



# Standout cars from Summernats Part 2

We pick up where we left off last month and bring you the second part of the Top 15 cars of Summernats. These are not necessarily the top judged cars, and they do not meet any particular standard. They are cars that changed the scene.

Once again, we acknowledge the support of Street Machine Magazine and thank them for the opportunity to reproduce these stunning images.

## Les Lawry 1930 Ford Victoria

Les stunned the show car scene when he debuted this Shane Rowe (Southern Rod) built stunner. I had heard of this car during the build and caught up with Les and Shane in the US, obviously over there checking out the build and level they needed to be at for the next step. I remember lying under this car for over an hour checking out the flawless undercarriage. I had never seen anything like it in Australia before. This car inspired many hot rodders to step up if they wanted to compete on the show circuit. As occurs with all innovation, there were critics, but the good builders are inspired and go on to build better cars based on these top cars. This Vicky is truly innovative and set the new standard for all hot rods to follow.



## Mick Fabar 67 Falcon "Zerod"

Another guy with a second car in the 15. As if RAWR wasn't innovative enough, Mick had a vision to build a car that complemented his business, "Green Homes Australia", which says it all in the name. He wanted to build a car with a zero footprint that was environmentally friendly to the planet. He achieved all this and more with a 7 ltr turbocharged diesel engine XR Falcon. Everything on the car was recycled and fitted the "sustainable model". Zerod would be by far the most innovative build ever undertaken in Australia, going on to win Summernats Grand Champion in 2013. To get all these recycled parts and mechanicals so neat in an elite build for the result he wanted was a true testament to Mick's vision, skill and resilience.



**Rod Hadfield**  
**55 Chev**  
**Final Objective**

I could have included several of Rod's builds, but this 55 Chev is by far the most outrageous car ever built in Australia. I saw it over many years in the build at Rod's shop in Castlemaine, just taking in the fabrication and engineering. It runs a 3000hp Merlin V12 engine, the same as the P51 Mustang fighter plane, hence the paint scheme on the car. It was finally finished in the early 2000s and blew everyone's mind at Summernats and follow-up shows before going to the US and showing them how to build a car that turns everyone's head.



**Bruno Gianoncelli**  
**1950 Custom**  
**Mercury**  
**Mercules**

Bruno built Australia's first fully detailed elite custom and debuted it at Summernats in 2006. Mercules ran a V10 with full custom interior, body and undercarriage. This car went on to the US and won awards at SEMA and "America's most Beautiful Custom" at Sacramento Autorama. Again, a truly innovative car overall, especially on the custom scene. It now lives in a Turkish car museum.



**Gary Myers**  
**66 Mustang**  
**Silver Bullet**

Most people would be happy with one car in here, but Gary has two. Once again, the Silver Bullet was really innovative in the mechanicals, especially the twin blower set up. There had been twin blowers before, but not on top of each other and never on an elite show car that would actually perform. This car had a chopped roof, smoothed and detailed undercarriage, modern interior and an awesome flame kandy paint job. Gary achieved many awards, including Summernats Grand Champion, in 2005.





## Rob Beauchamp VL Calais

Rob already had one of the best LX Toranas on the circuit and turned up at Summernats with his brand new VL Calais Pro Street show/go car. This was extremely controversial back in 1988 as it was basically a race car. When I judged this car, I absolutely loved it – unbelievable engineering, the best fabricated polished aluminium interior I'd ever seen awesome paint and superbly detailed. Rob went on to win three top judged overall awards and, testament to this car, it still runs 6 sec passes on the strip today, and retains its show finish..



## John Saad Mazda RX-3

John's RX-3 was another elite build that really pushed the boundaries. There was nothing like it before, and nor has there been since in the Mazda/small car scene. The finish and detail were incredible, with nothing left to chance on this car. The performance was also exceptional and John took out the Summernats Grand Champion in 2016.



## Paul Sant LJ Torana

Paul from Pro Flo has had many top builds, but nothing better than this LJ Torana which was unveiled at Summernats 33. Paul has a real passion for tough cars and has achieved that with this 940ci 1600 hp Sonny's engine LJ Torana. This made the list as it is truly pushing the mechanical boundaries with an elite build over the whole car. I'm also sure it will go on to inspire many new builds that want that tough, race look for their new project.



*That's the list of truly innovative inspirational cars of the last 33 years of Summernats. There were many more I could have listed, but I was originally only doing a top 10. I just couldn't leave any of these out; that's why there are 15!*

*Some will agree, some will want to challenge me, but that's why it's not set in stone, just my opinion based on attendance, judging and seeing the majority of these cars in the build. Until next time, stay safe and healthy.*



Owen is a leading figure within the auto re-styling and vehicle modification industry and a Lifetime Achievement Award inductee. He is Technical and Training Manager at Concept Paints.