

WHEN V8s ROAMED THE EARTH

Images and words: Ella Mae Walker



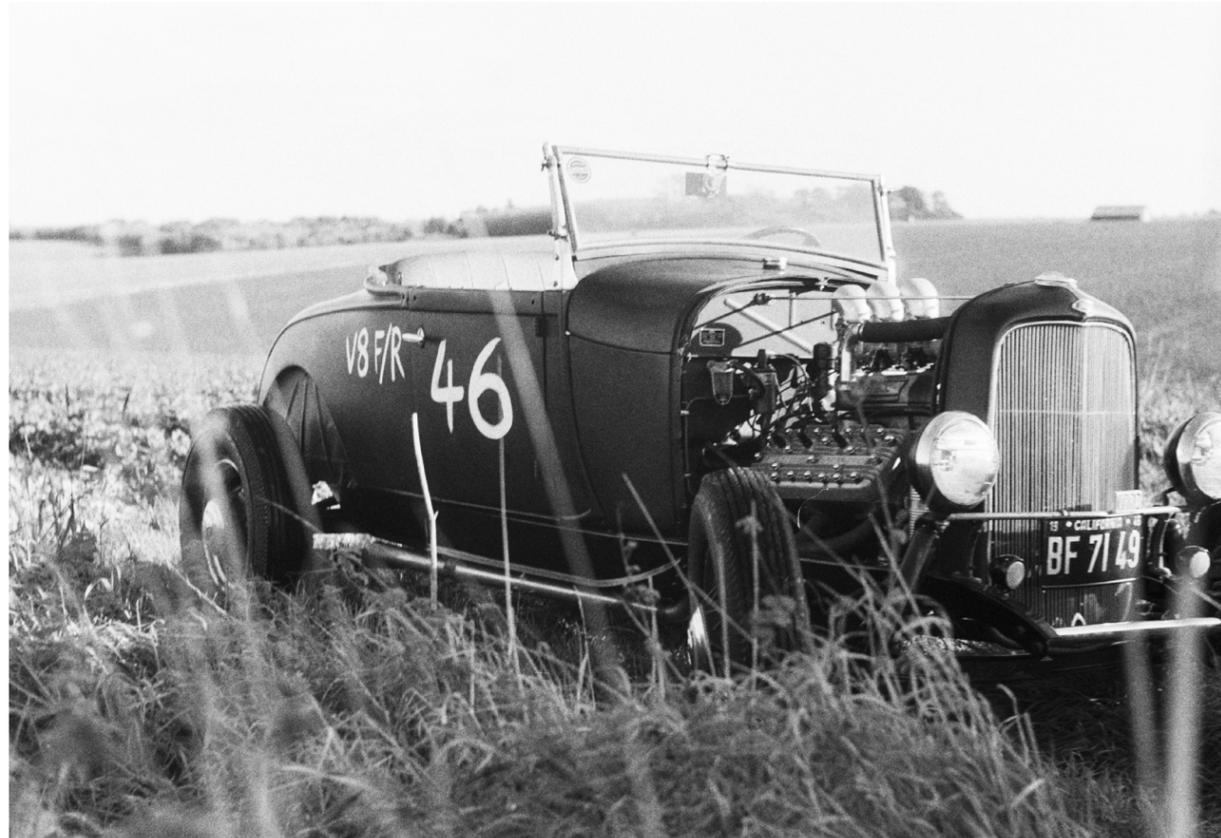


I became interested in photography at a very young age. My grandad was a photographer and used to cover a lot of motorsports back in the 1950s, from Grands Prix to local motorcycle street racing. He would always be showing me his photographs and cameras, and taught me pretty much everything I know. I got my very first camera, an Olympus point and shoot, when I was about 6 or 7 years old. My first SLR camera was an Olympus OM-1, and my first DSLR a Canon 400D.

I have been immersed in hot rod and custom culture all my life. My parents are both heavily into this scene, so I spent much of my childhood going to events, car shows and drag racing. My other grandad is also really into classic cars and has always had one or two in his garage. So really, I fell into it all quite naturally. I used to flick through magazines which were always lying around, titles like Hop Up, Rodders Journal, Rod & Custom and so on and these were a big influence.

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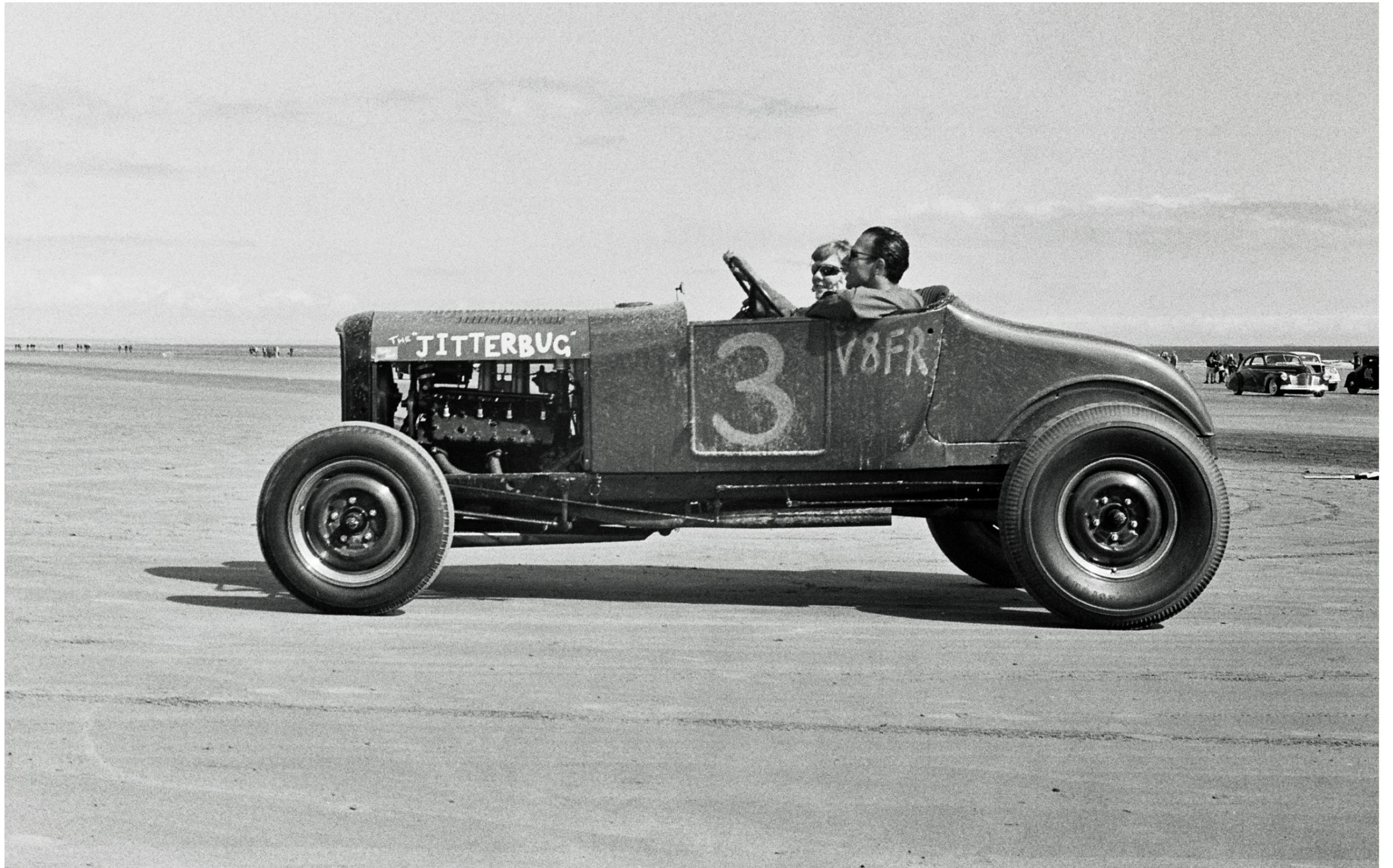




"As far as equipment is concerned, I'm currently using my Canon 6D MkII, and a 1935 Leica IIIa. When out and about, I tend to keep my lenses to a minimum to avoid carrying too much. I primarily use a 50mm, a 16-35mm and a 75-300mm. It's a bit of a cliché, but my favourite has got to be a 50mm, particularly when I'm shooting film. It's just so versatile.

I also collect vintage cameras. I have a collection of more than sixty which I really need to test and use! Black and white film photography will always be my first love, I love the timelessness and ambiguity of it, by which I mean taking a photograph that could just have easily been taken eighty years ago, or today. The only downside is that film can be tricky, especially if you have to trim or adapt it to fit beforehand, which is when digital comes in handy. Admittedly, I also use my iPhone a fair bit!





"I've done a little bit of portraiture, but not a lot. I've shot some burlesque shows, which I really enjoyed. Personally, I'm not a great director and I love to shoot people from a more candid perspective, really capturing a 'natural' image right in that moment. I also enjoy urban exploration; I'm really interested in history, especially the WWII era, so I'm hoping to do more of that this year.

I love documentary, fashion and pin-up photography from the early-mid 20th Century. Man Ray, Bunny Yeager, Irving Penn, Lee Miller, Louis Faurer... My favourite automotive photographers of the '40s and '50s include Marcia Campbell, Eric Rickman, Gray Baskerville and Tom Medley to name a few. As for modern-day, I really admire the work by Hotrod Postcards, Amy Shore, Shannon Brooke, Tatiana Gerusova, Tim Sutton, Chris Cooper and Hell Bound Photography, among many many others. The list could go on and on.



"I photograph most VHRA (Vintage Hot Rod Association) events, for example Pendine Sands, and GOW, a hillclimb event held at Prescott. I've also worked with the Atomic Vintage Festival shooting everything from drag racing to bands and danger shows. In addition, there are many, many other events I would love to cover. As a kid I used to go to Goodwood with my grandparents, but haven't been recently so I would love to shoot there. There are many events in the USA that I'd love to go to, like the Grand National Roadster Show, Bonneville Speed Week and the RPM Nationals as well as plenty others closer to home across Europe. Basically, I would love to travel.





"I don't like to edit pictures too much, but when I do I primarily use Adobe Lightroom which makes it easy to make little tweaks. I'll sometimes use Photoshop, and if I'm on my phone I use VSCO, but that is mainly just for Instagram. I do have a fair few analogue images! At the moment I send off my film for developing and scanning as I don't currently have access to darkroom facilities. I recently acquired my own scanners, and I'm planning on getting some equipment to process 35mm at home myself. Eventually I'd like to have my own darkroom, so that is on the cards when house hunting!"



"What makes a great photograph? That's a really difficult question! I've always been a strong believer that the arts are completely subjective and what I might think is great may not appeal to others and vice versa. For me, a great photograph is something that really tells a story, capturing a moment in time. Technique doesn't necessarily matter, I've seen some amazing pictures shot on a phone, or that are out of focus. Composition is the biggest thing for me. The framing and cropping of an image can make a world of difference. For example, a good photograph could be of a nice car, but a great picture would also be taking into account what's going on around it and in the background - big white vans and high-vis vests are a bugbear of mine!"

