

# In The Shop: Rutter's Rod Shop

April 23, 2020



## A Behind the Scene Look

By [Gerry Burger](#) – Photography by the Author

Bob and Patt Rutter started their rod shop the old-fashioned way, part time, in the backyard. As the years went by and the word of Bob's quality work spread, he soon had more work than he could handle on a part time basis. The year was 1998 Bob decided to quit his job working in logistics for a pharmaceutical company and Patt left her position as a supervisor in a printing company. Rutter's Rod Shop was officially opened as a full-time enterprise in the 2,000 sq. ft. shop behind his house. (Now located in Hickory, NC.)

When it comes to home shops 2,000 sq. ft. sounds big, but within three years Rutter's Rod Shop outgrew the space and moved to a 4,000 sq. ft. shop in their hometown of Kalamazoo, Michigan. Rutter's Rod Shop was now selling quality rod parts from many manufacturers and they also developed a line of their own products. Along with the sale of these quality products comes expert advice to ensure the customer is buying the best parts for his application. The shop stays busy doing everything from complete award-winning builds to hot rod repair.

After ten years of operating their business on the west coast of Michigan the Rutter's became weary of the long, harsh winters and decided to relocate the company to the more temperate climate of Hickory, North Carolina. Picking up and moving a full-functioning rod shop is no small chore but soon they were set up in a 4,500 sq. ft. building and enjoying working with the shop doors open. They initially leased a building in Hickory, but have since moved into their own 7,000 sq. ft. building.

Rutter's Rod Shop is a busy place, with multiple full builds in progress along with smaller projects like engine swaps and suspension upgrades. They employ a small and knowledgeable staff that enables them to do complete builds including from the chassis up to finish paint and bodywork. They prefer to keep the staff small since it enables them to focus on quality for every project and provide a personal experience for the customer. Speaking of staff, at this year's Cobo Hall show Austin Tedder, Pat Rutledge, Bob "Rutter" Rutledge and A.J. Langford are seen holding a First in Class award for the Rutter built Nomad. The same group lined up in front of the shop for us, but also included office assistant Kimberly Whisnant.

The current projects include everything from traditional street rods to muscle cars and trucks. On a recent visit we found everything from a Tri-five Chevy to Bob's own big block powered 1960 Impala to a gorgeous red 1962 Corvette. There was a Pro-mod 1966 Mustang going together and a nice original 1969 F100 with a 5.0 Coyote motor now neatly located under the hood. Don't let the survivor paint fool you, this is one hot truck. During our virtual visit we also got a chance to look over a freshly paint 1947 Chevrolet truck frame.

Quality is still the main focus and the team at Rutter's is proud to say their last three full builds were entered in the big Detroit Autorama Show and each car took home a first in class trophy.

While the Bob and Pat Rutter work long full days at the shop they are still true hot rodders. When they aren't motoring around in their gold Model A coupe Bob spends many evenings and

weekends wrenching on his latest project, a 1936 Chevrolet in his backyard shop.

Rutter's Rod Shop, Inc. has been a professional builder and supplier of parts for street rods, classics, customs, and muscle cars since 1998. Their experience and knowledge qualify them to advise any interested customers regarding the best options for their vehicle.

They can be found on Facebook and Instagram along with their comprehensive web-site that includes photos of the hundreds of vehicles they've built over the years. [www.ruttersrodshop.com](http://www.ruttersrodshop.com)

