

This Coupe Has Some Remarkable Details

You have to look close at Dwight and Ruby Johnson's 1927 Ford coupe. It's not just another Model T hotrod.

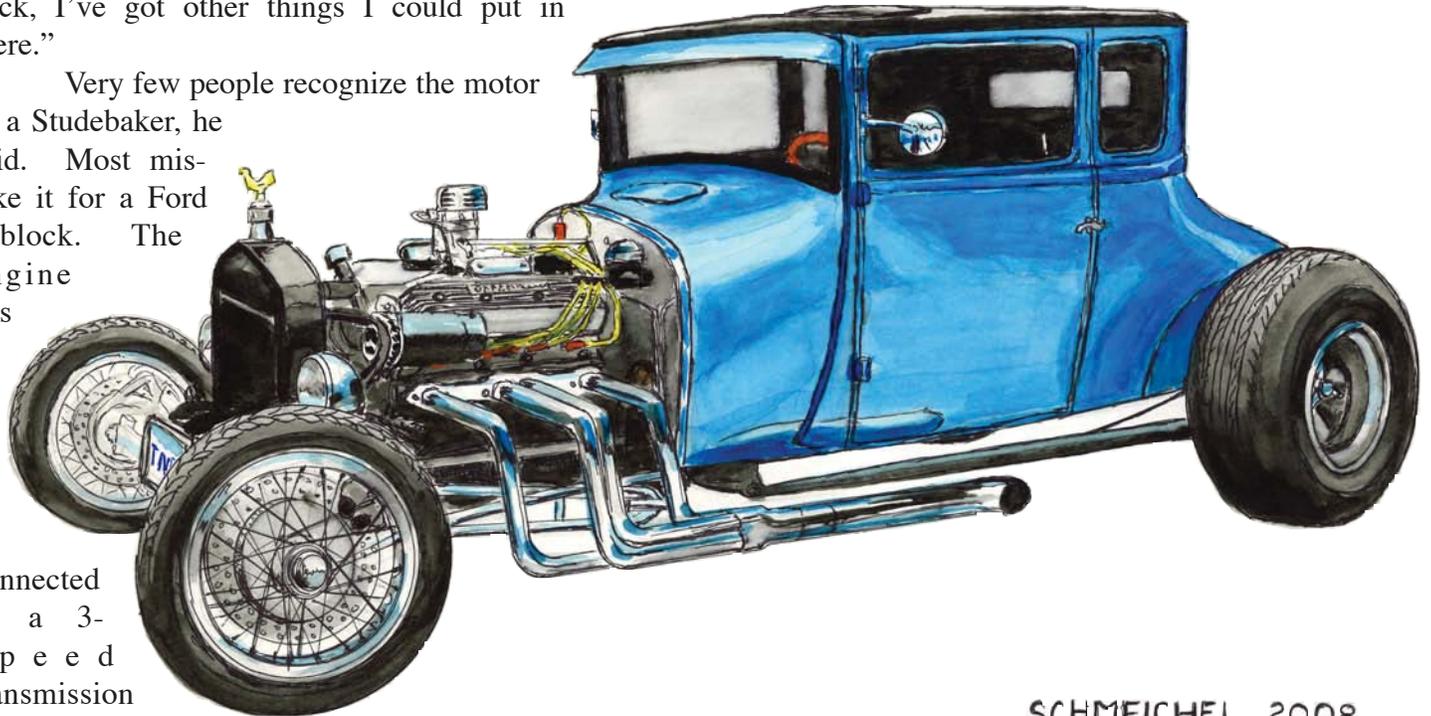
It doesn't have air conditioning, or a fancy stereo. It doesn't have a blower or a Ford flathead engine. But it is an accurate rendition of what someone built in 1959 or 1960 for their hotrod.

Probably the most unusual thing about this hotrod is the 1954 Studebaker 232 C.I. V-8 that powers it. The engine remains mostly stock, with a few dress-up items, and won't turn in any single-digit 0-60 times. But when was the last time you saw a hotrod powered by Studebaker?

"It's only rated at 130 hp, but it's enough for me," Dwight said. "If I wanted something that'll break my neck, I've got other things I could put in there."

Very few people recognize the motor as a Studebaker, he said. Most mistake it for a Ford Y-block. The engine is

connected to a 3-speed transmission with overdrive.



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"It's a conversation piece, if nothing else," Dwight said.

The car was built almost 50 years ago and wasn't driven much, he said. That was probably because it was not an easy car to drive around, he said.

continued on page 3



continued from page 2

Oh, it looked good, with that Studebaker engine in it and the Mediteranean blue paint. The interior was done nice, and someone somewhere along the line even put a sunroof in it.

When Dwight got it about 5 years ago, he knew there would have to be some changes before he would use it.

For one thing, the brakes weren't sufficient.

"When I bought the car it only had brakes on the rear, and they were 7-inch," he said. "It took two blocks to get it stopped."

But the things that caused a poor ride quality the most were the 12-degree castor in the front and buggy springs in the rear. The rear springs had almost no room to soften the bumps.

So, the first thing Dwight did was rebuild the front-end and replace the rear springs and axle. He swapped out the Studebaker rear-end for a '54 Oldsmobile nine-inch rear.

Part of the reason Dwight wanted this car was because he had a Model T coupe in high school, powered by an Oldsmobile V-8. It was a very basic hotrod, he said, and he sold it for \$75 not long after

he built it.

Then in 2003 or 2004 he saw a sign advertising this car while at Cool Deadwood Nights, and was taken with the looks. But when he found out the owner was a widow who needed the money to help put her daughter through college, he decided it was an excellent opportunity to help someone else out while gaining a cool hotrod in the process.

"It was probably a little more than it was worth, but I thought it was a good cause, so I bought it."

The top is chopped seven inches, and Dwight said he had to raise the header 3 inches in order to be able to see traffic lights. It also is channeled four inches, leaving the interior with about 30 inches of clearance between the floor and the roof. It's not built for tall people.

"It has no creature comforts at all. It doesn't even have a radio," he added.

In spite of the many upgrades Dwight has done, he said he tried to keep the car's overall appearance much like it was when it was originally built. That means it still presents some challenges for him to drive it.

"It's not suitable for long trips, but for cruising around town, it's just fine," he said.

Sympathy Offered

We would like to send our heartfelt sympathy to Diane and Roger Corkill. Diane's brother, Harlan Dubs, passed away on Wednesday.

Harlan Dubs, age 72, died Wednesday at the Freeman Hospital.

