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profile

Rolling Thunder – 502bhp in a 1940 Chevrolet Coupe Sports Deluxe

THIS gorgeous yellow 1940 Chevrolet Coupe Sports Deluxe was one of the American vehicles which took part in the Parliamentary Classic Car Run. Owned by American Car Imports (ACI) of Wood Green, and insured by Footman James, the car is respectfully known as 'Rolling Thunder' and is in fact, the original link between ACI and its winning reputation in drag racing.

The vehicle came to ACI in a part exchange deal in 2001 when an Irish drag racer traded it in for a new Ford Lightning pickup. Anthony Cohen, partner of American Car Imports along with friend Paul Strudwick, had to collect the Coupe from Ireland, and as a result the drag racing connection was made. Who would have thought that this vehicle, along with the encouragement of one of ACI's drag racing customers, would have led to the formation of an FIA European Championship winning team in the top Methanol Dragster Class, and one of the first European Drag racing team in the history of the NHRA to win an event in the States!

The stunning hot rod was designed and built by Keith Baker whose regular business,



Classic Cycle Works, undertakes the most awesome paint jobs for discerning owners of Harley Davidsons. Before he got his hands on it in 1985 it had been a drag car with slicks, regularly running the quarter mile in the Los Angeles area. Keith then chopped and raked the roof, strengthened the chassis, and turned the car into an awesome ZZ Top machine.

The car now boasts a 502bhp, 502cu.in. Chevrolet crate motor which sits comfortably within the 64-year-old frame, mated with a TH400 three-speed automatic. This was fitted by Euro American Car services who also repainted the car in school bus yellow- it certainly looks nothing like Chevrolet intended in the Forties.

Fatter rubber covering the Halibrand rims, bigger engine, traction bars and many other refinements make this classic Chevy totally unique! The car also sports a new Hurst shifter and Budnik custom made billet steering wheel in addition to lots of other cool bits.

With Black Richmond Vinyl seats, Wilton carpet and racing harnesses, this car is comfortable to drive and is often seen frequenting the coffee bars of Hampstead and the Kings Road. You can always come down to see and hear 'Rolling Thunder' in American Car Imports Showroom in Wood Green, along with a 355hp Boss Hoss and the winning 3000bhp Dragster!