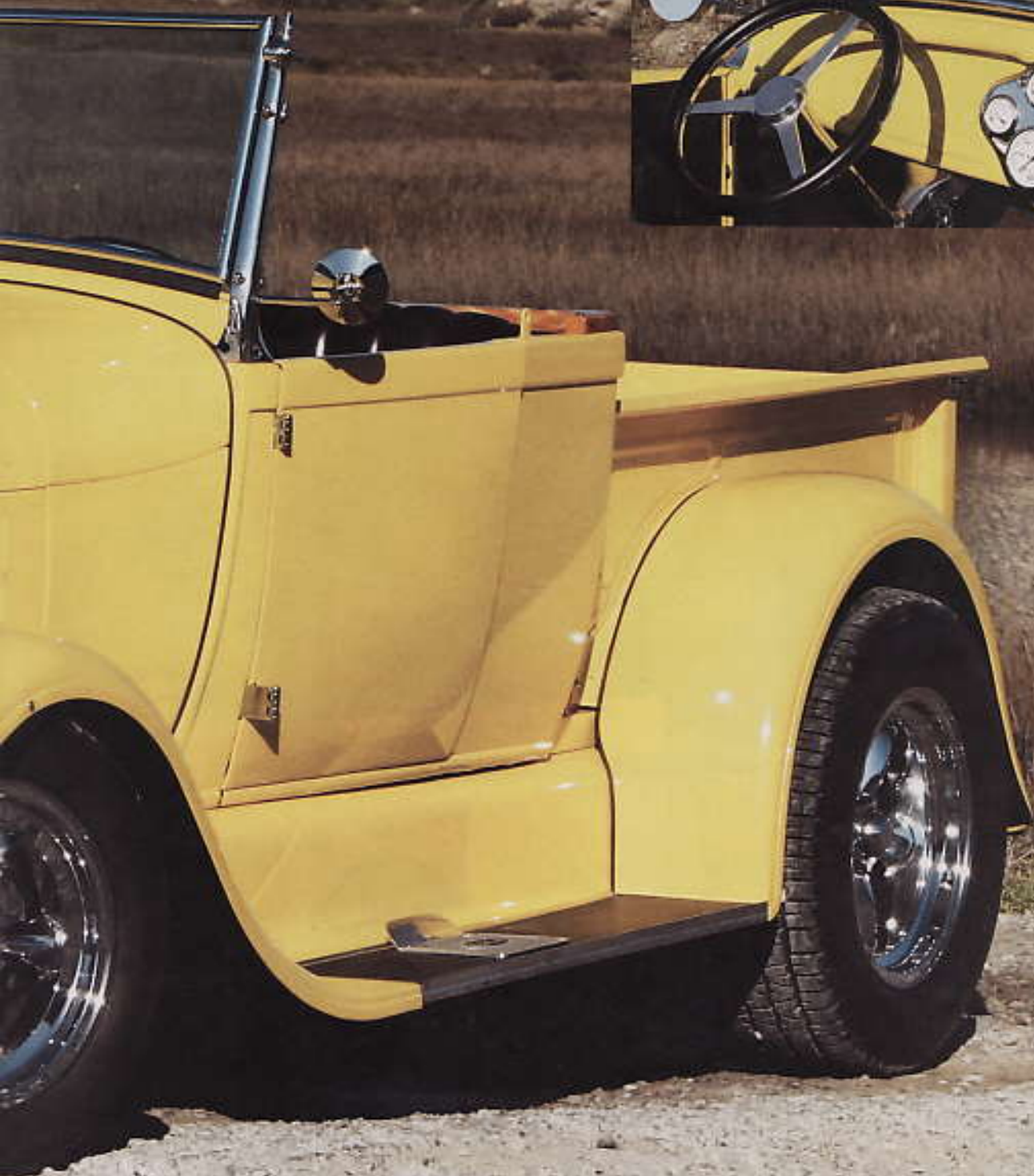


COLE'S '28



JERRY COLE'S '28

An Azusa Alley Find

into the backyard and brushed the truck off to see what shape it was in, and discovered it was in excellent condition. We came back later, and I bought the roadster pickup for \$60."

In 1955, Jerry tore into the little roadster pickup for the first time, and just like the pickup in *Hot Rod* magazine that inspired him, his truck ended up featured in hot rod magazines as well. The little yellow pickup that appears on these pages is fresh from Wheeler's Speed Shop in Huntington Beach, California. Wheeler's master technician and hair-farmer Chris Jonas was in charge of the '28's rejuvenation. "When the truck came to me, it was in pretty good shape. It just needed fresh paint and some suspension upgrades." The dropped straight axle perched on the Model A's nose for 50 plus years was scrapped in favor of an IFS setup from TCI. In place of the original tubular shocks canted at 45-degree angles, Chris hung a pair of

coilover shocks with special attention paid to polished stainless steel upper and lower control arms. Along with the straight-axle hitting the scrap pile, so went the worm and sector steering box in favor of a power-assisted rack-and-pinion. Power-assist enters the picture again with disc brakes handling the stopping chores in front, with late-model Ford drums at the rear. Out back, the old-style transverse-leaf setup was replaced with a TCI four-bar sprung with coilovers and damped with Bilstein shock absorbers. For rolling stock, the '28 motivates with 205/60R16 BFGoodrich tires mounted on chromed American Racing Torq-Thrust wheels.

Directing Jerry's '28 is a Pete & Jake's steering wheel mounted atop a Lime Works steering column on an aluminum steering column drop, which brings us into the interior of Jerry's '28. A testimony to the quality of '70s Naugahyde is the dark brown tuck 'n' roll upholstery

stitched up by Thornton's in Santa Ana, California, some time in the early seventh decade of the 20th century. It's interesting to note that Thornton's opened their doors in 1947, and the shop is still in business in Santa Ana today. The carpeting didn't fare quite as well and was replaced by Fibertech in Huntington Beach while Wheeler's was restoring the truck. Wheeler's also plugged a complete set of Moon gauges into the Model A dash cluster.

For propulsion, the '28 is powered by a 289-inch small-block Ford plucked from an early Mustang. Wheeler's sourced chrome goodies from Mooneyes to brighten up the 289, starting from the air cleaner down. The '28's transmission is the C4 Cruisomatic that came with the Mustang engine. Shifting occurs with a Lokar shifter mounted next to an original Model A emergency brake handle. Connecting the C4 to a Ford 8-inch rearend with 3.0:1 gears





is a shortened driveshaft from Drivelines Unlimited. Underneath the seat a 12 volt Optima battery facilitates any electrical needs the little pickup might have. Starting at the 289's heads, the exhaust system begins with ceramic-coated stock cast-iron exhaust manifolds plumbed through 2-inch pipe into a pair of Flowmaster Hushpower II mufflers.

Ordinarily one would expect the body of an almost 70-year-old truck to be an absolute rusted nightmare, but since



Jerry has owned the '28 since 1955 and has always stored it properly, the original sheetmetal was still in excellent condition. The only body panel on the '28 that isn't original is the left-front fender. After stripping off the yellow paint Jerry had been running on the pickup since the '70s, Ron Eagleton at Eagleton's Custom Paint in Huntington Beach repainted the '28 in a bright yellow custom mix. Some of Wheeler's newer body mods include a custom hood and a smoothed grille



shell. Other custom touches include a pair of Dietz mini-bucket headlights and a custom Wheeler's license plate frame.

With Jerry's '28 back together and ready for another 50 years of service as a hot rod pickup, he wanted to make sure we got in a special thanks to Bryan Wheeler at Wheeler's Speed Shop and Ron Eagleton at Eagleton's Custom Paint for a job well done, and while we're at it, here are props to Chris Jonas for tacking it all together. **CCT**



When magazines were king and television was only a

youngin', the hot rod bug bit Jerry Cole of Corona Del Mar, California. "I saw a roadster pickup in the pages of *Hot Rod* magazine, and I set out to find one. Fifty or so years ago when I was in high school, several of my friends and I drove up and down alleys in Azusa trying to find a restorable Model T or A. In one backyard, we spotted the radiator shell of this truck protruding from a pile of rubbish. The owner had stacked leaves and debris in the truck's bed anticipating that he would haul it to the dump, but instead he just continued to fill the bed with yard cuttings until it eventually covered the entire truck with the exception of the front bumper and radiator shell. No one was home at the time, but we went

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BY JOHN GILBERT ■ PHOTOGRAPHY BY BOB RYDER

