

When the company you work for is called the National Street Rod Association, you get a lot of people telling you what a street rod is. Of course, opinions vary even around the office, but the definition I go for when it comes to a street rod is a rod modified to be used on the street. A street rod can be a hot rod (which is usually only a barely disguised race car), a restored rod (either a resto-rod or resto-mod), or just about any rod modified to be driven. Bob Kerns of Lakeside, California, grew up loving rods and when he received his own '50 Olds for high school (many years ago) he started making millions of plans of what the perfect Olds would be. The basic ingredients sounded like this: a Hilborn-injected Olds 324, ground scraping bodywork, some massive meats, a manual tranny and he wanted to drive the thing everywhere he could on every SoCal day he could. If he had built this car in the '50s the ride would suck, things would drag on every bump, the motor would have only two speeds (barely idling and full throttle), his left leg would hurt and you'd have to be young to drive the thing across the country without blowing out your back or knee. Let me tell you the story of how Bob made his dream into a reality that we all would kill to have.

The first thing Bob did was build a rotisserie out of scrap metal and blow the car apart. The cool suspension back in the day came out of a Jaguar, so the bare chassis was prepped for a Jaguar IFS and IRS. The front suspension was outfitted with air bags, Bilstein shocks, aftermarket brakes and a fat front anti-roll bar. The rear IRS got the same Bilstein shocks, a 9-inch narrowing, new brakes and adjustable coilovers. The chassis was then fully welded and stiffened for the extra power coming from the 334ci powerplant (a bored '56 Olds 324) that runs 1957 Hilborn injection converted over to EFI with an owner-built Mega Squirt software system that is wideband O2 based. The built powerplant runs the juice through a Tremec five-speed with a hydraulic clutch.

The rotisserie revealed some rust that had to be dealt with and then Bob got to enlarging the rear wheelwells for the 12-inch tubing. The roof was then chopped 2 inches (easier said than done) and the rear roof vent from a '58 Impala turned into

Bob wanted old Oldsmobile power with an old Hilborn injection system. After looking at the standard solutions, Bob went all in and refurbished a Hilborn injection system and then modified it for modern EFI fuel management. Works and looks bitchin'!



**MODERN TECHNOLOGY GIVES US
THE ROD WITHOUT THE PAIN**

**REAL
ROD!**

by Louie Mayall



The goal of any street rod is to be driven and a '50s Oldsmobile is the perfect place to spend a day. We love how well Bob integrated A/C, modern tunes and power everything into the vintage-styled interior.

We hope to be seeing more chopped Oldsmobiles. Bob Kerns out of Lakeside, CA, is the smart fellow who put together this '50 Oldsmobile 88 with a 2-inch chop.

a third brake light was slipped in. The door handles were shaved, electric poppers installed, the rear pan was removed, the bumper was cut down and the hood emblem was removed. Bob then straightened everything out before laying down the PPG Vibrance O So Orange paint. The trim was then chromed and reinstalled. The last step was to hang the Center Line wheels after they were wrapped in massive Mickey Thompson meats.

Bob may have toughened up the exterior looks of the rather luxu exterior, but he obviously had a lot of good times in the interior and thought the basic stock layout was perfect for all day cruising. He may have liked the stock look, but we bet Oldsmobile never offered that much orange. Friendly Auto Upholstery stitched the stock seats in Naugahyde and did the rest of the interior. The interior was updated with a complete Vintage Air

AC/heat/defrost system, a Muncie shifter and the AirRide air pressure gauges went in the old clock pod. After having built the CPU for the engine management system, Bob felt confident in building his own wiring system.

What does all this add up to? Let's see, the RideTech stance sits slammed for the slow and then with a simple adjustment the '50 rides great for the go. The hydraulic clutch reins in the power-plant, but doesn't beat up your left leg. The injected motor looks straight out of any vintage racer, but runs EFI efficient and friendly. The Jaguar fully independent suspension rides smooth and handles great. In other words, Bob put together the rod he's always dreamed of and put it in a package perfect for hitting the road or simply looking good. That sounds like the perfect rod to us. We can't wait to see what's next!