

¡Órale! Lowrider: Custom Made in New Mexico

Don J. Usner



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Lowriding is a beloved cultural tradition in New Mexico, especially the northern communities and villages including Española, also known as the lowrider capital of the world. The classic car fixed up for shows and cruising has become a symbol of Hispano and community pride for the car aficionados, artists, and mechanics whose lives are immersed in the culture. They flaunt their cars in public?locals and tourists admire classic lines, upholstered interiors, and shiny chrome hubcaps when they pass by. It isn't surprising they captured the eye of other artists who have photographed the beauty and uniqueness of this art form. Thanks to them, we have a wonderful forty-year record of the cars and their makers as well as their homeland. Photographs by New Mexico's most renowned documentarians such as Alex Harris, Jack Parsons, Miguel Gandert, Annie Sahlin, Meridel Rubenstein, Don J. Usner, and Siegfried Halus are included alongside photographers newer on the scene, creating a fascinating compilation of lowriders over time. From the magnificent views of New Mexico's gorgeous landscape through the interior of a lowrider by Alex Harris, to Jack Parson's iconic lowrider images that were published in the classic MNM Press book, Low 'n slow: Lowriding in New Mexico, to Miguel Gandert and Don Usner's cultural take on lowriders and their communities, we are able to look back at an enduring but evolving tradition. In his essay, Don J. Usner provides an insightful overview of lowriding in New Mexico, how it evolved, the culture, and the car makers themselves who are also known as lowriders. In his intimate interviews with lowriders, he records in their own words what lowriding means to them as they mourn lost friends and family?icons in the community?and discuss generational shifts and trends.

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