



CONVERTED *Convertible*

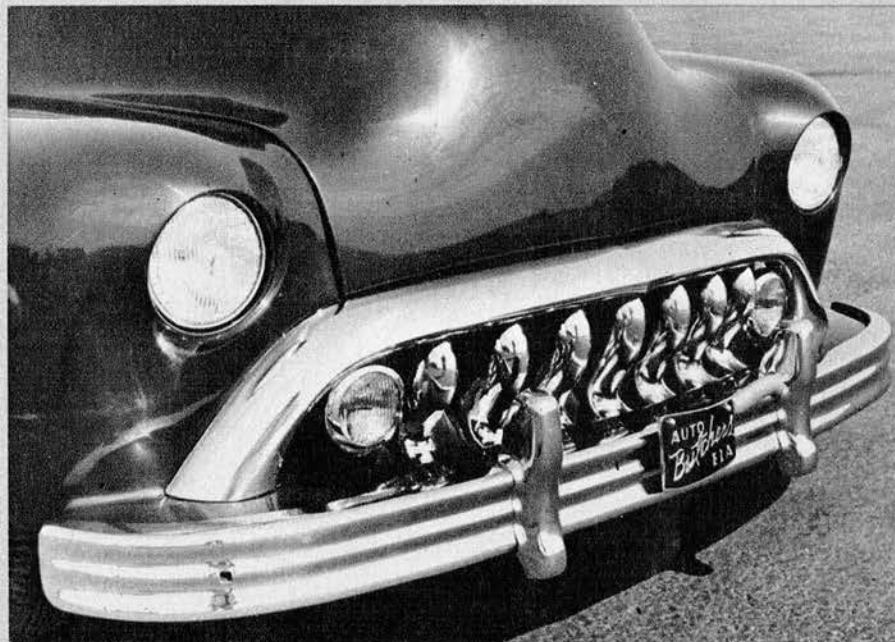
features many new ideas.

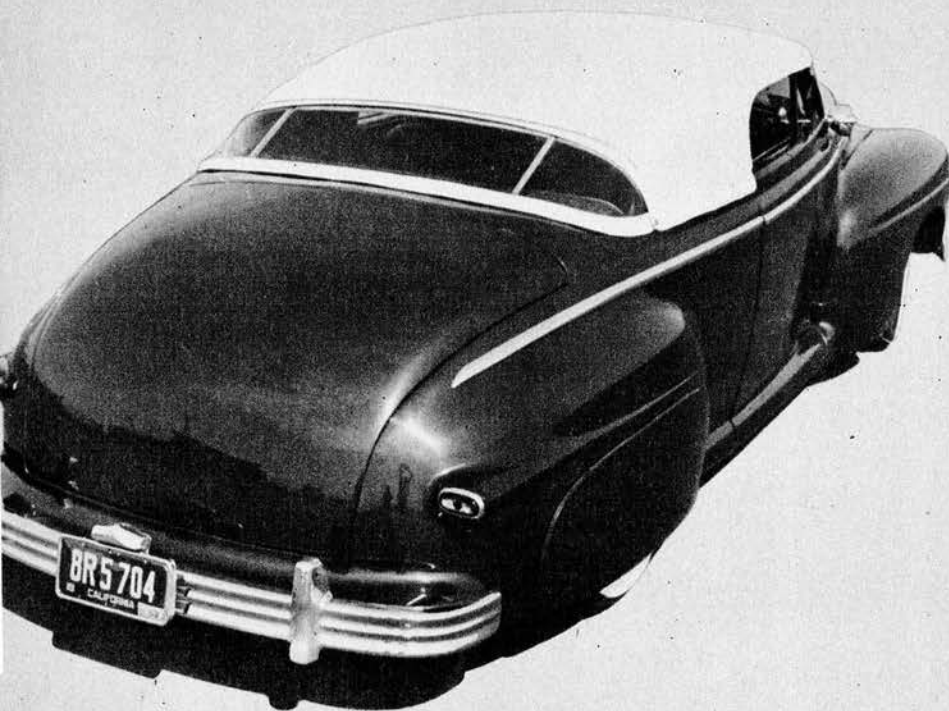
THERE are many difficult decisions a car owner has to face when he decides to restyle his pride and joy. The very basic reason for altering the appearance of a car is to change its looks so that it will no longer resemble the particular manufacturer's original product. Therefore, the problem is how to restyle a car tastefully yet with a minimum of expense.

A very late model car is reasonably easy to restyle "differently" because probably few customizers have had a chance to get their hands on one. But take, for example, the case of the '46 Ford convertible. This model remained

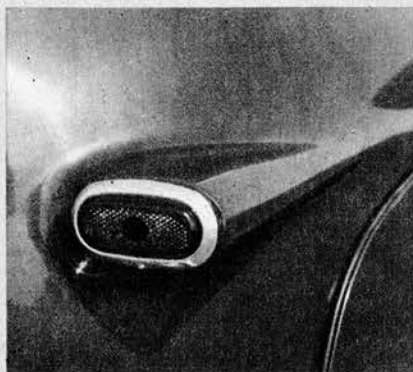
Grille design is unusual combination of both Oldsmobile and DeSoto parts. Hood has been reshaped to fit grille bar and headlights have been frenched.

HOP UP, June, 1953



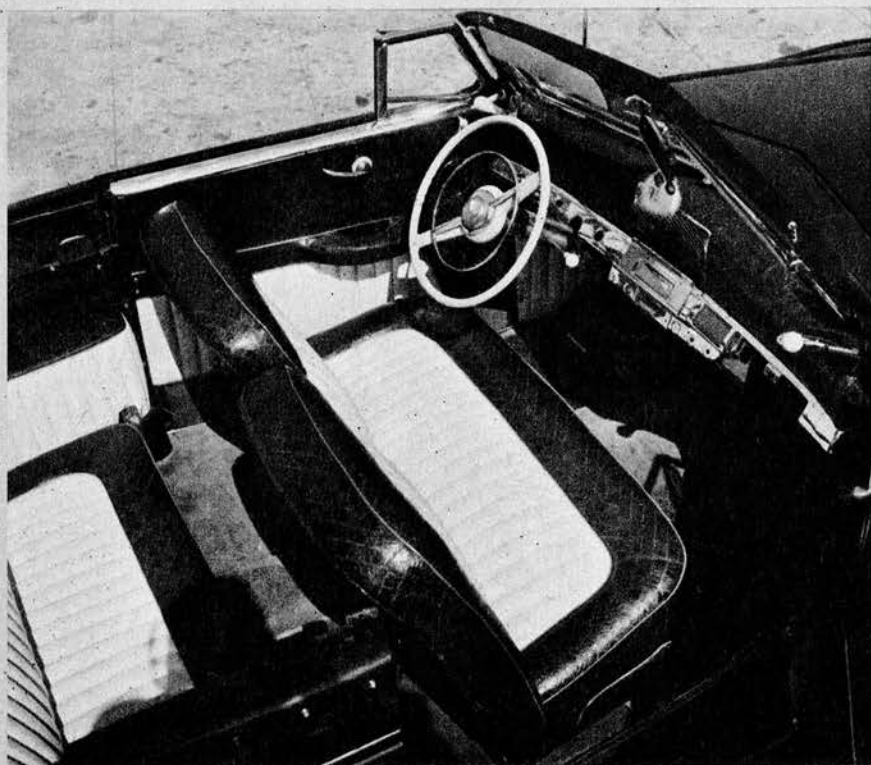


Rear fenders have been molded to body & stock taillights have been set in molded housing. Note wrap-around window.



Housing for taillight was hand formed from sheet stock and molded to fender.

The upholstery is combination pleated leatherette and imitation snake skin. Ford instrument panel is covered and Kaiser panel is positioned below it.



basically unchanged from 1941 through 1948. Of this series, convertibles were the most popular so for this reason literally hundreds of them have been customized, each owner with the thought to create something different.

Gil Ayala and Al Garcia faced this problem when they decided to go to work on Al's convertible. Seemingly every conceivable thing had been done to this model but yet, Al felt, there must be something that no one else had yet thought of. He and Gil (of Gil's Auto Body Shop in Los Angeles) sat down and meditated for a long time and slowly ideas began to formulate.

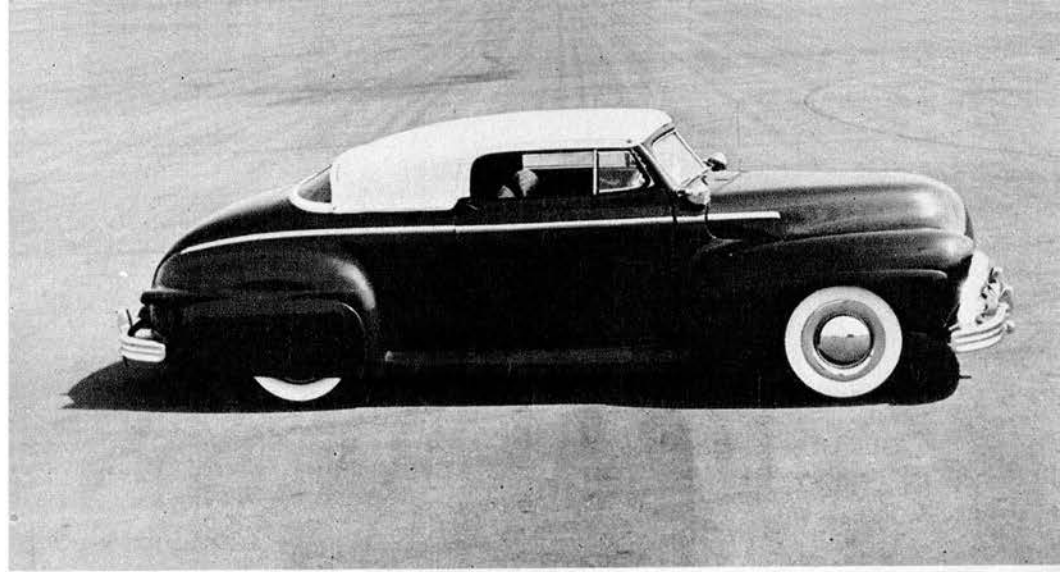
With the germ of an idea thus born Al and Gil mercilessly tackled the Ford and began sawing away at the windshield posts. They removed five inches from these posts and the door windows and windwings. All of the hacked-up pieces were eventually re-joined, the glass frames were sent to the chrome platers and the body metal was heavily primed. With this operation done, thoughts then turned to the front end. The stock grille and grille panel were removed and discarded. The front of the hood was done away with, it being reshaped to resemble the hood of an Oldsmobile. To further carry out the Olds theme, a 1951 top grille bar was fitted to the fenders and hood.

With this installation completed, the Oldsmobile resemblance ended. The two decided that there were too many floating grille type front end treatments around so they chose the vertical approach and subsequently installed "teeth" from a DeSoto. The front end was further enhanced with the installation of a '49 Plymouth bumper.

It was decided to french the headlights differently, too. The result is the apparent "droop" of the front fenders. This is caused by the overhang of the fender at the top of the sealbeam unit and the section of the fender at the base of the lamp being nearly flush with it. The front of the Ford was finished off with the removal of the hood center chrome strip and the filling in of the seam. The side chrome trim was shortened to give the car a longer look when viewed from the side.

The seams between the front fenders and the cowl were leaded over and filed smooth, there remaining only a smooth fillet. This trick is one that shows a thoroughness of detail work, however, the cost usually exceeds the "different look" it gives the car. If you decide to do it to your car, though, don't get involved in an accident because the insurance companies take a dim view of cars from which the front fenders cannot be easily removed.

The outside handles have been removed from the doors and the chrome side strips extended to cover the holes.



Padded top and white side walls balance symmetrical appearance of Ford.

This is another trick used by restylers for some time. Originally, the handles extended through the strips near their end. When the handles are removed there is not only a hole in the body, but one in the trim strip as well. Since the hole in the door is covered by the strip it is not necessary to actually weld the hole closed. Adding a section onto the chrome strip is not necessary, either. The problem is easily solved by purchasing a quarter panel chrome molding for the same make and model of car and cutting it to the length of the door. The doors on Al's Ford are now operated electrically.

All of the hardware was removed from the trunk lid and the holes ultimately filled in. This is quite a common procedure but it can be made into a real project if the job is undertaken by someone with little previous experience. A deck lid is held rigidly in position by its heavy inner panel but since the stiffener does not actually touch the lid, except at its outer edges, the center of the panel is actually quite weak. As soon as heat is applied with a torch the metal proceeds to take on the appearance of the Pacific ocean in a storm. Stated more simply; it's wavy! Few deck jobs ever turn out as smooth as the owner thought, or hoped, they would. In all our experience with "decked off" cars we've actually seen only three or four where the job could be termed absolutely perfect and Al's Ford is one of them. The deck lid on Al's car is electrically actuated.

Causing concern to the insurance companies, once again, but showing great attention to detail, the rear fenders have been frenched, or molded, to the body. The stock taillight lenses and rims have been retained but are housed in a new mounting that flares out from the rear fenders in line with the contour dividing edge.

The rear gravel deflector has been molded onto both the fenders and the

lower rear body panel and, like the front, is protected by a Plymouth bumper. The license plate now resides on the bumper and is illuminated by the type of accessory light that is available at most auto supply stores.

The instrument panel of the Ford has also received its share of restyling. The original Ford panel is covered with leatherette and below it is the major portion of the dash from a Kaiser. The center of the original panel contains a grille for the radio speaker.

The car is finished off in Emerald Green lacquer, its beauty not being done justice by the black and white

photos. The interior is a combination of pleated leatherette and imitation snake skin. The convertible is topped off with a padded white top with wrap-around rear window.

Being thus completed the car was lowered seven inches all around and skirts and moon-type discs were added. The cost of converting a convertible in this manner would run approximately nineteen hundred dollars but the result is an eye-catcher, all the way.

Interior of padded top. Stock quarter windows have been eliminated by top.

