

STREET RODDER

*Silencing Chevy Starters*

# STREET RODDER

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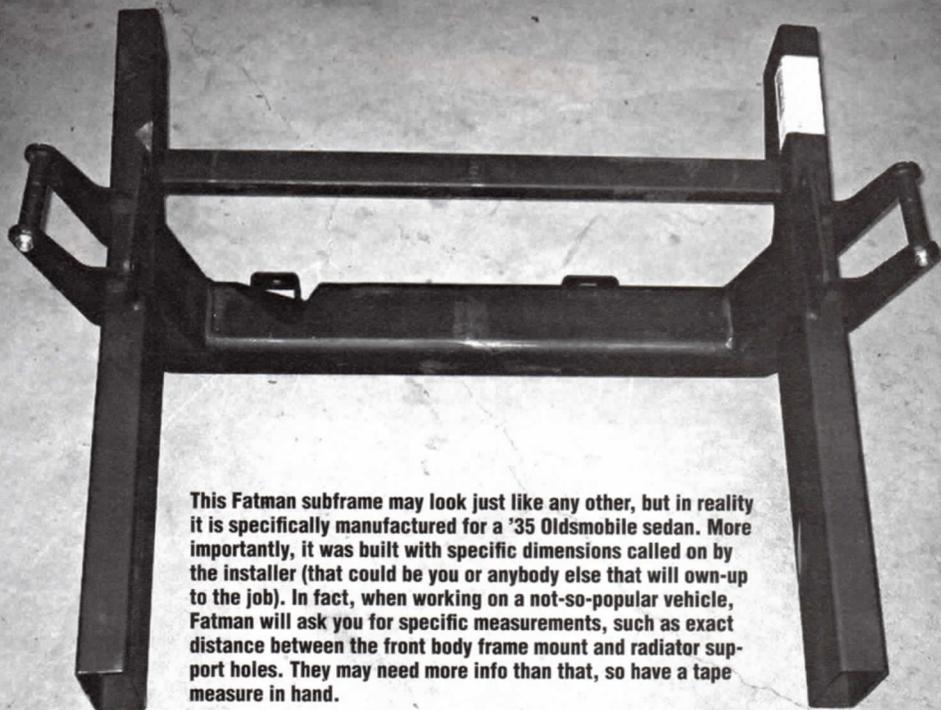
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Ts are back!

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APRIL 2003



This Fatman subframe may look just like any other, but in reality it is specifically manufactured for a '35 Oldsmobile sedan. More importantly, it was built with specific dimensions called on by the installer (that could be you or anybody else that will own-up to the job). In fact, when working on a not-so-popular vehicle, Fatman will ask you for specific measurements, such as exact distance between the front body frame mount and radiator support holes. They may need more info than that, so have a tape measure in hand.

# Subframes Made to Order

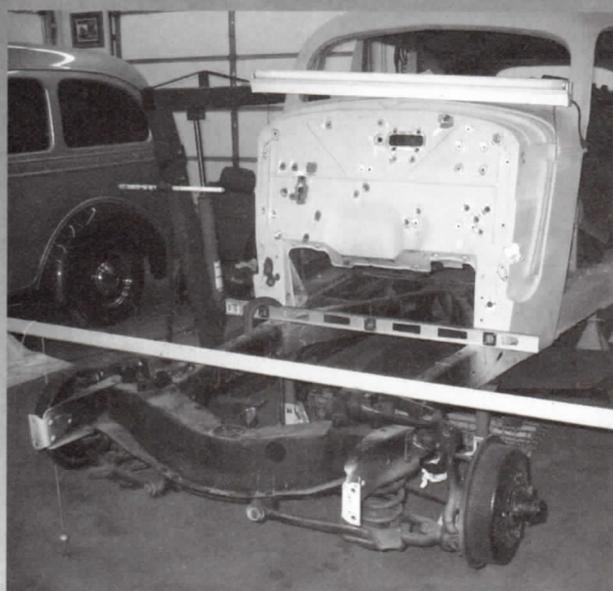
Fatman Fabrications will help put a Mustang II under whatever you drive

BY JASON WALKER

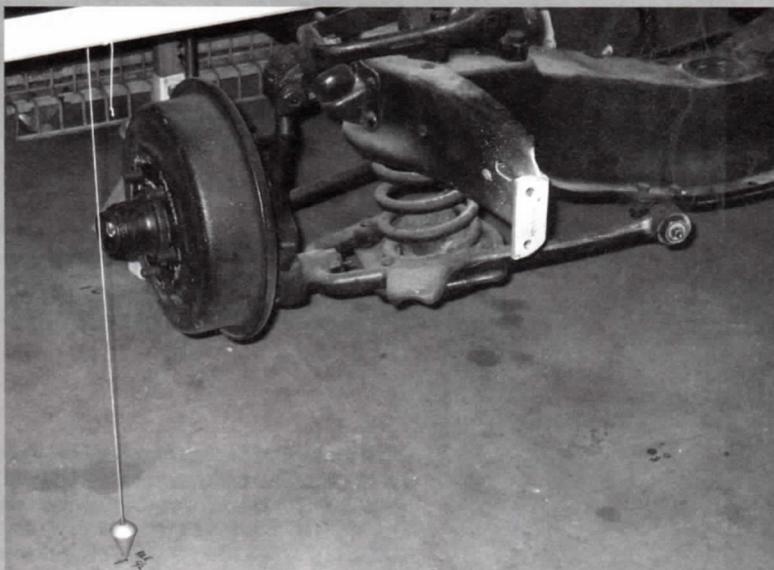
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PHOTOS BY BOB RUTTER

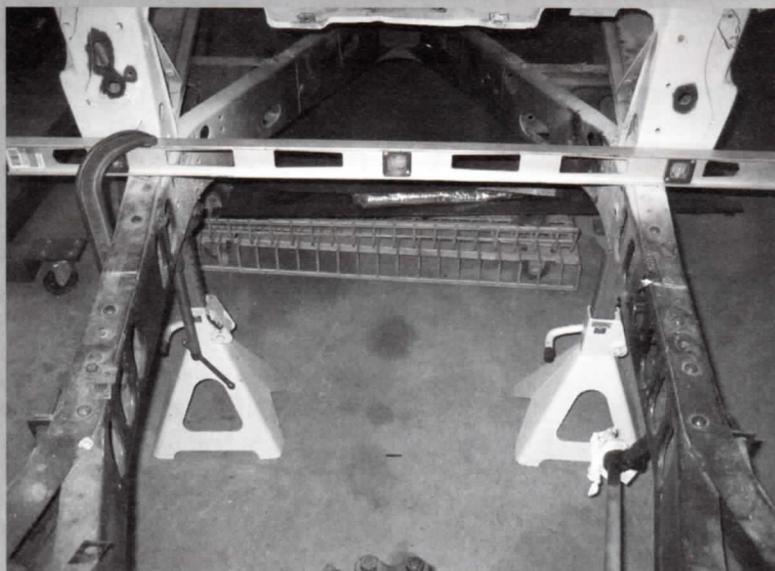
Mustang II-style suspensions are becoming as commonplace in our hobby as small-block Chevy power. Well, that might be a slight stretch, but there is no doubt about the popularity of those little frontends, and for good reason. It's amazing how many old car frames will accept a stock Mustang II crossmember with little or no modification necessary. Some would even say that Ford designed the Mustang II for more early-Chevy applications than any other.



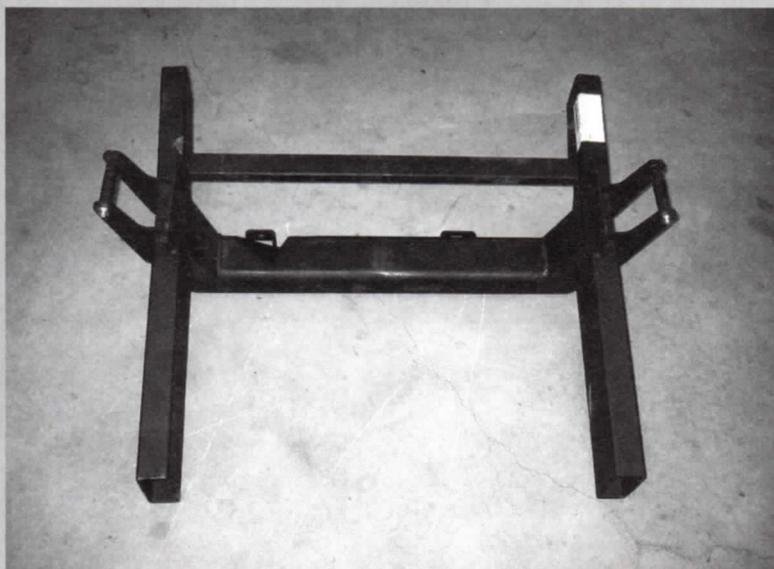
If you know what's good for ya, you'll take everything off the front-end from the cowl forward. It really is important to start with little or no obstacles. Try to level the car on jackstands, shifting the level from one area to another making sure that the chassis ends up as close to level as possible from front to back and side to side. →



This is the point where you will figure out all of the necessary distances and dimensions to accurately convey them to the boys at Fatman. A plumb bob will work perfect for this, as you will be able to transfer your important measurements directly to the floor. This is important to consider, as checking these measurements becomes increasingly difficult.



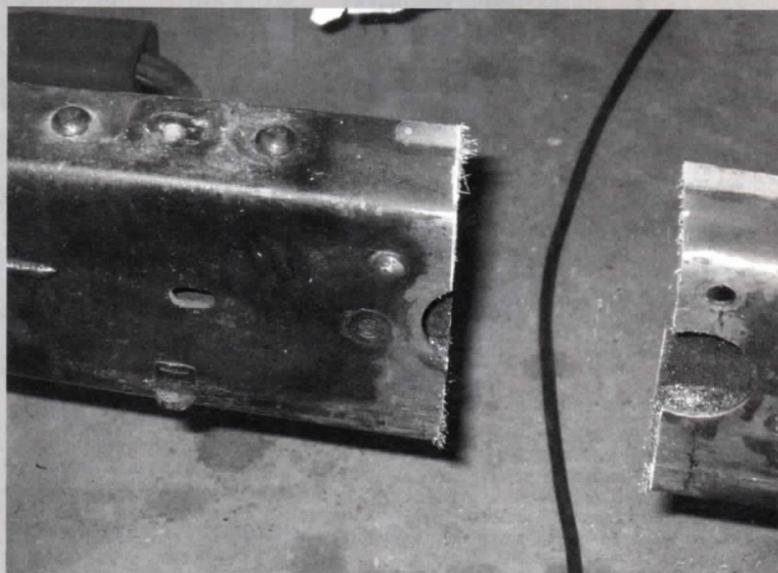
This shot shows the two cut lines where the frame will be cut off to accept the new subframe. Fatman will need these to determine how long to build the new subframe. They will also need to know the diameter of the frame to closely match it with either 2x4- or 2x3-inch square tubing.



Just to make sure everything is going to mate properly, measure your new subframe against the original front-end. Remember, you will need some extra meat on the framerrails to slide into the cut original rails.



Supporting the frontend without lifting the car will help when cutting the old suspension off. If there is too much pressure on the front, the saw blade may want to bind with knuckle-smacking results.



Take some time to make a clean perpendicular cut straight through the frame. You may also want to strategically find an area free of bends or large holes in your frame, but you should have already thought of that, right?



With the right tools, one man can get the job done just fine. →



**Don't ask why at this point; just use this seemingly scary sight as motivation.**



**Included in your kit will be 1/8-inch steel plates and gussets that will act as the adapters between the original frame and the new subframe. The plates will weld into the original side, and will accept the new stub snugly. Leaving a 3/8-inch gap between the new and old framerails will give you the necessary area to separately tack both sides without permanently connecting them at this time. This photo shows the fully welded frame, but before you go that far, measure everything another couple of times.**



**Notice that the plumb bob has been used once more to positively make sure everything lines up just as it should after each side is fully welded. Incidentally, the top of the new subframe should be exactly level with the top of the original frame. The bottom may need some cosmetic pieces of steel to be welded in (this would make for a smoother transition from the new into the old).**

So what about all the car frames that don't have the optimum widths to work with these frontends so easily? Or, what if you are building a high-tech wiz-bang cruiser, and don't want the ugly original crossmember disturbing the smooth flow of your up-to-date engine compartment? Maybe you don't want to rely on the road-hard and thrown-in-the-junkyard frontends. Well people, these are all legitimate questions, which, by the way, have been

answered by many aftermarket companies. However, no company, as far as we know, has answered as many questions as has Fatman Fabrications. There are currently hundreds of different applications for installing Mustang II crossmembers and subframes offered by Fatman. They don't want any excuses for flying down the freeway with an out-of-date, rickety, or otherwise sub-par suspension under your ride, even if it's a '35 Oldsmobile like the one

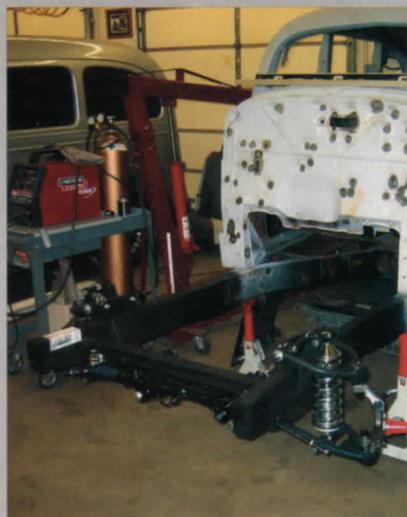


we have here. When we heard that Bob Rutledge, owner of Rutter's Rod Shop in Kalamazoo, Michigan, was about to install an aftermarket Mustang II-type subframe made just for this application, our first question was, who makes a subframe for a '30s-ish Olds? The rest is history, and here, on the next few pages, are some things for you to consider before installing one of your own, no matter what you drive. That's not to say a Mustang II-type

suspension will work in everything; there is track width, strength, and how you want to drive (be it on the street, track, or a little of both) to consider before choosing a suspension. Since this Olds fell under all of the necessary requirements for a new Fatman subframe, let the work begin and remember Fatman is just a phone call away from any question you may have about fitment or availability for your project no matter what it might be. **SR**



Now all of the suspension components can be bolted into place.



Now that the new subframe has been installed and all dolled-up with some filler and primer, we need to talk motor and trans installation. This Olds is going to receive a small-block and 700-R4 trans. We realize this story was about the subframe install, but hey, Bob made some trick mounts, so lets take a look.

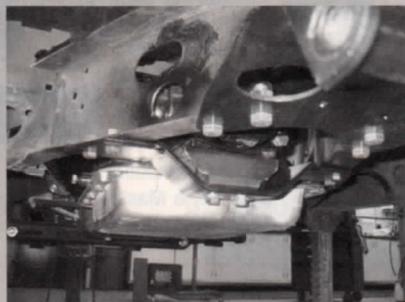


First things first with the trans not fitting into the original X-member. To alleviate this, Bob cut a clean notch in the frame, then backed it up with 1/8-inch plate for strength. →

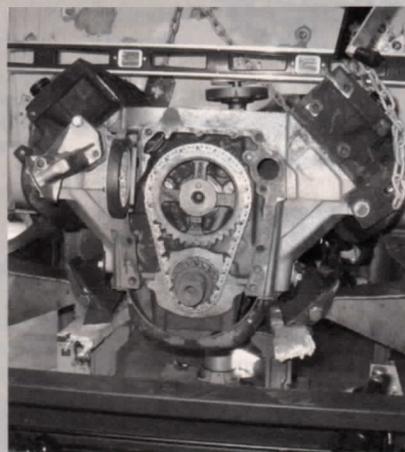
## SUBFRAMES MADE TO ORDER



This mount was made from 1/4-inch steel plate and shaped with some help from a 20-ton press. The ears were then welded into place, matching the frame miter for a clean-looking install.

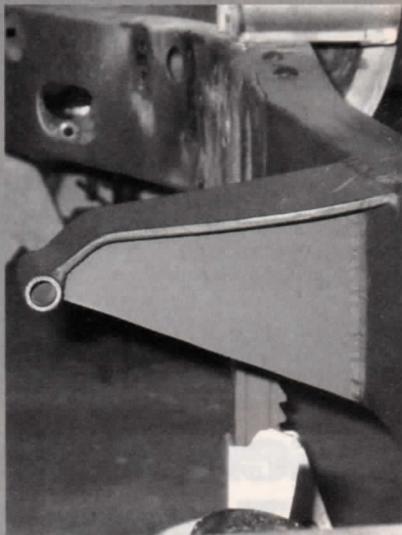


The finished product looks right at home, simple, clean, and functional.



The engine was set into place with the optimum 3 degrees of rake and leveled side to side. Bob made the motor mounts from 3/16-inch plate with a chunk of heavy-walled 1/2-inch ID tubing. →

## SUBFRAMES MADE TO ORDER



After a quick tacking, the engine was rechecked for alignment and then pulled out to finish welding the mounts on all sides.



Here is the semi-finished product completely up to date and ready for the show halls. SR

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