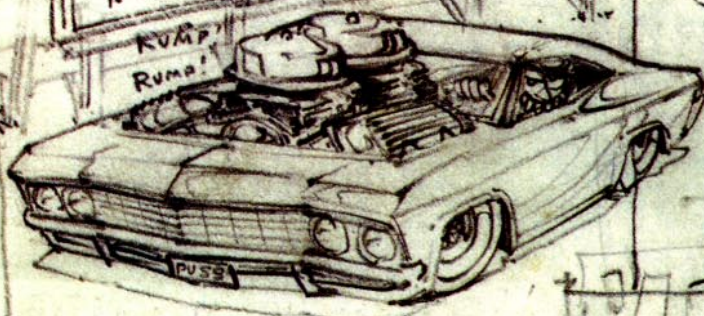


GIRLS  
WANTED!  
NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY

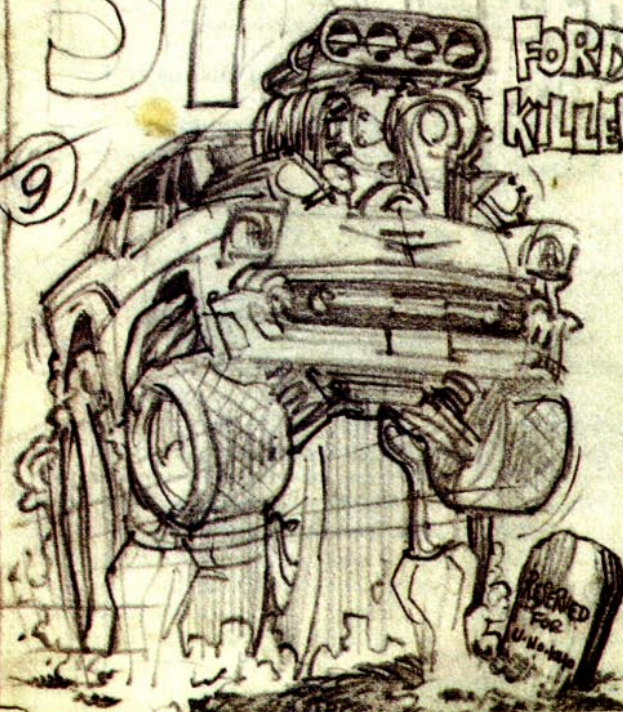
KUMP  
RUMPA



PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ . ASK FOR \_\_\_\_\_

'57 CHEVY

FORD  
KILLER



OLD CHEVYS NEVER DIE... THEY JUST GO FASTER!

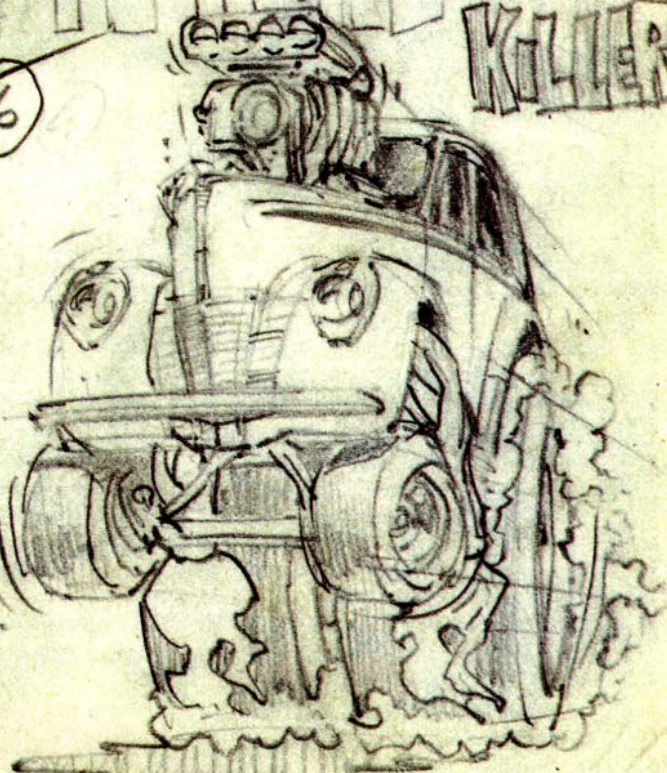
19 11 10



CAUTION: VOLKSWAGENS ARE HABIT FORMING

ONLY FOR EYE OWNERS WITH  
FOR SURE

'40 FORD CHEVY  
KILLER



I HATE EVERY CHEVY IN THIS TOWN



# WHEN LAST WE VISITED ED NEWTON, HE WAS JUST STARTING OFF AT ROTH STUDIOS, WHICH LET HIM DO WHAT HE ALWAYS WANTED TO DO—DESIGN WILD CARS THAT WOULD ACTUALLY GET BUILT. THEN REALITY SET IN ... BY JEFF KOCH

It wasn't perfected, but the concept for the wishbone was there, to have the steering mechanisms parallel to the suspension struts so that it could have been steered without having a tie rod between the front wheels.

"When the Revell folks saw the design, they rejected it. They believed that the wedgy body shape was too reminiscent of the successful Road Agent—even though the Road Agent had a bubbletop and Wishbone had a swept-back roadster windshield, and the Road Agent had a conventional front end. It was the general overall wedge shape that bothered Revell. They told us we had to change it significantly. It was frustrating. The idea of having to change because of an arbitrary thought process seemed unfair, and it was disappointing from a creative standpoint. They didn't tell Roth what they wanted, they simply said they didn't want that particular design.

"There had already been some publicity out there with the Wishbone name, so the concept had to be redone to conform to the name. That was frustrating, too. I didn't mind that they rejected the design, but I did mind being trapped into changing an existing concept because the name was out there.... I would rather we would have done a whole different vehicle—name, style,

vide an artist (me) for his friend who wanted a design job done, they'd owe him for introducing them to me, and I'd get paid to do what was considered a top-notch job. Everyone was happy. Plus, I wouldn't be asking for raises all the time if I was doing all this extra work."

Shirt design, a Roth staple, was not a part of the original equation, but when Newt saw that quality was an issue, he

percent line pattern or a 10 percent pattern. Roth loved it so much that he counted on me to do all of the shirt art after that."

Newt worked at Roth Studios from '63 through early '66. "It was the perfect job for me, since I was able to use my imagination to the utmost and work in a creative atmosphere. It's tremendously uplifting to be in an environment where

wrenches, and Astro Wheels, but freelance car design gigs had increased steadily through the years. "Lou Schorsch, who invented the floor-shift conversion for side-shift trannies, built a car for the Oakland Roadster Show in '64, but it wasn't well accepted—it was kind of 'backyard.' He hired me to design his next car, and I came up with the Vigilante. It was in the Tournament of Fame in '66—a pro class for guys like Barris, Roth, and Jeffries. He was competing against the Manta Ray, one of the finest customs ever, which Jeffries debuted that year. Naturally, Manta Ray won, and Lou got so upset he cut the car into pieces with a chainsaw and put it in a dumpster." Later in the '60s, Newt did a series of vehicles for Bob Reisner and Jay Ohrburg of California Show Cars. The Adam & Eve Bath-

tub Car, the Pink Panther limo, Sand Draggin', and Turnpike Hauler (which became the Redd Foxx Wrecker) were among them; some of these were even made into model kits by Eldon. The Ice Truck, which appeared on the Aug.

'70 cover of *Rod & Custom*, was another Newton design adapted from the Mail Box trike originally developed for Roth.

Roth liquidated his studios in 1970, shortly after his divorce from his first wife, Sally. Newt, meanwhile, was on a roll, designing Tom McMullen's Big Twin ("the three-wheeler that was really a five-wheeler," recalls Newt), the StratoTaxi three-wheeler, and StageFright (built by Jack Keef and Danny Eighstedt, later made into a Hot Wheels car). There was also the Magic Carpet car that Newt recalls later becoming the Pool Table car. "Stan Nystrom and Gary Hatfield had me do that one in trade for some custom bodywork they did on my '67 Riviera. Everyone was into the theme cars then. It lasted

# NEWT!

personality, everything. Changing horses mid-stream was very stressful. Eventually, instead of a wedge shape, we created a high waist going down the car, ending in pickle-fork pontoons to support the Wishbone name. And after all that grief, Revell never made it into a kit. I think the Surfite was the last Roth show car kit that Revell tooled until the Beatnik Bandit II in 1997.

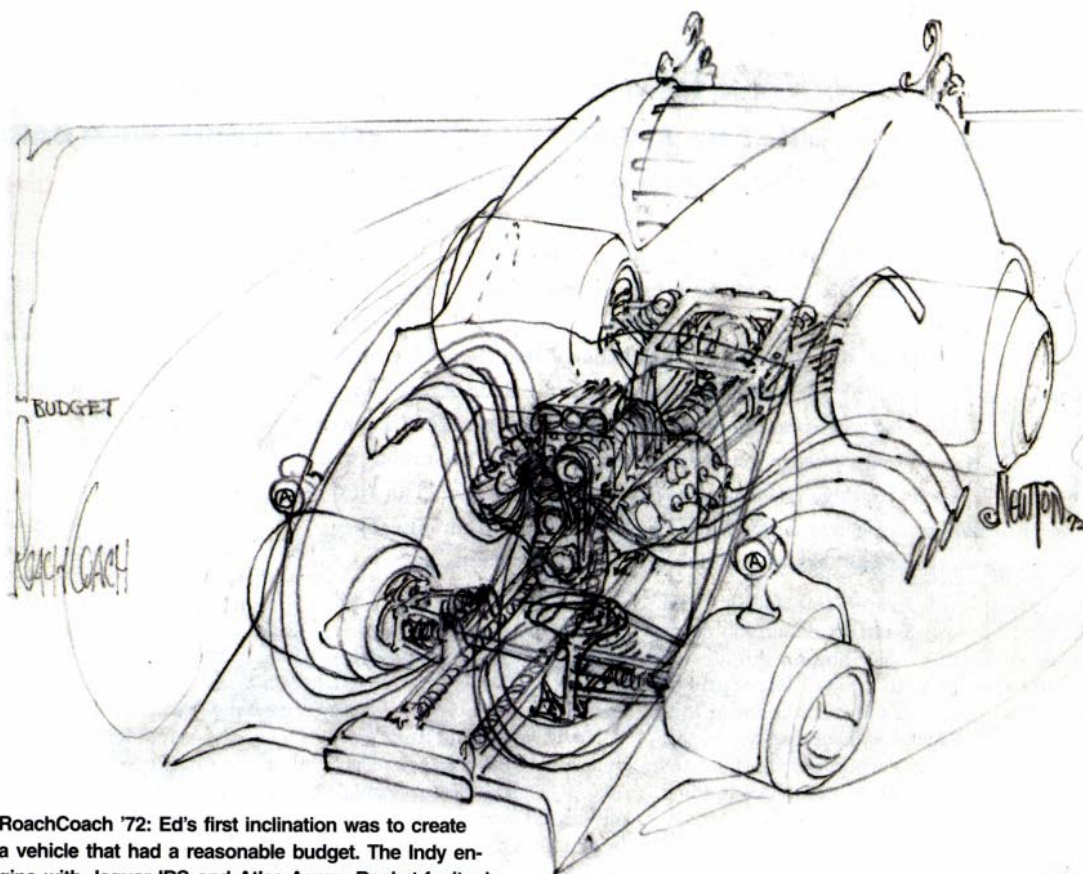
"So my first Roth design concept had been done before I got there, and the Wishbone was sketched up on the premises during the first week I was there. At the rate I was going, it looked like I'd design him into the 21st century within months." So freelance work became a large part of what Newt was doing—much of it passed along by Roth. "He would pro-

asked to give it a go. "The illustrations at the time were done by Wes Bennett, an ex-Disney artist. He used a crosshatch pattern in his shading, but when the plastisol was mixed too thin, the ink would close in and the print would come out a black blob. The guy who screened the shirts would often come in with a hangover and run the plastisol too thick or too runny. I saw the problem and told Roth, 'I'll do a design for you, and if you don't like it, I'll eat it. Won't charge you a cent, and I won't bug you again.' I did 'Killer Plymouth.' The style was with [Newt's trademark] 'thick-to-thin' organic line, so however the plastisol was mixed, it wouldn't matter: You could always see all of the lines in the design, whether it was a 90

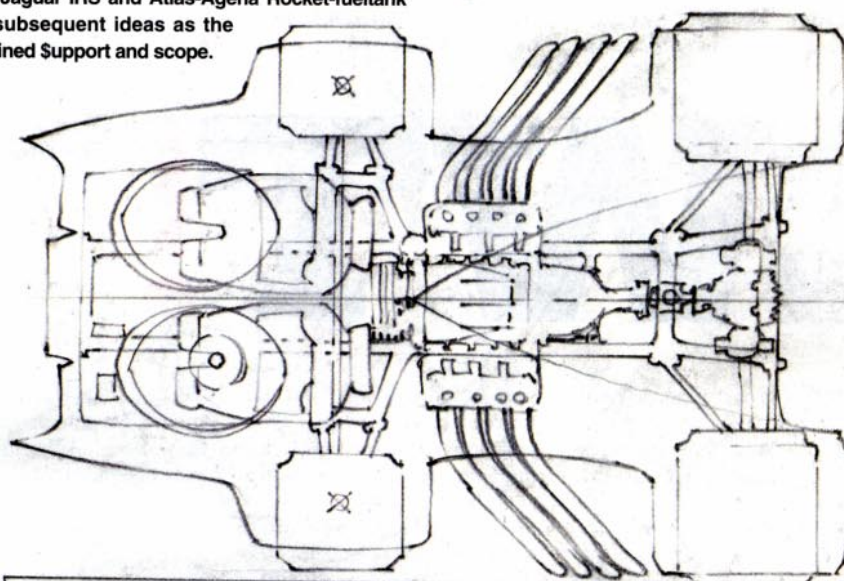
you can do things that are frowned upon elsewhere. Roth and I shared a workspace for more than 2½ years, however, and I found that the pressures of working in the same office would sometimes backfire, and things could get... strange. We got into a heated argument at one point [Newt refused to elaborate on the record], and I actually quit. I felt it was counterproductive to work in such a volatile atmosphere. From early '66 on, everything I did was on a freelance basis. I still did shirt and vehicle designs, but not the ads. Instantly things became more amicable between Roth and me, without the pressures of being in the same room all week long."

Newt kept on doing shirt designs for clients like Mickey Thompson, Sturtevant torque



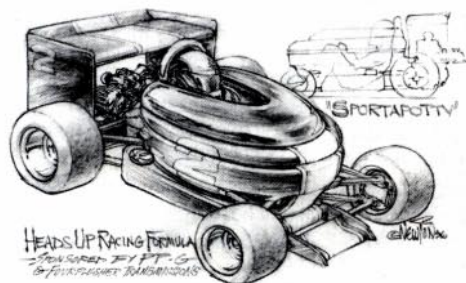


RoachCoach '72: Ed's first inclination was to create a vehicle that had a reasonable budget. The Indy engine with Jaguar IRS and Atlas-Agena Rocket-fuel tank were all subsequent ideas as the project gained support and scope.

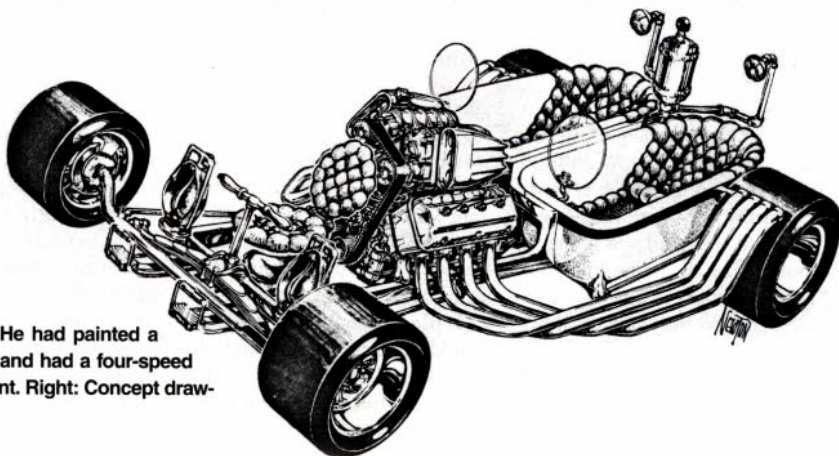


FIBERGLAS BODY,  
BLOWN 426" HEMI  
W/ TORQUEFLITE  
DRIVING DIRECTLY  
INTO JAG. REAR END.  
ALL INDEPENDENT  
(WOODS-TYPE) SUSP.  
SQUARE-TUBE FRAME  
(CHROMED) BOLTS TOGETHER.  
RACK & PINION STEERING.  
BABBS-BUILT LIGHTS,  
RADIATOR (WORKING),  
AND BODY TRIMMINGS.  
BUBBLE-ADORNED FLAT  
SECTION IS TILT DOOR.  
LAMPS @ HOLD LEGAL  
SEALBEAMS IN FRONT  
AND R.V. MIRRORS ON  
BACK SIDE. TAILLIGHTS  
HAVE ONE LEGAL LENS.

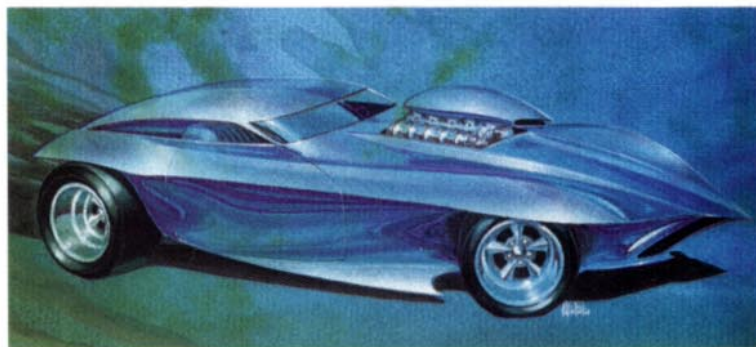
WINDSHIELD BUBBLES ARE ONLY STREET-LEGAL DIFFICULTY LEFT TO BE IRONED OUT.



Sportapotty was inspired by a car nut's bathroom. He had painted a black racing stripe through his toilet bowl and tank, and had a four-speed floor-shift bolted in the appropriate position out in front. Right: Concept drawings for the Adam & Eve Bathtub Car done in 1966.







Vigilante:  
From concept to the  
'66 Oakland Roadster Show.

almost a decade before people got sick of the idea altogether. And it hasn't come back. I wonder why." Newt laughs. He knows why.

Despite his ubiquitousness, credit for his designs often, frustratingly, eluded Newt. "When I worked for Roth, I signed the ads, and my illustrations for the Surfite, Orbitron, and the others. Roth gave me a hard time about signing the shirt art, though. All the shirt designs said 'copyright Roth' and the date. He said that if I signed the piece, he wouldn't be able to sell the shirts legally. There was never any

worry about me signing the ads or vehicle renderings, but he was fearful of copyright conflict—he told me that he didn't want anyone else sneaking in and stealing a design from either of us if there was any question as to ownership. I was young and dumb and I thought that's how things were done, so I bought that story and we proceeded from there. Later, when I was making decent dough doing the freelance car designs, getting credit still wasn't really an issue. Even then, though, it was a little irritating when I put a lot of work in and was aced out of

credit." And Newt can't even reclaim his original Roth-era drawings for his own files: They were sold during the liquidation and ended up in the hands of a collector, nearly intact.

T-shirts, however, continued to play a big part in Newt's career path. In '71, he hooked up with Roach Incorporated in Columbus, Ohio. "At first they hired me to freelance their shirt design work. I did 30 or 40 designs for them before they

portunity to do the ultimate theme car."

Sure enough, the RoachCoach reared its buggy head. It cost an astronomical \$100,000 in '70s money—a lot of T-shirts. "I called it a 'kinetic sculpture.' It was designed to emulate the company name—Roach. There were only two meanings for the term 'roach' at that time—a burnt-out marijuana cigarette, and a cockroach—so we went for the latter." In fact it may have been the ultimate "theme" car—and one of the last. Newt was actually half-owner of the beast, taking off-hours and vacation

engineering yen. "I sculpted the body using a cheese grater on a giant block of Styrofoam. That was the first time a feature showcar body mockup had been done in Styrofoam. Somewhere in my attic, I have a time-lapse 10-minute film of the process."

The RoachCoach was actually a serious engineering piece—beyond the fuel-injected Ford quad-overhead-cam Indy car engine and Hewland transaxle, a combo which had run 186 mph in the STP Special at Indianapolis. "It was a sculptural tribute to speed. The entire car was designed as an inverted airfoil; the faster it would go, the

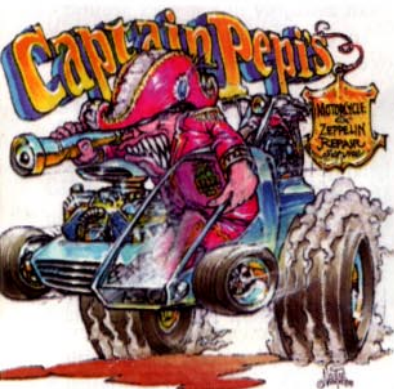
# NEWT!

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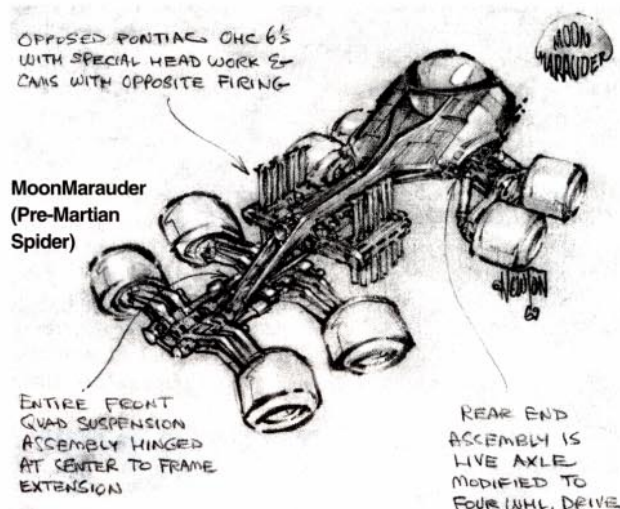
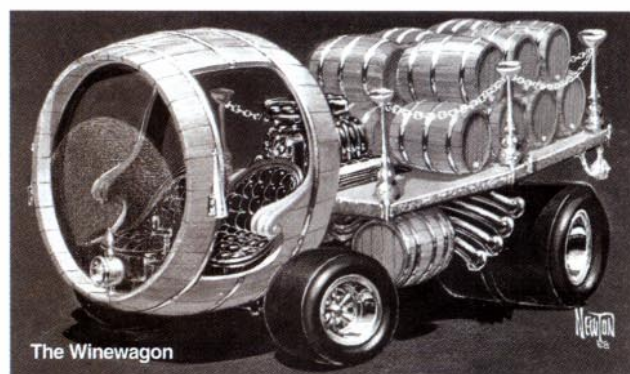
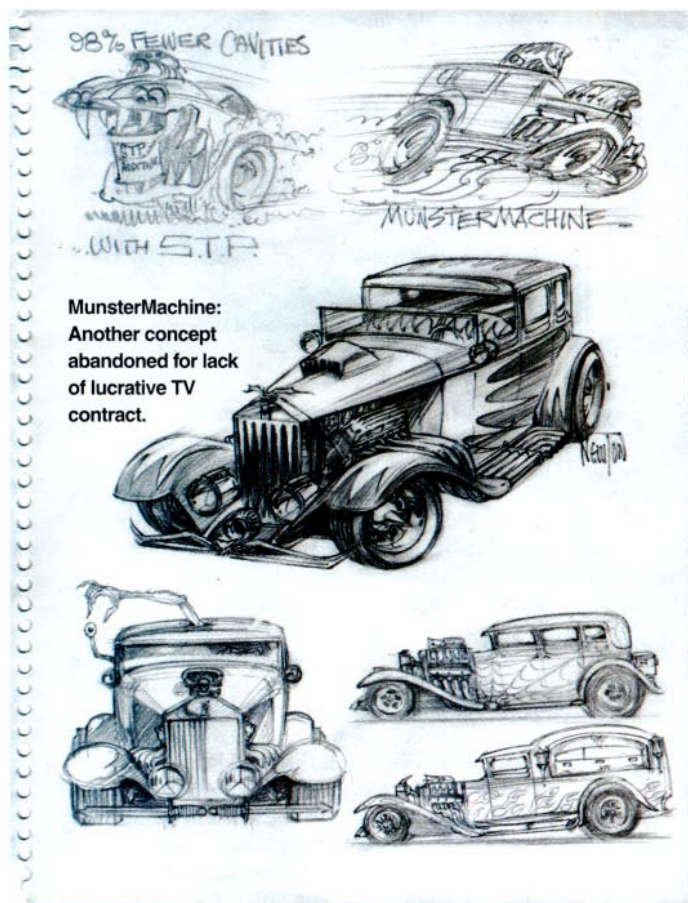
talked me into being Creative Director for the operation. At one time, Roach was the largest iron-on transfer manufacturer in the world. They developed the transfer technology and did lots of R&D, and in the late '70s and early '80s they were on top. Still, I didn't like the idea of moving to Ohio, but I was told there would be an op-

portunity to illustrate and work on it. "A surrealistic cockroach on wheels" is how Newt describes it. Twin cockpit windshield bubbles doubled as eyes, and the headlights were inside the bubbles so that the "eyes" would glow at night. The side sections were formed into legs which capped the rear tires. Still, Newt could not deny his

more downforce it would generate. People never saw the aerodynamic principles involved in that because of its outrageous theme. I see there are concept cars in Europe now that are taking this same idea—sucking the air from under or around the body and blowing it out the rear in an elevated section." RoachCoach ended up on the







show-car circuit for 5 years and even toured Europe. Newt appeared on the cover of the Roach catalog in '79, dressed in full wizard's regalia, lightning bolts bursting from his fingertips, giving life to the now-completed Coach.

In 1975, Newt took a two-year hiatus from Roach and opened up a gallery on 55th Street called the Manhattan Art and Antique Center. The California boy did not cotton to New York, however, so in '77 he closed up shop, went back to Ohio, and kept going with Roach until the proverbial bitter end. Once again, ownership of many of the images eluded Newt. Sadly, some of it just flat got lost. "Roach kept growing, and we moved from building to building. I remember seeing a couple of huge packets of artwork moving from High Street to Alum Creek when things were less organized, and the movers lost both of those bundles. Who knows what was in there? It probably ended up in a dumpster."

You might think that Newt would have hightailed it back

to California after Roach was exterminated, but he's still in Ohio. He met his current wife, Pat, when they worked at Roach together; she is now Personnel Director at Stanley Steemer Inc. in Dublin, Ohio, where they remain due to her close family ties. "When I work freelance, I can work from anywhere," he says, and to that end, what would ordinarily be a living and dining room, have become his studio.

## NEWT!

Still, the lure of the sun, sand, and sea still weigh heavily on Newt's mind. "When you grow up as a California boy, you never get it out of your system. There are plenty of perks here, but every time I shovel a load of snow, I think about the California weather. For folks who grew up out here, snow is a way of life. I just can't help but remember the nature of what I grew up with."

Newt has been freelance since Roach closed its doors, which has given him plenty of time to

pursue artistic endeavors. "Corporate work seems to be the most lucrative thing I do, but I still do lots of automotive art—ranging from sketches and illustrations to designs to concepts that are developed into models and toys. It's the automotive designs that remain the most gratifying to me."

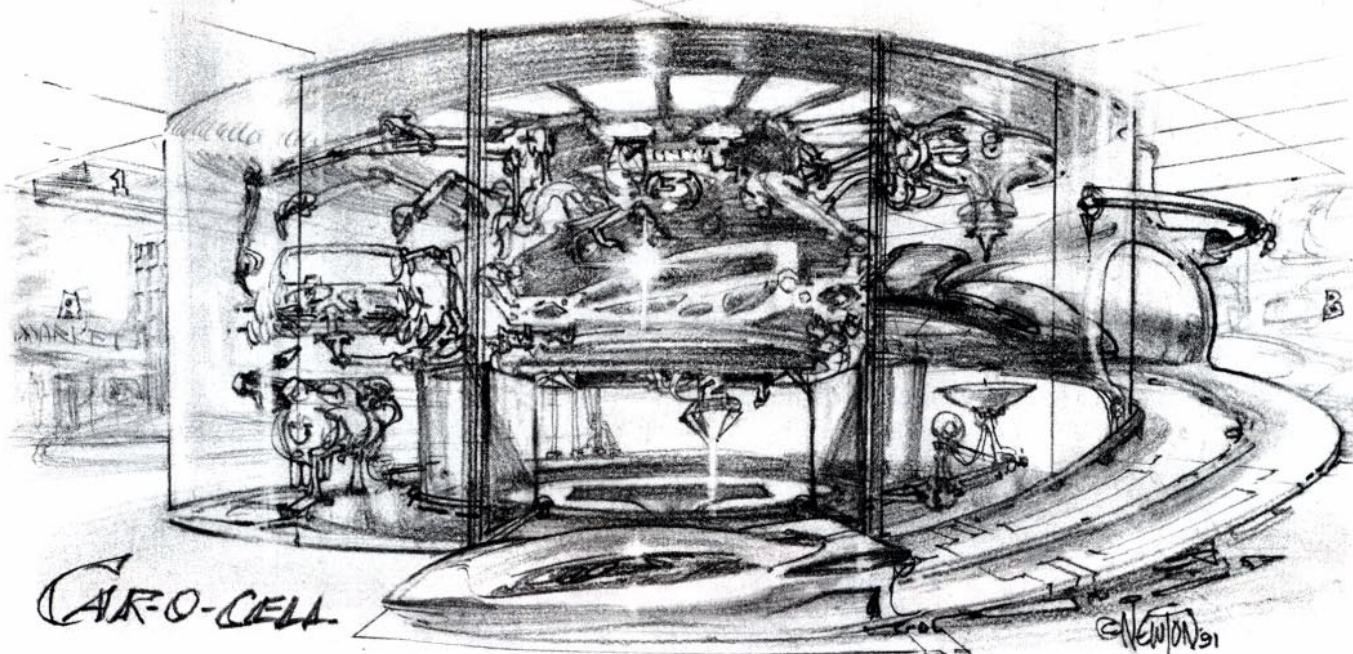
A peek into Newt's voluminous "Sketch Journals" reveal a wonderful flow of playfulness, cleverness, future-think, high technology, and bad puns... always with a hot rodder's eye for style and a scientific thoroughness. One of them is a sketch of a slammed Henry J, deep chin spoiler, large wheels on all corners, large Pro Mod-style wing. "That was for a HOT ROD sketchpad back in '86. The Henry J was one of my favorites when I was a kid. I hearken back to the popular cars at drags, and Henry Js were so light. But they'd sit way off the ground, and if they hit 150 mph in the quarter, they'd do a wheelie through the lights. They were so unaerodynamic. The idea for my Henry J update is stability at 220—with velocity tunnels in the rear and

ground effects underneath."

At roughly the same time, Newt did a hubcap concept similar to an idea later used by CadZZilla. "It's a hubcap that fit in a standard steel wheel, but the larger diameter of it floated on the outside of the tire to make a regular 15-inch road tire look like a super-low-profile piece. With lowered suspension, it really enhances the illusion." Another shows a "one-off vehicle production facility rotunda. As the vehicle goes around the building, the car goes to different stations. By the time it goes 360 degrees around, the first machine has reconfigured itself to do another task. So instead of an assembly line it goes around in circles. The concept was eventually used as artwork for backdrop of the limited-run Hot Wheels Collectibles' "Lowboyz" set, with the added whimsy of a large mechanical arm polishing one of the emerging models.

And the *Mad* magazine influence is evident throughout. A sketch of a toilet bowl car (not unlike one that Hot Wheels produced recently) that is "sponsored by P.P.G." and dotted with rude and amusing scatological





Above: Automated Auto Assembly sketch led to Lowboyz Hot Wheels box art. Left and below: first and last in a series of designs where the premise was to render a complete "Monster-Car" by incorporating the fewest elements.



references. Another is an exercise in semantics—a Pontiac Grand Prix proposal that is an open-wheel car with the trademark split grille, a Bonneville from the same marque that has been made into a streamliner, a Crown Vic with an actual crown instead of a greenhouse.

The value of sketchbooks stretches beyond mere amusement. "One theme I've been working on combines elements of the mechanical with the animal. The concept is to instill the feel or a personality of an appropriate animal into a car. The custom takes on this predatory feel, featuring the character of the feline." The first in the series, soon to be released as a limited-run print, is "Essence of Merc"—a dark Mercury custom that has a panther shadowed in the background. Headlights are echoed in the eyes, the grille takes on a toothy appearance, the aggressive shape of the feline skull is evident in the chopped roofline. Other renditions will follow.

The prints recall Newt's early T-shirt training, not

**NEWT!**

in terms of style, but of technique: Cars on his shirts stood out from a background of his own creation, while the print series is done exclusively with black backdrops. "I have a real affinity for that black background," he explains. "The art emerges from the background, rather than being put on top of

it. That way, you don't have to rely on every detail. You know it's the body of the car. It's not what you put in but what you leave out." Other experiments include an update on the old car-versus-train tale and a minimalist approach to the traditional monster-driven highboy: the number of lines used to convey eyes, car body, wheels, and motion can be counted on your fingers. Even the car-versus-train piece is minimalist, but you can very clearly see ev-

everything that's happening—including

the monster hand creeping up past the windshield to pull the too-tall shifter into High gear. "It brings out the personality of the extreme; the emotional impact is supposed to be over the edge, beyond what's politically correct or even possible."

Other works in Newt's recent past include a series of resin 1:24

scale model kits (designed by him and cast by Jimmy Flintstone for Testor's) that are based on radical-custom sketches. The Mercster and Edster take the general lines of a '49 Merc and '58 Edsel, respectively, and channel them into a highboy-like custom-bodied rod that clearly retains the flavor of the original street car. The MerCosmiCruiser was a concept rendering from '88 featuring a Ranchero-like '49 Merc hauling an art deco-style trailer; it was initially a concept for an actual running car that was presented to Coca-Cola for potential sponsorship. Coke said no, but that loss is now the

model builder's gain. Three more from that resin model kit series—the Triclopz ('48 Tucker custom), the Mercoholic ('39 Mercury street machine), and the Chrysler Airflow-based Rareflow—later became "Ed Newton's Lowboyz," a limited-edition 1:64-scale Hot Wheels Collectibles set.

From cars with no tie rods to monsters and highboys in 10 lines or less, Newt continues to seek the distorted edges represented in MC Escher's inspirational sphere print. In an evolve-or-die world, Ed Newton remains a creative force to be reckoned with, not content to rest on his past but instead dreaming up new concepts, new ideas, and executing them in new and exciting ways. Newt's evolution continues. And that's no illusion. **HR**

## Source

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