

By **Tim Bernsau**

**I**t takes a lot to get us charged up about spending a winter weekend in Detroit. Something big. Something like the Detroit Autorama. It's one of the most prestigious rod and custom events in the country, and the site of the coveted *Don Ridler Memorial Award*. We hadn't been there since the 50th anniversary Autorama filled Cobo Hall back in 2002. That year, it was the excitement of seeing 1,000 outstanding cars, trucks, and bikes that got us on the plane to Detroit. This year the incentive was the big news about a new addition to the program—something Championship Auto Shows was calling Autorama Extreme.

To find out exactly what Autorama Extreme was all about, we had to descend to the lower area of Cobo Hall (called Michigan Hall to the promoters, and "downstairs" to everybody else)

where an additional 100,000 square feet had been opened up for traditional hot rods and customs, as well as tuner cars.

We headed down the escalator a little bit curious as to what kind of "traditional" stuff was going to show up at an event famous for trailered-in, trophy-seeking show cars with build-up budgets rising above the million-dollar mark. To our excitement, downstairs was jam-packed with excellent homebuilt traditionally styled rides, and we spent the whole weekend bouncing up and down between floors, feasting our eyes on terrific rods and customs from both stories. To our relief, there was nothing but peace and harmony between the rodders upstairs and the rodders downstairs; that and maybe some new appreciation—maybe even some new respect—for how somebody else builds cars. **R&C**

## Two Stories of Rods and Customs From Detroit

# Rides of the Autorama

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*The original Ed Roth Mysterion appeared on the cover of this mag back in 1963 and moved car building in a whole new direction, which Fritz Schenks still follows. Dave Schuten's Mysterion replica—painted by Schenks—was joined by Schenks' own Roswell Rod bubbletop show rod, a tribute to Big Daddy, and built with the same techniques Roth used.*