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THE ICONIC FORD FALCON XB GT

SCALE 1:8

Bonnet assembly

The 1973 Ford Falcon

Roots of customising

POST-APOCALYPTIC EDITION

THE ICONIC FORD FALCON XB GT

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Begin the assembly of your model by attaching the dual scoop frame and other parts to the bonnet.

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YOUR MODEL

You will be building a 1:8 scale replica of a customised 1973 Ford Falcon XB GT. Features include a lift-up bonnet that reveals a detailed engine, opening doors, wind-down windows and an 'active' steering wheel. A remote-control fob illuminates the main lights, brake lights and indicators.

Scale: 1:8
Length: 62cm
Width: 25cm
Height: 19cm
Weight: 7+kg

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Stage 1: Bonnet Assembly

In this issue, work starts on the bonnet of your Ford Falcon XB GT, fitting the reinforcement structure, the dual scoop frame and other parts.

List of parts:

1A	Bonnet reinforcement structure
1B	Bonnet
1C	Bonnet dual scoop
1D	Bonnet lock
1E	Left bonnet round insert (L)
1F	Right bonnet round insert (R)
1G	Bonnet closing centering pin
1H	Left bonnet dual scoop vent grille (L)
1I	Right bonnet dual scoop vent grille (R)
DS20	Six* 1.8 x 4mm PM screws
PS12	Three* 1.2 x 4mm PB screws

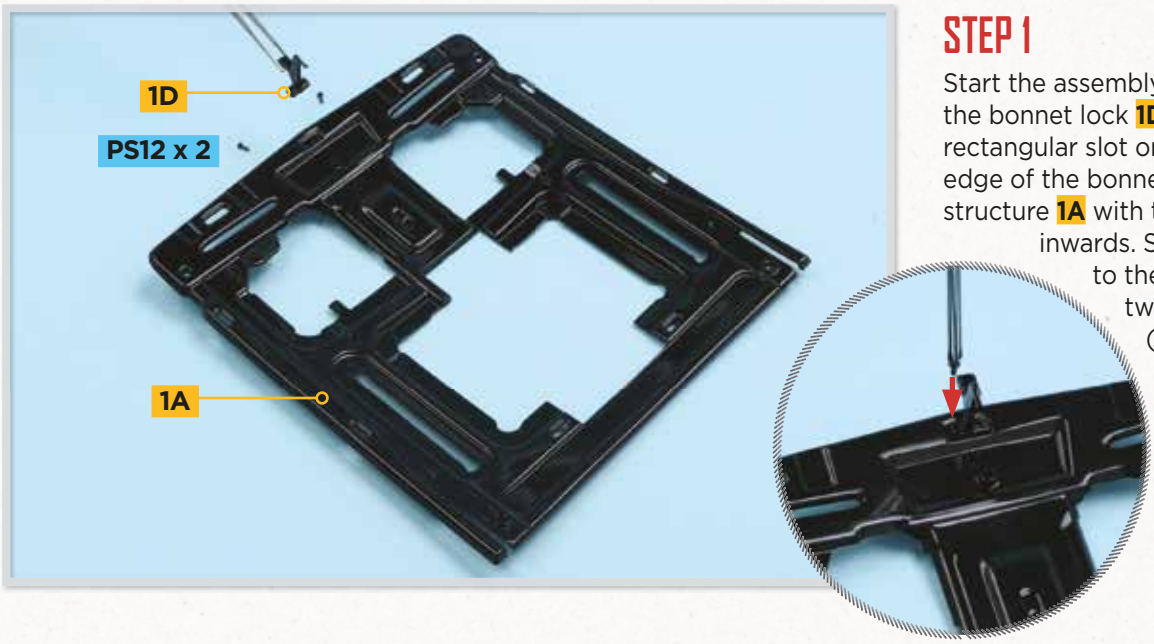
* Including spare

PM = pan head for metal

PB = pan head for plastic

Area of assembly

Stage 1: Bonnet Assembly

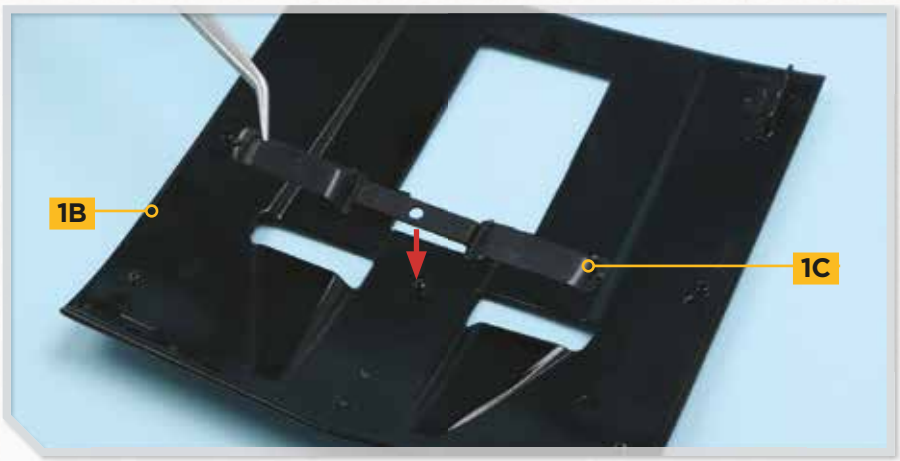


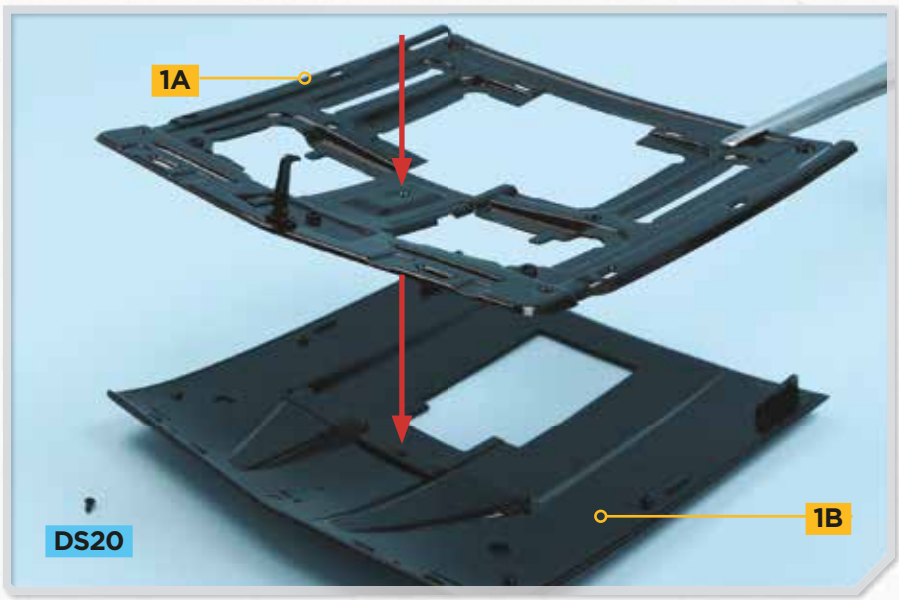
STEP 1

Start the assembly by placing the bonnet lock **1D** over the rectangular slot on the front edge of the bonnet reinforcement structure **1A** with the hook facing inwards. Secure the lock **1D** to the bonnet **1A** using two **PS12** screws (as shown, inset).

STEP 2

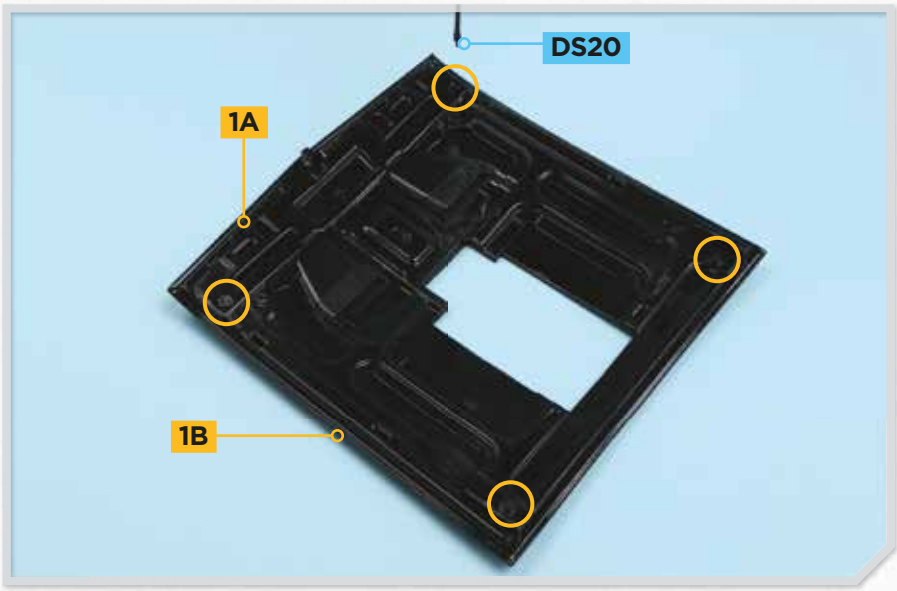
Carefully place the bonnet **1B** on a flat surface with the inside facing upwards. Position the bonnet dual scoop **1C** over the central screw post on the bonnet (arrow, right).





STEP 3

When the dual scoop **1C** is in place, align the bonnet reinforcement structure **1A** with the bonnet so that the screw hole in part **1A** aligns with the central post on the bonnet **1B** (arrows). Fix the two parts together using a **DS20** screw (as indicated by the arrows).



STEP 4

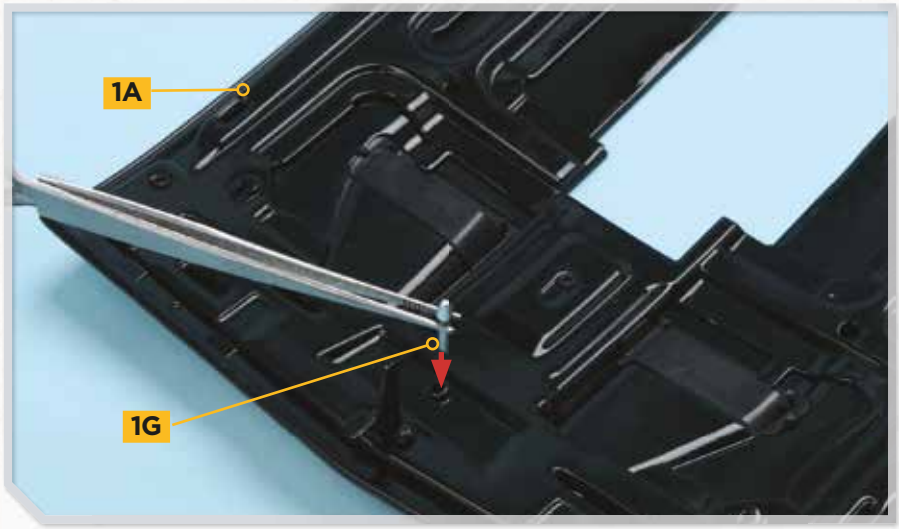
Screw a **DS20** screw into each corner of the bonnet reinforcement structure **1A** (circled) so that it is securely fixed to the bonnet **1B**.

EXPERT TIP

Cover your work surface with old sheeting or place the parts on a cutting mat to prevent the glossy painted pieces from getting scratched.

STEP 5

Insert the narrower end of the bonnet closing centering pin **1G** into the indicated hole in the bonnet reinforcement structure **1A**.

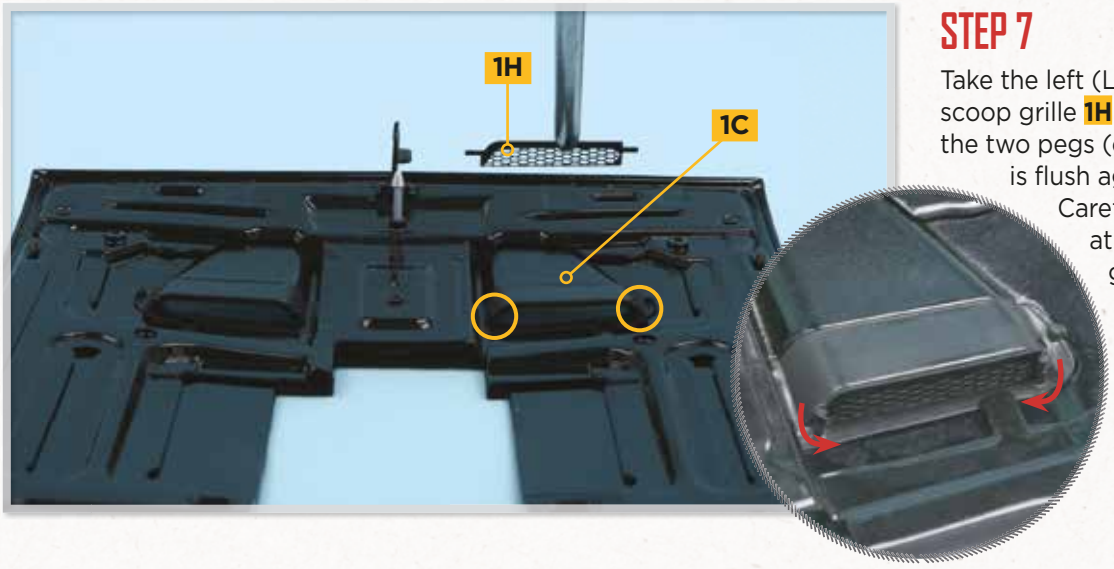


STEP 6

Turn the bonnet assembly **1B** over, making sure that it is fully supported so that the bonnet lock **1D** isn't damaged. Place the left (L) bonnet round insert **1E** into the hole on the left of the bonnet. Note that the hole is key-shaped to ensure the correct orientation.

Repeat the process with the right bonnet insert **1F**, as shown.

Stage 1: Bonnet Assembly

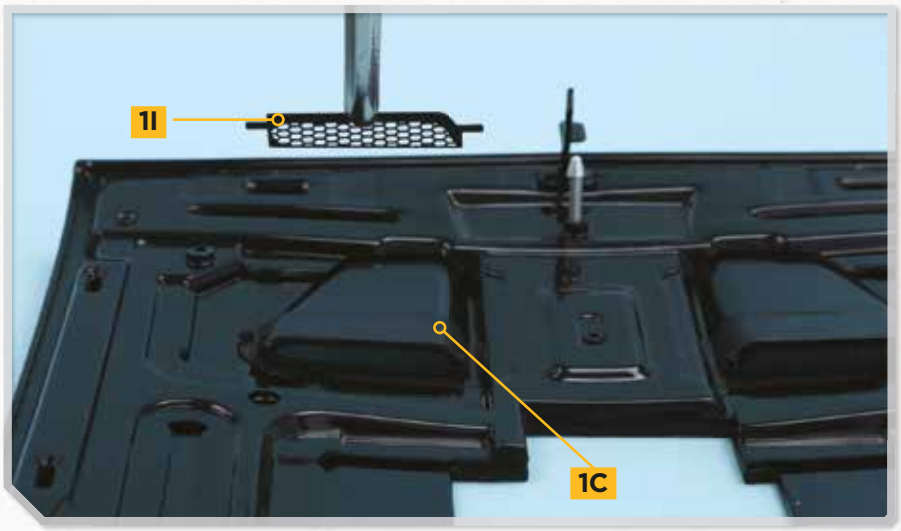


STEP 7

Take the left (L) bonnet dual scoop grille **1H** and insert it behind the two pegs (circled) so that it is flush against the vent **1C**. Carefully fold the tab at each end of the grille **1H** around the pegs on the vent **1C** (inset).

STEP 8

Repeat the process to fit the right grille **1I**, taking care when folding the tabs at each end of the grille.



COMPLETED ASSEMBLY

The bonnet lock, bonnet reinforcement structure, dual scoop vent and grilles have been fitted to the bonnet.

Ford Falcon XB GT 1973

THE MOST WANTED FALCON

The GT version of the Falcon XB was unveiled at the end of 1973. Its refined and aggressive style, and its power and performance, made it a cult car that is still admired today by a legion of fans of the popular Ford automobile.

The third generation of the Australian Falcon, which replaced the successful XY, was launched in March 1972 and sold as the XA. It was an Australian development designed exclusively for local conditions in Australia and there was no equivalent model in the United States, where the Falcon had been discontinued in 1970.

In October 1973, a second version was unveiled. This was the XB series and it introduced a stylistic update. The aim was to give the model a more aggressive and refined style, partly incorporating the DNA of the Ford Mustang, a model that at the time was not sold commercially in Australia. The most obvious changes could be seen at the front, with a much larger bonnet

The XB series coupé hardtop was developed exclusively by Australian designers. The GT version displayed its aggressive nature with exclusive colour combinations and graphics to identify the model.

The Falcon XB GT was also offered as a four-door model. With the same performance and equipment as the coupé, it offered the comfort of a classic family saloon.

1973 Ford Falcon XB GT
Technical Sheet

Engine:	Front mounted, longitudinal, 90 degree, 351 ci Cleveland V8
Displacement:	5.8 l (5,750 cc)
Power:	224 kW @ 5,400 rpm
Torque:	515 Nm @ 3,400 rpm
Fuel tank:	79.6 l (17.5 gal)
Length:	4,808 mm (189.3 in)
Width:	1,969 mm (77.5 in)
Height:	1,318 mm (51.9 in)
Wheelbase:	2,819 mm (111.0 in)
Weight:	1,587 kg (3,500 lb)
Exhaust system:	Cast-iron manifold, low restriction twin exhaust
Transmission:	4-speed manual
Front suspension:	Independent angle poised ball joint, coil springs, shock absorbers, wishbones and anti-roll bar
Rear suspension:	Hotchkiss type with semi-elliptic leaf springs, shock absorbers and live axle
Wheels & tyres:	6.0 x 14 in steel '12 slot', chrome dress rim; E70HR14
Brakes:	Servo-assisted discs

and a new design for the split grille. This had a plastic honeycomb pattern and was finished in matt black. The sidelights and indicators were placed below the revised bumpers. At the rear of the car, the saloon incorporated larger wrap-around tail lights and a slightly modified bumper.

The most popular, powerful version of the XB was the GT.

Between 1973 and 1976, 1,950 units of the Falcon XB GT were manufactured as saloons and just 949 as coupés.

Available with four-door or coupé bodywork, the XB GT was powered by an American 351 cubic inch Cleveland V8 engine that delivered 300 hp and was fed by a four-barrel Holley 750 carburettor. The standard engine connected to a four-speed manual gearbox, but a three-speed FMX automatic gearbox was available if preferred. The standard axle ratios were 3:1 for manual transmission and 2.75:1 for automatic, but these could be improved or adjusted. The brake discs on all four wheels were servo-assisted and turbo-cooled.

Inside, the complete set of instruments included a speedometer reading to 140 mph (225 km/h) and a tachometer to 8,000 rpm, combined with dials showing temperature, fuel level and oil pressure, as well as an ammeter and an electric clock. The model had a three-spoke steering wheel and reclining front seats. A number of customised details were available, such as a sunroof, electric windows, a vinyl roof and a radio-cassette sound system.

The exterior reflected the car's aggressive look with exclusive colours, bumpers matching the bodywork, a 'GT351' badge on the wings, details in matt black to contrast with the main bodywork colour, and twin exhausts. The front featured quartz-iodine fog lamps and the model was identified by a red GT badge in the bottom-left section of the grille. The XB line's GT was the swansong for the most powerful version of the Australian Falcon. The initials returned in 1992 with the EB GT to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the GT. ■

Gran Torino (2008)

It's difficult to say which is the best movie starring and directed by Clint Eastwood. One of the favourites will always be *Gran Torino*, a magnificent story of personal redemption in which the legendary Hollywood star – and his 1972 Ford Gran Torino – excels in a role tailor-made for him.

You can find them anywhere in the world: bad-tempered unsociable guys who have been left behind by life. Walt Kowalski is one of those guys. Previously a worker at Ford's Detroit plant, which has now closed down, he has lived alone since his wife died, and his children can't seem to find all that much time to visit him. He witnesses the gradual transformation of his neighbourhood, which is becoming more dangerous every day and in which families from different parts of Asia have come to live. This Korean War veteran is not interested in being nice to them. As his only consolation, from time to time he gets his 1972 Ford Gran Torino out of the garage; he fitted a new steering column when he was working in the factory, and he spends his time polishing up the bodywork and remembering how things used to be.

"The Gran Torino is his pride and joy," said Clint Eastwood. "Walt sort of is the Gran Torino. He doesn't do anything with it, except let it sit in the garage. But every once in a while he takes it out and shines it up. Walt with a glass of beer, watching his car – that's about as good as it gets for him at this stage in life."

IN SEARCH OF FORGIVENESS

The man responsible for movies such as *Unforgiven* (1992) and *Million Dollar Baby* (2004) was fascinated by this story written by Nick Schenk, which shows how contact with people from different cultural backgrounds can open up people's hearts. Although the original script was set in Minneapolis, Eastwood preferred to take the cameras to Highland Park, a neighbourhood in Detroit, where "all the families who worked in the car-manufacturing industry were interconnected in some way when the factories were at their peak." There, he concentrated on telling the story of how a disillusioned person can change and find humanity in others. "Clint is always interested in progressing, doing something that hasn't been done yet," the movies producer Rob Lorenz recalled. "Schenk's screenplay seemed to offer him precisely that. It was right for him in terms of age and personality. It seemed to have come straight out of his past, his roles as *Dirty Harry* (1971) or gunmen in Westerns, that tough and intransigent nature. And he moves it forward, he takes it somewhere a little darker, but through the redemption of his character it also allows him to explore something new." ■

Clint Eastwood as he appeared on the movie's promotional poster. Behind him is the automobile that the film is named after – one of the 92,033 Gran Torino Sports that Ford built in 1972.

A genuine classic

The film crew found an authentic dark green 1972 Ford Gran Torino Sport, fitted with a 5.7-litre Cobra-Jet V8 engine, in a classic car dealership in Utah. The car had been sold a year earlier by collector Jim Craig after he had restored it. Clint Eastwood fell in love with it, and after the filming he bought it for himself. In the end, however, he leased it to The Picture Car Vault at Warner Bros. Studios, in California, so that it could be displayed along with other classic cars.

The Roots of Custom Cars

Car manufacturers have always attempted to provide a choice for consumers, but for owners with an independent imagination, there has always been room for improvements. Out of this, the practice of 'customising' was born. Add tuning and speed upgrades, and you had what we know today as hot-rodding.

Back at the beginning of the 20th century, car ownership was a rich person's hobby, and most cars were, to a degree, bespoke – built for their owners. A chassis and engine would be ordered, and was sent to another company for the required bodywork – saloon, estate or tourer. Naturally, at the same time, engineers experimented with improving car performance, mainly for the racetrack, but also for the road. This was the norm on both sides of the Atlantic, and the practice was generally known simply as 'coachbuilding' as the term 'customising' had yet to be coined.

Hot-rodding really started with the Ford Model T, and it has been a popular choice ever since. This low-slung 1927 Roadster features a later Ford V8 with triple carburetors and a 1932 Ford grille.

IN THE BEGINNING

California is generally credited for being the birthplace of 'customising', and businesses around Los Angeles were soon adapting expensive models for stars of the silver screen. At the other end of the scale, for the person on the street, Fords were cheap, plentiful and easy to work on, and were often customised to emulate the high-dollar models. Meanwhile, also in California, owners with different priorities set about improving the performance side of their cars, often on older, more obsolete models that could be bought for next to nothing. These guys weren't that bothered about looks, just speed, and so hot-rodding was born. By the 1940s, customising and hot-rodding were two separate camps in American car culture, and wouldn't really come together until the 1950s.

WORD SPREADS

World War II actually did much to further both styles of automotive individuality. From 1942, when America entered the war, GIs from California were dispersed across the US and, later, the world, spreading the word about the car scene back home. Conversely, those stationed in the UK and Europe got to see the smaller-engined, lightweight, more sporting cars built in Europe. This had an influence on post-war customising, and hot-rodding alike. However, post-war austerity meant that the favour wasn't returned, and customising as it is known today didn't take off in Europe until the 1970s, and then only in Scandinavia and the UK.

Unfortunately, strict regulations regarding car modification in many mainland European countries (and particularly those in the EU) mean that hot-rodding has remained very

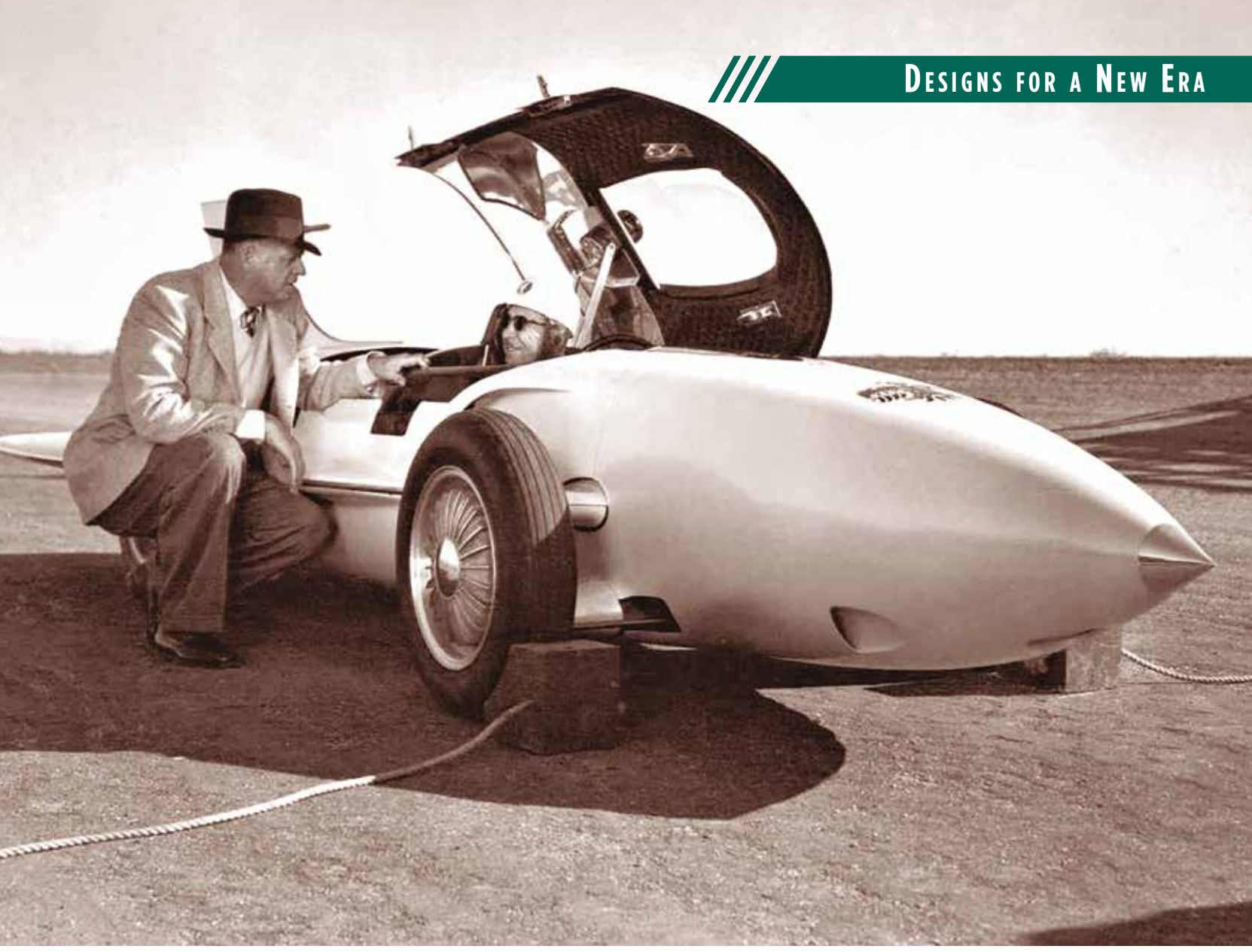
Customising in the 1950s was mainly carried out on new – or nearly new – American models. This 1950 Ford Sedan features a lowered or 'chopped' roof, with most of the chrome trim removed for a clean look.

much a minority hobby in most parts of Europe. In the US, however, hot-rodding in its many forms has become a multi-million dollar industry, even influencing the designs of the new production cars it initially rebelled against. It encompasses many styles and models of vehicle, from American produced cars to Volkswagen Beetles, to modern four-wheel-drive pick-up trucks. In this series we will take a closer look at many of these styles. ■

Media influence

The influence of the media since the 1950s has done much to put hot-rods and customs directly in the public eye and popular culture. In particular, the acclaimed George Lucas film, *American Graffiti* (1973), did much to promote the teenage cult of cruising town in a cool, customised car for audiences the world over. Some 10 years before that, a wild, hot-rodded Ford Model T did the same for an earlier generation in the US TV programme, *77 Sunset Strip*, as the many cable and satellite automotive-themed TV series of recent years provide for the current generation.

Known as the 'Kookie T', after its owner on TV, the style of Norm Grabowski's hot-rod influenced generations of hot-rodders.



General Motors XP-21 Firebird

With its aerodynamic bodywork and innovative design, General Motors' Firebird burst onto the scene in the first half of the 1950s like a jet fighter, ready to point the way towards the new challenges that the motor industry was facing.

Seeing science in action. That was what was proposed by the advertisements inserted into American newspapers for GM's Motorama in 1954, to be held at the International Amphitheatre in Chicago. Besides the usual exhibition of the company's latest models and a jolly musical show entitled *Going Places*, this Motorama generated special interest by serving as the formal presentation of what was thought to be the car of the future: the awesome Firebird XP-21.

Since the start of the 1950s, General Motors had set out to design a series of experimental vehicles that would make it possible for engineers to explore the use of new technologies and materials in automobile manufacturing. Harley Earl, head of the company's design department since 1927, took advantage of the XP-21 project to combine his love of planes with automobile design. Influenced by the jet fighters that he had seen in the then recent Korean War – such as the twin-engined, mid-wing Douglas F3D Skyknight – Earl came

Above: The three-times winner of the Indianapolis 500, Mauri Rose, agreed to test the Firebird XP-21 on an empty desert road in Arizona. The creator of the model, Harley Earl, offered him some advice before starting.

up with an automobile that looked like a plane about to take off.

GAS TURBINE-POWERED

The front of the vehicle seemed to have been taken directly from a jet, with two open front wheels, miniature wings and a vertical tailfin added. The individual cabin in which the driver sat also seemed to echo that of a jet fighter, while the large rear exhaust pipe resembled that of a jet engine. However, what powered the car was a turbocharged Whirlfire GT-302 gas turbine, nominally delivering 370 hp. It was the first time anyone had tried to propel an automobile with a gas turbine in the United States, and its viability became a major objective of the General Motors directors.

With bodywork made of fibreglass-reinforced plastic, the Firebird XP-21 weighed 1,134 kg (2,500 lb), was 5.65 m (18.5 ft) long and had a wheelbase of 2.54 m (8.3 ft). Emmett Conklin, the supervisor in charge of the project, personally took charge of testing its power. The vehicle was equipped with a two-speed gearbox, but upon changing to second the driver felt that the wheels were losing traction. Afraid that something might go wrong and he would have an accident, Conklin reduced speed. It hadn't even reached 161 km/h (100 mph).

Although, in those days, millions of Americans must have dreamed of getting behind the controls of a winged car, GM never considered taking it to the assembly line. It was a concept car, the purpose of which was none other than to serve as a showcase for the company's future ideas in design and technology, just as the later generations of the Firebird – all four of them – would do. Firebirds continued to be developed into the mid-1960s. Apart from that, high production costs and the state of gas turbine technology, which was still in its infancy, would have made it totally infeasible. However, the daring aerodynamic design and the greater fuel efficiency made the Firebird XP-21 a true legend that influenced the philosophy and the appearance of other automobiles, such as the Chevrolet Corvette and the Ford Thunderbird. ■

The XP-21 Firebird displayed important innovations in its design, such as bullet-shaped bodywork designed to minimise wind resistance; a glass roof that covered the driver's cabin and offered a panoramic view; and a set of embedded tail lights.

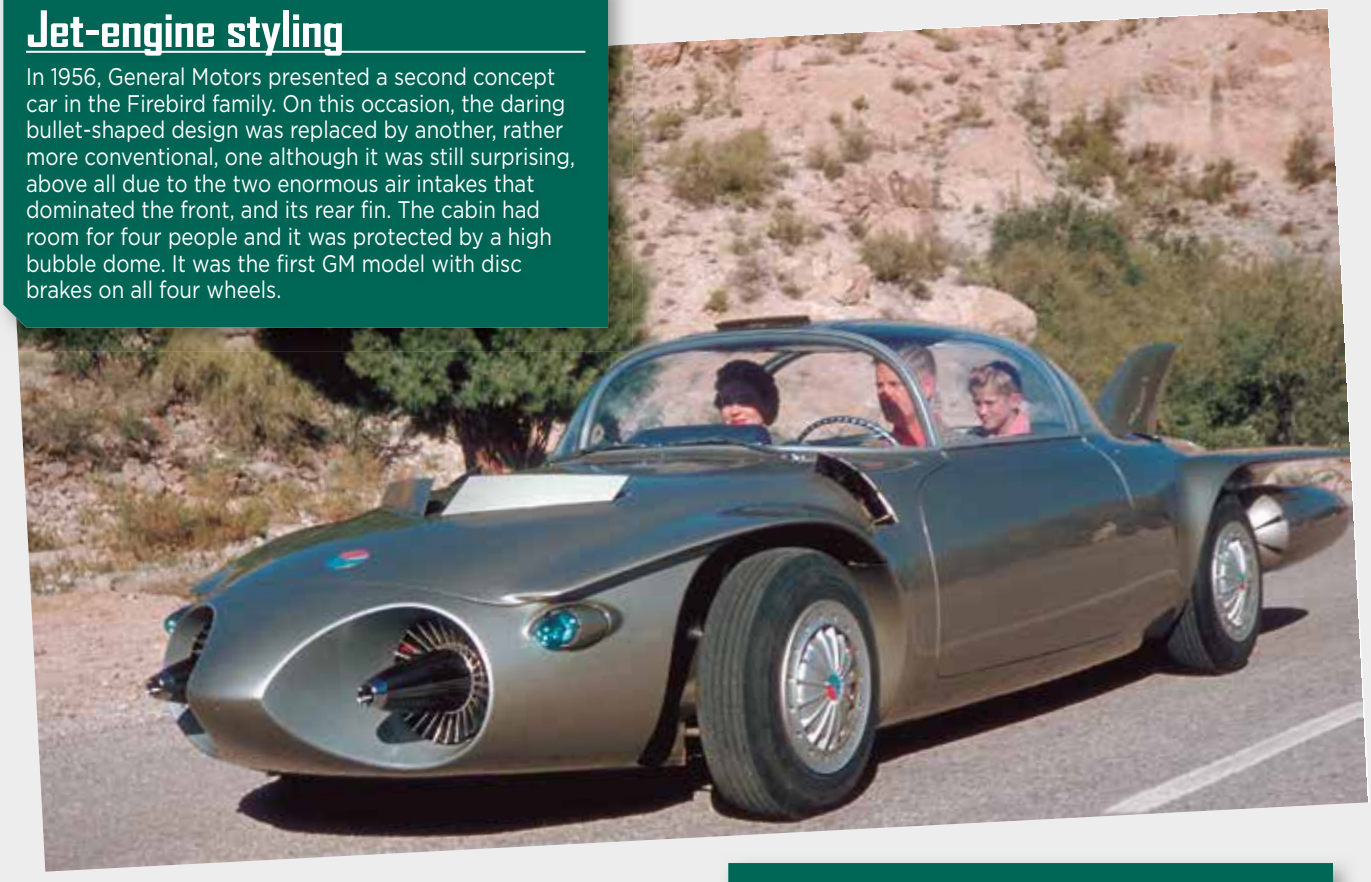
How do we stop this thing?

The Firebird's innovative engine, the 'Whirlfire Turbo-Power', was developed under the direction of Charles L. McCuen, head of the GM Research Laboratories Division. It led Emmett Conklin to fantasise about the possibility of the automobile being able to reach speeds of 322 km/h (200 mph), but it raised a logical question: how would it stop? To prevent the car from actually taking off, drum brakes had to be fitted with exterior flaps that opened to facilitate rapid cooling. The wings also had small spoilers, a small-scale version of the ones used by real planes, which also helped to reduce the vehicle's speed.

Unlike the XP-21, the Firebird III had a double bubble canopy and room for two people. Obviously, it still had the futuristic lines that characterised the Firebird family.

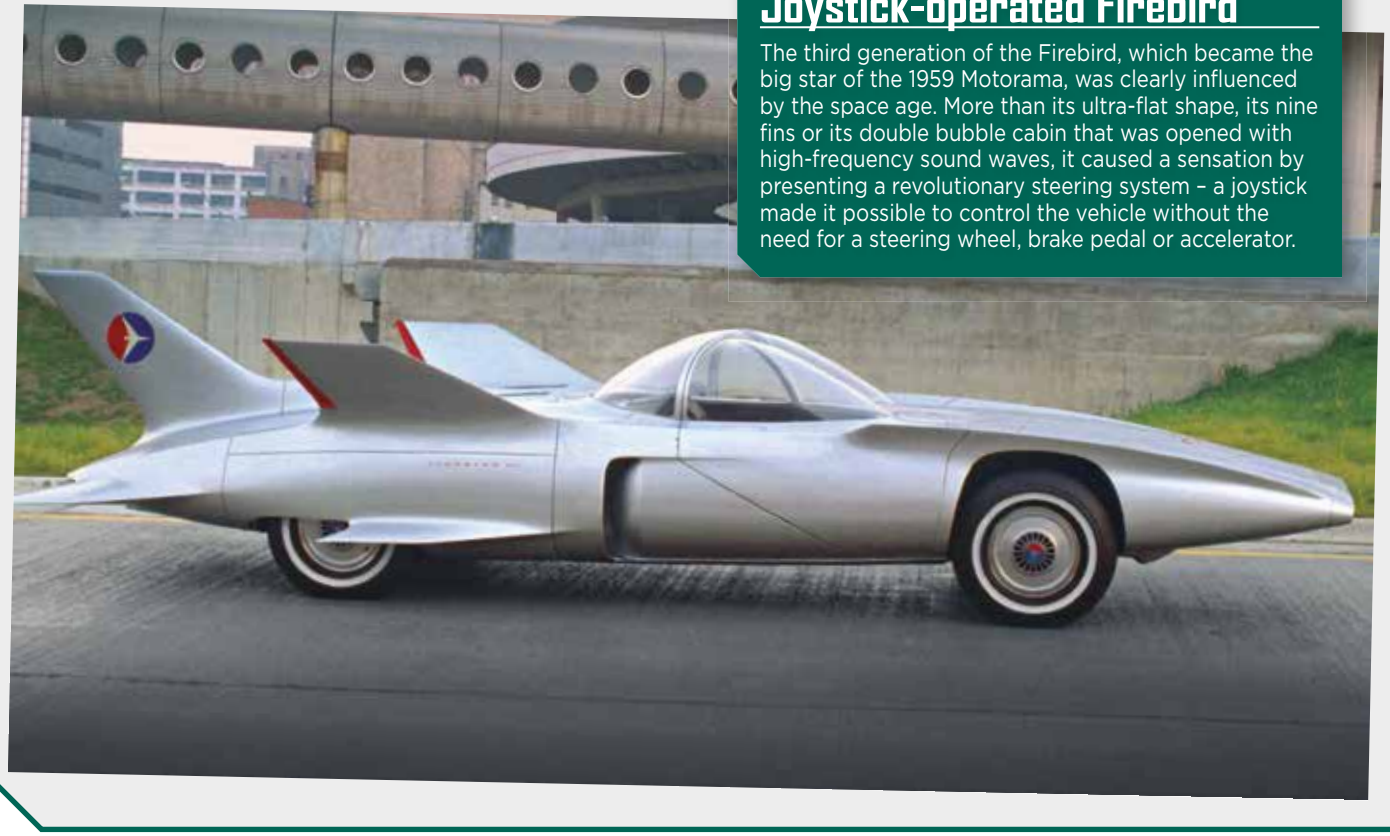
Jet-engine styling

In 1956, General Motors presented a second concept car in the Firebird family. On this occasion, the daring bullet-shaped design was replaced by another, rather more conventional, one although it was still surprising, above all due to the two enormous air intakes that dominated the front, and its rear fin. The cabin had room for four people and it was protected by a high bubble dome. It was the first GM model with disc brakes on all four wheels.



Joystick-operated Firebird

The third generation of the Firebird, which became the big star of the 1959 Motorama, was clearly influenced by the space age. More than its ultra-flat shape, its nine fins or its double bubble cabin that was opened with high-frequency sound waves, it caused a sensation by presenting a revolutionary steering system – a joystick made it possible to control the vehicle without the need for a steering wheel, brake pedal or accelerator.



COMING IN ISSUE 2

- **ASSEMBLY GUIDE**
  Parts of the first wheel rim are assembled and a tyre is fitted to the rim.
- **HISTORY OF THE FORD FALCON**
  After its US debut in 1959, the Ford Falcon became a success all around the world.
- **CARS ON SCREEN**
  The star of *Need for Speed* (2014) was a Ford Mustang Shelby GT500 Super Snake.
- **CUSTOM MADE**
  The Ford Model T was the ideal model for the first American customisers.
- **DESIGNS FOR A NEW ERA**
  Ford's futuristic X-2000 concept car looked ready for lift-off into space.

NEW PARTS:

Tyre, wheel rim parts, hub cup, wheel nuts, screws and screwdriver.

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