

## A History of Wescott's

Dee Wescott and son Karl Wescott are the proprietors, heart and soul behind Wescott's Auto Restyling. The following is a short history of how Wescott's came to be what it is today, as the hot rod industry grew through the years.

### **1954:**

Dee Wescott started Wescott's Auto Restyling in 1954. The business at that time was largely body and fender repair and painting, but with a strong emphasis on Customs and Hot Rods (There were no "Street Rods" back then.)

### **The 50's:**

Wescott's quickly became THE name in the Pacific Northwest for high quality paint work or custom car work. Many cars painted or custom built by Wescott's were featured in various magazines during the mid and late 1950's. Dee was also active in drag racing and hardtop racing in the 1950's. He was the first president of the (Portland, Oregon) Multnomah Hot Rod Council, which helped move drag racing off the streets and onto designated drag strips (including one owned by the Council.)

With the increasing popularity of the fiberglass bodied Chevrolet Corvette, in the mid-fifties Wescott's was one of the first body shops to learn how to repair this "new" fiberglass material. With knowledge of how to work with fiberglass, Wescott's began building a few fiberglass fenders and parts which soon found a market with Northwest drag racers hoping to lighten their cars, as well as some early restorers of Model A's and early V8's. Wescott's fenders were featured in the August 1958 edition of Hot Rod Magazine. From the beginning, Wescott's has always tried to manufacture the best fiberglass parts for early Fords.

### **The 60's:**

In the 1960's Wescott tackled many varied industrial and marine fiberglass jobs, including Coast Guard approved lifeboats and life rafts. Production of early Ford fenders and parts continued, with many improvements resulting from knowledge gained from the industrial and marine work. Fiberglass bodies were also being built for Indy type and ISCA race cars. High quality body repair and paint work continued, especially Corvette repair.

About 1968, in the Heyday of T-Buckets, a discussion among several Portland area street rodders and restorers concluded that it was impossible to reproduce an early Ford body with working doors using fiberglass. Accepting this as a challenge, in 1969 Wescott's introduced the 1931 Coupe body replica.

### **The 70's:**

Few sales resulted from the Coupe, but an interest was sparked among restorers for a replica 1931 roadster body, introduced about 1971.

With the rise in popularity of Street Rods and restoring early Fords in the mid 1970's, the demand for fiberglass bodies and parts taxed the organization and physical plant. About 1977 the body repair and paint shop was closed, and industrial, marine, race car, and Corvette fiberglass molds were

sold to other companies. About the same time, Karl Wescott joined Dee full time, and began developing a comprehensive reproduction parts catalog to complement the fiberglass line.

### **The 80's:**

Wescott began building exclusively for 1926-48 Fords and began stocking a large inventory of replacement parts for these cars. Big projects in the 80's included engineering and building molds for the '34 roadster body and '40 convertible. Wescott's also added and renovated buildings to enlarge the physical plant.

### **The 90's:**

In the early 90's Wescott's engineered and built molds for the 1932 3-window coupe and new molds for the 1931 5-window coupe. Dee continued with developing very high quality products, and in 1993 the extensively steel reinforced '32 3-window coupe body won the "Outstanding Safety Related Product" award from the Street Rod Equipment Alliance of the Specialty Equipment Manufacturer's Association. (Just the existence of these groups demonstrates the huge growth and popularity of the street rod industry over the decades.) Many new molds were developed to fill in "gaps" in the fiberglass line.

### **The 00's:**

Seeing a need for quality replacement and custom hardware, Wescott's has branched out into making patterns for cast metal parts. Most door hinges for 1926-40 cars are now available. DuVal style windshields cast in silicone bronze for 1932-36 roadsters were introduced in 2000.

Currently Wescott's Auto Restyling occupies 16,000 square feet in 5 buildings (including the original building built in 1954) with approximately 20 employees. Dee Wescott is still very active in the company doing much of the pattern work for new products, engineering of the steel structures & assembly fixtures for new bodies, and supervising body assembly. Karl Wescott is currently active in developing new products, and supervising the sales and production areas.

*Dee Wescott with pet project, a 1941 Cabover*

