



Isky: Ed "Isky" Iskenderian and the History of Hot Rodding

Matt Stone

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To tell the life story of Ed "Isky" Iskenderian is to tell the history of hot rodding in America. Ed was there from the very beginning. Born in 1921 to first-generation Armenian immigrants, Ed's first hobby was ham radio, but like many young men in the years before World War II, his interest turned to automobiles, especially hot rods. Ed had natural skills in metal working and machining that were developed in high school. He wanted to further develop those skills, so he joined the Air Corps to continue his education and flew with Air Transport Command. By the time Ed mustered out of the service, the California hot rod scene was in full bloom, with tens of thousands of vets who had the desire to make cars go fast.

Isky: Ed "Isky" Iskenderian and the History of Hot Rodding, tells the whole story, from his pre-war Lake Muroc and car club activities, his service in the military, starting a small business fabricating parts and making cams in the back of a rented shop, and then selling cams to other rodders. It covers how he grew a business from a single cam grinder and became the leading cam authority in barely 10 years. Ed was a gifted machinist, and he also had a natural knack for promotion. He purchased an ad in the very first edition of *Hot Rod* magazine, sensing something big; his instincts, as always, were right. He was also the first to use T-shirts and uniforms as promotion. Not only was he an early pioneer in the industry for print advertising and catalogs, he was also among the first to understand the value of having successful race cars using his cams in their engines and wearing his decals on their fenders. The biggest names in the racing industry were running Isky cams, and Ed made sure the world knew it.

Ed's company name went on to become one of the household names in the performance community. His continued success is an entertaining tale of mingling with industry icons, insight into the business of hot rodding, great stories of yesterday and today, and a life very well lived. You will enjoy the stories recorded here as much as Ed "Isky" Iskenderian seems to enjoy telling them.

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