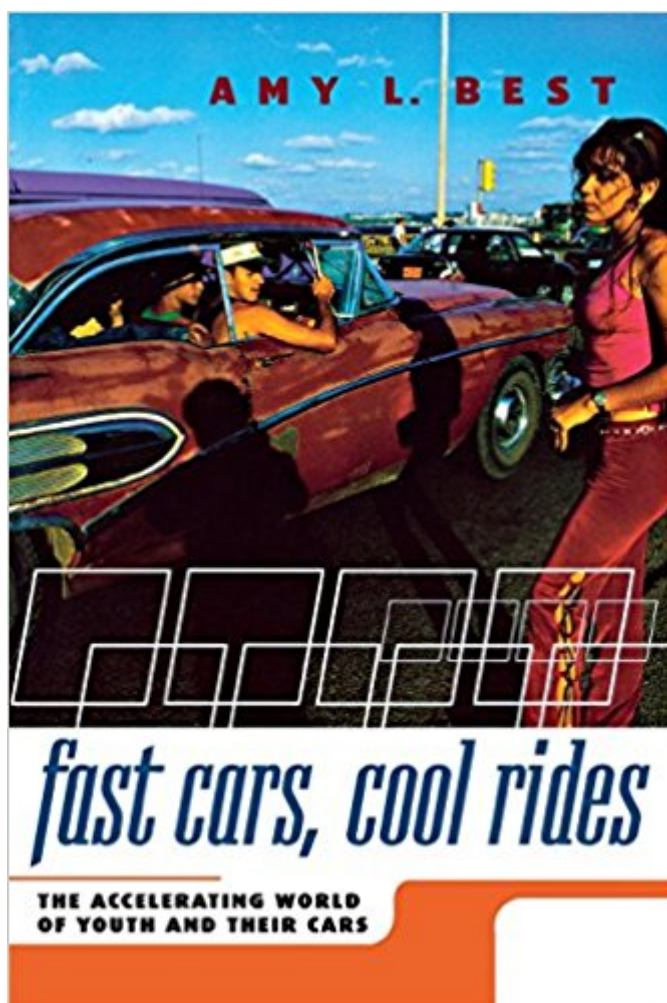




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Fast Cars, Cool Rides: The Accelerating World Of Youth And Their Cars



Synopsis

Bass booms from custom speakers, pick-up trucks boast lowered suspensions, chrome rims reflect stoplights, and bare arms dangle from open windows. Welcome to Santa Clara Street in San Jose, California, where every weekend kids come to cruise late at night, riding their cars slow and low. On the surrounding, less-traveled streets you can also find young men racing customized cars to see who has the "go," not just the "show." And, in the daylight hours, in a nearby suburb, you might find a brand new SUV parked in the driveway, a parents' Sweet 16 present. In *Fast Cars, Cool Rides* Amy Best provides a fascinating account of kids and car culture. Encompassing everything from learning to drive to getting one's license, from cruising to customizing, from racing to buying one's first car, Best shows that never before have cars played such an important role in the lives of America's youth as they do today. Drawing on interviews with over 100 young men and women, aged 15-24, and five years of research—cruising hot spots, sitting in on auto shop class, attending car shows—Best explores the fast-paced world of kids and their cars. She reveals a world where cars have incredible significance for kids today, as a means of transportation and thereby freedom to come and go, as status symbols and as a means to express their identities. But while having a fast car or a cool ride can carry tremendous importance for these kids, Best shows that the price, especially when it can cost \$30,000, can be steep as working-class kids work jobs to make car payments and as college kids forgo moving out of Mom and Dad's house because they can't pay for rent, car payments, and car insurance. *Fast Cars, Cool Rides* offers a rare and rich portrait of the complex and surprising roles cars can play in the lives of young Americans. Fasten your seatbelts, it's going to be a cool ride.

Book Information

Paperback: 257 pages

Publisher: NYU Press (December 25, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0814799310

ISBN-13: 978-0814799314

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.7 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 1 customer review

Best Sellers Rank: #210,584 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #84 in Books > Engineering & Transportation > Automotive > History #320 in Books > Engineering & Transportation >

Customer Reviews

“In *Fast Cars, Cool Rides*, Amy Best takes the inside lane on how and why young people use their cars as a means of cultural expression. Whether the school parking lot, auto-shop class, or the San Jose cruising scene, and whether the goal is personal freedom, racial solidarity, masculine power, or feminine rebelliousness, the car is the vehicle for the job, affording youth the symbolic and material means to solidify their identities within the context of global consumer culture. An intelligent, well-written book on kids and their cars; buckle up and take this ride.” —Laura Grindstaff, author of *The Money Shot: Trash, Class, and the Making of TV Talk Shows* “How pleasantly jarring to be invited to enter Santa Clara Street, to feel the heat of the summer, to smell the alcohol on the breaths of the youth, to hear the bottles breaking on the sidewalk and to, most importantly, be treated to a fine analysis of the experiences of some of these cruisers.” —Daniel Thomas Cook, author of *The Commodification of Childhood: The Children’s Clothing Industry and the Rise of the Child Consumer* “Best shines a fluorescent street light on young people in high octane motion, making meaning and community through their cars. . . . Best’s subjects articulate an intricate interplay of class, race, gender, and identity formation; she’s given a great American institution its props.” —Donna Gaines, author of *Teenage Wasteland: Suburbia’s Dead End Kids* “Has the potential to expand our knowledge about young people’s great social power, their contributions to changing culture, and their influence in marketplace decision-making. . . . A compelling and thought-provoking read.” —Debra Van Ausdale, author of *The First R: How Children Learn Race and Racism* “Fast Cars, Cool Rides is empirically rich, full of arresting observations and revealing verbatim quotes.” —American Journal of Sociology

Amy L. Best is Professor of the Sociology at George Mason University. She is author of *Prom Night Youth, Schools and Popular Culture*, which was selected for the 2002 American Educational Studies Association Critics’ Choice Award, and *Fast Cars, Cool Rides: The Accelerating World of Youth and Their Cars*. She is also the editor of *Representing Youth: Methodological Issues in Critical Youth Studies*.

The book was in perfect condition and seems like it will be a good read. I love fast cars and cool rides, so this will be interesting to analyze from a sociological standpoint.

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