

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

1966

BOON
DUGGIES

When people think of the good old days of HOT ROD, they rarely recall the coverage of motorcycles, Baja, go-carts, and Pintos that was included in what was truly Everybody's Automotive Magazine. And when you think HOT ROD today, you don't think "dune buggy," either. But we were there.

By the '50s, rodders had figured out the great fun of blasting around sand dunes in a lightweight jalopy with huge tires. Soon, a boat-builder named Bruce Meyers (not to be confused with hot rod collector Bruce Meyer) realized the benefits of a minimalist fiberglass body combined with the drivetrain from a Volkswagen 1200 sedan, and his Meyers Manx became the first of the fiberglass dune buggy kits. That's Bruce wheeling his creation in an Eric Rickman photo outtake from the August '66 HRM story, "Terra Firma Funny Cars," about the off-road boom. Meyers would later win the race from La Paz to Tijuana in 1967, the precursor to the Mexican 1000 and Baja 1000. Dune buggies would continue in the pages of HOT ROD for years.

Bruce left the company he started even before it shut its doors in 1971 after producing roughly 7,000 cars and an entire marketplace of knock-offs. Today there's a huge resurgence of interest in the original dune buggies, and they trade for big bucks. The Manx is supported by The Manx Club at www.manxclub.com, and Bruce is back in business with the Beetle-based Manxter 2+2 and Manxter DualSport at www.meyersmanx.com. His kits are no longer under \$1,000 as they were in the '60s, but at least you can still order them in metalflake.

—DAVID FREIBURGER