

SECOND TIME AROUND



FEATURE

THIS FULLY REBUILT '40 FORD WAS ONLY SUPPOSED TO BE A PAINTJOB

◆ BY TIM BERNSAU ◆

Ernie Daw has always loved '40 Ford pickups. He was 21 when he owned his first one, for three whole weeks. It was 1964. He bought the truck from his boss. It wasn't a showstopper, just a cool old pickup, and Ernie enjoyed driving it until the boss changed his mind and took it back.

Ernie never lost his interest in classic vehicles, and has owned some nice cars over the years. About five years ago, while recuperating from some life-saving surgery, Ernie had one of those "you only live once" realizations, and decided that he would really like to drive a '40 Ford truck again. He looked all over, without luck, before buying this one from a friend. It wasn't a showstopper either. The candy blue finish had cracked in several spots, but Ernie didn't mind because he intended to have the truck repainted candy apple red.

When stripping the paint revealed large patches of Bondo, it was obvious that the old '40 needed more than some shiny paint to become what Ernie wanted. Lucky for him, Scott's Hot Rods

is located 10 minutes from his house in Oxnard, California. Scott's had built Ernie's '34 coupe, so a good relationship already existed between Ernie and shop owner Justin Padfield.

It took two years to completely rebuild and transform the '40. The bodywork was probably the most challenging part of the whole project, with much of the work performed by Jimmy Hartman. In addition to the sheetmetal repairs, the cab was stretched four inches to improve legroom and the bed was shortened the same amount to keep the overall length unchanged. The hood and cowl were smoothed. Drip rails and door handles were shaved, and hidden door hinges were added to smooth the body lines. The top was rebuilt and new

glass was installed. A repro grille from Alumicraft was added and the front bumper was rechromed and pulled in. Lokar taillights were mounted in the custom roll pan. The ash bed floor was stained to match the interior of the cab.

With the body off the chassis, Scott's Hot Rods created a whole new frame from fully boxed repro rails and tube crossmembers—with Aldan coilover shocks at the corners. Scott's added one of its independent front suspension packages, including a sway bar, dropped spindles, power rack-and-pinion steering, and Wilwood four-piston, 12-inch disc brakes. At the other end, a Jag rearend was installed, featuring 3.73:1 gears and a limited-slip differential with 11-inch inboard disc brakes. The chassis was finished with black powdercoating.

The mid-'60s, the era when Ernie briefly owned his first '40, could have had an influence on the tire and wheel choice. Futura five-spokes from Hot Rods by Boyd add some hot rod flavor to the pickup's personality. The front and rear 17x8s are mounted by 245/40R17 (front) and 255/45R17 (rear) blackwall radials.

Ernie's wish for a candy apple red paintjob (the thing that got this whole project started, remember?) was finally fulfilled when Jimmy Hartman sprayed the House Of Kolor paint.

Some impressive looking custom metalwork lines the engine compartment. In the middle of it all is a Chevy 350 crate engine, crowned with a Magnuson blower and dressed up with Billet Specialties finned valve covers and matching air cleaner. Rewarder ceramic-coated headers

are routed into a custom exhaust. Bolted behind the 350 (which makes an estimated 450 horsepower) is a column-shifted 700-R4 transmission.

The custom interior was designed by illustrator Eric Brockmeyer, and interior builder Ron Mangus replicated Brockmeyer's design. A custom-built bench seat is upholstered in tobacco-toned leather upholstery distinguished with elaborate stitching, decorative grommets, and Ford's V-8 emblem. The custom wood dash from Wabbit's is filled with Auto Meter gauges and an Alpine stereo receiver tied to Kicker speakers. Vents for the Vintage Air A/C system are mounted in a lower panel. The Lecarra steering wheel, on an ididit column, was customized with the same paint and leather as the rest of the truck.



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"It took a while to get back my '40," Erbie says, referring to the truck his boss sold to him, and then took back, 50 years ago. There's no chance of that happening the second time around. Erbie retired earlier this year. Now if he's not at home hanging out in his man cave, he's out driving his recently finished '40. **CCT**

