

Gordon Tronson

THE BUILDER

If you have to ask why, you'll never understand Gordon Tronson.

There is absolutely no practical reason to build a twin-engine, 1,000-horsepower hot rod, by yourself, in your garage. If you can somehow make sense of that, try this: Unlike practically every other twin-engine car ever built—and there have been quite a few, from drag racers to street cars—the power plants in Tronson's car are mounted side-by-side. It's much easier to put them in-line, but Tronson doesn't do easy.

"I was laying in bed one night and I said, 'I'm going to build something no one else has got,'" says the 58-year-old in his bouncy Kiwi accent, a broad smile spreading across his tan face. "So I dreamed this up. I did it because I could. It was supposed to be a rat rod, but it turned out to be a frickin' show car."

He bought the body, but built virtually everything else by hand. He bent the frame tubes himself, designed and built the suspension himself, and engineered the drive train himself. (The engines are harnessed together via a stout belt from an industrial blower.) Six months and thousands of dollars later, the result is so refined, so polished, that people are constantly asking him if he's an engineer. He's not. He installs phones for a living. "I probably should have been an engineer," he says. "I should have owned a hot-rod shop. But there are a lot of guys going broke building hot rods."

Tronson had a taste of that. Between 1989 and 1991, he made a living building knock-off Lamborghinis here in Las Vegas. Every bit, from the body panels to the suspension, was handmade. It took nine months to produce a single car, and so many hours that Tronson figured his hourly wage at \$5. When Lamborghini found out about his work and sued him for \$5 million, he knew it was time to get into another line of work. They dropped the lawsuit, and he went into telecommunications.

Most weekends you'll find him working, alone, in the garage behind his Henderson home. Pick your way past the convertible limo with a working hot tub mounted in the back, the crusty rat rod with a custom front suspension, the race cars, motorcycles and restoration projects waiting his attention, and there you'll find him, wrenching on something long into the night. "We're only here once," he says, in about as philosophical a moment as he has time for. "We might as well make the most of it."

