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## Fact Sheet

### *Hot Rods and Cool Mods: The Vocabulary*

**Over its long history, the hobby of modifying and customizing automobiles has developed a distinctive vocabulary of colorful definitions and descriptive language. Some primary examples:**

#### **Car types:**

- *Hot rods* typically are vehicles customized cosmetically and modified mechanically, often using an older vehicle as a starting point. The earliest hot rods were essentially performance vehicles. Over time, hot rods became more refined as their builders became older, more skillful and more affluent.
- *Mods* (modifieds) are stock cars with a limited number of added or subtracted components, typically performance-related rather than cosmetic.
- *Rat rods* are reactionary vehicles – typically rough-and-ready performance cars similar to the earliest hot rods and not owner-built show cars. They reflect a revival of interest in hot rodding in its earlier form.
- *Customs* were initially modified new production vehicles, but over time became hot rod variants. Emphasis shifted away from new vehicles and cosmetic changes came to outweigh performance upgrades, eventually requiring customs to be differentiated in categories ranging from “mild” to “extreme.”
- *Resto-rods* are mildly customized older cars with updated powertrain and suspension but largely intact exteriors. In some cases, resto-rods are so similar to restored antique cars that only larger engines and features such as larger wheels and metallic paint betray their past.
- *Tuners* are contemporary variations of the hot rod theme – vehicles with added peripherals, such as custom wheels, spoilers and exhaust systems, but with fewer major body modifications. Tuners emphasize contemporary vehicle electronics, including owner modifications to on-board computer systems and the addition of high-powered stereo systems.
- *Blinged* cars are contemporary production vehicles modified with custom accessories, particularly oversized chrome wheels and powerful audio and video systems. These cars

reflect the urban “bling-bling” fashion trends of the 2000s. The new Chrysler 300C is one of the most favored vehicles for blinged conversions.

### **Terms and techniques:**

- *Bobbed:* The fenders or frame rails of the vehicle have been shortened.
- *Channeled:* The floor has been cut to fit around the frame rails rather than on top of them, giving a lowered appearance.
- *Chopped:* A hardtop car that has had its roof lowered.
- *Decked:* Chrome details and trim from the trunk have been removed and the area where they were located smoothed over.
- *Fadeaways:* Fenders that taper back into the body.
- *Filled roof:* Replacement of an original wood-and-fabric roof insert with a welded steel panel.
- *Frenched:* Recessed head lights or tail lights have been smoothed into the body panels.
- *Headers:* A fine-tuned exhaust manifold, usually chromed or coated, that is more efficient than stock versions.
- *Lowered:* A vehicle that sits lower than stock height through suspension or frame modifications.
- *Nosed:* Removing chrome details and trim from the hood and smoothing over their former locations.
- *Pancaked:* Changing the hood to a lower profile.
- *Peaked:* Adding a molded accent seam to the hood.
- *Pinched:* Narrowing the front frame to match the grille shell.
- *Raked:* The front end of the vehicle has been lowered more than the back. Can also refer to a slanted windshield.
- *Rolled:* Removing the rear bumper or gas tank and adding a replacement panel that “rolls” under the body.
- *Sectioned:* Removing a horizontal section of bodywork to lower the overall height of the vehicle.

- *Shaved*: The door handles and body trim have been removed and smoothed over.
- *Slammed*: A significantly lower vehicle, dropped as low as possible.
- *Street machine*: A street-legal, highly modified car or truck built during or after 1949.
- *Street rod*: A street-legal, highly modified car or truck built before or during 1948.
- *Stock*: An unaltered vehicle or component.
- *Suicide doors*: Doors that hinge at the rear.
- *Tubbed*: The rear frame and body have been modified to allow for extra-wide wheels and tires that do not protrude past the fenders.
- *Z'ed* [pronounced ZEED]: The frame is cut, usually in front of the rear wheels, and a section welded in to raise the axle so that large tires can be used at stock body heights.

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