



# 1932 Rat's Glass Vicky SpeedStar - The Conundrum

## Street Rods Imply Performance, or at Least They Used To. Today, They Are Megadollar Show Cars. Is There Still a Place for Them in HOT ROD? Or Do We Need an Attitude Adjustment to Appreciate Them for What They Are?

By: [David Freiburger](#), Stephen Kim, Photography by Randy Lorentzen/Planet R  
[Hot Rod Magazine](#), May, 2009

In these days of editorial upheaval there's a daily banter in the office as to what does and does not constitute a HOT ROD magazine car. It's accepted that each [vehicle](#) we feature should be a standout in its realm, but which are the acceptable realms? Of particular debate is the subject of professional show cars, and in particular, pro show street rods.

On one hand they represent the pinnacle of automotive craftsmanship and styling expertise. They push the boundaries of both subtlety and audacity, and they trade for Robb Report kind of money. They appeal to a vast audience of fringe car enthusiasts who have likely never turned a wrench, yet have the potential to inspire die-hard backyard wrench wielders. The question is whether they inspire creativity or ire. Because, let's be honest, we get a lot of hate mail about megabuck [cars](#) that can't be driven. Yet, just as Top Fuel is the ultimate exaggeration of Calvin Rice's first Nats-winning digger, pro show is the evolution of every Barris, Alexander Bros., Ed Roth, or Dean Jeffries car.

Consider Dan Carter's '32 Rat's Glass Vicky SpeedStar—a ride that's in stark contrast to the performance cars that occupy almost every other page of this issue. In true show [car](#) fashion, the odometer reads under 500 miles, the sparkly rotors show not a scuff, and the plush carpet reveals not a shoe imprint. But it's got a thundering 12.5:1 big-block.

What makes these cars interesting is the surprise creativity, and phantom cars with body shapes that never existed are more popular than ever. Study the Vicky from the grille shell back and something doesn't seem quite right—or perhaps it's odd from the cowl forward. Credit the Rat's Glass Vicky SpeedStar body, one of the long line of the Thom Taylor/Bobby Alloway-inspired cars that became available in fiberglass, first as a highly stylized '33ish roadster, then as a [coupe](#), and now available as a Vicky. They're liberal, cartoonish interpretations of the original design-period incorrect, if you will—and have become just slightly less than ubiquitous in the rodding realm. So, after finding out that several other Vicky SpeedStars would be competing at the Indy Goodguys show, builder Jack Sheppard knew he'd have to bust out a trump card to take the win. He decided to graft on a stock-style '32 roadster grille shell, an upright piece that vastly contrasted the SpeedStar's rearward-tilted configuration.

Sounds straightforward enough, but something as simple as integrating a '32 roadster grille shell required massive reconstructive surgery. The SpeedStar's body featured a sharply forward-raked stance, resembling a wolf hunched down on its front legs, ready to rumble. To get the body lines to match, the increased grille-shell height necessitated raising the cowl and flattening the hood and roof on a horizontal plane more parallel to the ground. Says Jack, "I had to cut the floorboard out to change the car's side profile, stretch and widen the hood three inches, then relouder it to match body lines." In essence, the body was modified to fit the grille, not the other way around, and the upright shell blended traditional Vicky cues back into what was a somewhat cartoonish figure.

Once completed, the Vicky started rounding up trophies and magazine coverage. At a NSRA show in Louisville last August, it caught the eye of Dan Carter, who offered to buy it on the spot. That's common for Jack, who builds a top-notch rod every year only to sell it right away, sometimes before it's even completed. His creations have consistently made a big impact, and he's earned a reputation for building stellar street rods. With skills groomed over decades, Jack exercises new creative ideas through building cars in his personal shop. The guy's an incredibly talented homegrown wrench. Can you fault him for building a car the way he likes it, then turning a profit to move on to the next one? He already has a lucrative day job, so it's not about the money. "I don't miss the Vicky at all," he says. "I've been playing with cars since I was a kid, so for me, the fun is in building the car." If someone wants to throw money at him, he might just take it. Now the car is for sale again for \$125,000.

**Quick Inspection: '32 Rat's Glass Vicky SpeedStar**

Dan Carter, Yorba Linda, CA

**Powertrain**

**Engine:** Built by David Cooper (Knoxville, TN), the 468ci big-block Chevy runs on 110-octane race gas and puts out 550 hp. The package includes a steel crank and rods, and 12.5:1 compression slugs. It breathes through Edelbrock aluminum heads and intake and a 750-cfm Demon carb. Fumes exit out of Sanderson shorty headers and custom 3-inch pipes.

**Transmission:** A Lokar shifter controls a B&M TH350 trans and 3,000-stall converter.

**Rearend:** The Winters quick-change rearend is polished and houses a 4.11:1 ring-and-pinion with 3.74:1 quickie gears.

**Chassis**

**Frame:** Bobby Alloway custom built his trademark SpeedStar-style chassis and reworked it to accommodate the standard '32-style grille shell.

**Suspension:** Up front is a Heidt's independent suspension with upper and lower A-arms, coilovers, and rack-and-pinion steering. Out back is a custom Winters quick-change converted to IRS with two transverse links and coilovers on each side.

**Brakes:** Wilwood discs at all four corners provide the whoa.

**Wheels:** Accentuating the wicked stance are a set of custom billet-aluminum Boyd Coddington wheels, measuring 17x7 up front and 20x10 in the rear.

**Tires:** BFGoodrich P215/45R17s and P275/55R20s.

**Style**

**Body:** Rat's Glass provided a '32 Ford Vicky SpeedStar body, which Jack Sheppard custom modified to fit a '32 roadster grille shell. The taillights are custom one-offs.

**Paint:** The two-tone treatment features DuPont Milano Red from a Honda and Mercedes Silver. Between the bases and clears, there are 13 coats total.

**Interior:** Paul Adkins (Coleman, Alabama) completed the interior with a matching red and silver theme. The seats, dash, and center console are all custom.



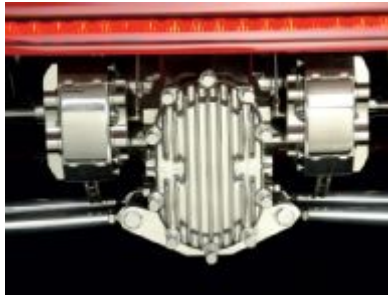
Jack custom fabricated the center console and dash. Two-tone upholstery matches the exterior paint scheme.



The doors and rear quarters house power-operated windows. The door-to-quarter-window glass features weatherstripping to seal out the elements even without a B-pillar.



Auto Meter gauges report the vitals. There aren't as many miles as you'd like to see here.



A custom rear license-plate bracket flips up and down at the touch of a switch to show off the polished IRS components.



Boyd Coddington carved out a set of custom one-off billet wheels for the Vicky.



Leaf springs and a drop axle get the dump for a complete independent front suspension.