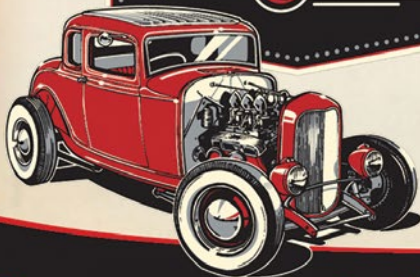




# Shop Rag



► In 1975, Griffith, NSW hosted the very first Street Machine Nationals, a raw and rebellious celebration of Australia's emerging custom car culture. Just 103 cars entered, but the impact was lasting. Judges awarded Top Street Machine to Tony Ross's 1959 FC Holden, *Dream On*. Remarkably, Tony has kept the car exactly as it was when it won, untouched and unrestored, still riding on its 14x8 Auger five-slots. He even retained the original trophy and the unopened DeBortoli champagne and red wine presented on the day. Hats off to Vince De Rossi for taking us on a full-throttle trip back to '75 at Griffiths Biggest Lap anniversary weekend, captured in full in Cruzin Magazine #293.



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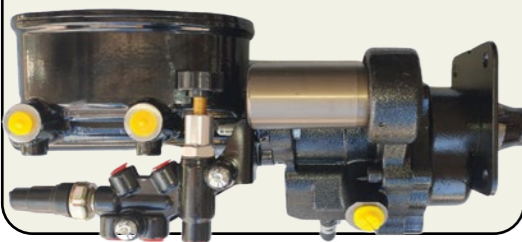


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## EDI TAKES ON THE MOTHER ROAD

Every June, Team EDI (International Freight Management) – driver John Leggett and navigator Tom Ditchburn – head back to the USA to compete in the Great Race aboard their 1966 Mercury Marauder, affectionately known as "Rusty Red".

"We have covered around 30,000 miles over the last 8-10 years in our 1966 Mercury Marauder participating in the June event or the April Spring Rally, or just relocating the vehicle to next year's event via America's back roads," they say. "The Great Race has taken us on back roads crisscrossing the mainland states, including Riverside CA to Tacoma, St Augustine FL to Colorado Springs, St Paul MN to South Carolina, Kentucky to Maine."

This year shapes as something special as the event is an officially sanctioned partner of the 100th year Route 66 celebrations. This June, it will begin in Springfield IL and finish in Pasadena CA.

It's a timed technical rally for 140 pre-1970 vehicles and the winner finishes (without any digital assistance following instructions handed out each morning) with a time closest to an earlier point to point GPS record. After finishing 25th overall last year, they're keen to climb the order. "It's pretty simple really — stay alert, follow instructions carefully, stay on time and don't get lost."

For more event information, visit [www.greatrace.com](http://www.greatrace.com).

If you're serious about participating in your own wheels and need to get them to the USA and back again, visit [edicustoms.com.au](http://edicustoms.com.au) or call 0417 733 057.



## ED ISKENDARIAN PASSES ON, AGE 104

Hot rodding has farewelled one of its true pioneers — a man whose name became shorthand for horsepower.

For more than 70 years, Isky wasn't just in the performance game — he helped build it. From the dry lakes to drag racing's golden years and into today's LS era, his camshafts powered everything from backyard builds to record-setters. Even at 100, he was sharp, curious and quick with a joke, crediting onions, hot chilli peppers and a good laugh for his longevity.

The company that bears his name remains in family hands, still delivering the lift and punch generations of rodders have relied on.

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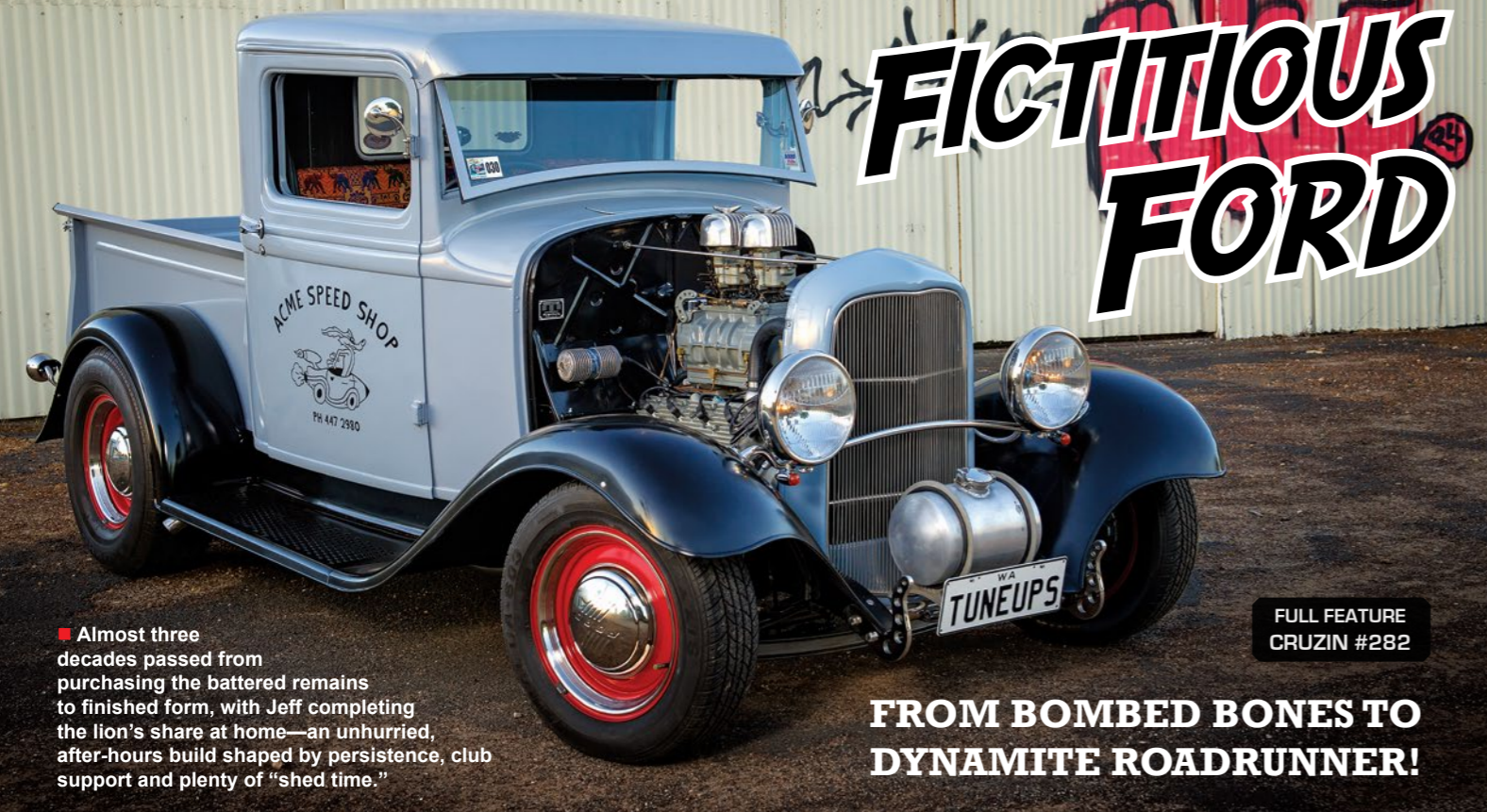
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# FICTITIOUS FORD



■ Almost three decades passed from purchasing the battered remains to finished form, with Jeff completing the lion's share at home—an unhurried, after-hours build shaped by persistence, club support and plenty of “shed time.”

FULL FEATURE  
CRUZIN #282

## FROM BOMBED BONES TO DYNAMITE ROADRUNNER!

Jeff Hitchens' '32 Ford closed-cab pickup is the product of patience, persistence and a simple philosophy: “Shed time is good time”.

After completing his home-built '30 Model A coupe, ACME 30, Jeff rolled straight into the Deuce project, drawing on help from mates Charlie Ferraloro and Phil Pavich but tackling much of the work himself.

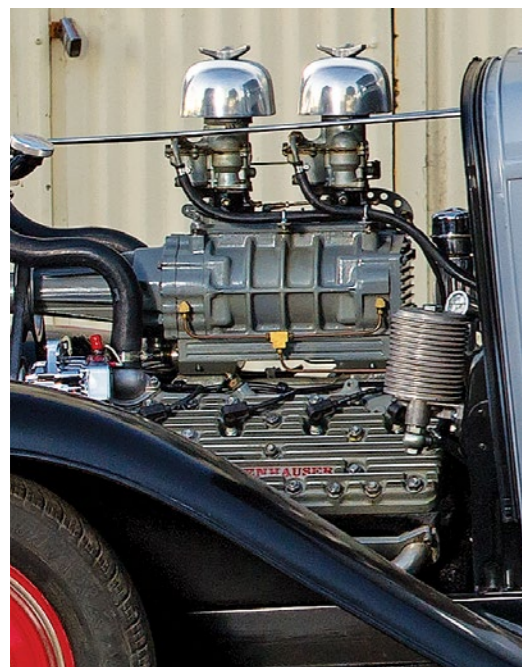
A founding member of the GoodFellas club, Jeff freely admits he wasn't born with a spanner in hand. “I had spent about 18 months previously doing vintage restoration and paint courses at the local TAFE and attended a weekend metal workshop,” he explains. From there, he handled the rust repairs, floor install and even the two-inch chop on the cab, cherry-picking the best from two rough imported bodies to create one solid foundation.

The chassis combined American Stamping rails with traditional hardware: a dropped Superbell axle up front, split '36 rods, transverse springs and an XP Falcon diff. Phil initially squared and boxed the rails, but when progress stalled, Jeff returned with a trailer of parts. Within a week it came back as a rolling chassis. “You would think that work would have progressed quickly after that, but I am pretty slow all round!” he laughs.

The heart of the build began as a bargain. “I picked up the flathead at a Perth swap meet for \$100... The guy selling it had about 8 or 10 of them on a truck with the heads off so you could examine them and take your pick. Sadly, the initial purchase price was significantly eclipsed by the engine build price,” Jeff admits.

A Mercury crank, Egge pistons, Isky cam and Offenhauser heads set the tone before an unexpected GM453 supercharger deal transformed the combo. “Honestly, if it wasn't for Phil Pav, it wouldn't have happened... He was absolutely awesome, machining all the necessary parts and adapting them to the engine”.

Inside, the pickup reflects Jeff's resourcefulness. Op-shop serving trays became the engine-turned dash panel, bus stop signage forms headliner panels, and wife Sandra stitched the bold seat trim. Nearly three decades after first buying the rough remains, Jeff has created a blown flathead hauler that blends club camaraderie, ingenuity and good old fashioned shed time. ★



■ What started as a \$100 8BA flathead swap meet score now runs a Mercury crank, Isky cam and Offenhauser heads, topped by a GM453 supercharger and twin 94s—proof that cheap cores can become serious hot rod horsepower.



## MODEL CITIZENS WITH ALAN BARTON

I recently combined a long-planned North American road trip with one of my favourite subjects — early Australian hot rods.

With Deuce Days in Victoria, Vancouver Island, held only every three years, it seemed the perfect excuse to build something special for the accompanying ‘Deuce Days in Scale’ show.

The model had to be a Deuce, and it had to be distinctly Australian. I chose Ern Harewood's early-'60s channelled '32 Sports Coupe, Little Sport, a Melbourne-built rod well featured in period magazines. Using Revell's '32 five-window as a base and incorporating '37/'38 Ford mechanicals, I worked through the usual challenges of scale accuracy, stance and body conversion, fabricating details where reference photos didn't exist.



After travelling more than 50,000 kilometres by road and air, the finished model was warmly received — a little piece of Aussie hot rodding showcased on the world stage!



## MOTORVATIN' MUSIC WITH LORI LEE CASH

UK vintage rhythm'n'blues and swing star Si Cranstoun returned to Australia for his first tour here in over a decade, delivering ten high-energy shows across five cities.

Sparked by Sydney promoter Andrea Handford, the collaborative tour united promoters nationwide and drew strong crowds, with many dates selling out. In Brisbane, Robot Productions and Rockability Australia presented an electric night of music and dancing, capped by three encores.

This collaborative tour concept and Si's visit created a multi-city celebration that reminded us of the power of live performance and how cool it is when we all get together. Check out Si Cranstoun online at [www.sicranstoun.com](http://www.sicranstoun.com)



## CRUZIN NZ

WITH CRAIG 'STYLE' COUNSELL

Manawatu rodders scored a full day of action on August 2, kicking off with the Palmy Swap Meet in Feilding before rolling into Palmerston North for Kruzin Kustoms' annual Mid-Winter Chill Out.

The open house threw the workshop doors wide, giving visitors a close-up look at

projects under construction and access to plenty of retail specials. A free BBQ and cold drinks kept everyone fuelled, while staff were on hand to talk builds and answer questions. With a relaxed vibe and strong turnout from across the country, it was the perfect cure for the winter blues!

Be sure to check in with our regular columnists in every issue of Cruzin!

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# NO POLISH. ALL PARTY

**Chopped!** – where hot rods get dirty, bands get loud and nobody's checking the clock.

Kyle Ford sums it up best: "I class Chopped! as a three-day hot rod, rock and roll and motorcycle festival... but the party factor is the key thing." And that's exactly what it is — a full-throttle weekend built on fun.

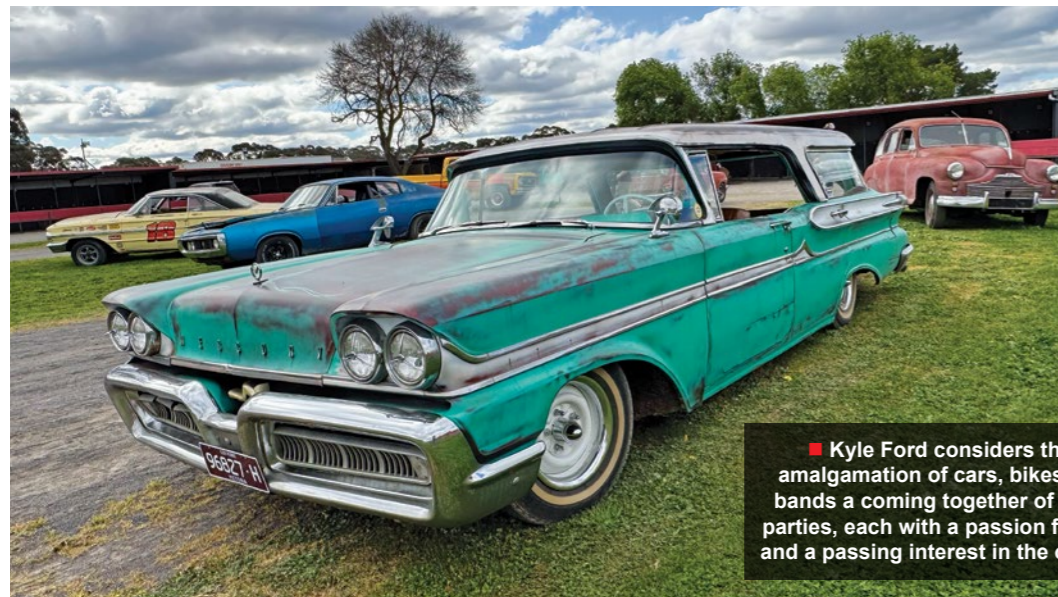
The whole thing grew out of the grassroots Chopped! magazine, created by the sons of publishing legend Eddie Ford. The first event in 2008 was a modest affair at Newstead Football Oval — around 60 cars each day. A year later it doubled.

By 2010 it had shifted to the racecourse, the dirt drags were born, and things got serious in the best possible way. "It tripled in size that year," Kyle recalls, and the dirt drags quickly became the heartbeat of the event.

Now settled at the Maryborough Harness Racing Track, Chopped! has found its groove. There's room to camp, cruise, bench-race and thrash your pride and joy down the strip. The dirt drags pull everything from rough-as-guts weekend builds to wild horsepower heroes, while the Vintage Gassers add extra theatre. "Chopped! will never be a competition," Kyle insists. "It's about having something you can have fun in."

Beyond the cars, there's Chopparama indoors for custom bikes, tattoos buzzing, and live music cranking from arvo 'til late. "I choose my music to surprise people," Kyle grins. "You're never going to make everyone happy, but you can put a smile on their face."

Three scenes. One paddock. Zero boredom. Check out [chopped.com.au](http://chopped.com.au) for the next one.



■ Kyle Ford considers this amalgamation of cars, bikes and bands a coming together of three parties, each with a passion for one and a passing interest in the others.



# FAT ATTACK AT THE GNRS

The 76th Grand National Roadster Show rolled into the Fairplex in Pomona, California this year, continuing its legacy as one of the longest-running and most revered custom car shows in the world.

Alongside the headlining trophies — America's Most Beautiful Roadster and the Al Slonaker Memorial Award — the 2026 show featured a standout thematic display dubbed "Fat Attack!", dedicated to fat-fendered hot rods from 1936 to 1948. These cars and trucks, defined by their generous, curvaceous fenders and bold presence, represent a golden era of automotive design and hot-rodded creativity.

Curated as a centerpiece of the Feature Building, the Fat Attack exhibit brought together an eclectic range of classic American iron — from sleek coupes and sedans to gassers, customs, and pro-street machines — celebrating not just vintage aesthetics but also the passionate craftsmanship that keeps the fat-fender tradition alive.



■ Founded in 1950, the GNRS draws thousands of enthusiasts and more than 1,500 vehicles ranging from classic roadsters to pro-street customs and muscle cars — all under one roof.



■ Two legendary Willys coupes share the spotlight — the red "Big John Mazmanian" gasser and the blue Stone, Woods & Cook car — icons of '60s drag racing. ■ Greg and Penni's 1940 Ford pick-up, dubbed "Towel," showcases a South City Rod & Custom build, 383ci SBC power and classic craftsmanship etched proudly into this hand-crafted timber display board. ■ The legendary Pierson Brothers '36 Ford 3-Window Coupe blurred the line between custom and hot rod, tearing across El Mirage at over 129mph before being restored to its original 1947 street trim.

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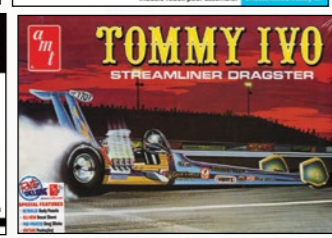
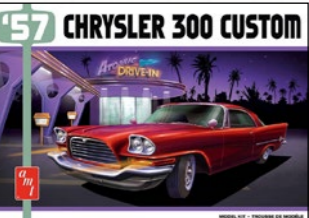


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## A FACTORY-SPEC, HEMI-LICIOUS RED RACER - ON A DIET!



BY GAVIN KELSO

Charlie Cuka has long admired Chrysler's early-to-mid-sixties Super Stock machines. "I always liked this era," he says. "I just love the Super Stock stuff."

His 1965 Plymouth Belvedere I is one of just 101 Race Hemi sedans ever built under Chrysler's A990 lightweight program to satisfy homologation rules. These cars were engineered specifically for drag racing, with weight reduction and performance taking priority over comfort.

Based on the lightest Belvedere I body shell, everything non-essential was deleted — no heater, radio, sound deadening or rear seat. A yellow dash decal confirmed no warranty was offered or implied. Body panels were chemically thinned, the bonnet scoop is aluminium, and ultra-thin Corning glass was fitted. "The doors, hood and bumpers are all a lot thinner," Charlie explains. "The scoop is alloy, there's only one wiper, and there's no

extra trim on the taillights."

Under the bonnet sits a correctly date-coded 426 Race Hemi. While not original to this particular car, it remains true to factory specification and reflects how these cars were used in period. The drivetrain retains the correct 8¼-inch differential with 4.56:1 Sure-Grip gears and factory Hemi suspension. The front wheels sit slightly forward in the so-called "2%" configuration — a precursor to Chrysler's altered-wheelbase cars.

Documentation confirms this Belvedere as

Few factory lightweights survived the rigours of 1960s drag racing. Seeing one in Australia today — documented and largely correct — is rare.



number 44 of the 101 built in 1965 and one of four delivered through St. John's Chrysler-Plymouth in Florida.

"They don't come up for sale that often," Charlie says. With few factory lightweights surviving the 1960s drag strip, his A990 represents a rare and documented example of Chrysler's most focused racing program. ★



The correctly date-coded 426 Race Hemi isn't original to the car, but it's period-correct and built to factory spec, featuring aluminium heads, magnesium cross-ram intake and twin 770 Holleys. Dyno-tested in the US at 609hp, it's since been detuned slightly for pump fuel.

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**VHRA ANNOUNCES 2026 HOT ROD SHOW AND NEW VENUE**

The Victorian Hot Rod Association (VHRA) has confirmed dates and location details for this year's hot rod show, with the event set to take place on September 12-13, 2026, at Caribbean Park, Scoresby.

Caribbean Park is a 500-acre complex in Melbourne's east that combines office and industrial facilities with parklands and event spaces, allowing the show to continue as an indoor/outdoor attraction. Vehicle entries will open in stages, with car clubs receiving first priority. The VHRA is also inviting clubs interested in running live, hands-on activities during the event, such as pinstriping demonstrations, DIY workshops, and other interactive displays.

For updates, head to **www.vhra.com.au** or check in on Facebook.



**CHROME BY THE COAST**  
 Winterfest Port Stephens fired up last July with around 300 cars and thousands of spectators packing the marina precinct for a huge weekend of motoring.

Friday's BBQ set the tone, Saturday's Supercruise rolled through Nelson Bay under escort, and Sunday's Show & Shine transformed the d'Albora Marina into a closed-street celebration of hot rods, classics, muscle and exotics. Live music, markets and a relaxed winter vibe made it a true family event, with \$15,000 raised for the Mark Hughes Foundation.

For 2026, it's set to go even bigger. Lock in July 10-12, 2026. Details and entries at **www.portstephenscarshow.com.au**.

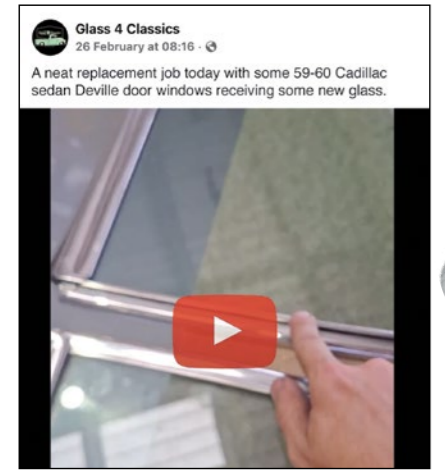
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**COMING EVENTS**

**NATIONAL EVENTS**  
 Apr 3-6. Camaro Firebird Nationals, Albury, includes Hawaiian night, Saturday show and shine, cruises, track days and dinner. **www.cfnats.com.au**  
 April 9-13. 2026 ASRF Regional Nationals, Thoroughbred Park, Lyneham, Canberra. **canberraregionálnationals.com**

Aug 21-23. The 1st Ford Customline & Mainline National Meet, Leeton NSW, open to all Ford Customline & Mainline vehicles from 1952 to 1959, Darren 0439 110 358, **cussonats2026@hotmail.com**.

**QUEENSLAND**  
 Apr 8. Top of the State Swap Meeting, Car & Bike Show at Cannon Park Jockey Club. Gates open 6am Sunday. Barry 0407 741 442.

Apr 17-19. Festival of Wheels weekend, Boonah Showgrounds, **festivalofwheels@rodsinc.com.au**, Amanda Addison 0487 042 189.

Aug 29. Nitro in the Cane. Palmyra Dragway. Event and ticket information **www.palmyradragway.com.au**.

May 2. Warwick Cruze Inn Club Annual Swap Meet, Morgan Park Raceway. Jayson 0499 834 021.

May 3. Brisbane Toy and Hobby Fair, Nissan Arena, Nathan, 9am-3pm, **www.ashow.com.au**.

May 16. Wild Gasser Drag Racing, Round 3 of the Vintage Gassers Championship at Warwick Dragway. **www.vintagegassersqueensland.com**

May 30. SMS (Scale Model Supply) presents Rods, Rides and Rigs, Fitzy's Hotel, Loganholme, info@scalemodeller.com.au.

**NEW SOUTH WALES / ACT**  
 Apr 19. Show 'n' Shine, Maitland Park, Maitland. Part of the Hunter Valley Steamfest, **steamfest.com.au**  
 Apr 19. Yass Swap Meet, Yass Showgrounds, Info Ray 0409 931 229.

May 15-17. 24th Annual Lazy Winter Run, Arararra. Hosted by the Mid North Coast Hot Rod Club. Accommodation bookings **Darlington Park Beach Resort**, 02 6640 7444, info Andy 02 6642 5963.

May 23. The 2026 Hot Rod and Custom Auto Expo, Rosehill Gardens Racecourse, one massive day only, Saturday May 23, **hotrodandcustom.com.au**.

Jul 10-12. Winterfest Port Stephens Car Show, Friday BBQ, Saturday Supercruise, Sunday massive show and shine, **www.portstephenscarshow.com.au**.

**VICTORIA**  
 Apr 11. 42nd Annual Horsham Automotive Swap Meet, Horsham Showgrounds, Terry 0406 006 040, **swap@wmhvs.org.au**.

Apr 19. Aussie Classic Car Show. Manhattan Hotel, Cnr Canterbury and Heatherdale Roads, Ringwood, **www.aomc.asn.au**.

May 30-31. 49th Historic Winton, Winton Motor Raceway, Benalla, featuring historic car races from the 1920s to the 1980s, **historicwinton.org**.

Aug 1. Dubbo Model Show, Dubbo Showground, Saturday and Sunday 8.30am-5pm. Enquiries Brian 0417 291 053.

Sep 4. Cranksters Cruise, Nagambie. Three-day cruise event running September 4-6. FB: Cranksters Rod and Kustom Club Victoria, 0429 959 185.

Sep 12-13. Victorian Hot Rod Association Hot Rod Show, Caribbean Park, Scoresby, **www.vhra.com.au**.

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA**  
 Apr 19. Valley Hot Rodders Swap Meet will be held at Angaston Oval in the Barossa Valley, 0408 811 053, **www.valleyhotrodgers.com.au**

May 2-3. Steel City Nats, Steel City Dragway, Mullaquana Rd, Whyalla. Mandy 0417 884 758 or Nigel 0438 445 918.

May 30. Riverland Auto Street Party Barmera, with classic cars, hot rods, customs and bikes. Hosted by Riverland Customs & Classics and Riverside Rodders, **facebook.com/events/697755186337842**

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA**  
 Sep 25. WAHRA Sandgroper Mid-West Run to Geraldton, September long weekend. Open to pre-1978 road-licensed hot rods, customs and classics. **wahra.org.au**.

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