



Ed "Big Daddy" Roth: His Life, Times, Cars, and Art

By Pat Ganahl

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Who was Ed Roth? The answer depends on who you ask and when they knew him. To some, he was a counter-culture, greasy-fingernailed, renaissance man of the mid-20th Century. To others, he's the creator of Rat Fink and builder of some of the most creative custom cars to ever get a coat of candy paint, cars like the Beatnik Bandit, the Mysterion, and the Outlaw. Some knew him as a devout Mormon, others recall a Harley-riding hellion with a devilish glint in his eye. He was a force of nature and a creative genius whose work had a profound influence on popular culture and helped spawn numerous subcultures. Big Daddy's rise to fame began in the '50s, and peaked with the custom car boom of the early '60s. This book covers it all, from art to custom cars, monster shirts to VW-powered trikes, and the wild life that brought it all together.

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Editorial Review

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Emanating from southern California's hot rod and surfing scenes, Ed "Big Daddy" Roth's art captivated the nation--well, young breeder males, at least--in the years around 1960. Ganahl's coffee-table biography is a cornucopia of facts and color reproductions, including tee-shirt shop and county fair perennial Rat Fink and plenty of Roth's wild, customized vehicles. Rat Fink may have been created "to show what Mickey Mouse's father . . . looked like," but as underground comics god and former Roth staffer Robert Williams says, "It was the cars that made Ed." Roth rivaled George Barris in flamboyant hot rod designs, and his were "the first," Ganahl avers, "to take the automobile . . . into the irrational world of abstract thought." With their fanciful lines, monstrous motors, and palpable attitude, early triumphs like *Outlaw* and *Beatnik Bandit* attracted attention at auto shows. When plastic model kits of Roth cars and characters appeared, he became famous, and Rat Fink became a pop-cultural icon. Ganahl's text occasionally wanders, but as a pictorial archive, this package is peerless. *Mike Tribby*

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About the Author

Pat Ganahl is the author of several CarTech books, including definitive works on Ed "Big Daddy" Roth and Von Dutch. He is a life-long hot rodder and has been the editor of Street Rodder, Hot Rod, Rod & Custom, and The Rodder's Journal. He lives in Southern California.

Users Review

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Gina Melton:

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