

# HOT RODS

Welcome to the Hot Rods section of the mag, where all the car features live. Know of a great ride that should be here? Got killer photos of cars in action along with details about them? Tip us off: email [HOTROD@hotrod.com](mailto:HOTROD@hotrod.com) or mail to HOT ROD Hot Rods, 831 S. Douglas St., El Segundo, CA 90245.



# THE 23-GT

## Bill Holland Builds, In His Own Words, “A Real Hot Rod” To Satisfy His Cravings for Canyon Roads and Vintage Shapes.

By Rob Kinnan

Photography: Randy Lorentzen

> With a low stance, svelte curb weight, and fat meats on all four corners, the 23-GT looks the part of a modern track roadster. The body, deck, and nose are fiberglass but the hood and side panels are handformed aluminum. Headwinds made the headlights. The paint is DuPont Hot Hues Meltdown Red with black scallops sprayed at Spitzer Concepts (the street rod/muscle car shop at Spitzer Enterprises). The wheels are Wheel Vintiques Lakester models (18-inch in front and 20 in rear) mounted with BFGoodrich g-Force T/A radials.



Those of us who make our living in the automotive performance aftermarket all know Bill Holland. Bill has been around the industry since the mid-'60s, first in the glory days of NHRA drag racing with involvements in everything from Modified Production cars to Top Fuel dragsters, and he was hired by Wally Parks to be the editor of *National Dragster* in 1969. After five years at the helm of the NHRA's house organ, Bill left to start his own automotive public relations firm (but kept his foot in the Top Fuel game), and he's still at it.

In all those years, Bill has built a multitude

of race cars, street machines, and other project cars and SEMA vehicles, but he never had a true hot rod, or more specifically, a true street rod for himself. He decided a few years ago to change that. But instead of a traditional, solid-axle rod that can't turn corners, Bill wanted a car he could beat on in the twisty canyon roads of Los Angeles.

Bill liked the look of the track roadsters that rose to popularity in the '40s and '50s and were in a way precursors to Sprint Cars. Adding to the Sprint Car vibe, Bill envisioned an injected, big-cube, small-block Chevy with way more power than the car's weight could ever handle—

which is almost enough in our book.

Bill came up with the basic chassis design that features mandrel-formed 2x4 rails that follow the perimeter of the T-bucket body, with a rear kick-up to support the body and fit within the turtle deck. Inner rails were added for rigidity and to enclose a pair of 3.5-gallon saddle tanks for fuel. Mike Spitzer at Spitzer Enterprises in Indianapolis talked Bill into an IndyCar-style front suspension with inboard coilovers and a triangulated four-link in the rear. Art Morrison built the rails, and Spitzer assembled it on a jig and created the suspension.

Spitzer Composites also molded the

# THE 23-GT



> LED taillights came from Watson's Streetworks, and the gorgeous chrome work was done by Advanced Plating in Nashville.

fiberglass body, which is longer and wider than a stock '23 T for more elbow room. A 4-inch foot box was also built into the firewall for taller drivers, but it is still a T-bucket and therefore not a Cadillac—you sit up and high in this car. Spitzer also built the deck and nose cone of fiberglass, as well as some of the interior bits in carbon fiber.

To satisfy the thirst for power, Bill built a 427ci small-block Chevy with a World Products Motown aluminum block and Motown aluminum 220cc heads. It has all the good parts in it, as you'd expect, and is topped with the only induction system that would fit in this track roadster: a set of Kinsler injection stacks electronically controlled by a FAST system. At 6,200 rpm, it makes 567 hp and at 4,800, it grunts out 563 lb-ft. Behind it is a Tremec six-speed and a Mark Williams modular aluminum 9-inch solid axle with 4.11:1 gears.

Wet but sans driver, the car weighs a mere 2,078 pounds with a 51/49 percent weight distribution that Bill claims does not change when a driver and passenger are added to the mix. That's 3.66 pounds per horsepower, or just a little more than a Suzuki Hayabusa motorcycle.

The car debuted at the SEMA show in 2008 and then made the group of 12 cars chosen to compete for the America's Most Beautiful Roadster (AMBR) Award at the '09 Grand National Roadster Show in Pomona, California. Bill designed the car with an eye on producing more of them if the demand is there. The chassis is in the computer at Morrison's, and Spitzer kept all the body molds (and can modify them for big guys), so if you're tempted, go to 23-GT.com.



> Here's the arrangement of the front coil-overs and billet rocker arm actuators.



> This Steer Clear transfer box avoids having to use a bunch of U-joints in the steering shaft.



> The traditional Track-T nose has been fitted with a handmade grille, while nerf bars add to the nostalgic look. Headwinds made the headlights, and the brakes are from Wilwood.

**"I HAVEN'T HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO REALLY LEAN ON THE CAR, BUT FROM WHAT LITTLE I'VE GOTTEN AFTER IT, 23-GT IS WAY MORE POTENT AND NIMBLE THAN MY C6 VETTE."**

—BILL HOLLAND

> World Products Motown aluminum block and heads make for a lightweight small-block, while a 4.125-inch bore and Callies forged 4.00-inch stroke crank create 427 ci. Manley H-beam rods carry Manley Platinum Series forged pistons, and the cam is a hydraulic roller from Crane with 234 duration at 0.050 and 0.548-inch lift. An Aviaid road race oil pan and Moroso fabricated aluminum valve covers handle the tin work. The cool injector stacks are from Kinsler, with RC Engineering injectors and a FAST system controlling it all.



> With the bomber formed-aluminum seats (from Speedway Motors and padded by Larry Sneed, who also did the rest of the upholstery), there is ample room for a 6-footer. The dash and console (which Bill designed) are carbon fiber. The dash is fitted with a matching complement of Auto Meter carbon-fiber gauges, and the console (*not visible here*) has a pouch that holds an iPod and cell phone with a pair of 12v power taps at the bottom. A Painless Performance wire loom was employed, and an Optima battery supplies the juice.

Photo: Bill Holland



> Bill doesn't plan on babying the T, as proven here by a run through the cones at a test session soon after the car was finished.  
**HRM**

