

New Hubs for Old Style



Buick finned drums with Wilwood disc rotors, lugless kidney bean wheels, bias-ply dirt track rubber, and three-pronged knock-offs; the unseen one-piece knock-off hubs from Hollywood Hot Rods are the piece that pulls together this whole cool combination.

Putting Together A Traditional Rolling Stock Combo

By Tim Bernsau & Troy Ladd

Before hot rodding was an industry with a huge aftermarket providing virtually every part for virtually every application, hot rodders had to design and build their own performance parts. Mechanical problem-solving was an essential part of the hobby. It still is for a lot of hot rodders.

Early on during the buildup of a similar duo of Deuce roadsters, owner Jon Riddle and builder Troy Ladd from Hollywood Hot Rods in Burbank, California, decided on the perfect tire and wheel choice for the high-end, traditionally styled rides, choosing PS Engineering custom-fabricated 500-16 kidney bean wheels with Indy-style knockoffs rolling on skinny Coker dirt track tires, with So-Cal's Buick-style drums/Wilwood disc brake system behind them.

The custom-built PS Engineering wheels are 5 inches wide, nice and narrow for the bias-ply tires. PS



The Hollywood Hot Rods one-piece knockoff hub (left) is built to replace the knock-off adapter from PS Engineering that is matched with the hub that comes with So-Cal Speed Shop's outstanding Buick-style front brake system.

Engineering provides a knockoff adapter that pairs with the So-Cal backing plate, bolting to the lug assembly to convert it into a knockoff. It's a great piece, but in this case, left the front wheels sticking out too far and exposing too much of the fins on the brake drums. One solution would be to go to a wider rim, but the 500-16 Firestone dirt track tires from Coker wouldn't fit a rim wider than five inches without bulging the sidewalls. Radials tires would've solved that, but that wasn't the right look.

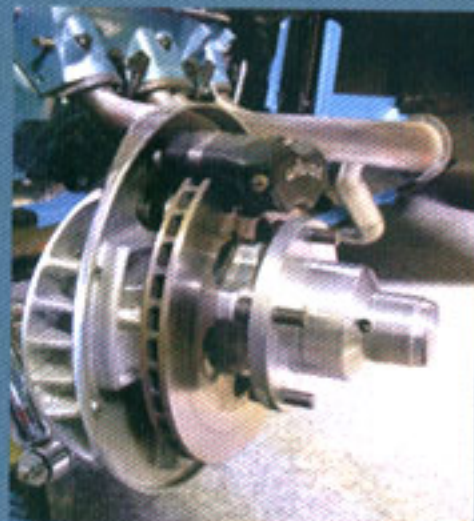
Troy solved the problem with a little old-time hot rodding mechanical

ingenuity, building his own one-piece knockoff hubs to replace So-Cal hubs and PS Engineering adapters. The CNC-machined hubs bolt to the rotors. Drums and rims are mounted on the hubs and held in place by the spinner. It looks clean and pulls the wheel in by about 3/4 of an inch, all the space it needs to look right.

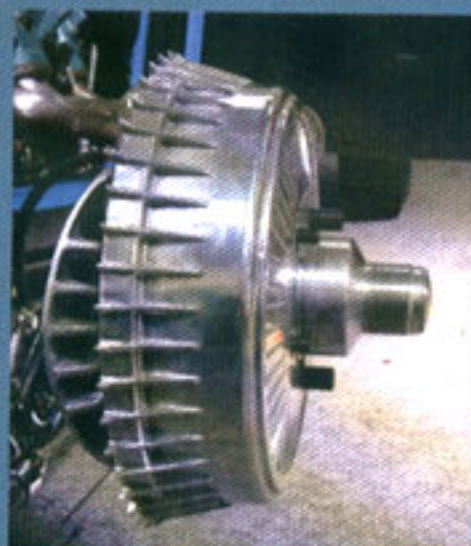
The new hub could also be used to run knockoff wheels plus disc brakes without the drums on full-fendered car. The one-piece hub would also locate the front wheels properly into the fenders.

Hollywood Hot Rods has started

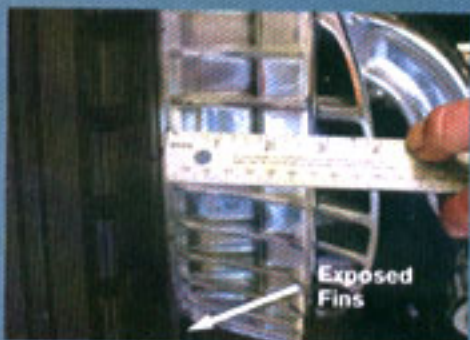
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With the tires and wheels and brake drums removed, it is easy to compare the difference between the knockoff adapters (left), which were included with the PS Engineering wheels chosen for the Deuce project and the new one-piece knockoff hubs (right). The adapter is mounted to the Wilwood rotor using the hub that So-Cal offers for its brake kit.



The difference is even more apparent once the drums are installed. The adapter spacer on the outside of the drum on the left measures approximately 5/8 inch. On the right, you can see that the drum slides on right over the one piece hub from Hollywood Hot Rods, eliminating that 5/8 inch.



Being scientific, we measured from the lip of each wheel to the edge of the So-Cal brake drums to find out how much offset we gained with the one-piece hub. The results: a whole 3/4 inch. On the left, the two piece hub leaves the fins completely exposed. The one-piece hub pulls the fins farther into the rim, which looks a whole lot better.



There is a practical advantage to pulling the wheels closer in. Wheel offset is a major factor affecting scrub radius, the distance from the front tire centerline to the point where the kingpin inclination angle (the angle between the upper and lower ball joints) meets the road. Excessive scrub radius causes tire and suspension wear, difficult steering, and bumpsteer during braking.



Of course the only thing that makes us happier than proper steering geometry is the perfect traditional look of the rolling stock on this '32 roadster.

making these one-piece hubs available to anybody going after this look. You're seeing them first on Jon Riddle's roadsters, but you could be seeing them next on your own hot rod. **R&C**

Hollywood Hot Rods
40 E. Palm Ave., Dept. R&C
Burbank, CA 91502
(818) 842-6900
www.hollywoodhotrods.com