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New Iberian Alex Viscardi has been driving at a high rate of speed since the age of 15.

'Boom Boom' living life in the fast lane as racer

Nineteen-year-old Alex Viscardi was the youngest licensed driver on the National Hot Rod Association circuit.

BY HOLLY LELEUX-THUBRON
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Alex "Boom Boom" Viscardi of New Iberia likes driving fast.

In fact, he recently broke a world record, unofficially driving 1/8 of a mile in 4.3 seconds at 185 mph.

Now 19, Viscardi started racing at 15, and was the youngest licensed driver on the National Hot Rod Association circuit, behind the wheel of his first race car, a purple 1966 Mustang Coupe.

He told his father Keith Viscardi that he wanted to go faster, so the pair set out building a new car, a bright blue 1966 Fast Back Mustang Pro Mod, which is what he drag races at breakneck speeds, about 10 times per

year, on tracks all over the country. He said the race experience is so fast he barely remembers what happens.

"The rush is intense and its done almost as fast as you start," he said. "All you can say to yourself is 'that was awesome.'"

That first time down the race track had Viscardi hooked. He is now in a professional racing league and calls himself a "professional rookie."

"My dad was always a car guy," he said. "I was real small and inherited the interest from him. I told him I wanted to drive one day so off we went to the track and my parents had to sign a waiver to let me drive."

He said his dad has supported him in his dream 110 percent.

"This was his dream so I'm living it out for him in a way," he said. "I thank my dad every day for being there. He really wants to drive the car but he can't now its too powerful. This is a totally different level

and you can't just jump in the car and go."

He said he has wrecked a car twice and the sport can be a dangerous one.

"My mom, Phyllis, was nervous at first," he said. "But, then she got over it. She loves it now."

Drag racing is an expensive hobby, Viscardi said, costing him more than \$150,000 per year maintaining his cars, paying racing fees and traveling to races. That figure climbs if something breaks.

He said his goal is to race full time and he is presently working on sponsorships though his dad keeps one of his son's feet in the real world teaching him the family business at Viscardi Industrial.

Viscardi's niece Alexis gave her uncle the nickname referring to a Jeep he used to drive with serious stereo equipment inside he said.

The nickname stuck and he is now known by people in the circuit and drag racing fans as "Boom Boom."