



Lowered Six Different Ways, This '41 Ford Is Now a

DAYTON DAZZLER

By George Barris

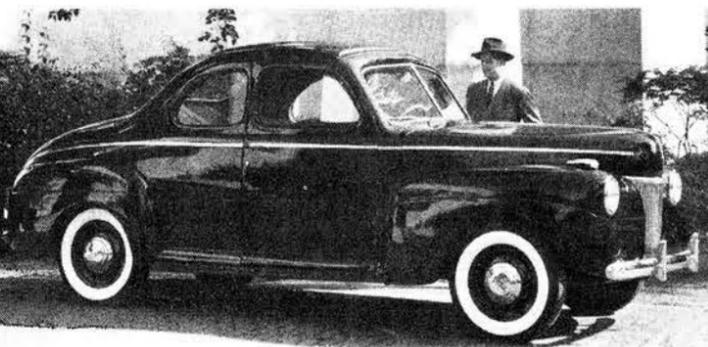
CHIEF PROBLEM currently bothering the solid citizens of Dayton, Ohio, is aching neck muscles. Experts in the massage parlors have diagnosed the cause: too many double-takes at the dazzling sight of Jim Skonzakes proceeding down the street in his customized 1941 Ford.

The residents of Dayton can be excused for registering nothing but startled attention every time Jim trots out his car. It is a fine example of the art of customizing as practiced on a prewar model, a case in which skilled hands worked long and carefully to convert a stock model into an original design. Among the distinguishing characteristics is the notable fact that the car has been lowered through a combination of six different methods.

Customizing of the exterior and interior is not the only department that has received attention, however. Under the hood rests a powerful '48 Cadillac V-8, made more potent as the result of engine modifications by Dick Lyons of Lynwood, Calif. The unit, which mounts dual carburetors, has been coupled to the Ford transmission.

Before the customizing treatment began, the car was a

Stock '41 Ford, as it appeared off the production line, points up the style changes made during customizing treatment



conservative business coupe version of the '41 Ford line. Jim wanted something different. He got it!

The net result was that six separate lowering methods were incorporated into the new version of the car: chopped top, sectioned body, channeled body over frame, channeled undercarriage, Diego dropped front axle and reworking of the rear cross member assembly.

The job began with the top. The front windshield was lowered four inches, but ample vision was maintained by permitting it to extend two inches into the top area. A sharp slope toward the rear was achieved by executing a six-inch drop at the back end. Lines were further enhanced by an additional ten-inch extension, power hammered and shaped to conform to the top, of the back panels. Then a full-sized rear window was laid into the slanting surface. Final touch to the top was removal of the outside drain molding with the area smoothed into new contours that blend with the rounded door corners.

Attention was then focused on the body, which was cut and channeled over the frame by six inches. Firewall and fenders were also opened up to fit the body channeling. The builders elected to substitute '48 Ford front fenders that were installed two inches higher into the cowl.

A further refinement consisted of removing a three-inch section from the bottom half of the body, thereby reducing the area taken up in the stock model.

Undercarriage channeling consisted of C-ing the frame above the rear end. Floorboards, subsequently panelled to eliminate air leaks, were shifted to provide clearance over the rear end, drive shaft, housings and side stabilizer bars—the latter item installed to reduce swaying action of the back.

Front end was lowered with a drop Diego axle, stretched with a three-inch curve on the end of the axle. Steering rods also were lowered to allow clearance for the new positioning.

Lastly, the rear cross member was replaced by a straight, channeled member which had a new center hole grooved in for alignment of the rear end.

In creating the front grille, basic components were drawn

from a '49 Cadillac. The complete bar assembly was welded into one unit with the center bar. The front bumper was selected from a '52 Studebaker, cut and fitted into position. Gravel pans for the front were made from cold rolled sheet metal stock and formed to fit bumper and adjacent fenders. Headlights were Frenched, with rims flush. They are removable from inside the front fenders.

The hood was formed with framing made from angle iron stock and completely power hammered into one piece and then fitted to the fenders.

As mentioned previously, the front fenders were '48 Ford. Creases were rolled out and, once squared off, were welded into place with handmade plates.

The nice flowing, fadeaway fender effect was achieved by designing them to cover three sections, with easy repair of possible damage in mind. Rolled from sheet stock and supported by angle iron brackets, they were fixed into final position with plates and body solder. The blending rear fender arrangement was molded solid onto the body using plates and welding.

Lens for each of the rear taillights was made from clear red lucite with reflection back and formed to fit plates in the flared sections which were fitted into creases of the rear fenders.

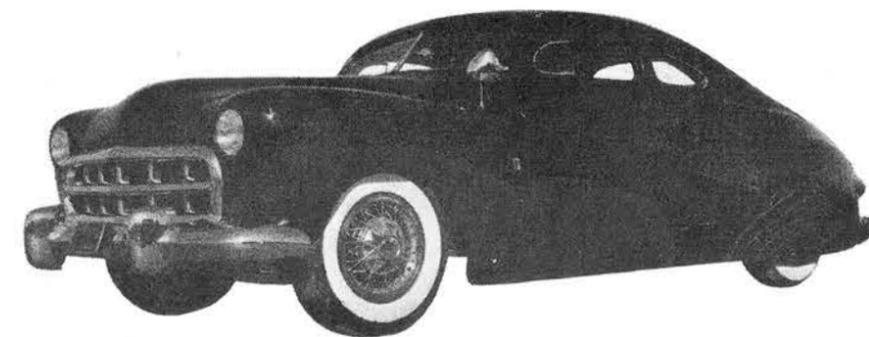
Tucked neatly into the back quarter sections is the rear deck lid which has rounded corners. A gravel pan extends to the rear '50 Ford bumper which has been reshaped to fit. The rear license plate carrier is sunk into the bumper with specially trimmed lucite lens for better illumination at night. Finally, the deck lid is operated from the dash with an electrical two-way push button screw jack. The doors, incidentally, are also electrically controlled.

Footnote to the exterior styling remarks is that the fender skirts from an early model Mercury have been fitted at the rear.

The dash is from a '48 Ford, with specially chromed panel and finished in contrasting two-tone color to match the exterior. White shag rugs are covering for the floors and firewall.

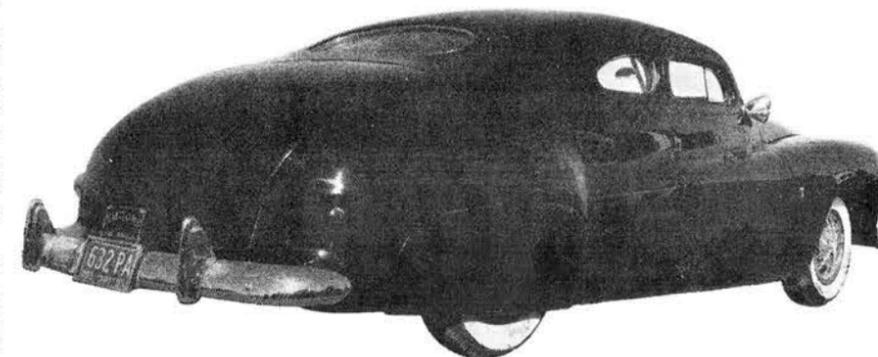
The car rates high in the opinion of many experts. Judges in numerous Eastern auto shows and the Los Angeles "Hot Rod and Motor Sports Show" have awarded it trophies time after time.

Owner Jim's interest in customs has been at a high level for years. Currently, he has a new project under way. It is a '53 Lincoln Capri, which is being given the full treatment at the Barris shop in Lynwood. As a result of this, Jim anticipates parting with his Ford custom in the near future. Those who may be interested in seeing the lavish creation can inspect it at his home in Dayton, 819 Xiena Avenue, where it is on display.



Front grille was created from '49 Cadillac units welded to center bar assembly, while bumper is altered '52 Studebaker design. Fenders were reworked from '48 Ford

Rear styling is characterized by six-inch drop and ten-inch extension of top into which full-sized window is fitted. The bumper was selected from a '50 Ford



Interior of the car is plushy. Dash from '48 Ford was chromed, while seats were covered with plastic material in tan and white, with matching overhead rolled lining

