

Terry Cook's **1992 Buick Wagon**

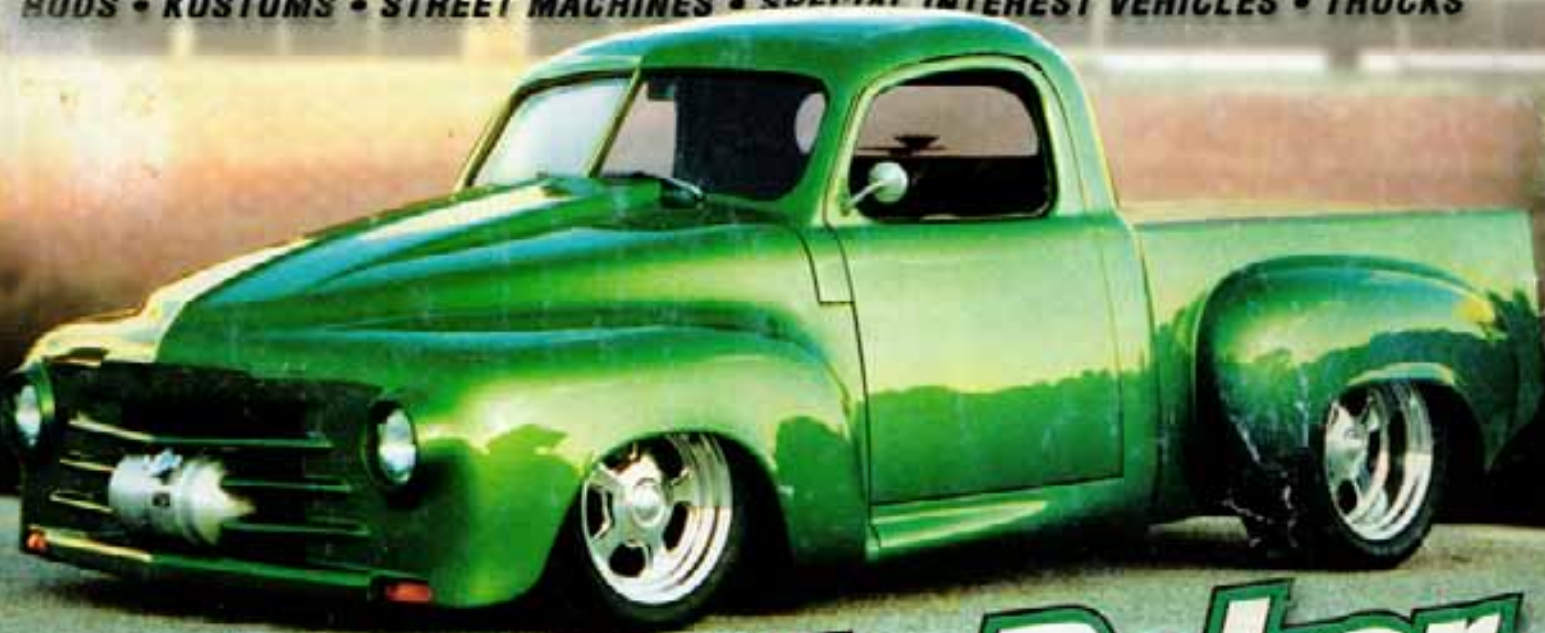


**NORTHERN  
RODDER**

JUNE 2002

# Northern **RODDER**

RODS • KUSTOMS • STREET MACHINES • SPECIAL INTEREST VEHICLES • TRUCKS



Rob Melanson's  
1953 Studebaker Pickup

## Roadside Baker

- '32 Vicki Giveaway  
10 page Build-Up
- Project '39 - It's Done!



Joey Hutson's  
**Rolling  
Memorial**  
A Tribute To The Officers Who Made The Ultimate Sacrifice



# Roadside

**Rob Melanson's  
1953 Studebaker Pickup**



# Baker

**Question: How do you make one of the ugliest trucks ever made into a stand-out custom?**

**Answer: Take it to EXTREME Rod & Custom and let them go nuts!**

That's exactly what happened in the case of this '53 Studebaker pickup. Steve White purchased the truck, and very soon thereafter Extreme Rod and Custom would work their metal-magic on the truck.

Disassembly was the first step, and a general clean up was performed on all the parts that would be used in the project. The chassis had the old front suspension cut off, and a narrowed Nova clip replaced it. Power steering, disc brakes, a PST sway bar, and all new bushings made the Studie driveable. The rear end got some new parts as well. The leaf springs now hold a 9" Ford rear end. The brakes are drum style, and the entire suspension was positioned to get Rob's truck "in the weeds!"

Rolling stock was chosen for looks and for just the right stance. Budnik 16"x7" front wheels roll on BFGoodrich T/A radials. The giant 18"x9.5" Budnik rear wheels wear BFG radials as well.

The engine is as different as the body style. Extreme decided a 455 Buick would be ample to propel the little truck . . . anywhere! Detailing is a trademark at Extreme and a subtle use of paint, aluminum, and time produced a very attractive engine bay. The slick new firewall had a lot to do with the good looks. The transmission is a 700R4 overdrive unit.

The body is the focal point of this project. First Ray Touriguy (of Extreme) whacked the top a full three inches. Then the hood looked silly, so he pied it by taking out another three inches of vintage Studebaker tin. A Camaro hood scoop found its way to the metal workers' bench and was grafted to the newly fabricated hood sheet metal. A new grill shell was fabricated to work with the new flowing lines of the front sheet metal. The whole assembly was welded

Article and Pictures by **Jonathan White**





**Specs: Rob Melanson's 1953  
Studebaker Pickup  
Portland, Maine**

**Builder:** Extreme Rod & Custom Portland, ME

**Color:** "Gang Green"

**Engine:** 455 cubic inch Buick; stock internally detailed; 3" exhaust; FlowMaster mufflers; built by Extreme's Steve White

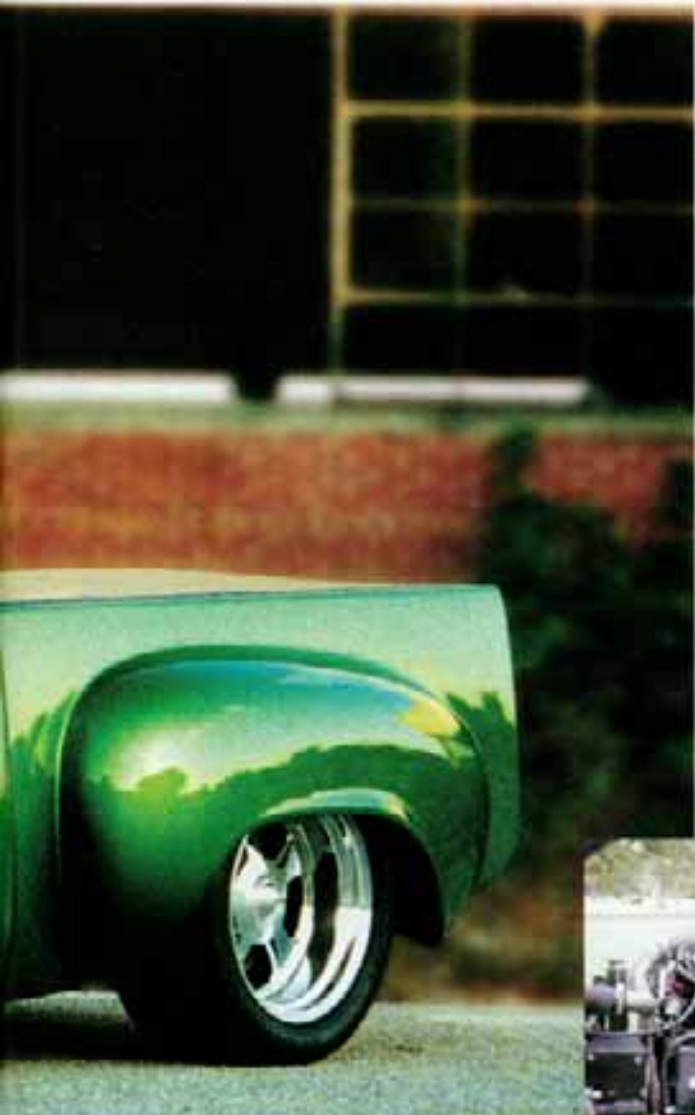
**Drivetrain:** '53 Stude chassis with Nova clip; disc brakes; power steering; 700R4

transmission; Ford 9" rear end; drum brakes

**Body:** Modifications too numerous to list; read article

**Interior:** Black and gray leather over bucket seats; custom interior panels by Pete's Upholstery; filled dash with molded center console; AutoMeter gauges; AC; power windows; Lokar shifter; Pioneer stereo

**Wheels and tires:** Budnik billet wheels; 16"x7" fronts and 18"x9.5" rears, BFGoodrich T/A radials



into one piece, and a tilt mechanism added. The doors are now suicided. The front wheel wells were opened up for added tire clearance due to the lower stance. Then the cab was channeled four inches just for the heck of it! The rear fenders were welded to the bed sides, and a hard tonneau was fabricated. All the stake holes and the rear area of the bed were filled and smoothed. A new rear pan was rolled, and the taillights and license plate worked into it. Giant exhaust megas mimic the taillight openings. With all the metal work complete, Extreme shot the truck in "Gang Green," a custom mix by the local NAPA store, and applied by Ray Touriguy. The end result . . . a Studebaker that rocks events all over the east coast!

We didn't mention the interior. Pete's Upholstery in New Hampshire stitched and stretched the black and gray combination over the seats and interior panels. The dash has been modified to incorporate a center console. The AutoMeter gauges, AC controls, and floor shifter add a sharp contrast to the body color dash and aluminum console insert. A tilt column, custom steering wheel, and Pioneer sound system completes the interior.

Rob's truck can be seen at most east coast events. Rob is about to add air ride and still plans on putting a bunch of rod miles on the "Baker" this season. Who knows this little truck might even make it to our Northern/Southern Rodder Reunion? What do you think, Rob? Come on down! **NRM**

