

Kiwi Kid II

Lance & Jackie Crane's 1932 Ford cabriolet hard-top/soft-top



By Paul Grace
Photos by Greg Stokes

I THINK they broke the mould when they made Lance Crane. Why do I say that? Because he's consistently gone outside the square and pushed the hot rod envelope with a string of show-winning cars which have spanned decades. Some would scoff and scorn Lance on his entry into hot rodding with his 'dripping with chrome' and highly-detailed Austin A30 show car (*HRM Aug '73*) which earned him the nickname of "Chrome". I asked him "Why choose

an Austin A30?" "Simple" he said. "I was a budding apprentice fitter and turner with the Post Office, looking for my first car and wanted a '34 Ford V8 sedan. But my dad, a cop, said I needed an economical car and bought me the A30 with a loan to be paid back. I started tinkering with it and the rest is history." That car must have won more trophies than any of us have seen in our lives, and remember this is just the beginning! His well-meaning mates in West Auckland Street Rods, plus the need for a bigger hot rod due to a growing family, saw to it the A30 was replaced

with a '34 Ford sedan. A cool car painted silver and black, flathead powered and used as a daily driver (*HRM Oct '75*) before being rebuilt into Mr Capone, an award winner from the outset. (*HRM June '78 and Liz & my wedding car in 1980*) Lance then went the street machine route with a '58 Ford (*HRM Feb '80*) before his V8 Toyota Corona. (*HRM Dec '82*) See what I mean about pushing the envelope? The hot rod purists again ragged on Lance, but he had his vision and stuck to his guns and that's what hot rodding is all about, the pursuit of dreams. Hanging out with hot rodders

will always get you an earful of how they think your car should look and that's pretty much what happened. By the mid '80s Lance had succumbed to the pressure and built Kiwi Kid, a chopped deuce sedan, flamed to the hilt with a ton of attitude. (*HRM May '84*) To this day the deuce is a horny looking car and remains pretty much as it was by current owner Graham Robinson in Timaru.

What followed was a 20-year hiatus from hot rodding but during that time away, Lance's fertile imagination had already conjured up a master plan for his ultimate deuce, a '32 three-

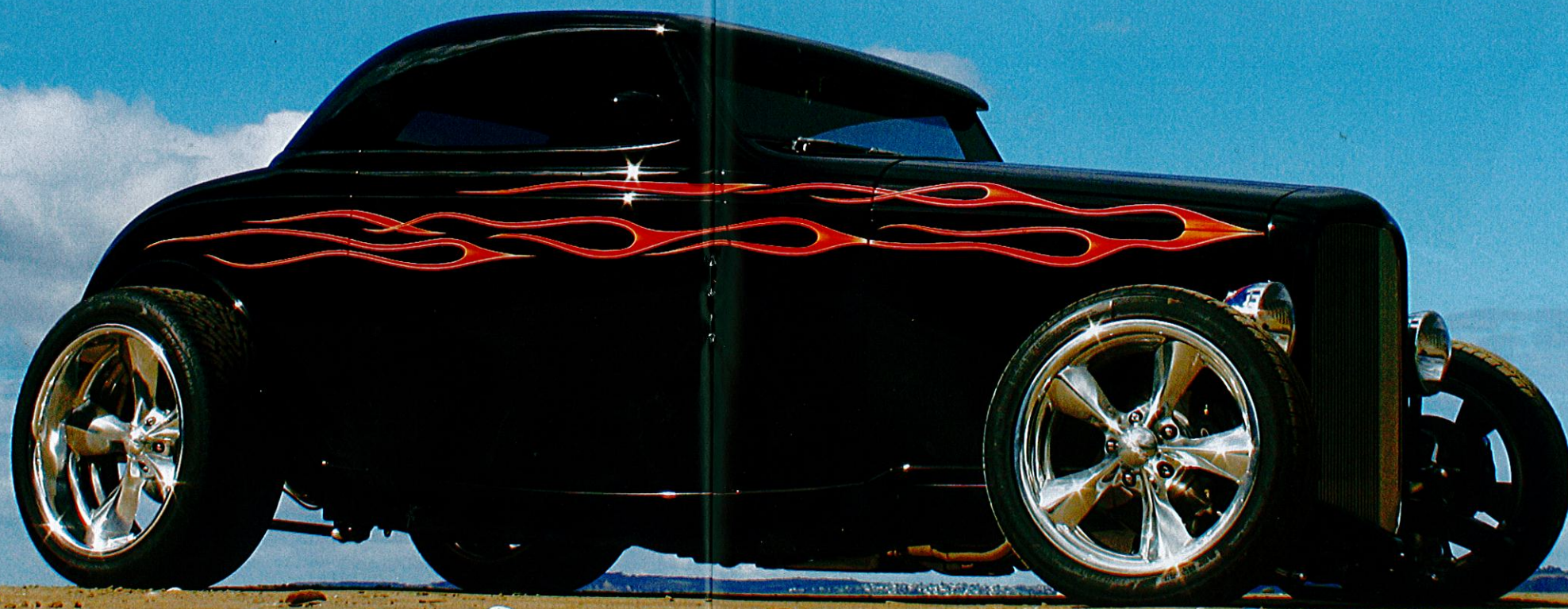
window coupe with a removable roof. It was an idea well ahead of its time because back then no such car existed but in the early '90s Pete Osborne produced his own custom cabriolet which fitted the bill, but Lance's vision needed honing and remained dormant.

The spark was finally re-ignited when longtime friends Errol & Val Mollet invited the Cranes to the Beach Hop a few years back. Riding around in the rumble seat of the Mollet's A sport coupe with the atmosphere thick with hot rodding did the trick. The bug bit hard and Lance was back!

His re-entry would eclipse any previous rod so an order was put into Pete Osborne Productions for a '32 Ford cabriolet rolling on an Osborne chassis with IFS, a 4-bar rear and then Lance added "can you do a fold-down roof and also fit the fenders up as well?" The end result gives them many options. They can run the car topless, or as a hard-top or as the power operated soft-top and then they can run the car fendered or fenderless – talk about options! Lance reckons he can have multiple cars within the one car – there's that outside the square thinking again!



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Lance and Jackie spent 18 months getting the '32 ready for Beach Hop 2010, taking care of the hundreds of small details and adding custom touches everywhere. There's a myriad of unique features in this hot rod which are not overtly apparent. Spend some time with Lance looking over the car and you'll be amazed at the detail. Take the time to read the Features & Specifications at the end of this feature.

Over the years Lance has given a lot back to hot rodding. He's served on the committee of NZHRA for many years, was on the committee of West Auckland Street Rods, and the SR Nationals organising committee and more recently president, secretary and treasurer of Harbour City Hot Rod Club. He visited the USA way back in '75 and ran movie evenings at home to show others what the USA had to offer. Behind the scenes he's been backed to the hilt by wife of 38 years Jackie and now has a grown-up family of three boys, Glenn (33), Adam (30) and Leon (26) who're all successful people in their own right.

Looking back on those crazy-hazy days of hot rodding in the 70s in New Zealand was brought back into focus by Jackie at the photo shoot, when she recalled the time one morning when she came to retrieve Lance from a party at my flat in Oratia the night before: "I don't know what happened that night, nor do I want to" she whispered, "When I went inside there were black foot prints on the ceiling." It must have been a good night because neither Lance or I can recall what actually took place. There are dozens more stories which are the fodder for short trips back in time but for now Lance and Jackie say it's a real buzz to be back in hot rodding again with many old friends re-establishing contact. "The camaraderie we've found in hot rodding is so special" they say, "and the friendships which have endured the test of time." Welcome back Lance and Jackie!





FEATURES & SPECIFICATIONS

BODY: Started off as a 3-window coupe then channelled 13mm at the rear and 20mm at the firewall. Rear inner fender and body swage moved up the body 40mm and tubbed 50mm each side. Front of rear fenders lengthened 40mm, rear of fenders shortened 90mm. Roof cut off and a hard-top made to fit. Cowl and doors moved forward 75mm, cabriolet windscreen frame created, top of doors remodelled with window posts. New swage around back of the interior compartment was moved back towards the trunk to allow for longer removable hard-top. Front headlight stalks moulded to fenders. Bonnet top cut down 25mm at front to gain tapered look. Grille shell cut down 50mm and widened 10mm at bottom. Front apron made as grille is now further forward than stock. Bonnet hinge kit fitted with electric opener. Rolled rear panel with recessed number plate. Hand-made S/S grille insert. Hidden door hinges. Electric windows, central locking and intrusion bars. High stop lamp built into body.

CHASSIS: '32 stock type chassis, fully boxed, 500mm kick-up over diff, tubbed 50mm each side, tube centre "X" members, removable trans mount, hidden tow-bar mount.

ENGINE: 2003 XR8, 5.0-litre, factory injected & computerised, hand-made raised inlet manifold,

alternator and power steer, pump swapped sides, engine oil cooler, owner-made headers, 2 into 2.5" into 3" exhaust system.

TRANSMISSION: 2003 factory 4-speed auto and computerised. Alloy finned trans cooler with braided lines.

FRONT SUSPENSION: Polished stainless A-arms, low rider stubs, HQ vented discs. Billet alloy 4-pot Outlaw callipers with Air Ride shocks. Nissan power steer rack.

REAR SUSPENSION: Polished stainless 4-bars and Panhard rod with Air Ride shocks.

DRIVESHAFT: Custom-made and flamed.

DIFF: Ford 9-inch narrowed, 3.5 ratio, XF Falcon vented discs, alloy finned diff cover, hand-made S/S disc covers.

RADIATOR: Custom-made polished alloy by Real Deal Radiators. 16-inch electric fan, S/S overflow tank.

PETROL TANK: Custom-made S/S 90-litre with billet pre-filter, electric fuel pump and after fuel filter, braided lines with shut off & water draw.

WHEELS:

REAR: Boyd Coddington 20" x 10" Junkyard Dawgs with 295/40 x 20 tyres

FRONT: Boyd Coddington 17" x 8" Junkyard Dawgs with 205/45 x 17 tyres

INTERIOR: Custom-made dash to fit Ford XR8 speed cluster. Hidden stereo and switches etc. Modified Genie shifter. Billet Specialities tilt-steering column. Toyota Caldina bucket seats.

Soft-top frames designed and built by Peter Osborne. Leather interior and soft-top by Tom Black at Ian Goodwin Car Upholsters.

LIGHTS: Front: 7-inch buckets with built in LED park and blinker. Rear: Hella LED. Stop, tail & blinker all in one. (The American way)

WIRING: By Trevor Saran. Trev say's most hot rods are 20-22 circuit looms and Kiwi Kid II is about 400 looms.

PAINT: PPG Black base coat clear coat. Preparation and flames by owner. Colour applied by Mark Wakeling at Allan Wakeling Panel & Paint.

CLUB: Harbour City Rod Club

LANCE AND JACKIE GIVE SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Peter Osborne Productions, PPG Paints, Young Gun Mark Wakeling at Allan Wakeling Panel & Paint, Ian Goodwin Car Upholsters, Trevor - FHM Automotive, Trevor Saran - auto electrical work. Tim - Procoat and Steve Foster (pin striping flames).