

**(Letter sent to Chevrolet management by Duntov)**

**"THOUGHTS PERTAINING TO YOUTH, HOT RODDERS, AND CHEVROLET"**

The Hot Rod movement and interest in things connected with hop-up and speed is still growing. As an indication: the publications devoted to hot rodding and hop-upping, of which some half dozen have a very large circulation and are distributed nationally, did not exist some six years ago.

From cover to cover, they are full of Fords. This is not surprising that the majority of hot rodders are eating, sleeping, and dreaming modified Fords. They know Ford parts from stern to stern better than Ford people themselves.

A young man buying a magazine for the first time immediately becomes introduced to Ford. It is reasonable to assume that when hot rodders or hot rod-influenced persons buy transportation, they buy Fords. As they progress in age and income, they graduate from jalopies to second-hand Fords, then to new Fords.

Should we consider that it would be desirable to make these youths Chevrolet-minded? I think that we are in a position to carry out a successful attempt. However, there are many factors against us:

1. Loyalty and experience with Ford.
2. Hop-up industry is geared with Ford.
3. Law of number-thousands are and will be working on Fords for active competition.
4. Appearance of Ford's overhead V8, now one year ahead of us.

When a superior line of GM V8's appeared, there were remarkably few attempts to develop these, and none too successful. Also, the appearance of the V8's Chrysler was met with reluctance even though the success of Ardun-Fords conditioned them to the acceptance of Firepower.

This year is the first one in which isolated Chrysler development met with success. The Bonneville records are divided between Ardun-Fords and Chryslers.

Like all people, hot rodders are attracted by novelty. However, bitter experience has taught them that new development is costly and long, and therefore they are extremely conservative. From my observation, it takes an advanced hot rodder some three years to stumble toward the successful development of a new design. Overhead Fords will be in this stable between 1956 and 1957.

The slide rule potential of our RPO V8 engine is extremely high, but to let things run their natural course will put us one year behind-and then not too many hot rodders will pick Chevrolet for development. One factor which can largely overcome this handicap would be the availability of ready-engineered parts for higher output:

If the use of the Chevrolet engine would be made easy and the very first attempts would be crowned with success, the appeal of the new RPO V8 engine will take hold and not have the stigma of expensiveness like the Cadillac or Chrysler, and a swing to Chevrolet may be anticipated. This means the development of a range of special parts-camshafts, valves, springs, manifolds, pistons, and such-should be made available to the public.

To make good in this field, the RPO parts must pertain not only to the engine but to the chassis components as well. In fact, the use of light alloys and brake development, such as composite drums and discs, are already on the agenda of the Research and Development group.

These thoughts are offered for what they are worth-one man's thinking aloud on the subject.

Signed: Z. Arkus-Duntov

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