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THE LOW LIFE / THE LOUD LIFE

Lowriders: we all know what they are and know that they're pretty damn cool. But where did they come from, how do you explain the lowrider style, who drives them? We delve deeper into the cult of tattoos, guns, women, family and pinstripes. For a slice of lowrider culture, check out or collectibles section too.



The lowrider culture is an evolution of the American hot rod of the 40's and 50's. The cars were built to the "low and slow" ethos, and were meant to be smooth boulevard cruisers. With new hydraulics technology, "car hopping" became entwined with the lowrider style. More and more, the culture of car hopping is taking over the lowrider scene - however, the original concept of the lowrider is to create a piece of art on wheels, treating the cars like the tattooed bodies of their owners.



Originating in the Hispanic communities in California, the American lowrider scene has an extremely strong sense of community. Family comes first and the culture is passed down to the kids. They love pugs as much as they love pinstripes. Gang violence and territory marking goes with all of it.

THE PEOPLE



The Japanese **Bosozoku** started out as a gang of rowdy, loud and daredevil bikers who loved terrorising the police. Over time, the Bosozokus expanded into cars, adopting a style that was hard to replicate anywhere else.

"Bosozoku" means "running out-of-control (as of a vehicle) tribe." The Bosozoku are not as hardcore as they look. Initially the Bosozoku came from lower and lower middle class backgrounds, and used motorbikes as a way of expressing their dissatisfaction at being labeled as second class citizens. Now, professionals ranging from doctors to engineers join Bosozoku gangs and roam the streets at night, causing trouble for the police and having their own kind of "fun". Most of the time, out on the road, they'll don masks and bandanas in an effort to hide their identities and protect their alternate lives as working professionals. For the newer kind of Boso, the lifestyle is a way of venting frustration from work or family life.

THE PEOPLE



As for the cars and the bikes, they're so loud that a fleet of bosozoku bikes going past can render you unable to hear for weeks. Long term Bosozoku members report damaged hearing. Since the loudness is such a big part of the Bosozoku style, the exhaust, whether on a bike or a car, must be the standout feature. Outside, its all bright two tone colours and ridiculous bodywork with arches, lips and scoops.

THE CARS/BIKES



COLLECTIBLES

LOWRIDING ON YOUR SHELF

The best bang, thump and jump for buck

Lowriders are a strange automobile phenomenon that I simply cannot get my head around. The cars are intentionally customised to be low and slow. And often they jump around. Which completely seems to defeat the purpose of cars which is to move around, often quickly without jumping like a confused, caffeine addicted bunny. Then I realise cars are also works of art. They symbolize the owner's style, culture and temperament. And works of art often need to be slowed down so others can enjoy it.

For the budget conscious, Hotwheels offers a decent variety of low riders. It's not in the mainline right now but the 1980 Monte Carlo truly captured the essence of this trend.

First offered in yellow with a targa-style chopped roof and pleated interior, it had small wheels and a slammed stance for that slo-mo image. These are so low they will snag and scrape on every carpet strand and unmindful ant crossing the path.

The 66 Chevrolet Impala is another favourite of this scene and Hotwheels has rendered it perfectly with a ground scraping stance and rear wheel covers all of it covered in pin stripes. Impalas are the common choice for their long, low sleek look and HW has recreated several model years in this style. But the two that exude most flair would be the elegant 64 Buick Riviera and the slab sided 64 Lincoln Continental hardtop in green with

white stripes and scallops. These are cars that look slammed even in stock form.

For more functions and details, up your budget to get lowriders from 100% Hothwheels, Revell and Racing Champions. The first make has extensive detailing, rubber tyres, engine detail and fully poseable suspension to look like a paused dancer. The Revell and Racing Champions versions seem to only have a high and low setting only along with intricately detailed interior and engine bay/trunk. Prices average \$12 for the Racing Champs with boxed 100% Hotwheels commanding a little higher. Mind you, these are average prices. Look for lots online and you may stumble upon amazing deals.

If you want your very own custom built low riders head toward plastic kits. Revell has a 64 Impala that has a stock option also with appropriate wheels and suspension height. It is an excellently moulded kit with superb detail and decent fitment of parts. It will cost you about 1500-2000tk to paint and build

your own artistic expression. And now comes the amazing stuff. Customisers take the plastic kits and even the 1:64 cars and build them as actual hoppers. Small motors help create jumping cars aided by a controller much like the real thing. The plastic kits are larger and easier to work with but the smaller 1:64 scales are ridiculous works of art.



EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

General Motors puts \$1bn investment on hold in India



US automaker and global automotive giant has held back on 1 billion dollars in investment in India, citing the reason as slow growth and sales worldwide as well as in India. Sales in India have fallen by almost 40%, and its share of the passenger vehicle market has also dropped. Regulatory crackdown on diesel vehicles have also prompted the decision.

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