

Pacific Northwest Scrap Rod

By Randy Johnson

Rodger Hoyt of Grants Pass, Oregon, had a 35-year long-haul trucking career going until the recession hit. With no income and bills piling up, he was forced to liquidate his beloved '31 Ford Model A pickup, an eight-year, resto-rod project, full fendered and gloss black. Seller's remorse set in with a vengeance. His doctor's diagnosis? Empty garage syndrome.

Necessity breeds creativity; creativity drives invention. Hoyt decided to build a quickie beater with a trucker theme that would give him his fix for a hot rod, yet still leave some cash to pay the mortgage. He'd fabricate everything himself from the ground up, without niceties and polish: it wasn't going to be pretty.

"I spent eight months building the trucker-themed 'Scrap Rod' from the frame up. My credo was 'build, don't buy.' Cheap took precedence over cool, and generic supplanted rare or

vintage. Above all, I was going to have fun," said Hoyt.

Hoyt outlined his philosophy and listed his priorities:

- 1) Utilize whatever parts already on hand (hence the name "Scrap Rod")
- 2) Fabricate everything possible
- 3) Perform all the work myself, with hand tools only, mostly just a welder and a grinder
- 4) Buy as little as possible; nothing new, everything used or swap meet
- 5) Use available parts instead of exotic
- 6) Always choose the least expensive option
- 7) Eschew trendiness
- 8) Avoid the evil Ps: perfectionism and pretension. Don't show off my fabrication skills with elaborate bracketry or anything else pretentious. Don't use expensive vintage parts. Don't spend big bucks just to look low buck.

On Craigslist he found a hacked-up 1934 Ford pickup body that a farmer had tried to mount onto an S-10 frame.

After his immaculate Model A, using the beat-up '34 cab required some radical adjustments to his thinking. The decades of neglect and abuse made it a poor candidate for restoration, so he decided to just have fun with it.

Since the original rebel outsiders started the rat rod nation almost two decades ago, the gang has multiplied like, well, rats. Rat rods have found their place among traditional rods and customs. But while the word "patina" has earned itself a new entry in Webster's, the rat rod pioneers of the '90s didn't foresee faux patina.

Nope, nothing faux about the Scrap Rod. The finish on the steel is the real deal—just as Hoyt found the truck body from the farm—with its geologic-like strata of successive black, then yellow, and then red paint jobs, gouged and scraped over the course of 78 years.

"I had over three million miles behind the wheel of a semi, so I imme-



diately had a theme for the '34 - Big Rig!" said Hoyt. And right from the get-go, trucker-themed parts appeared miraculously. "A neighbor brought over a Mack bulldog hood ornament (mounted on the cowl vent with illuminated eyes), I 'salvaged' twin 3 1/2-inch trucker exhaust stacks and big rig heat shields after-hours from local scrap yard; and dual roof-mount trumpets appeared at a swap meet," said Hoyt.

Playing wide receivers on the sides of the cab are vintage semi-cab lights for the front turn signals. While Hyster seats provide the cushioning and no-name gauges on the '34 dash give the feedback, the interior's finishing touch is a green metalflake Peterbilt shifter handle.

"I gave the cab the standard shortening treatment: a four-inch chop and four-inch channel. The pickup bed was shortened 22 inches and narrowed 8 inches. The body was so tweaked that there was no hope of ever making it square again," said Hoyt, "so I didn't even try."

The frame of the Scrap Rod was scratch-built from 2x4 rectangular steel, with a vintage Okie Adams 6" dropped I-beam up front. The wishbones are original Model A and the shocks are swap meet on fabricated brackets. In the rear, a 4-link setup made from plumbing pipe works in conjunction with Monroe Load Levelers adapted to a Ford Maverick rear end.

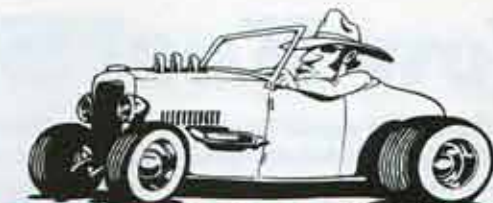


Pacific Northwest Scrap Rod



TECH SHEET

Owner: Rodger Hoyt
Builder: Rodger Hoyt
Vehicle: 1934 Ford Pickup
Body: Chopped, channeled, bed shortened and narrowed
Engine: Chevy 307
Intake: 3 Rochester 2Gs
Exhaust: Dual semi 3.5-inch stacks with heat shields
Tranny: Chevy S10 5-speed
Rear End: Ford Maverick 8"
Suspension: F: Speedway spring with 2 leaves removed, R: 4-bar fabricated
Wheels: F: 15x6 Cragar S/S; R: 15x8 Cragar S/S
Brakes: F: Camaro disc, R: Drum
Tires: F: 5.60-15 bias ply, R: N50-15 bias ply
Steering: Custom chain drive
Dash: 1934 Ford with homemade aluminum insert
Stereo: Twin Cherry Bombs



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- Feb. 8-10, 2013 – Kansas City, MO – 53rd Annual O'Reilly Auto Parts World of Wheels:** Bartle Hall; event includes Ol' Skool Rodz Traditional Rod section plus Gene Winfield "Chop Shop." Info: www.automarama.com
- Feb. 8-10, 2013 – Indianapolis, IN – 54th Annual O'Reilly Auto Parts World of Wheels:** Indiana State Fairgrounds; event incorporates "Motorama 1982" hosted by the Indy Road Rockets and featuring 2 Rodz DeLuxe Awards for best hot rod and best custom. Info: www.automarama.com
- Feb. 9, 2013 – Phoenix, AZ – Third Annual BOMB-B-Q Hot Rod Show and BBQ:** Papago Park; Sponsored by Bomb Squad CC; 11AM – 6PM Cruise and after show party with live music 7PM – 9; Info: 480-228-1437
- Feb. 15-17, 2013 – Sacramento, CA – 63rd Annual Sacramento Autorama:** Cal Expo Fairgrounds; Info: www.rodshows.com or 877-ROD-SHOW
- Feb. 15-17, 2013 – Milwaukee, WI – 51st Annual O'Reilly Auto Parts World of Wheels:** Wisconsin State Fair Park; event includes Ol' Skool Rodz Traditional Rod section; Info: www.automarama.com
- Feb. 22-24, 2013 – Calgary, AB Canada – 47th Annual Auto Value World of Wheels:** BMO Centre; : www.automarama.com
- Mar. 1-4, 2013 – Bakersfield, CA – 54th Annual Bakersfield March Meet:** Auto Club Famoso Raceway; NHRA Heritage Series Event: 661-399-5351 or www.autoclubfamosoraceway.com
- Mar. 28-31, 2013 – Las Vegas, NV – Viva Las Vegas:** Orleans Hotel & Casino; Info: www.vivalasvegas.net
- Mar. 28, 2013 – Shelbyville, TN – 11th Annual Spring Thaw:** Calsonic Arena; Swap meet, motorcycle show, "Rats in the Arena" car show; Info: www.bothbarrels.us or 615-364-1828
- Apr. 27, 2013 – Shelbyville, TN – Indoor Motorcycle Races:** Calsonic Arena; Dirt track races, motorcycle show, swap meet; Info: www.bothbarrels.us or 615-364-1828
- Apr. 28, 2013 – Brighton, England – 3rd Annual Incarnation-Brighton:** Madeira Drive Seafront; 10AM to 6PM; More info at: www.acecafevents.com
- May 3-4, 2013 – Dubuque, IA – Vintage Torque Fest:** Dubuque County Fairgrounds; Pre-1966 traditional style rods & customs; Info: www.vintagetorquefest.com
- May 3-5, 2013 – Dewey, OK – 12th Annual Stray Kat 500:** Info: www.straykatcustoms.com
- May 17-18, 2013 – Union, SC – Steel In Motion Hot Rods & Guitars:** Union County Dragway; Presented by Geargoyles C.C. Pre-'70 traditional hot rods, customs, gassers, front engine dragsters, funny cars, altered; any year custom chopper or bobber. Grudge racing. Live music. Free primitive camping & hot showers. Info: www.steeleinmotion.net; 864-909-3067
- May 24-26, 2013 – Santa Maria, CA – WCK Cruisin' Nationals:** Santa Maria Fairpark; Info: www.westcoastkustoms.com or 951-488-0413
- June 2, 2013 – Paris, ON, Canada – Unfinished Nationals:** Paris Fairgrounds; Info: www.unfinishednationals.com; 905-544-8900 or 905-476-2632

The engine is the ubiquitous small block Chevy of the 307 cubic inch variety, turning a five-speed trans out of a Chevy S10 pickup. Up top, a vintage trio of Rochester 2G carbs sucks go-juice through velocity stacks made out of used martini shakers! The truck keeps its cool via a Mustang aluminum radiator inside a '30 Ford shell. Fuel is extracted from a 14-gallon tank fabricated from sheet steel. But where's the battery? It's a Honda unit from Walmart, hidden inside a Craftsman toolbox in the truck's bed.

The whole setup rolls on a set of corroded Cragar wheels and big-n-little bias-ply tires, with 5.60x15 skinnies on the front and N50x15 fat boys bringing up the rear.

"But it's the steering system that gets all the attention at car shows," Hoyt says.

With three pedals to deal with, there wasn't a lot of foot room left inside the cab. To keep the steering shaft up out of the way and provide a more ergonomic wheel position for

the Ford tractor wheel, Rodger fabricated a unique chain drive steering system from a double-row roller chain and a couple of industrial sprockets. This turns a Dodge steering box hooked to a drag link also made from plumbing pipe.

"Without exception, everyone at shows ends up pointing at the steering chain," he says.

Don Tippit, a veteran car builder and master pinstriper who started his career 50 years ago painting and lettering sprint cars, funny cars, dragsters, and Indy 500 cars, interviewed Hoyt at this year's Ratrod-O-Rama in Grants Pass for a documentary video.

"Rodger's a craftsman; you can tell by his welds. He's got safety in mind because he knows his wife Roberta's going to ride in it. He's built himself a rat rod-flavored [hot] rod that's correctly proportioned. It's got the right attitude and fine features like the three twos, the exhaust stacks, the truck horns, stock mirror, and martini velocity stacks. This truck's got a lot of eyeball," said Tippit.



Take a virtual ride in the rat truck; see Scrap Rod 1934 Ford Pickup by Rodger Hoyt on YouTube and read his blog at: <http://scraprod.blogspot.com>. And check out 2012 Ratrod-O-Rama and Pin-up Contest with Don Tippit on YouTube.

