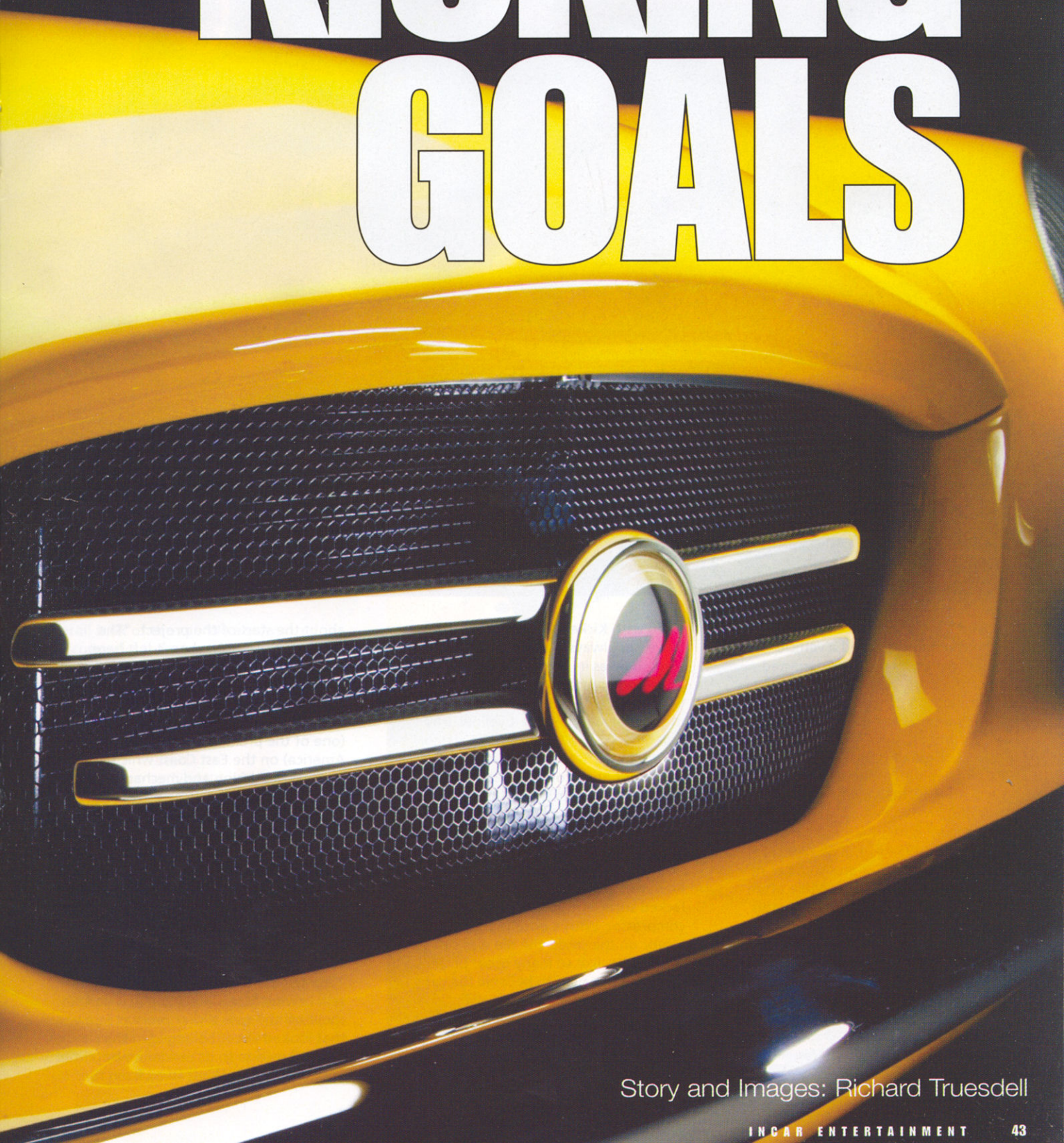


Diehard AMC aficionado and US car audio expert Rich Truesdell was left hot and bothered after riding the Kicker Metropolitan.

# KICKING GOALS



Story and Images: Richard Truesdell



It's been a long time since any car audio company has used a vehicle manufactured by the long departed American Motors Corporation so the choice of the diminutive 1960 Metropolitan was to be an interesting choice for Kicker, one of the best-known names in the mobile electronics universe. US car buffs might know that AMC was swallowed up in 1987 by the then Chrysler Corporation, mostly for its valuable Jeep franchise. AMC's two-seater Metropolitan was built from 1954 to 1962 by Austin in England for AMC and shares some of its DNA with the original Mini. While often referred to as a Nash Metropolitan, this particular Metro used by Kicker is an authentic AMC. The Nash nameplate, along with Hudson, were put to sleep at the end of the 1957 model year as AMC concentrated on its Rambler line of compact cars as well as the imported Metro.

The selection of the Metro (as Metropolitan are also known) had a lot

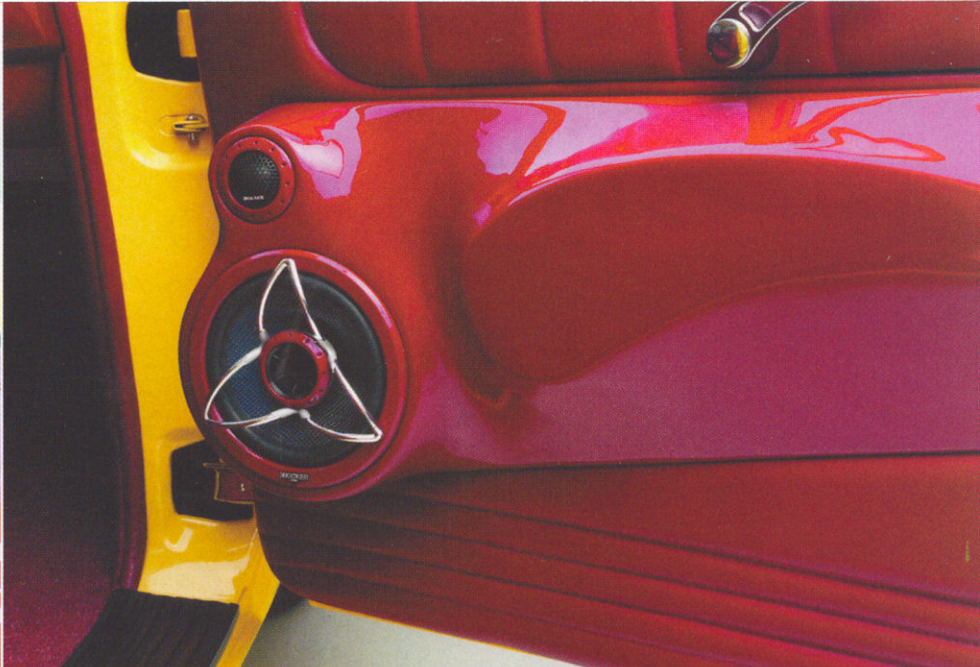
to do with Kicker's owner, Steve Irby. Steve has always liked small cars and when he was in high school he restored a Morris Minor convertible (also a quirky English car with a huge cult following in Europe) and painted it yellow. Irby purchased the Metro from a professor at Oklahoma State University, also based in Kicker's hometown of Stillwater but at the time he purchased the car, he wasn't really sure what he was going to do with it. His original plan was to just add air conditioning as it gets really hot in Stillwater in the summer time, however, Irby was told the stock motor lacked sufficient power to run an A/C compressor. With a potential upgrade motor on the cards, the die was cast and from there, like so many other project cars, it snowballed to become the car you see pictured here.

### **Metro Restoration**

Toby Lewis, Kicker's Installation Department Manager had this to say

about the start of the project. "The car was very rough when it left here. It was kept here for over a year in the warehouse. It did not run, had flat tyres, broken windows and a lot of rust. Steve decided to do it right and sent it to Posies (one of the premiere hot rod builders in America) on the East Coast which handled most of the design and mechanical direction. It needed more power and then it just went crazy from there. Elements like the new front end with the rounded wheel openings, Mercedes headlights and custom grille all came from Posies."

Lewis and his team at Kicker, including John W. Myers and Randy Botts, had some time to think about the planned system. In fact, they had a lot of time as the car was at Posies for a total of three years. "The system had to sound incredible," said Lewis. "More importantly, it had to show off the new Kicker product in a way that looked like it belonged in the car, but would function to its maximum potential and not take anything away from the



overall look of the car. We also wanted the cosmetics to be incorporated into all aspects of the system so they all looked like they were made by the same people, that Posies work would be seamless with our installation."

### Kicking Goals

"When the car arrived back in Stillwater it was complete with the exception of the finishing of the trunk. Posies crew did the new dash and console, which gave us some unique opportunities. We looked at the space behind the seat, trunk, and on the doors to see what of our new equipment would fit and look correct with the car. We also wanted to make sure that the sound quality was just as important as the cosmetics and the installation quality."

We asked Lewis to detail the obstacles encountered during this install and how they were overcome. Installation faces a serious challenge given the Metro's tiny cockpit. "We first had to deal with the fact that because of they way the doors ►





were constructed, there was no depth to mount the speakers into the door. The solution was to add sealed aluminum and fiberglass enclosures to the doors that attached through the door to the existing metal for added support. This also helped the sound quality because we now had sealed speaker enclosure for the front stage, which was provided by a set of SS65.2 components."

"The second major concern was running wires so they could not be seen. This took more planning than most cars because of the way the interior and underbody of the car were put together. There were no large cavities for the wire to be run through and easily hidden. The sub enclosure had to be assembled in the trunk so that we could get the maximum airspace and cool cosmetics required for the system. Once again, the wires leading to the subs took special consideration. The woofer's jumper wires are chrome-plated with 1/8-inch solid copper wire that was bent and cut to the desired lengths. The wires leading to the amplifier are 10-gauge that was passed through quarter inch copper tubing that was custom bent and then chromed. It took all three of us to get the woofers mounted because of the complexity."



## Matching Rack

"The amp rack had to be assembled in the car as well as to hide the wires and the mounting bolts that run to the bottom side of the car. The front and back of the amp rack matches the custom wheel stands that are made of half-inch thick aluminium that was machined with the Metro logo and other cosmetic designs. The decorative panel in the sub enclosure also has the same machining to match. The teardrop shape design in the door handle was carried into the front speaker enclosure for added airspace and to keep the cosmetics matched. We also added the same shape to the sides of the subwoofer enclosure to keep the same theme in the trunk. There is a piece of 5/8-inch half-round chrome under the Nakamichi head-unit, which is also present in the subwoofer enclosure to keep the consistency."


"The cosmetic panel in the bottom of the subwoofer enclosure has elements of the shape of the amp rack, wheel stands and the badge work of the amplifier to further the cosmetic relationship between all parts of the install. The colour of the amplifier's display was also changed from blue to red to match the colour of the interior."

When asked how the Metro's small size impacted on the selection and installation of the amplifier components, Lewis explained the process. "We looked at mounting the subs behind the seat and amps in the trunk but we decided to mount the amps behind the seat since the battery is located right behind the driver seat and this simplified the routing of the wires. Since we were using the same plates as the wheel stands for the front and rear of the amp rack, we had to choose the size of amplifier that would fit the dimensions of the plates yet still have plenty of power. We chose the SX600.2 for both the woofers and the front stage. This gave us about 175 watts for each of the front speakers and with the sub amp bridged at 4 ohms it will produce about 750 watts between the two 10-inch L7 subwoofers."

## Custom Chrome

"We're really proud of the cosmetic integration of the door handles, door panels, sub enclosure, amp rack, wheel stands console and the general cool looks and great sound! The chrome plated aluminum panels in the trunk were handmade with a router and then all sent off to be chromed. The only machining on these was the engraving on the surface. The bottom of the car actually is very impressive and shows off how much work really went into construction of the car, which we estimate took about 500 hours."

If we have to quibble about anything, it's the selection of the Ford Ranger engine. Being the purists that we are, we would have suggested an AMC/Jeep 401 V8. If Mr Irby thought that a bit much, then how about a four-banger out of a Jeep Wrangler or Cherokee, just to keep it all in the AMC family? Regardless, with its lowered stance courtesy of the AirRide Technologies suspension, the classic Colorado Customs wheels and BFGoodrich rubber, the little Kicker Metro strikes a stunning pose, static or out on the road, as can be seen in our photos. Mr. Irby was also kind enough to let us take it out for a spin to get some shots and we thank him for the opportunity given that the car is virtually priceless.

Over the years Kicker has built and sponsored many noteworthy show vehicles. While some are not quite as far over-the-top as others, all are flawlessly designed with installations that are executed to the highest degree. As this and the installations on the following pages illustrate, the boys in Stillwater truly get it. 



**Owner:** Kicker USA

**Vehicle:** 1960 AMC Metropolitan

**Engine:** Ford Ranger 2.3 litre

**Drivetrain:** Ford 5-speed manual, Ford 9-inch rear end

**Suspension:** AirRide Technologies suspension

**Brakes:** Wilwood front and rear big brake kits



**Wheels:** Colorado Custom wheels

**Tyres:** BF Goodrich tyres

**Interior:** Custom interior by Posies

**Exterior:** Custom body by Posies

### SYSTEM

**Source Unit:** Nakamichi CD700 CD receiver

**Front Speakers:** Kicker SS65.2 6.5-inch component speakers

**Subwoofers:** 2x Kicker L7 dual 4-ohm 10-inch subwoofers

**Speaker Amplifier:** Kicker SX600.2 two-channel amplifier

**Subwoofer Amplifier:** Kicker SX600.2 two-channel amplifier

**Wiring:** Tsunami power, speaker, interconnects and terminals

**Installed By:** Kicker USA

# MEGAR INFO