

ROAD ROCKETS!

Style is Good. Having the Beans to Back it Up is Better.



By Drew Hardin | PHOTOS: JAMES BROWN & DREW HARDIN

You can turn off your poser radar. These guys are the real deal. Jeff "Skinny" Coloman and Jimmy White definitely look the part—greased hair, cuffed jeans, boots, tattoos—but the commitment runs far deeper than looks alone. For instance, both of these guys live in Southern California's Orange County, an area best-known for luxurious seaside communities, Olympic diving champions, and Disneyland. But Jeff and Jimmy live in a grittier portion of OC, where suburban garages house air compressors and grinding wheels, not surf boards and Range Rovers. Jeff's garage, in fact, is so full of cool old hot rodding stuff—a story in itself we'll do someday—that he does most of his work in friends' garages.

THE FIVE-WINDOW

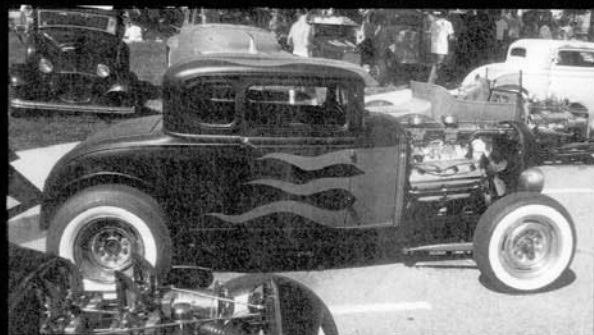
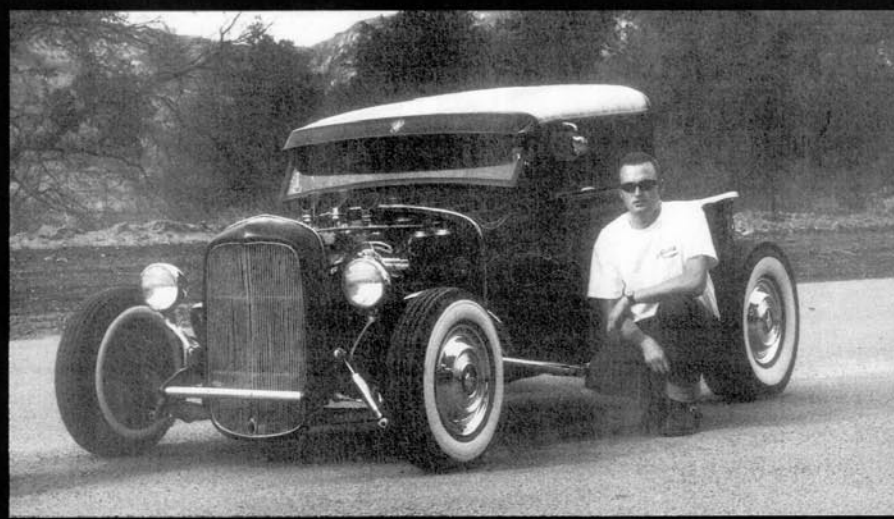
When Jimmy bought his Model A from Royal Foust in Riverside, California, it almost looked like a totally different car. Back in the mid-'90s it was black with red flames and had whitewalls on all four corners. The Hemi was in there, but it was fitted with two Strombergs and block-hugging exhaust manifolds. Since then the car's look has evolved as Jimmy worked on it. The two twos became four, and now there are six rebuilt Strombergs on a Weiand Drag Star manifold. The block-huggers have been replaced by headers Jimmy made, and a set of zoomies hangs in the garage for those times he can run wide-open.

The Hemi is an early 331 that Reath Automotive bored 0.125 inches. The heads are 354-inch industrial pieces. The stock crank and rods turn Jahns 10.5:1 pistons; and an original Sig Erson Top Fuel solid-lifter cam (reground by Clay Smith) actuates the original valves. Behind the Hemi is a McLeod clutch and an early cast-iron Borg-Warner T-10 transmission that sends power to a tri-year Chevy rearend via a custom driveshaft made by Unitrax.

The Model A body sits on a '37-'41 Ford chassis that's been narrowed, shortened, kicked up in the rear, and boxed. The straight axle is of the same vintage as the chassis. Out back, the split-wishbone suspension that was under the car when Jimmy bought it has been replaced by So-Cal Speed Shop hairpins, since the old system was "always in a bind," Jimmy says. Traction aids? We ask "Slicks," Jimmy answers. The 8-inch Hurst slicks run on '49 Chevy steelies, and the skinny Goodyear Speed Grips up front are mounted on Halibrand spindle-mount wheels.

THE PICKUP

Jeff found his '31 truck—or at least, the bed, body, and frame—in Riverside, California. "After I bought it, it just sat for two months," Jeff tells us. "I was overwhelmed by all the work to be done." But then one day, the bug finally bit him, and he thrashed on the truck non-stop for four months. He did just



about all the work on the car, "except the polishing. And now that I have a wheel, I could do that, too."

Jeff boxed the pickup's original Model A frame, and then assembled the front suspension from a 4-inch dropped axle, '46 Ford spindles, So-Cal Speed Shop batwings and old chrome hairpins. In the rear, a '55 Chevy axle mounts to junkyard coil springs and stock Chevy shocks. Jeff made ladder bars and a Panhard rod to help locate the rear axle. Like Jimmy, he gets grip not from a posi in the pumpkin but from vintage Casler slicks on '55 Chevy wheels. The Firestone front runners are on '46 Ford rims.

When he attacked the body, Jeff chopped the truck's roof 6 inches in front, 5½ inches in back. He shortened the bed 28 inches, and channeled the body 9 inches in front, 7 in back. He made the cab floor, filled the '32 grille shell, and sprayed the body flat black using Pep Boys rattle cans. Anthony Castaneda laid out the flames, Jeff painted them metallic red, then Anthony striped them. Artist Dennis McPhail did a tiki pinstripe on the grille to reflect Jeff's interest in tiki goodies.

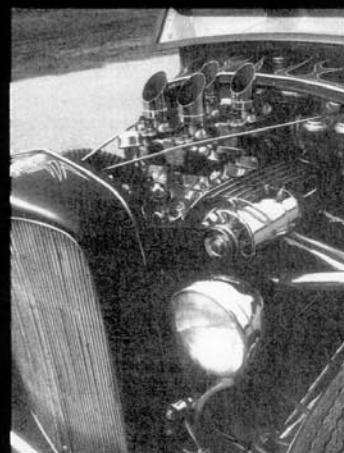
Jimmy and Jeff agree that they've spent most of their hard-earned dough building their engines. The early Chevy small-block in Jeff's truck has TRW 10:1 slugs, 5.7-inch rods, and a polished and balanced crank. The camel-hump cylinder heads were ported, polished,

and fitted with Manley 2.02/1.75 valves by Reath Automotive. The valve dance is controlled by a solid-lifter Comp Cams bumpstick. Four Strombergs on a Man-a-Fre intake feed the engine, and exhaust leaves via headers originally made for a drag-race Anglia. Backing the mighty Mouse is a Muncie four-speed that Jeff rows with a Hurst shifter that's topped by a tiki god.

If you think these cars are cool to look at, try driving them. Jimmy and Jeff were like two kids hopped up on Twinkies and Coke as they made their passes in front of the photographer. They just did not want to stop. We didn't get any wheel time ourselves, but a ride in Jimmy's A-bone on the way back from the photo shoot taught us there are few things as sweet as Hemi power in a car that weighs almost nothing.

When we talk to guys about their cars, we always ask them to mention the people who helped in the process. With these two, the "thank you" list was almost identical: They mentioned each other, Jeff Moon, Rob Markworth, Jimmy's wife Michelle, Jeff's girlfriend Emily Dutton, their respective parents, and the Choppers car club out of Burbank, California. Jeff added friend James White, and Jimmy thanked "all the old front-engine Top Fuel drivers who kicked ass."

"God bless all the old hot rodders and drag racers," Jeff said. "If it weren't for them building cars back then, we surely wouldn't be doing this today." ☿



(Clockwise from top) • Here's how the '31 Model A pickup looks today: chopped, channeled, lowered, in black with red flames. • A local high-school student took this photo of Jeff and his truck early in the buildup process. "Man, look how dirty I was," he pointed out. "I was sleepin' on the garage floor, workin' nonstop." Four nonstop months later, the truck was done. • Cozy in there, huh, Jeff? • The heavily-massaged small-block sports four Strombergs on a Man-a-Fre intake manifold, ported and polished heads, and headers originally made for an Anglia drag racer.

(Clockwise from top) • The Hemi-fied five-window as it sits today. Jimmy fogged on fresh gray primer—thanks to Pep Boys rattle cans—so the car'd look clean for the photos. • When Jimmy bought his five-window in the mid-'90s it was black with red flames. There were whitewalls at each corner, and the Hemi sprouted only two twos. • The 331-inch Hemi was punched out to 354 inches. Inside the massive block is a Top Fuel Sig-Erson cam that Clay Smith reground for a little more civility on the street. • Yes, those are honest-to-God spindle-mount Halibrands on the front runners.