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TWO FOR THE ROAD

The Mariani Brothers Double Take



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Chuck Vranas



Bob Rutledge Adds a Wicked Twist to His '30 Ford Coupe

◆ **When you're influenced** early in life by Ed Roth's automotive creations and Rat Fink-infused artwork it's easy to take that inspiration to the next level by creating a personal build that's percolated for decades in the back of your mind. We're talking about one that would look right at home on a Roth T-shirt having a monster poking out of the roof with a muscle-bound arm grabbing at the shifter while in the midst of a wild smoky burnout. That's what led Bob Rutledge of Hickory, North Carolina, to create his latest hot rod, complete with wicked proportions and supercharged V-8.

From his early days of growing up in Richland, Michigan, one thing has been constant in Bob's life and that's an attraction to radical hop-ups. Since his early model building days at the family kitchen table through experiencing blistering nitro-laced drag racing at Martin US 131 Dragway in the '60s and '70s, his attraction to cool cars is easily traced back to influences from his dad and uncle. Learning to drive the family dune buggy

long before he earned his license lit the fuse that continued onto hanging out on a regular basis at family friend Bill Chalker's Gulf gas station. It was the place where cool cars congregated, especially since it was on the road that led US 131 where all the visiting racers would pass by. He eventually started working there after high school, honing his mechanical skills while also discovering local salvage yards to feed his need for

parts to build a number of hot rods. He opened Rutter's Rod Shop with his wife, Patt, 20 years ago in Kalamazoo, Michigan, eventually relocating the business to Hickory.

Wanting to bring his dream build to life he located a '30 Ford Model A coupe at the NSRA Louisville swap meet a few years ago. The car was a Wyoming barn find that had seen plenty of abuse, however, it was an ideal starting point.

To give the coupe perfect proportions the stock frame was stretched 7 inches to a 110-inch wheelbase, packed with a custom X-member and crossmembers and kicked in the rear. To channel all the power out back a Ford 9-inch was filled with 3.25 gears spinning 31-spline axles, suspended in place by a Heidts triangulated four-link combined with Aldan American coilover shocks. For perfect handling and dazzling looks a Heidts Superride IFS features polished stainless upper and lower control arms with matching spindles deftly matched to Aldan American coilover shocks and an antiroll bar. To tame the beast fluid moves through stainless lines to a Kugel Komponenten dual master with Wilwood discs and calipers anchored at each corner. Nothing



makes a statement better than a set of Billet Specialties 17-inch front and 22-inch rear Chicayne-model wheels wearing BFGoodrich rubber to bring it all to the pavement.

For shaking the streets Bob called on Dan Whisnant at WSC Racing Engines & Heads in Casar to add plenty of venom to a '70 454 Chevy mill. The block was massaged to 461 ci and filled with a 4-inch stroked Eagle crank with matching rods topped by a set of JE forged pistons urged by an Erson hydraulic roller cam. A set of Patriot Performance aluminum heads make plenty of power, especially when matched to a Weiand 8-71 supercharger topped with a pair of Holley 600-cfm carbs wearing a Hilborn-style scoop. An MSD ignition lights the fire with spent gases blowing through a set of custom Sanderson zoomie headers. Added dazzle comes from a Street & Performance serpentine system and plenty of plated and polished bits. To move the goods a race-prepped TH400 trans from Phoenix Transmissions links to a

custom driveshaft from Martin Spring. It's all good for close to 900 hp to the rear wheels.

Bob wedge-channeled the body 7 inches at the cowl with a gradual trail off toward the rear. He

followed with a graceful bow to the firewall while also shortening and pie-wedging the cowl followed by metal finishing the entire body and setting all the gaps. To make the car stand out he

selected PPG's Sunburst Gold Metallic to bring it all to life. Rutter's Rod Shop team member Austin Tedder then made the body razor sharp and laid down the mile-deep vibe. The '34 Chevy grille shell from Outlaw Performance with an Alumicraft insert combined with the vibrant red roof insert finishes the look.

Inside a '34 Chevy standard dash was flush mounted and filled with an array of custom Classic Instruments dials to monitor the vitals while a LeCarra banjo-styled wheel navigates and a Gennie shifter pulls the gears. A cool breeze from Vintage Air keeps the office perfect while a custom bench was covered with yards of traditionally pleated bright red leather by A.J. Gisonda of Street Seats in Old Fort, North Carolina, who also covered all surrounding panels and laid out the complementing Daytona weave carpeting. We really dig Bob's Roth-inspired vision come to life and can't wait to see it on the streets.

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