

Swingin' Pedals

An easy-to-install option for that homebuilt hot rod

Is space a premium in that hot rod of yours, or are ya just tryin' to hammer together a cool traditional ride? Well, I recently came across a brand new version of those popular (and nearly impossible to find) Ansen-style swing pedals from the early '60s that ended up saving me a lot of time and energy when it came to this particular aspect of my latest project.

We all know how difficult it is to stuff ten pounds of, well, stuff, in a five-pound bag—especially when shoehorning V-8s and manual trannys into tiny Ts and As. Reno Rod & Custom's combination brake and clutch master swinging pedal assemblies are not only an option that could save a bunch of aggravation in this regard but the setup looks as cool as it works, too. Best of all they're affordable, American-made, and come complete with a master cylinder assembly, mounting bracket, pedal arm assemblies, and early-style pedal pads as well.

It all started out one afternoon when Editor Brennan asked how my Model A pickup was progressing. Always needing to vent a bit I proceeded to tell him about the difficulty I was running into trying to shoehorn the OEM '48 Ford clutch and brake pedal assembly I had into the diminutive space between my T5 and the framerail of my A chassis. The '48 Ford assembly would have been perfect if only it was designed totally differently—meaning of course that it wasn't anywhere near perfect for my situation. In fact, given the amount of modification and bracketry required to make it fit (and maybe even work) I'd more than likely have an easier time building a new chassis—a typical situation in my usual style of pipedream project planning. As luck would have it, and as he often does, Brian again came to my immediate rescue. "Turn around and grab that box on the floor over



These cool swinging clutch and brake pedal setups manufactured and sold by Reno Rod & Custom are exact replicas of those legendary and extremely rare Ansen setups popular on hot rods and racecars back in the '60s. They're affordable, American-made, and come complete with a master cylinder assembly, mounting bracket, pedal arm and pushrod assemblies and early-style pedal pads.



My latest homebuilt jalopy was the benefactor of one of these swingin' pedal setups and, I have to admit, it really helped to solve a bit of a quandary caused by a severe lack of space between the pickup's framerails and the Flathead/T5 combo shoehorned within.



The design of the setup is simple and straightforward and so is its installation. That said, keep in mind who's doin' the install here. In this case I sorta dovetailed the pedal assembly install with that cool side-steer setup you may remember from last issue. Since both upgrades occupy nearly the same space under the cowl I went back and forth between the two chores in the early segments of the job. To make things a bit easier in this respect I started out by removing the cowl/fuel tank from the cab so I'd have easier access.

there—it might be the answer," he said. The box contained the aforementioned pedal assembly which Brian had recently photographed for a new product release for inclusion in an upcoming Window Shopper. "If ya think it'll do the trick, give Johnnie at Reno a call and tell him we're keepin'



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Once the cowl was out of the way I began figuring out the best way to get both my new steering and pedal assembly situated. Would I be better off locating the box below and behind the pedal assembly, or above and in front? Correct positioning of the steering Pitman arm won out and below and behind ended up being the only way to go. That decided, I put aside the pedals for a little while and fabbed the steering box main bracket first—the pedal assembly installation would be carried out with this in mind. After the main portion of the box bracket was roughed out and temporarily installed I grabbed a couple of C-clamps and hung the pedal assembly from the lower half of the firewall, making sure there'd be ample clearance between the steering box and the pedal arms which straddled it.



it and doing an install story with it." Not being one to look a gift horse in the mouth, I grabbed the box, thanked him for his offer and headed back to my office and the phone. Well, Johnnie was as generous as I'd hoped and, within minutes, I was the proud recipient of a new brake and clutch pedal assembly.

The next morning I was out in the garage, pedal assembly in one hand and steering box in the other (by now you'll most likely have seen the recent side-steer install story I did that included a reference to this pedal assembly). Though the Reno Rod & Custom Ansen-style swinging pedal assembly installation is really a straight forward affair and by no means rocket science, every situation is different, especially when I'm involved. I had to start out by trying to figure out how to get a steering setup and the pedal assembly to occupy nearly the same space under the dash. After a couple of hours of head scratching and trial and error I finally settled on a plan of attack and got to work.

All's well that ends well and later that afternoon the pedals and master cylinder were in place and I was ready to move on to the step in completing yet another signature Rizzo homebuilt jalopy. So take a peek at the installation of a neat Reno Rod & Custom pedal assembly that just might speed you along to finishing up that hot rod project of your own. **SR**

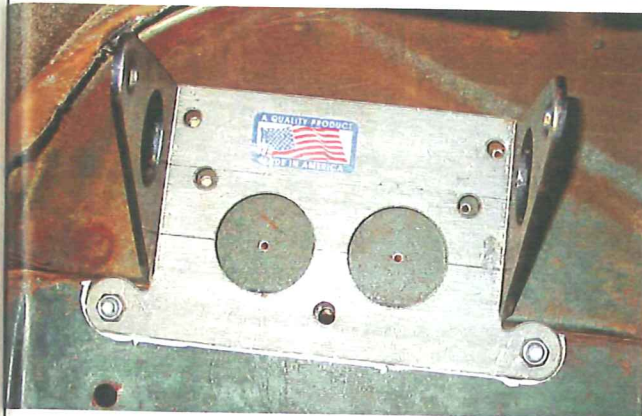
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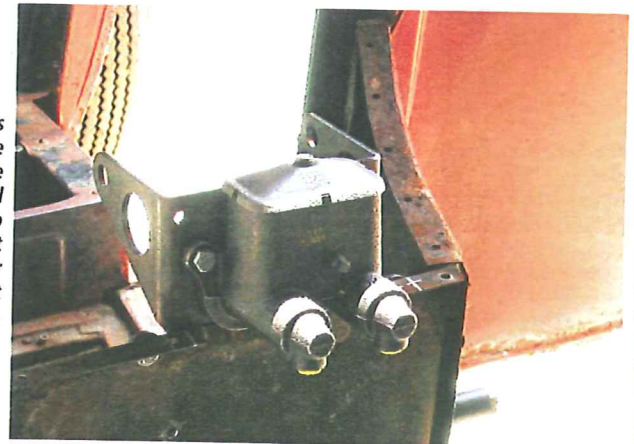
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After I slid the cowl back in I marked and center-punched the balance of the bracket mounting holes. I then drilled a few small diameter starter holes in both the upper and lower sections of the firewall.



I was so intent on handling the mounting holes that I plum forgot the holes for the master and pushrods. It was back under the cowl to get those handled.



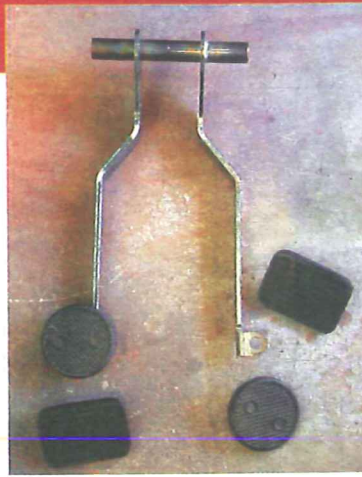
While the cowl was off (so I could use a hole saw for the larger holes) I figured it'd be smart just to double check the fit between the master and the bracket. It fit just fine.



One thing I did notice though was the large diameter holes fell flush with the edge of the firewall flange. That area would have to be trimmed slightly larger than the width of the master cylinder so that it will sit flush and sandwich the firewall between it and the pedal bracket. (The arrows show the marks on the flange where it'll need to be trimmed.)



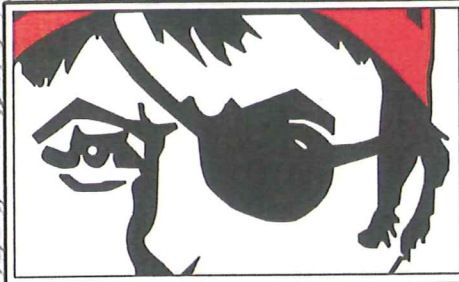
While the cowl was off the cab I took a few minutes and cut the fuel tank from underneath and then marked and drilled the first couple of pedal bracket mounting holes in the lower half of the firewall. I then slid in a couple of bolts and snugged it up.



Next, I grabbed the pedals and tweaked the bends a bit increasing the distance between the pedal arms just enough so there was adequate clearance so they didn't hit the steering box when depressed. While I was at it I swapped out the rectangular pedal pads for the round ones on the '48 Ford pedals I was originally planning to use.



The Reno Rod & Custom setup comes complete with an Early ('60-'62) Chevy truck brake/clutch master (Wagner PN F87167). The matching clutch slave (Wagner part PN F124369) will be needed to hook up the clutch but they're available (usually special order) at your local parts store. They also include adjustable pushrods, clevis', and dust boots, too.



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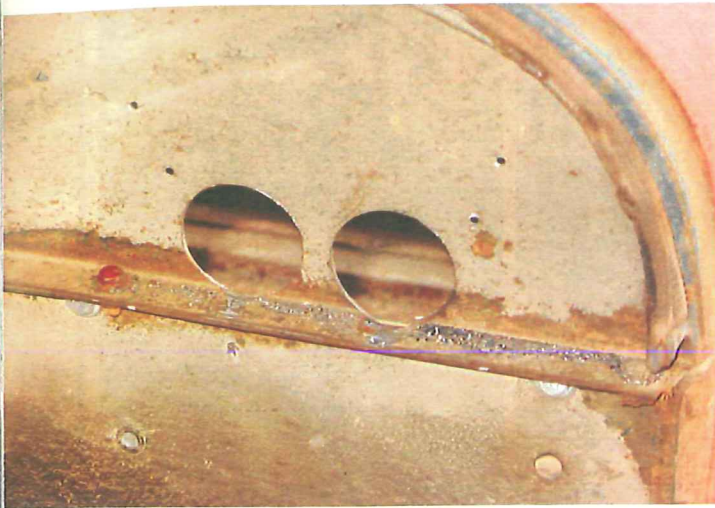
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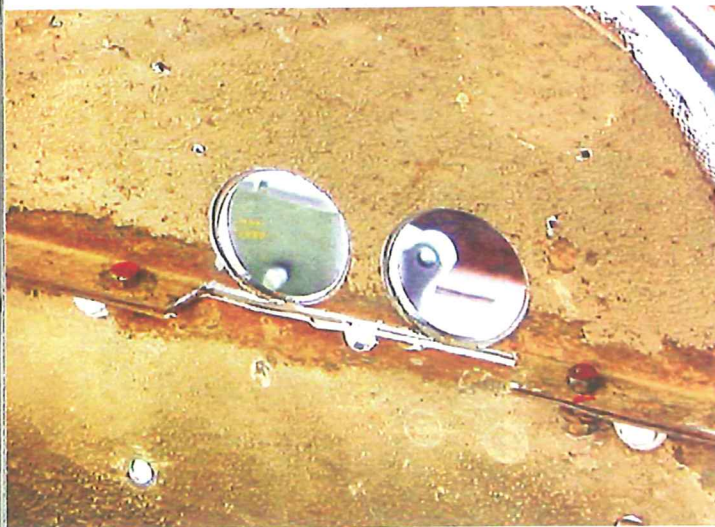
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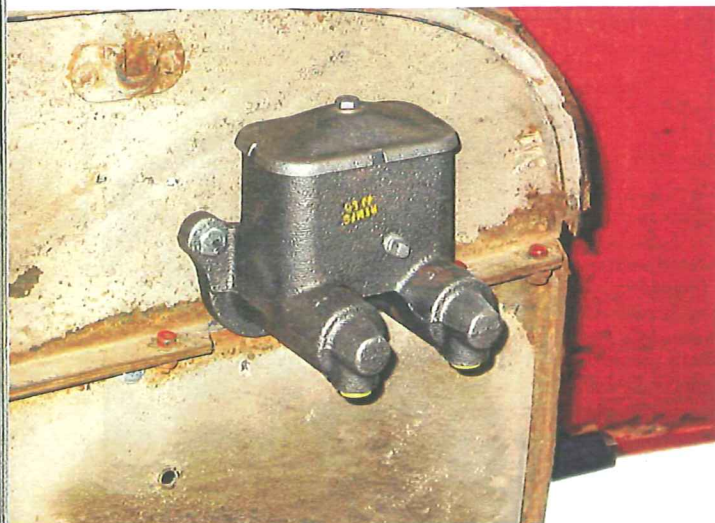
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Here, with the cowl back in place, you can see just how close the holes are to the flange...



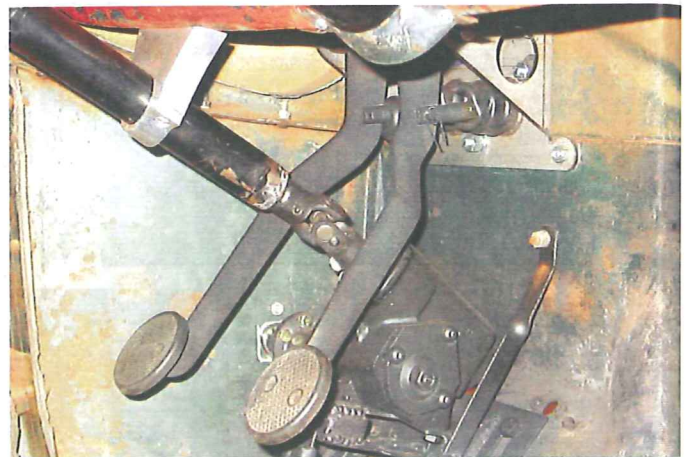
...and here, how much of the flange was trimmed away.



That done, I went ahead and bolted the master in place. Then it was back inside and under the cowl to install the pedal and push rod assembly into its mounting bracket.



Once I got the pedals and pushrods installed into the bracket I again switched gears and went back to the steering box bracket. When I got that reinforced and solid enough to resist the torque generated when turning the wheels I then fashioned a shorty column using a '40 Ford steering shaft, the upper third of a column tube from a '60 Ford pickup, a swap meet find column drop, and a Grant four-spoke wheel.



Aside from mucking up the master cylinder dust boots, the install turned out just fine.



Not too bad for a weekend out in the garage. The setup seems to work just fine, and as soon as I run down and grab a clutch slave, some hard line, and a clutch disc I'll tackle the balance of the clutch and brake plumbing and assembly. Finding and installing these cool and affordable aftermarket gems is half the fun of building a homebrewed hot rod. The other half is designing and fabricating my own—that is when they actually work as well as products like these anyway.