

# An early Ford makes a terrific investment.

—by Bob Drake

In these days of financial uncertainty and a shaky economy, an investment in an early V-8 Ford (1932-48) is historically as solid an investment as gold. Values for fully restored Fords and hot rods of vintage years have not declined with the housing market, but have remained high and relatively stable. If you wisely buy a classic Ford and rebuild it with the best parts, the chances are that you cannot lose money.

For the mechanically-inclined, buying an early Ford V-8 fixer-upper and rebuilding it with high quality replica parts can turn a lucrative profit.

## But that's not the whole picture. Money is far from the only reward that comes from rebuilding an old Ford.



1936 Ford Convertible Sedan  
Built by Al Casteen



As a young boy, Bob Drake built models. As a teen, he built the real thing.



Gene Rayburn wins best of show for his highly customized '51 Ford pickup at the Ratrod-O-Rama.



Ford cars roll off the assembly line in 1932.

**It's a great hobby.**

**It's readily apparent that people get a tremendous amount of enjoyment** from building cars. Since the early 1950s, restoring early Fords and building hot rods has been one of America's favorite pastimes. The car in post-WWII years became more than just a means of transportation: It became a status symbol and offered people a way to express their pride and individuality. When someone builds a car or works on it themselves, the value of the car as a means of self expression is ramped up considerably.

**It creates camaraderie among friends and family.**

**People with cars love getting together!** Most communities have street rod clubs and rod runs. Concours car shows are loads of fun and a great way to meet other people in the sport. Judged shows make for friendly (if sometimes intense) competition and they motivate builders to create unique praise-worthy cars. And there is no better way to bond with a son or daughter than when you include them in your car project.

**It's a great way to learn about American history.**

**Inevitably, car builders learn about the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s** when they work on these cars. How did Henry Ford manage to put America on wheels? Why was it necessary for him to launch his own top secret program in 1930-31 to save the Ford Motor Company? Why was Ford's flathead V-8 engine revolutionary? Why is the 1932 Ford *the* Classic American Hot Rod? Did Ford actually build jeeps and bomber aircraft during WWII?



The 1932 Ford Deluxe Roadster



Mike, through his experience in mold-making, became Bob Drake's chief engineer.



Extraordinary sculptor Evgeni Vodenitcharov creates the V-8 Goddess sculpture for Bob Drake's 2008 SEMA Show exhibit. It will be 8.5' tall.



Bob Drake's General Manager Wes Webb shows a customer the '34 grille at the LA Roadster Show.



Bob and Pat Drake ready to take a spin in the '32 hiboy.



There is general agreement that knowing history helps those of us in the present to avoid mistakes, and can guide us in making wise strategies. In hindsight, Henry Ford's costly investment in the infrastructure of his company in 1930-31 (and creating a revolutionary new V-8 engine block cast in one piece) may have been among the smartest business decisions of the 20th Century. Perhaps that is exactly what the United States needs to do now to recover our economy: invest in our infrastructure.

### It's hands-on mechanics and engineering.

**The best mechanics are born when they jump into classic cars to figure them out and rebuild them.** Working on these cars teaches us how to apply ourselves, create new solutions, and to be innovative. The skills learned are often easily transferred to other kinds of work, even to different careers. (Bob Drake's early adulthood car-building hobby and his experience as a draftsman in the aerospace industry primed him to be a leading manufacturer of Ford auto parts.) The end result for the builder is a deep satisfaction in hard-won skills.

### You can take pride in participating in a great industry.

**The hot rod industry is BIG.** It encompasses car fans, individual builders, local and national auto parts stores and distributors, parts manufacturers, magazine publishers, technical writers, photographers, and CAD designers. It offers great career possibilities for young people. Car builders are part of something bigger than themselves, a culture within American culture.

### You help build valuable business relationships and profitable enterprise.

**It's Economics 101.** You want parts. You buy them from your best sources. If they don't exist, your feedback can drive the manufacturing of new parts. Your purchase of some hot rod taillights has a ripple effect through the whole community. You've upgraded your car and have gotten a great local buzz on them, while your purchase makes it possible for your retailer or parts manufacturer to employ a workforce and to create new and better parts. Everybody in the game plays an important part.

### You can improve the value of your very own investment.

**Every time you change out a patch panel,** add a new California Swan side-view mirror, or new instrument gauges to your car, you are upgrading it in a very real, tangible way. You've increased the value of your investment. It's totally unlike the instant depreciation that occurs as soon as you drive a new car off the lot. With a classic Ford, you can actually get your money out it.

### You can actually use your investment!

**Your 1933 Ford three-window coupe is not like a bar of gold locked up in Ft. Knox.** It's not a paper investment like a 401-K or a savings account. You can actually drive it and have fun with it! And it's the frosting on the cake to get those enthusiastic thumbs-ups from everyone you pass. You couldn't ask for a better deal!

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