

PRACTICAL PERFORMANCE

CAR

GT CUP FINAL ROUND
MCLAREN WIN AT DONINGTON



SUPERCHARGED FIAT
850 BOUGHT AS NEW CAR NOW SPRINTS

THIS MONTH'S
TOP 10
BEST THINGS
ABOUT OLD CARS

PERFORMANCE TUNING FOR GROWN-UPS

BACK TO THE FUTURE

SUPERCHARGED
MGB FINALE

A BRIEF HISTORY
OF SALOON CAR
RACING



SUPER COOL PONTIAC
POWERED HOT ROD

WORKSHOP

Walker's 2021
Cars of The Year
Staff Cars: Kev
Finishes Mini Shell

BMW Z3 EV
HOME BUILT
ROADSTER
SPARKS DEBATE



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David Archer fell in love with this Model T rod the minute he saw it. Turns out it makes great company for his pickup truck too

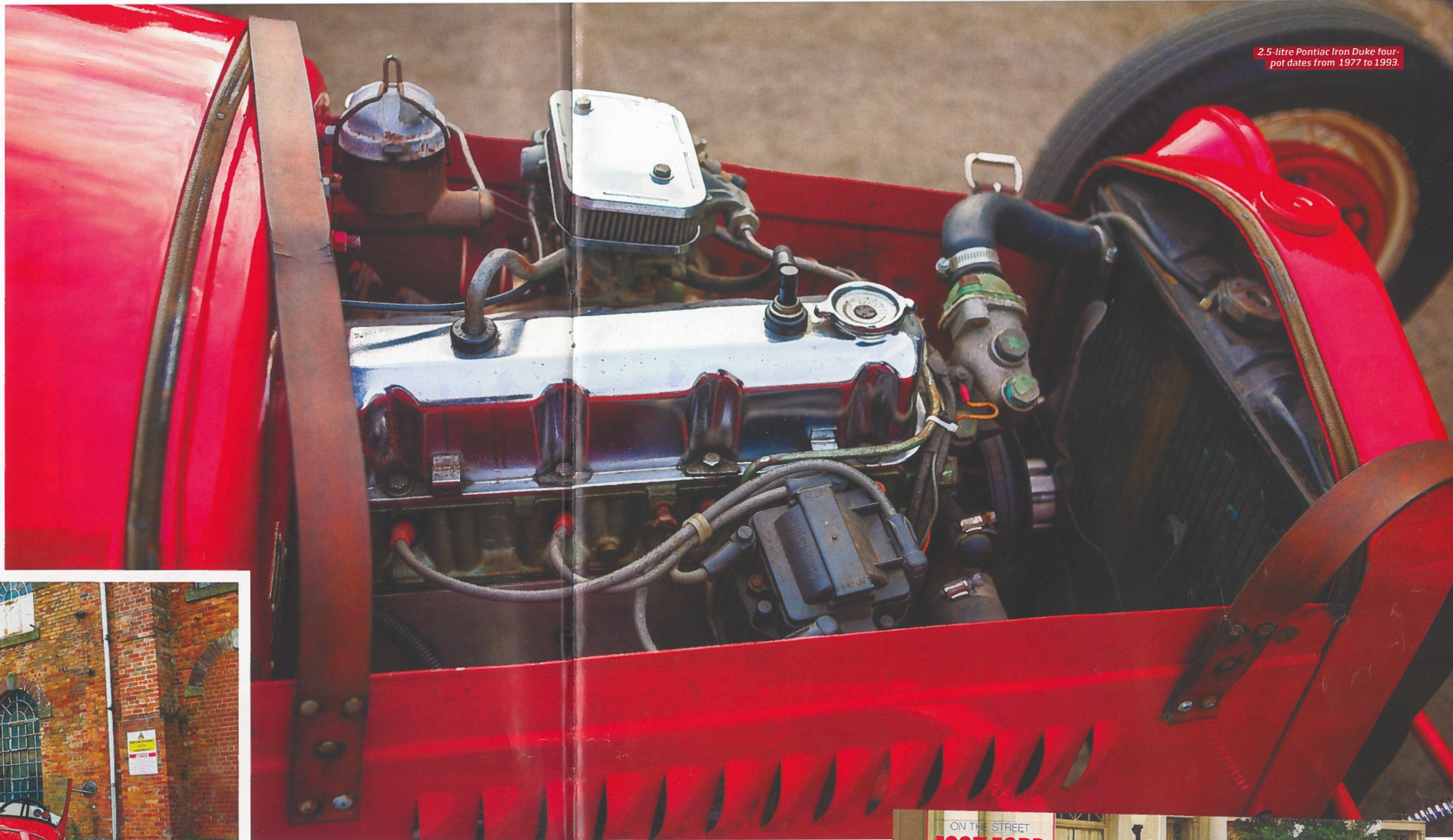
HOT ROD

'D LOVE TO say this hot rod was all my own work but I must admit to buying this red T as is. Sorry, but I just fell in love with it, it appeared for sale last year on a well known social media selling page, then promptly disappeared. Snooze you lose and I forgot about it. But fast forward to this year, and it re-appeared, and I was hooked.

It turns out due to Covid the seller took it off the page, as nothing was selling. I messaged him, spoke to him, went to Grimsby to look at it, and kept talking myself in and out of buying it. It's small, impractical, dangerous and totally unsuitable for anything other than fun. . . . simples then - BUY IT!

So I bit the bullet, clicked the agreement box for the loan and that was that - all mine. The seller Carl, even met me half way with the car on a trailer to lessen the blow of the first drive.

I've always had something interesting in the way of cars, a few Mazda MX-5s, cheapish reliable fun, Porsche 944, expensive fun, 1972 Land Rover with a 200 TDi engine that we dropped in one weekend. This gets bashed and clattered about on any green lane we can find when the mood takes us. And also a 1951 Ford F1 pick up that we shall speak about in a bit.



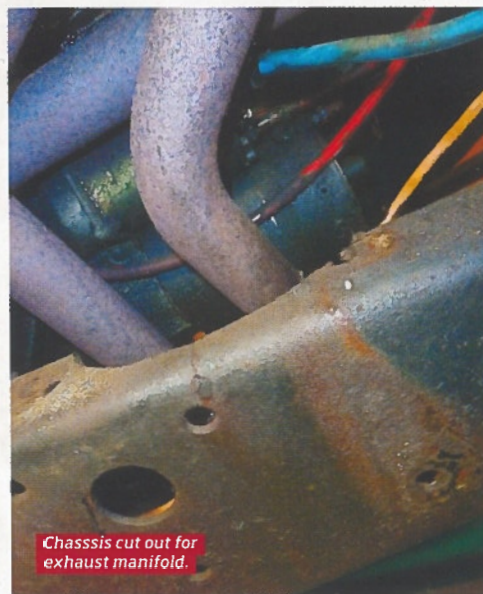
2.5-litre Pontiac Iron Duke four-pot dates from 1977 to 1993.



Cleverly hidden front disc brakes.



Suspension doesn't get any simpler.



Chassis cut out for exhaust manifold.



FORD F1 PICKUP

This is a 1951 Ford F1 pickup that I'm kind of fixing as I'm driving. It was built in the States (very badly) and brought over here about 22 years ago, looked lovely – a bit too custom for me, but still smart. Fast forward four years ago and I found it looking sorry for itself, and had to buy it. I probably paid too much for it, but it came with basically a whole new front end, steering box, disc conversion and lowered leaf springs.

In hindsight, I probably should have sold all the bits and put it towards a Mustang front suspension set up, but it's too late now. Me and a mate hurriedly got it on the road, and I used it for about three weeks, then a greasy roundabout and 12 year old tyres (that looked brand new) took their toll.

So a rebuilt radiator and trans cooler, second hand front sheet metal and I was ready to bung it back together, or so I thought. On closer inspection it was a bloody mechanical mess, knackered front shocks with loose mounts that had cracked the chassis, oval brake drums, front axle with a caster wedge on one side but not the other, the steering box was a pig, but hey ho.

So we cleared a space in my mate's workshop and we started. Welded up the holes welded up, new shocker mounting holes welded and re-drilled, it needed a new exhaust but I was skint, so we used a couple of Land Rover Disco front pipes and rear boxes, and spent a few hours with the welder (thanks Geoff) and we had a cracking exhaust that sounds amazing.

The front axle went off to a local old car-friendly machine shop to be straightened and new king pins fitted, and they also made me all new shackles for the springs. I then thought about the body work, so I started with the pickup bed. It was like the rest of the truck, rust covered in filler, the more I attacked it, the worse it got. So we got a mate to bend up some 2mm steel and we made a new one, some old scaffolding planks for a bed floor and it was good to go. I then picked up a paint gun for the first time and shot some satin blue all over the new sheet metal. Like I said, it's an on-going project – as and when will do. It gets used for transporting logs and general shite when I need it and making lots of tyre smoke. I also have a 1973 Viva 2300 SL that Dad bought new – that's in the garage waiting for me to retire.

I'm now thinking... I have a 530d E61 BMW as a daily (like PPC editor Will's). So BMW diesel lump in the truck with a sexy trailer to tow the T, 350 Chevy in the Viva to make it sing...



Any colour you like as long as it's not the same as the panel next to it.



Repairing the chassis.



Before the new front end went on.

1951 Ford F1 pickup. Brutalism on wheels.



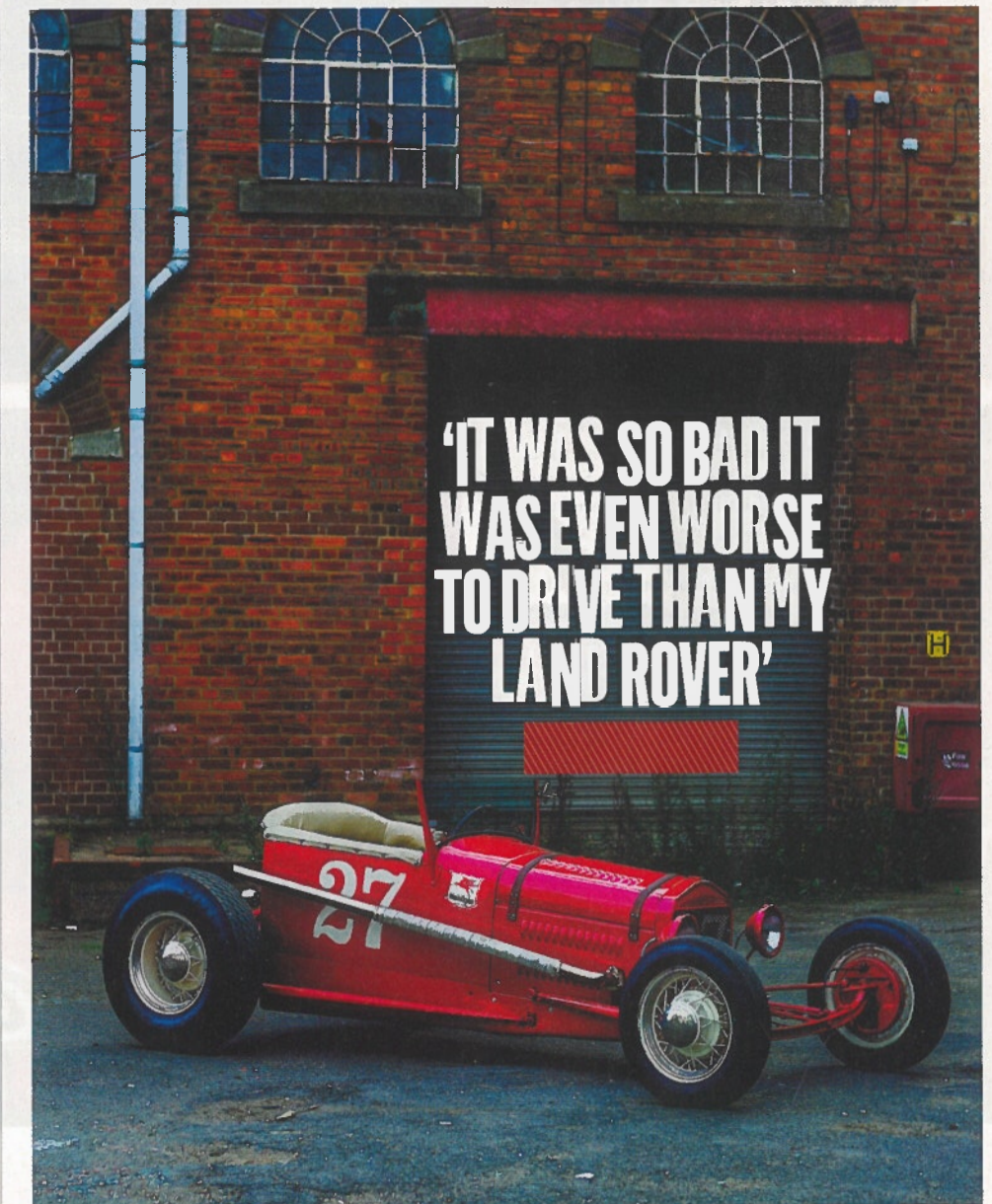
Back to that drive home in the Model T.

Let's just say the first 10 mins frightened the shit out of me. Carl recommended cruising at about 55mph, but as it has no speedo I just give it a boot full and hung on. The front wheels started to shimmy and shake and the front axle leapt about like it wasn't attached, as it tried in vain to handle the bumps and tram lines on the M1 left by all the HGVs and such. It had me hanging on for dear life.

I was really disheartened and regretted spending a small fortune on an undrivable car. It was even worse to drive than my Land Rover. Then I calmed down a bit and realised the best way was to let it get on with it, while I just kind of guided it along, gently nudging it where it needed to be – and it all came together. When I got home, my mate following me said I was doing about 80. No bloody wonder!

A brief history of the car; it's a 1927 Ford Model T, built in the States as a dirt track racer. It has a narrowed body (by 7 inches), a box section chassis and 1940s Ford axles with no front brakes. There are quarter elliptic springs on the front with a Model A rear spring stopping the sparks at the back, and 16 inch Kelsey Hayes wire wheels (widened at the rear). I'm not sure what engine or box it had fitted, or much else about its original spec.

In fact I don't know much about it until the late 1980s, when it was seen and bought at a



Eventually, Howard traded his roller wheels for radials and began racing drag boats. Two national records later he took to the skies, becoming a serious airplane hobbyist (the still is today, and on a fully restored 1934 Piper J2 Cub Coupe). But his is the Brenda, prefer to keep both feet on the ground – or at least at ground level. If they were going to spend their leisure time together, she told him, it would have to be on some farm.

Enter this 1927 Model T. On a last, they attended the L.A. Roadsters swap



Meet at Pomona Ian Fisher's Day, and swapped the roadster for sale. The car had been in Arizona, and was in Howard's words, "still in pretty rough condition." Even so, Brenda was in favor of taking it home. Initial cost was \$5,000, which was followed by a summer full of evenings in the garage. Howard, however, didn't mind the work. "I hate television," he says, "and I'd rather spend the time doing something constructive."

His energy paid off and before Labor Day he had the truck T roadster on the road. He figures the rebuild cost another grand or so to complete.

As near as Howard can tell, the frame – hand built from rectangular steel tubing – was crafted sometime around 1925. "That's the earliest registration slip for the car." The frame was originally built for a '24, he notes, as evidenced by its mounting holes.

BY AMERICAN RODDER

It all went wrong when cars started getting more complicated than this.



'THE FIRST DRIVE SCARED THE SHIT OUT OF ME'

swap meet by Howard Holman, and hurriedly put together and enjoyed. The engine fitted then was, and still is, a 2.5-litre Pontiac Iron Duke lump with a Holley Carb, backed with a GM TH350 autobox. It was even featured in American Rodder in 1991.

It changed hands a few times, then ended up being bought by Carl in 2017, who restored it its original(ish) state. He sensibly fitted front brakes, removed a hideous spun alloy fuel tank with a neat underfloor item, and replaced the drainpipe exhaust with a nice lump of stainless, er, drainpipe. So now it sounds lovely, burbles around very well, and kinda just buggers off when I hit the loud pedal. Like I mentioned before, it's got a mind of its own, but it's built using ancient technology, so that's to be expected.

My plans for it include replacing the wooden floor with some aluminium, and I have to sort out some decidedly dodgy wiring and get the alternator fixed as it's causing a drain. There is a bit of play in one of the rear wheels, so that will need looking at, and then some usual stuff, adjust the brakes, and I'm looking into a twin feed master cylinder, as the one fitted at present only has one line out and that's feeding all four wheels. It also needs a speedo cable as the original T speedo is fitted in the dash but doesn't work.

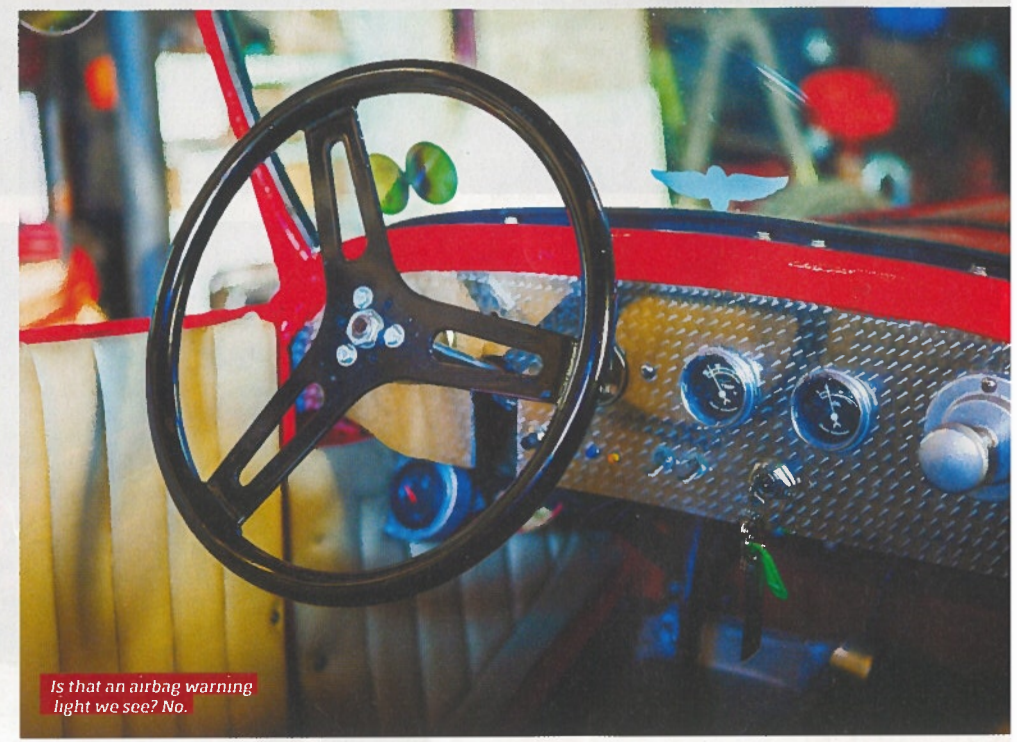
I don't really want to change much if I'm honest. Carl made some rather nice friction dampers for the front, but I'm not sure they're actually doing much damping, so I'm looking



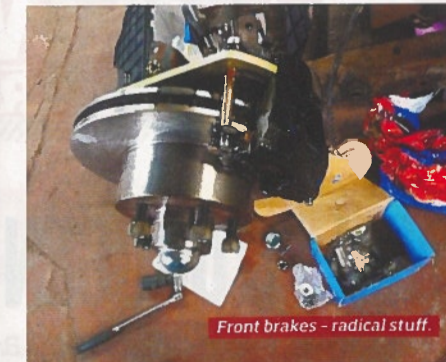
Got anymore of that red paint?



Sophisticated exhaust isolation system



Is that an airbag warning light we see? No.



Front brakes - radical stuff.



Exhaust system isn't very involved.

'IT'S DANGEROUS AND COMPLETELY IMPRACTICAL. I ABSOLUTELY LOVE IT TO BITS'

into a redesign. The engine is a big old heavy lump. I have a spare cylinder head and it weighs a bloody ton, so a lighter power unit is possibly on the cards. I reckon it would originally have been fitted with a four cylinder model A or B lump, but with it being an auto (there's no room for a clutch pedal) a screaming four pot won't work. And there just isn't room for a V8, a shame I know, so I'm on the lookout for a decent four pot of reasonable capacity that will bolt up to the TH350.

I'm also looking into getting a new cover made for the cockpit, and if I can talk the same mate into re-doing the interior as well, that will tidy things up under my bum. The car is a magnet for people staring, pointing, and there is always a bit of a crowd around when we stop and park up. It's enjoyed by most folks, especially the bike lads 'n' lasses, who seem to love it.

Thanks to: Geoff the welder for, er, welding and the room in his busy Land Rover workshop, Colin for tinkering and telling me to buy it, Big G for telling me not to, Big Dawg, Ron and Allen and not forgetting my other Half Lynne, who just fits into the T next to me and even likes it! Unlike, as she so nicely puts it, 'my other old shite.'



No room for a clutch pedal! He's not wrong.

