

## The Bernie Couch Story

Bernie was born in Yorba Linda, California, in 1924. "In May 1940, when I was 16, I bought my Deuce Roadster for \$285 from McCoy Mills Ford in Fullerton, they're still in business. The car had been Dick Hartzler's, Dick and my brother Morey belonged to the Tornado Car Club. Morey told me Dick traded the Roadster towards a 1937 Ford after he spent five days in jail for street racing. I began making payments of \$14.30 a month and working full time while I was in high school. Additionally, I delivered the Fullerton Tribune newspaper to help pay for the car—but when I couldn't buy tires, I had to quit the route."



During WWII, Bernie joined the Navy where his ship, the USS Anzio Coral Sea was engaged in 10 battles in the Pacific. Bernie was assigned to the boiler room (probably the most dangerous, noisiest, and hottest places onboard the ship). "It was 140 degrees where I worked."



After the war Bernie attend Fullerton Jr. College on the G.I. Bill. Bernie also worked at a gas station and in a print shop, "I worked the night shift to earn 50 cents worth of gas, enough to go to El Mirage."



Racing at El Mirage meant removing the headlights, bumpers, windshield, and fenders. Bernie began with a stock Flathead V-8, so every part removed helped him go faster. But all these parts were carefully stored in the back of his garage.



In 1948, Bernie's car was displayed at the first Hot Rod Show in the Los Angeles Armory. The birthplace of Hot Rod Magazine.

