



## SOUPER

... a 1931 Ford “nostalgia” hot rod  
by *Grant MacLaren*

“Souper” is the car I would have built in 1949 in my Arcadia, California driveway—if I could have pulled it off at age 14.

Many ask “How are you going to finish it?” I answer “It’s finished!” Then they ask “How fast will it go?” I don’t know and am afraid to find out. At 60 it’s scary and has plenty of “pedal” left.

In the late forties, when our family moved from Philadelphia to California, the first issue of *Hot Rod* magazine had just been published. Before then modified cars were known as *Soup Jobs*; hence “Souper.”

Soup jobs and hot rods started out as a simple idea; take a vehicle that’s cheap and readily available, cut it up to remove some weight, lower it, fit some fat tires and soup up the engine. Open up the exhaust; maybe customize it and paint it a wild color. Using some ingenuity, you were able to modify an inexpensive vehicle into one that performed better and looked “cool.” (The word “cool” was not yet in use.)

There wasn’t a prescribed set of rules. In fact, rules were meant to be broken. How come that simple formula has become so rigid and difficult today ... not to mention expensive? Hot rodding started out as kinda fun and easy going. Why can’t it still be? Well, it can ...

Here’s a brief history and description of how Souper came to be. I bought the car—a 1931 “slant window” Model “A” Deluxe Fordor—in the Spring of 2000. It was used as the subject of our Model “A” club’s annual “Start-up” party that year. (For more about our club and the parties, see [www.modelaclub.org](http://www.modelaclub.org).)

After starting it and driving it around the neighborhood, we removed, and I sold, the body. I also sold the engine, radiator, wheels and shock absorbers. I took the rest of the stuff home and started two years of cleaning sandblasting, dreaming, sketching, etc.

Many of the unused holes in the frame rails were filled and a

tube of 4130 steel was welded between the front horns. The steel roadster body, by Brookville, is a 1931 Roadster Pickup cab with six additional inches behind the doors. The gas tank is from the original Fordor.

New front and rear springs by Posie have reversed eyes. The brakes are mechanical with cast iron drums. The parking brake system has been removed. Its lever will operate the service brakes.

The original transmission and differential have been rebuilt. The rear end ratio is now 3.54 to 1. The wire spoke wheels are 16 inch 1935 Ford. Tires are Firestone; fronts are 5.00/5.25 x 16, rears are 7.50 x 16.

The electrical system is the original 6 volt with a voltage regulator replacing the “cut-out.” All new wiring is pretty much per original.

Headlights are original with silver plated reflectors mounted on a modified “28-29” bar. Taillights are original ’31 on modified original Ford “A” brackets.

The radiator is a new Walker with an “original” ’31 shell. The 1929 Model “A” engine was built by Kyle Holeman for use in a Pietenpol airplane. When its owner died, I bought the short block and added some interesting old “hop-up” equipment. Here’s a run-down on the engine:

- a stock head (to be a “Lion Speed” head)
- “3/4” cam
- drilled crank with full pressure lubrication
- oil pressure to cam bearings
- tube type exhaust header by Dan Price
- a circa 1945 Zepher “dual” intake manifold
- two Holley 94 carburetors (to be 81’s)
- Model “B” Ford (mechanical advance) distributor
- a Crager valve cover
- balanced and “chopped” flywheel, 26 pounds removed

The exhaust system features a “cut-out” from a WW II U.S. Army stationary engine. For quiet running the system employs a “Turbo” muffler. For more information visit:

[www.oldfordstuff.com](http://www.oldfordstuff.com)

