

Revamped Ford Tub

NOT TOO many years ago, a Model A Ford touring car, its neat cloth top snugly buttoned down, isinglass curtains firmly in place and four barrel engine chugging steadily along, was practically an American institution.

Unfortunately, these have almost disappeared from the highway, thereby ending an era in the history of the American motorist. Of the few remaining, we luckily uncovered a '29 model that still bears a marked external resemblance to its showroom days. The body, fenders, running boards, windshield and radiator shell retain their stock appearance, but there the similarity ends.

Don Chase of Burbank, Calif., had wanted to own a good custom hop-up for several years before he purchased this one in the summer of 1951. This "A tub," as their fans call them, was already equipped with a rather tired Mercury engine and a body and interior that did not come up to standards Don had set for his roadster. However, he set to work on the basic automobile and has built a car to be proud of.

Beginning with the running gear, Don replaced the front axle with one that had been dropped and filled. It boasts a

2¾-inch drop, the maximum allowable for safe operation. The shocks are 50/50 Gabriel, which perform adequately on city corners, rough streets and the drag strips.

Realizing that hydraulic brakes are a necessity, Don installed a set from a '40 Ford. The transmission and differential are also Ford products. A column shift from a '40 Ford operates 26 tooth Lincoln-Zephyr gears in the transmission housing while turning the rear wheels is a '46 Ford Differential running a 3.78:1 gear ratio.

Don did his own engine work with the exception of such major machine jobs as balancing, and has turned out a fine looking and smooth running mill. He replaced the original engine with a '48 Mercury block which has been bored and stroked ⅜-inch over stock. An Iskenderian "track grind" cam, Edelbrock equipment, including pistons, heads and four carburetor manifold, and a Kong ignition system also were installed. Touches of chrome on the generator and water hoses help make the "engine room" as neat and attractive as the exterior of the car.

As evidence that the car will move with the best of them,

Don recently turned 94 mph on gasoline at the Pomona drag strip and is certain he can do much better when the car is tuned perfectly. All this in view of the fact that the car pulls 2370 pounds with its full complement of road equipment!

Custom headers to relieve back pressure when "dragging it out" in competition are supplemented by conservative-sounding dual exhausts for street driving, so as not to draw the wrath of Don's non-roadster neighbors.

The instrument panel is particularly unusual. Although adapted from a '32 Packard, it is as neat and well proportioned as if it had been built for the "A." Don says the dash was built originally by Packard as a custom job and that only 12 were manufactured, making it somewhat of a collector's item now.

A major deviation from factory specifications is Don's replacing the rear seat with the spare tire, battery and a 16 gallon gas tank—he didn't like the idea of sitting under all that fuel in the stock tank. A white canvas tonneau cover keeps the opening neatly covered and includes a split section of canvas that will cover the right half of the front seat while driving, or both sides when parked.

The upholstery follows good custom practice, with pleated maroon and white leatherette matched through the seats, doors and kick panels.

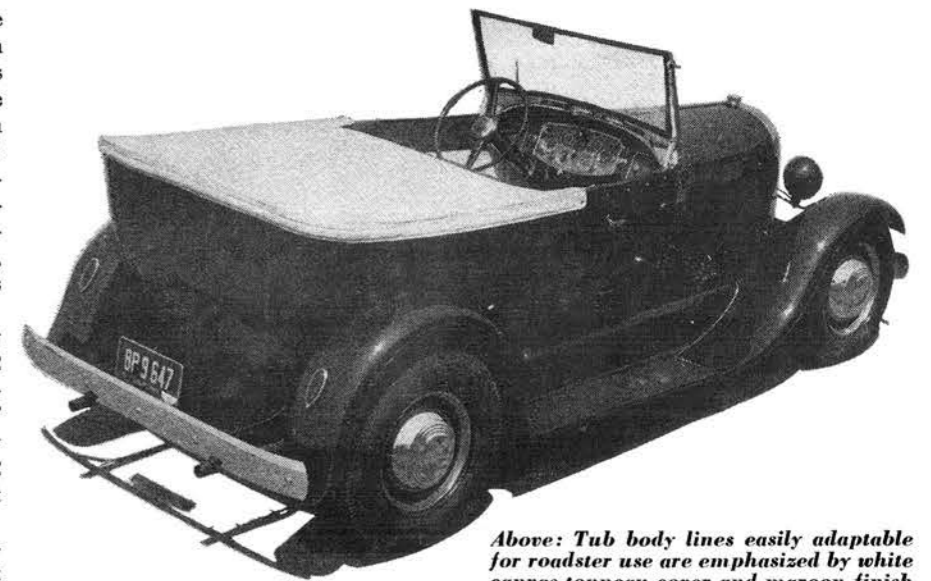
A carefully reconditioned body with all dents smoothed and holes filled provides the base for a sparkling Packard maroon paint job that has been enlivened with the addition of a small amount of metallic and purple lacquer. Chevrolet pick-up truck bumpers fore and aft, stock radiator shell, windshield posts, front fender beading, original hood gas filler cap and Ford teardrop taillights add the proper touch of chrome for contrast.

Like so many roadster fans, Don is using two tire sizes—6.50-16 on the rear and 5.50-16 in front. This, coupled with the dropped front axle, gives the car a slight downhill effect that will be characteristic unless Don wants to cut into his frame and drop the rear end or channel the body. Even so, this car is definitely an eye-stopper in its outward appearance and the performance figures on speed and acceleration speak for themselves.

The cost of building such a car? Of course, this will vary a great deal with the individual. If you are able to do as much of your own labor as Don, naturally you'll spend less. Don estimates he has put more than \$800 into the car above the original purchase price. But that's not too unusual—performance and looks cost labor and money!

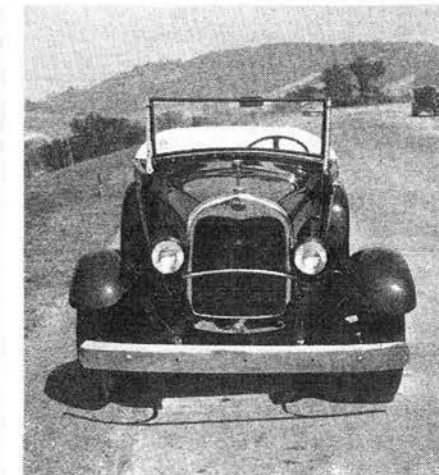


HOP UP, November, 1953

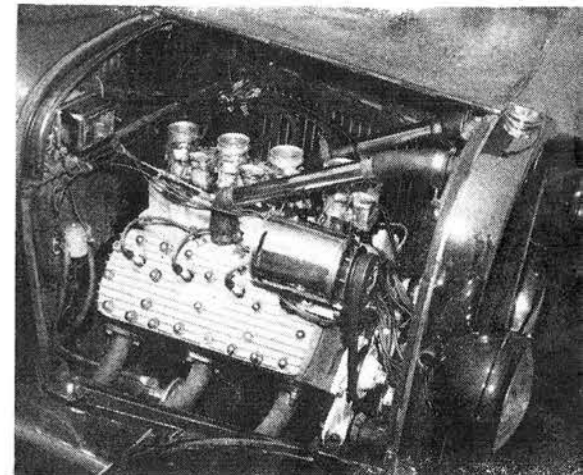


Above: Tub body lines easily adaptable for roadster use are emphasized by white canvas tonneau cover and maroon finish

Massive Chevrolet pick-up bumper accentuates clean front profile of tub roadster. Dropped axle lowers front end 2¾"



"Touches of chrome on the generator, water hoses help make the 'engine room' as neat and attractive as the exterior"



Unusual wood-paneled instrument group from '32 Packard fits "A" as neatly as if it had been built for it. Elaborate dash is one of 12 custom built by Packard

