

You've Got To Keep Both Hands On This One

Gary Bockorny's 1923 T-bucket is a kit car with a lot of get-up-and-go.

Gary bought the car from a man in Chicago who became frustrated with it when he tried to build it. Gary got it on the road about 5 years ago, and has been tweaking it ever since.

"I brought it back and tore the whole thing apart," Gary related.

The Chevy 327 that came with it was basically stock other than a .030 bore-over. But Gary wanted more power, so he added a blower, a steel crank and blower pistons he found on ebay. After having it machined, Dale Furby helped him put the motor together. He ended up with about 700 horsepower to carry his 1800-pound car down the road.

"It'll do 0-100 in a block if it hooks up," Gary said.

But he said he knows he has to be careful with that power, as the fiberglass car would not hold up well if he got in a wreck.

"Actually, the only thing that holds that fiberglass body on is four bolts on each corner," he noted.

And the rear end tries to push out to the right when he gets on it too hard.

"I'm sure it'll come around on you if you don't know when to quit," Gary said. "I don't do anything silly on the street with that blower on it."

"It's a quick car. It'll jump out from under you," he added.

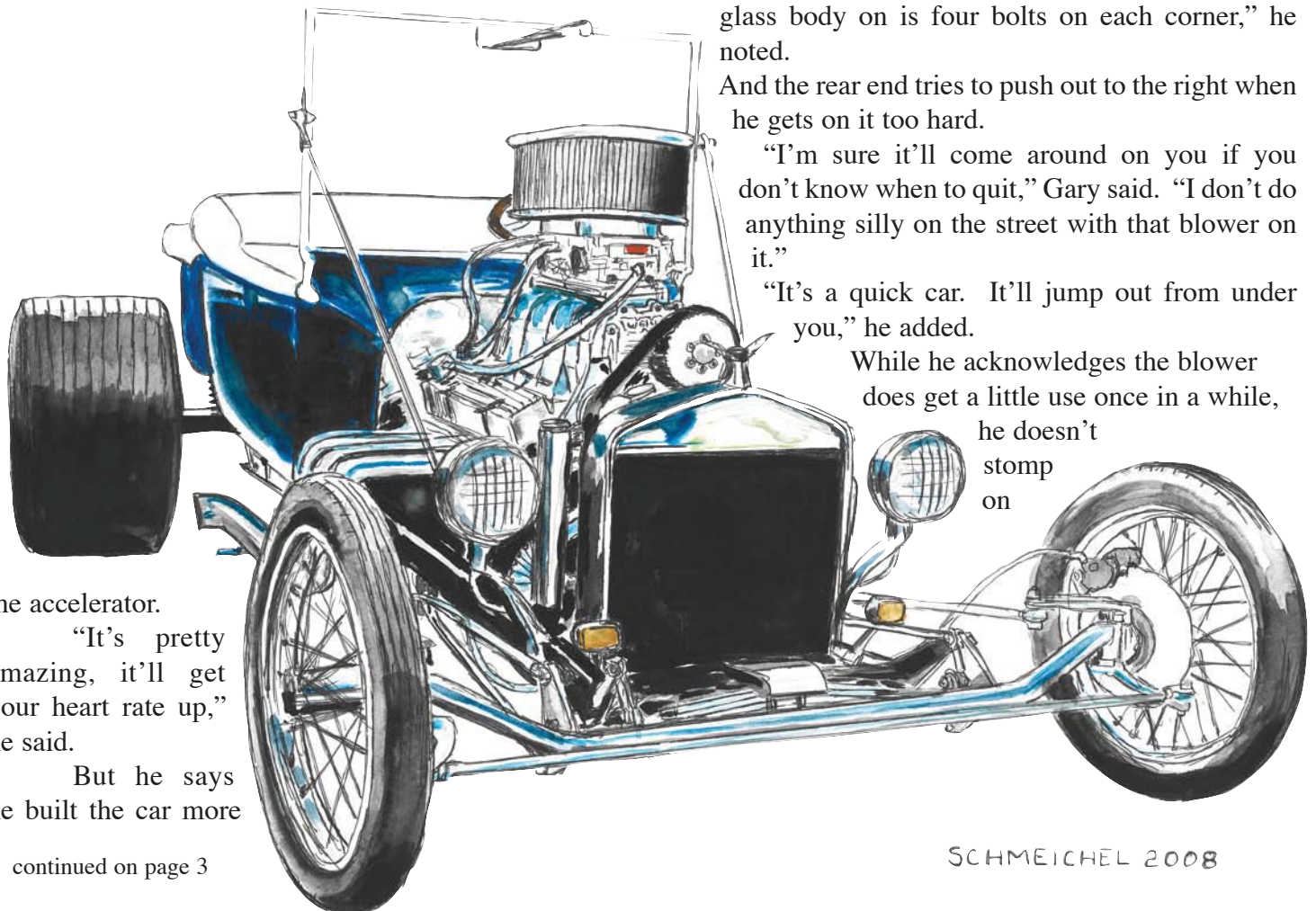
While he acknowledges the blower does get a little use once in a while, he doesn't stomp on

the accelerator.

"It's pretty amazing, it'll get your heart rate up," he said.

But he says he built the car more

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for the looks than to run fast. He's never raced it, he said.

Gary named the dark blue roadster "Blue Thunder," in honor of a racer from the 1970s. During that time Jimmy Matthews of Mitchell drove a race car in a modified class that has since been taken over by the sprint car class, and Matthews called his car Blue Thunder. Gary liked to see Blue Thunder race, and talked to Matthews on occasion until Matthews was killed in an accident at the Lyons Fairgrounds in Sioux Falls.

While the car is as fast as most any race car, it does have its disadvantages. He noted he has to be careful keeping the narrow front wheels from any bad bumps. And he can feel most imperfections in the road.

"It's not a Cadillac. It's got a short wheelbase, and you feel every rib in the road," Gary said. But he added, "It's not uncomfortable."

But then, there probably aren't very many Cadillacs that could keep up with him down the road



What's Wrong With This Picture?

A lot of people were scratching their heads upon seeing Jules Haper's latest project at the June 11 cruise held at Terry Koch's shop June 11.

The 1923 Dodge hotrod was powered by a 1966 Buick V-6, but upon closer examination, there were no bolts holding the valve covers down, and one of the valve covers had a gaping hole where the oil filler cap should be. What kept the valve covers on?

"Gravity," was Jules' answer.

Some people had to touch the valve covers and wiggle them, to see if they'd fall off, but gravity had a pretty good hold on them.

And wasn't he worried about rain and dirt getting in the hole?

As it turns out, the chrome valve covers were sitting snugly on top of an additional pair of valve covers. It turns out the car has a 1966 Buick V-6 motor, and the chrome valve covers Jules bought fit Buick V-6 motors of 1977 vintage and newer, but did not fit his engine. They did, however, fit over top the stock valve covers on his 1966 engine, and made for quite an interesting conversation piece.



60's Factory Cars Challenge the Popularity of Hot Rods

By Clay Seachris

The decade of the 1960s was a strange period for hot rods and custom cars as both would witness a change in popularity. Many factors created the right climate for nearly ending customizing and hot rodding, and much of it had to do with what was going on with auto manufacturers competing for product sales.

Production cars were becoming more stylized, with thinner roofs, shorter body sections, and more sculpturing than anything that had been available through most of the 1950s. With slim, tall fins; lots of glass; and tighter body sections, they took on a look that was a natural progression of American automobile design. The look was hard to match by custom cars based on 1940s and early '50s cars.

Even the radical customizing trick of body sectioning -- mostly seen on 1949-51 Fords because of their slab sides -- couldn't change the heavily crowned fenders, tops, and body sections that looked old compared with the latest from Detroit.

As production cars became more modern in appearance, they were also developing a wallop under the hood. The auto manufacturers were fighting it out in NASCAR and drag racing, and they met the challenge with increasing cubic inches and engine configurations that were previously available only through speed shops. With the dawn of the muscle car era, you could drive off the showroom floor and take on anything, including the average homebuilt hot rod.

Besides muscle cars, Detroit began offering "personal luxury" cars

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