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**ON THE COVER**  
Rooftop tents have taken the overlanding industry by storm, offering hard- and soft-shell versions that install easily, set up quickly and handle anything the wilderness can throw at them. Learn why they're quickly becoming favorites of off-road shops nationwide. See article on page 17. (Photo courtesy Quadratec Inc.)

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**Jef White**  
Editor

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## New Vehicle Prices Reach All-Time High

**A**dd new vehicles to the long list of products whose prices have recently hit an all-time high.

The average price paid for a new vehicle in the U.S. in June was the highest on record and marked the first time the average transaction price (ATP) surpassed the \$48,000 mark, according to data released by Kelley Blue Book. The previous high was \$47,202, set in December 2021.

New-vehicle inventory days' supply (which calculates the number of days, expressed in units, it would take to deplete the current new car inventory at the current rate of sale)

inched up into the high 30s in June after being in the mid-30s since mid-January. That means there are more vehicles available nationwide.

The report adds that customer demand remains strong, given continued supply issues. The conditions enabled most dealers to continue selling inventory at or above the manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP). The average price paid for a new vehicle has been *over sticker* throughout 2022.

Meanwhile, the average price paid for a new nonluxury vehicle in June was \$43,942, up \$615 from May—the highest price for a nonluxury vehicle on record. Car shoppers in the nonluxury segment paid on average \$1,017 above sticker price, and consumers have paid roughly \$1,000 more than MSRP in each month of 2022, versus only \$158 over MSRP in June 2021, KBB reports.

"While prices for the industry are, on average, higher than MSRP, there are some nonluxury segments that are more affordable, such as compact cars and compact SUVs/crossovers," says Rebecca Rydzewski, research manager of economic and industry insights for Cox Automotive. "These segments are selling for more than 30% less than the industry average transaction price."

In June 2022, the average luxury buyer paid \$66,476 for a new vehicle, up \$1,097 month over month, the highest price for a luxury vehicle ever. By comparison, luxury vehicles were selling for nearly \$825 under MSRP one year ago.

Luxury vehicle share remains historically high and increased to 18% of total sales in June, up from 17.3% in May.

The average price paid for a new electric vehicle (EV) increased in June by 3.8% compared to May, and 13.7% versus a year ago. The average price for a new electric vehicle—over \$66,000, according to Kelley Blue Book estimates—is well above the industry average and more aligned with luxury prices versus mainstream prices.

Hybrid/alternative energy vehicles were selling at just over \$39,000 in June, a whopping \$3,593 increase over May, and an eye-popping \$8,453 increase versus a year ago. High gas prices are thought to be driving consumers to consider electric vehicles, hybrids and smaller, more fuel-efficient gas-powered models.

Meanwhile, electric vehicles had the lowest incentives (as a percentage of ATP) of 0.4%, and entry-level luxury cars had the highest, at 3.4%. Incentives dropped to a record-low level in June, averaging only 2.3% of the average transaction price.

All in all, it shows there's plenty of action at your local car lots. To see more of what's coming for 2023, check out the New Vehicle Report beginning on pg. 48. **TS**

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# DEALING WITH OSHA

More inspections, greater citations ahead.

By Phillip M. Perry

**E**mployers trying to avoid costly Occupational Safety and Health Administration citations are facing new challenges in the form of heightened enforcement activity and greater liability for workplace COVID-19 infections.

To lessen their exposure, businesses are retooling their operating environments to ensure compliance with state and federal standards.

Here's a look at where some experts expect the agency to focus its attention in the coming months.

## COVID-19 RECOMMENDATIONS

OSHA has issued guidance for the miti-

gation of the spread of COVID-19 in all workplaces. The intention is to reduce the chances of contracting COVID-19 by employees who are unvaccinated or otherwise at risk of infection because of conditions such as a prior transplant, or prolonged use of corticosteroids or other immune-weakening medications.

As a general rule, OSHA does not suggest employers take steps to protect fully vaccinated people, unless other federal or local laws apply. For unvaccinated or at-risk workers, OSHA recommendations include the following:

- Separating from the workplace all infected people, all people experiencing

COVID symptoms, and any unvaccinated people who have had close contact with someone with COVID-19

- Implementing physical distancing
- Maintaining ventilation systems
- Properly using face coverings or personal protective equipment (PPE)

Recently OSHA added the following two recommendations:

- Fully vaccinated people should wear masks to protect the unvaccinated in areas of high community transmission
- Fully vaccinated people who have close contact with people with the coronavirus should wear masks for up to 14 days

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To lessen their exposure, businesses are retooling their operating environments to ensure compliance with state and federal standards.

unless they have a negative coronavirus test at least 3-5 days after such contact

*(See the sidebar “OSHA Workplace Guidelines” for a full list of the new OSHA recommendations.)*

While OSHA observers have long expected the agency to issue regulations for workplace disease mitigation in the form of a so-called Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS), the above guidance is only advisory in nature and, in the words of the agency, “creates no new legal obligations.”

(Early in 2022, the Supreme Court struck down OSHA’s vaccine-or-test mandate for

employers with more than 100 workers, while letting stand a similar mandate for health care facilities. Employers in all industries must continue to comply with pre-existing mandatory OSHA standards.)

Observers see the recent OSHA activity as indicative of a more robust regulatory fervor in general.

“I think you’re going to see much more aggressive OSHA enforcement under the Biden administration,” says former OSHA head Edwin G. Foulke Jr., now a partner in the Atlanta office of Fisher & Phillips ([fisherphillips.com](http://fisherphillips.com)).

The new federal posture may also include a larger OSHA oversight staff.

“The Biden administration says it wants to double the number of inspectors,” says William K. Principe, partner in the Atlanta office of Constangy, Brooks, Smith & Prophete ([constangy.com](http://constangy.com)). “While we don’t know if they will hire that many, it’s reasonable to assume there will be some increase. During the last administration vacancies weren’t always filled, so OSHA ended up being below the number of federal inspectors that had existed for a very long time.”

## MORE INSPECTIONS

More inspectors mean more boots on the ground. OSHA observers expect an increase in the rate of inspections, along with more citations and higher penalties.

The agency is expected to pay increasing attention to building sites.

“Construction falls are among the most frequent causes of workplace injuries or fatalities,” says Mark D. Norton, director of Norton Safety Services, Tucson, Arizona. “Because of that, OSHA tends to focus inspection activity on that area.”

Observers cite an influx of new workers as a key reason for the spike in accidents.

“In the economic downturn of 2007 and 2008, many employees left the construction industry,” says Norton. “When the economy rebounded, people were hired without the same level of experience and knowledge. Fewer trained workers and an increasing demand for construction is a recipe for more accidents.”

OSHA is also taking greater interest in machine shops, another environment with high accident rates, according to Gary Heppner, a California-based independent OSHA safety advisor ([riskmanagementaudits.com](http://riskmanagementaudits.com)).

Here COVID-19 is having an effect.

## DETERMINE YOUR OSHA READINESS

How well have you secured your workplace against the risk of accidents and COVID-19 infections? Find out by taking this quiz.

Score 10 points for each step taken. Then total your score and check your rating at the bottom of the chart.

- Conducted a workplace risk assessment
- Implemented measures to control risks
- Developed a written accident and infection prevention plan
- Assigned a COVID-19 mitigation plan coordinator
- Trained employees on the plan and on preventative measures

- Enforced the use of face coverings
- Implemented temperatures/symptoms screening
- Implemented cleaning protocols
- Coordinated use of breaks and lunchrooms
- Ensured the enforcement of sick leave policies

What’s your score? 80 or more: Congratulations. You have gone a long way toward making your business environment safer for your employees. Between 60 and 80: It’s time to fine-tune your prevention procedures. Below 60: Your business is at risk. Take action on the suggestions in the accompanying article.

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## CONTROLLING THE OSHA INSPECTION

While OSHA has the right to conduct inspections of business premises, employers need to know and exert their own rights.

“Just because a person has a government badge, that doesn’t mean they get to do whatever they want,” says former OSHA head Edwin G. Foulke Jr., now a partner in the Atlanta office of Fisher & Phillips.

During an opening conference with inspectors, Foulke suggests employers set out guidelines such as the following:

- At least one management person needs to be present when OSHA inspectors visit the worksite
- One other management-level person must be present when OSHA inspectors interview any supervisor or manager
- The employer must be allowed to bring in their own industrial hygienist, as well as be present if OSHA does any kind of monitoring of air or noise

During their inspections, OSHA representatives will look for the following evidence of violations:

- There was a hazardous condition
- The hazard was recognized
- The hazard was causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm
- There was a feasible method to correct the hazard

Finally, businesses should treat OSHA inspectors with respect while not offering more data than the law requires.

“Some employers think that if they tell OSHA everything they know and they give every document they have, that somehow that’s going to make things better,” says Foulke. “It never does.”

Workers, long required to wear safety glasses while using drill presses or hand drills, are now expected to add face shields and maintain appropriate distances from others in locations with unvaccinated or at-risk workers. That can be difficult in restricted environments where people are working in close quarters.

Any resulting laxity in safety considerations, however, can spark illnesses and OSHA citations.

### OSHA RULES

Most employers want their workers to be safe and healthy. And, given the higher OSHA profile, businesses will be making a special effort to meet state and federal standards.

That means conforming to the General Duty Clause of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, requiring workplaces to be “free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to employees.”

While the imprecise nature of the clause allows leeway for employers to account for varying local conditions, it also leaves plenty of room for inspectors to find unexpected violations.

“One thing I think you’re going to see during the Biden administration is a focus on musculoskeletal disorders (ergonomics, repetitive motions, lifting) and combustible dust,” adds Foulke.

Employer organizations will likely litigate any onerous OSHA rules.

“Trade associations have been successful in the past in getting injunctions against OSHA regulations deemed outside the agency’s jurisdiction or overly burdensome,” notes Douglas E. Witte, who represents businesses in labor and employment law matters at Madison, Wisconsin-based Boardman & Clark (boardmanclark.com). “Sometimes the regulations are modified, or simply delayed for a year or longer.”

### WORK-RELATED ILLNESS

If an employee comes down with COVID-19 and misses work time or goes to the hospital, is the illness recordable as work-related? The answer is often murky.

“Up until now, OSHA has not been pushing too hard on employers who claim COVID-19 infections occurred outside the workplace,” says Witte.

Employers have been operating under fairly liberal standards, thanks to OSHA guidance issued in the spring of 2020 that allowed COVID-19 illnesses to be categorized as not work-related if an alternative explanation could account for the infections.

Unfortunately, the term *alternative explanation* is vague, and OSHA does not provide examples.



Some experts predict the Occupational Safety and Health Administration will increase its enforcement activities in the coming months.



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## OSHA WORKPLACE GUIDELINES

OSHA suggests a multilayered approach to the protection of workers who are either unvaccinated or otherwise at risk of COVID-19 infection. Here are some suggestions:

- Grant paid time off for employees to get vaccinated
- Instruct any workers who are infected, unvaccinated workers who have had close contact with someone who tested positive for SARS-CoV-2, and all workers with COVID-19 symptoms to stay home from work
- Implement physical distancing for unvaccinated and otherwise at-risk workers in all communal work areas
- Provide unvaccinated and otherwise

at-risk workers with face coverings or surgical masks, unless their work task requires a respirator or other PPE

- Educate and train workers on your COVID-19 policies and procedures using accessible formats and in language they understand
- Suggest that unvaccinated customers, visitors or guests wear face coverings
- Maintain ventilation systems
- Perform routine cleaning and disinfection
- Record and report COVID-19 infections and deaths
- Implement protections from retaliation and set up an anonymous pro-

cess for workers to voice concerns about COVID-19-related hazards

OSHA has provided additional guidance for unvaccinated or at-risk workers who are likely to be in prolonged, close contact with other workers or the public. Employers may access the complete guidelines in the document *Protecting Workers: Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace* accessible at <https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/safework>.



“The guidance is being interpreted, by some, as indicating that if the employer can point to some exposure away from the workplace, then the case can be deemed not work-related,” says Principe.

Others are even taking the position that, because COVID-19 is being spread everywhere, an infection is not work-related unless the employee has continually commuted in their own car, stayed in their own house and not gone to a grocery store or interacted with the public in any way.

That kind of liberal interpretation, though, skirts the edge of justice.

“I think you need more concrete evidence that the employee was exposed to an infected person away from work,” cautions Principe. “Perhaps their spouse, children or people they socialized with have COVID-

19, or perhaps they attended a super-spreader event.”

Faulty categorizations can be costly.

“OSHA issues citations to employers who fail to properly record or report cases,” says Principe. “The agency is often tipped off by whistleblowers, or they get word of infections through hospitals or public health departments.”

Penalties for serious violations start at \$13,653, although the amount is sometimes reduced in the event of a good faith history. Citations for willful or repeated issues start at \$136,532.

Certainly, there is no need to record cases that are clearly not work-related. While



Most employers want their workers to be safe and healthy.

an employer may do so out of fear of a citation, being too inclusive can backfire.

“Over-reporting can spark an OSHA inspection when the entries from an employer’s logs are entered on their 300A Summaries,” says Foulke. “Those are available for review not only to OSHA but also

---

OSHA recently released updated recommendations regarding ways businesses can help mitigate COVID-19 infections and keep workers safe.

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Businesses are responsible for alleviating recognized hazards in the workplace.

to plaintiff's lawyers and community activists like Common Cause. Skewed numbers can impact a business's ability to get future work from clients."

So, how about those cases that fall into a gray area?

"My advice to employers would be that in the case of doubt, record or report the event," says Principe. "You can always explain the facts, saying that you don't believe it is work-related for the following reasons, but that you are including the case out of an abundance of caution. This will protect you from a citation."

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## Citations for willful or repeated issues start at

# \$136,532

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Many OSHA observers believe the Biden administration will tighten criteria, determining that more infections occurred in the business environment. There may be a return to earlier CDC guidance, which mandated that an illness be designated work-related if the employee had been within 6 feet of another COVID-19-infected worker for a total of at least 15 minutes.

"The agency may start tracking infections down to employer facilities if they can do so and support the change by claiming they are trying to halt the spread of COVID-19," notes Principe.

### FINDING HELP

While the prospect of an OSHA inspection and citations can disturb any business owner, the federal agency can also be helpful.

"Many businesses believe that every interaction with OSHA is negative," says Norton. "They don't realize that OSHA also provides consultative services at both the federal and state levels."

At the employer's request, says Norton, OSHA will inspect the workplace for problem areas. While there is no charge for the service, the employer has to agree to fix whatever OSHA finds.

"It's all confidential, so nothing uncovered by the inspectors gets shared with the compliance side."

That proactive approach can prevent costly citations down the road.

"It's very important to take the right steps to reduce the risk of infection in the workplace," says Principe. "This will keep employees from getting sick and the employer out of trouble. I encourage businesses to track the OSHA and CDC websites on a regular basis. Know what the recommendations are. Then, if OSHA shows up at the door, everything will be in order." **TS**



New York City-based journalist **PHILLIP M. PERRY** publishes widely in the fields of business management and law.

# OLD THINKING WON'T LEAD TO NEW IDEAS

5 tips to instantly become more innovative. By Susan Robertson



**W**hen you really need new ideas, fresh thinking or a creative solution to a challenge, a typical day-to-day approach in your thinking is not the optimal process. Using the same old thinking will simply lead you to the same old ideas you've already had or tried before.

Instead, you need to do something different—something that will stimulate your brain in different ways and shift your perspective on the issues at hand.

Here are some ways you and your team can shake up your thinking when it comes to big changes or decisions so that you actually come up with the fresh, new ideas you need.

**1 CHANGE YOUR ENVIRONMENT** Get outside your own conference room or office—and even beyond the local coffee shop.

Debrief the proposed changes to your service offerings or possible expansion in an art museum. Or take your team to the zoo with the objective of coming back with new ideas.

Depending on what part of the country you're in, you could send your team to the Mall of America, Walt Disney World or a trendy area of Manhattan to look for inspiration and new ideas.

If you can't physically get out of the office, then find a way to get out meta-

phorically. Ask people to imagine how they would solve the problem at hand if they lived in Antarctica, or if viewed from the perspective of a submarine captain.



## BRING IN OUTSIDERS

When forced into situations where new thinking is required, invite other perspectives into your discovery and idea generation processes.

For example, for a new product introduction, invite visitors from other walks of life, like a flower shop owner, a jewelry store owner or a bartender, and ask how they go about highlighting new offerings.

Your project team will be amazed at the range and diversity of new ideas that come when they are exposed to new perspectives. They'll think of ideas they never would have arrived at on their own—due to their own embedded assumptions about the topic and market.



## TRULY ENGAGE WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS

Don't rely solely on second-hand data to understand your customers' needs. You need to actually talk to them. Go to the races, the car dealership, the trailhead or the auto show to see their problems and needs for yourself.

All too often, teams looking for an idea generation project will say, "We don't need

to do any discovery in advance because we already have lots of data." This is a red flag because it usually means they have numerous reports with reams of statistics about your customers. Unfortunately, it rarely means they have discovered any real new insight into customer needs.

Instead, find ways for your employees to have meaningful conversations with your best clients. It will be far more effective to immerse your team in real customer understanding.



## QUESTION EVERYTHING

Perform some specific exercises that force people to confront and challenge their subconscious assumptions about the topic. An easy way to do this is to first ask for ideas that the team thinks would solve the problem, but that they probably couldn't implement for some reason.

Then, ask them to reframe each idea by saying, "We might be able to implement this idea if..." What comes behind the *if's* will help surface a lot of assumptions people have that may or may not be actual barriers.

Of course, some of the barriers will turn out to be real, in which case don't spend any more time on them. But, in every case that I've ever done this with client teams, they also discover many supposed barriers that they could actually overcome.



**LET SOME CRAZY INTO THE ROOM**

The academic definition of creative thinking is “the process of coming up with new and useful ideas.” The only way to get new ideas is to start with seemingly crazy ideas.

Every truly innovative idea seems a little crazy at first. If you only start with ideas that are comfortable or clearly easy to implement, they’re probably not very new.

So, encourage people to throw in extremely wild ideas. Then, play a game called *If We Could*.

Step outside your comfort zone and ask, “what if.”



Instruct the team to temporarily let go of the problems in the idea and ask, “If we could implement this idea, what would be the benefit(s)?”

Once you have identified the benefits of each crazy idea, lock in on the most promising few and ask the team to look for possible solutions to any barriers.



**THINK ABOUT YOUR THINKING**

If some of the suggestions listed above seem a little too out there for your specialty after-market shop—well, that’s the point.

It’s too easy to simply tackle every new challenge using typical day-to-day thinking, approaching our customers and our challenges as we always have in the past.

It feels familiar, it’s easy to access that type of thinking, and it works on most daily challenges. So, you subconsciously

assume it will work on any challenge.

But, when it comes to major changes or big ideas, it’s incredibly helpful to do some meta-analysis on your approach—in other words, think about your thinking.

Not every problem will benefit from the same type of thinking. Once you recognize that this new situation needs new thinking, it’s fairly easy to do some things to shift to a more productive mode for the challenge at hand.

Then, shift back to the more familiar day-to-day thinking for your daily tasks. **TS**



**SUSAN ROBERTSON** is a creative thinking expert with over 20 years of experience speaking and coaching in Fortune 500 companies. As an instructor on applied creativity at Harvard, she brings a scientific foundation to enhancing human creativity. Visit: [susanrobertson.co](http://susanrobertson.co).

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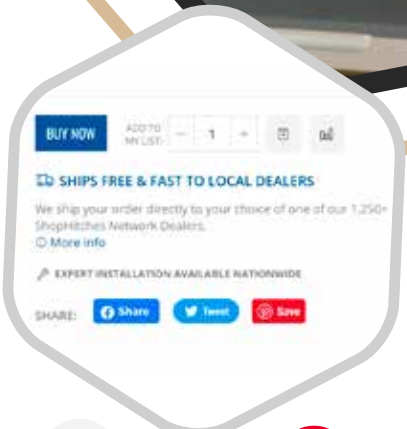
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**Redefining The Way Customers Shop Locally**

By Jef White

# the HIGH Life

Rooftop tents are making their way to the top.

**S**afe, secure and refreshed, overlanders rise to face a new day of adventure thanks to their rooftop tents.

RTTs have taken the overlanding industry by storm, offering hard- and soft-shell versions that install easily, set up quickly and handle anything the wilderness can throw at them. Add in a cool, modern appearance and the notion that rooftop tents can also be a gateway to a garage full of related accessories, and it's easy to see why they are quickly becoming favorites of off-road shops nationwide.

Rooftop tents continue to surprise. They are lighter, roomier and more comfortable than one might think, pack down low and tight during drive time, and feature a wide range of attractive amenities.

The products have a wide range of features and amenities. (Photo by JT Maguire/Courtesy OFFGRID Outdoor Gear)



# the HIGH Life

## Hot Rooftop Tent Products

### ■ HOT PRODUCT:

Esperance Hard-Shell Rooftop Tent

### ■ FEATURES & BENEFITS:

Practical and comfortable; efficient storage and setup; clamshell design is easy to deploy and packs down to 13 inches tall when closed; weighs 123 pounds; telescopic ladder; gas struts; large windows; removable rainfly; 1.5-inch mattress.

ARB 4x4 Accessories

Moea Theroux

U.S. Marketing Manager

### ■ HOT PRODUCT:

Sky Ridge Pike 2 Tent

### ■ FEATURES & BENEFITS:

Entry-level tent manufactured from 280gsm ripstop reinforced polyester/cotton canvas with a polyurethane waterproof coating; privacy windows and rainfly; built-in skylight; 2.4-inch high-density foam mattress; telescoping ladder.

Body Armor 4x4

Nupesh Patel

Body Armor 4x4 Brand Manager

### ■ HOT PRODUCT:

King-Sized BunduTop

### ■ FEATURES & BENEFITS:

An easy-to-use, all-electric tent with a self-deploying rainfly; 4-inch high-density mattress; interior light; interior charging port; 360-degree view.

BunduTecUSA Inc.

Jenn Crooks

Office Manager

### ■ HOT PRODUCT:

Napier Rooftop Tent

### ■ FEATURES & BENEFITS:

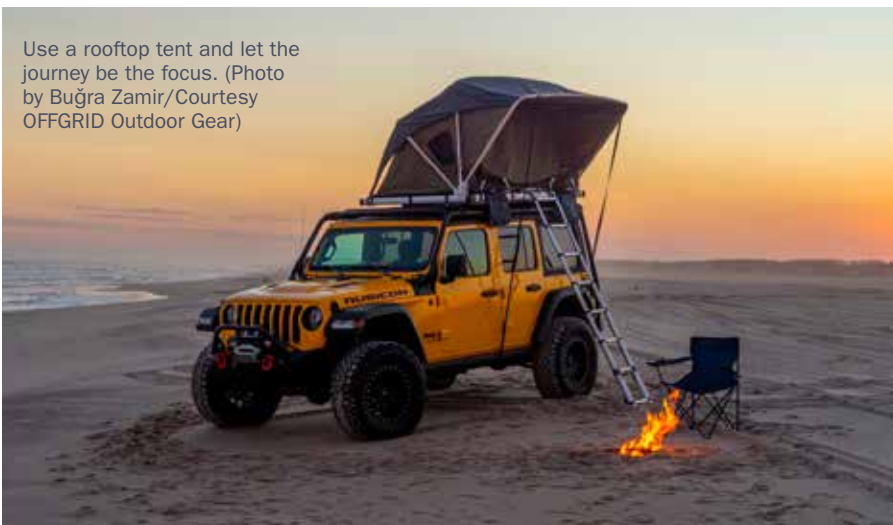
Easy set-up with the pop-up feature—unlatch corners, drop down the ladder, prop open windows and rainfly and you're done; instant campsite.

Napier Outdoors

Stuart Christie

Brand Specialist

Use a rooftop tent and let the journey be the focus. (Photo by Buğra Zamir/Courtesy OFFGRID Outdoor Gear)



Rooftop tents open the door to repeat business. (Photo by Abigail Ducote/Courtesy OFFGRID Outdoor Gear)



Lightweight and versatile, the products appeal to many consumers. (Photo courtesy Body Armor 4x4)

Innovation is driving the industry, as updated offerings add utility to new vehicle models. In short, it's a market on the rise.

Manufacturers are more than willing to expand on the potential of rooftop tents, including spotlighting common misconceptions, outlining lesser-known benefits, highlighting interesting partnerships and

collaborations, and introducing hot new products.

With their suggestions and support, your shop could soon be helping customers live the high life with a rooftop tent.

### AN OVERLANDING MAINSTAY

Overlanders want to get away from it all, and rooftop tents allow them to do it in style and comfort.

Their efficiency can make for a more enjoyable trip.

"When you have a rooftop tent installed, you can set up and tear down camp with such ease that your journey can truly become the focus, instead of the hassle of standard ground tents and the pains that come along with them," says Jesse Brown, director of marketing for OFFGRID Outdoor Gear.

They really are that easy, agrees Jake





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# the HIGH Life

## Hot Rooftop Tent Products

### ■ HOT PRODUCT: Voyager Rooftop Tent

#### ■ FEATURES & BENEFITS:

Simplicity of design that allows for a quick and easy set-up—it can be completely set up in less than 2 minutes.

*OFFGRID Outdoor Gear*

*Jesse Brown*

*Director of Marketing*

### ■ HOT PRODUCT: Mamba III Rooftop Tent

#### ■ FEATURES & BENEFITS:

New aluminum-bodied hard-side rooftop tent; set-up and put-away times under 1 minute; anti-condensation mat under a 2-inch-thick mattress; standard functional and removable crossbars; insulated honeycomb base; space to store bedding when closed.

*Overland Vehicle Systems*

*Michelle Bates*

*Marketing Director*

### ■ HOT PRODUCTS: Max 1.9 Soft-Shell and Skye Hard-Shell Rooftop Tents

#### ■ FEATURES & BENEFITS:

Max—fits 4-5 people, practical, provides space and amazing views; Skye—lightweight, aerodynamic, fits 2-3 people, comfortable, sets up in seconds; components including shocks are inside the tent for longevity.

*Pittman Outdoors - AirBedz*

*Edmond McClure*

*Social Media Community Manager*

### ■ HOT PRODUCT:

#### Lost Canyon Rove Edition Rooftop Tent

■ FEATURES & BENEFITS: Skylight panel with quick-release clips; integrated LED light strips; 2-1/2-inch-thick high-density foam mattress.

*Quadratrec Inc.*

*Eric Ammerman*

*Director of Content*

### ■ HOT PRODUCT: Alpha Hard-Shell Tent

#### ■ FEATURES & BENEFITS:

Fits 3-4 people; available in black and gray; aerodynamic hard shell that allows bedding to remain inside; 6cm-thick mattress with accompanying interior LED lighting; 210D polyester/Oxford waterproof coated 5,000mm rainfly; built-in TPU moonroof.

*Tuff Stuff Overland*

*Jake Snyder*

*New Product Coordinator*



A rooftop tent brings added value to a vehicle's overlanding setup. (Photos courtesy ARB 4x4 Accessories)



Snyder, new product coordinator for Tuff Stuff Overland.

“With our Alpha line of hard-shell tents, you’ll have a comfortable bed ready to relax on within two minutes of pulling up to camp,” he says. “Packing up your tent takes no more than three minutes, with minimal effort involved.”

This comes in handy, particularly in inclement weather.

“You can set up a tent in just a couple of minutes, even in the pouring rain,” notes Eric Ammerman, director of content for Quadratrec Inc. “It’s much faster to set up than a typical ground tent.”

Security is another important feature, says Michelle Bates, marketing director for Overland Vehicle Systems.

“Rooftop tents provide a long list of conveniences for our customers that you don’t get with a ground tent, one of them being safety,” she explains. “Being safe is the first priority of all adventure-goers on the trail. Our tents give our customers the satisfaction of knowing they will be safe in our four-season-ready tent from weather

and unwelcomed natural visitors.”

The systems are also affordable, says Stuart Christie, brand specialist for Napier Outdoors.

“A \$500 to \$700 ground tent includes much more maintenance to set up and pack away. For a bit more money, rooftop tents are almost maintenance-free,” he says. “Plus, initial installation of a ground tent can be daunting, while our rooftop tent is easy to install, with detailed instructions included. If you convince a friend to help, initial installation will take just 10 to 15 minutes.”

### HOORAY FOR THE LITTLE GUYS

Rooftop tents are not just for full-sized

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# the HIGH Life

## Ranked: The BEST New Off-Road Trucks

A great off-road truck can take your customers and their rooftop tents just about anywhere. To help with the selection process, Kelly Blue Book recently ranked its 17 Best Off-Road Trucks in 2022.

“To make traveling off-pavement safer and smarter—and to have the most fun—you need a truck with the right features to power through even the worst terrain,” says Brian Moody, Kelley Blue Book executive editor. “Kelley Blue Book’s experts have unpacked everything drivers need to know about off-roading, from detailing the basics to lists of must-have features and technology, along with their recommendations for the best new and used off-road trucks for car shoppers to consider.”

The top-10 new truck list features the Chevrolet Colorado ZR2 at No. 1:

1. **2022 Chevrolet Colorado ZR2**
2. **2022 Ram 2500 Power Wagon**
3. **2022 Ford Raptor**
4. **2022 Ram TRX**



The 2022 Chevrolet Colorado ZR2 is at the top of a recent ranking of off-road trucks by Kelley Blue Book.

5. **2022 Ford Ranger Tremor**
6. **2022 Jeep Gladiator Rubicon**
7. **2022 Toyota Tacoma TRD Pro**
8. **2022 GMC Sierra 1500 AT4X**
9. **2022 Ford F-250 Super Duty Tremor**
10. **2022 Ram 1500 Rebel**

Furthermore, when discussing must-have vehicle features with your overlanding customers, KBB suggests focusing on:

- Larger tires
- Skid plates

- Off-road suspension
- Locking differentials
- Disconnecting front sway bar
- Electric winch

To see more of the study, including a ranking of top used trucks to consider, visit [kbb.com/best-cars/best-off-road-trucks/](https://kbb.com/best-cars/best-off-road-trucks/).

*This article originally appeared on [theshopmag.com](https://theshopmag.com). Visit today and sign up for the free daily eNewsletter.*



trucks and vans. Today’s options allow for nearly any off-road vehicle, large or small, to mount a tent on top.

“Many people think that tents are too heavy or won’t fit on their specific application,” says Nupesh Patel, brand manager for Body Armor 4x4. “Truth be told, our tents are lightweight at just over 100 pounds. Most factory crossbars and rails will hold a 150-pound dynamic weight, and you can fit our tents onto small CUVs, minivans, trucks and trailers.”

Much depends on the vehicle’s setup, says Edmond McClure, social media community manager for Pittman Outdoors – AirBedz.

“Many rooftop tents only weigh 140 to 175 pounds, and we have seen them mounted on trailers, campers, Jeeps, trucks, station wagons, boats and even a Prius,” he says. “The secret is truly in the rack system you use.”

Overlanding attracts couples and families who consider their gear an investment. (Photo courtesy ARB 4x4 Accessories)

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REI finds younger, more diverse, spontaneous campers turning to the co-op to outfit their mid-sized SUVs for adventure.

## REI: Young Campers Embrace SUV Accessorization

As campsite reservations continue to fill quickly due to more people going camping for the first time, outdoor products retailer REI has noted shifts in camp product purchases—with more customers incorporating their mid-sized SUVs to extend adventures beyond the campsite.

Since 2019, the co-op's sales of vehicle-supported camp items including car shelters, refrigerators and rooftop tents have increased by 45%. The co-op and the outdoor industry at-large both

saw a significant increase in the number of people who took up camping as a recreational activity due to the pandemic.

A recently published Kampgrounds of America (KOA) report showed diversity of first-time campers was also up significantly (54% non-white), comprised of a majority of millennial campers (54%), as was the number of people taking an overlanding or off-road vehicle camping trip (27%).

The same study counted 93.8 million active camper households in 2021, and



9.1 million first-time camper households in 2021.

“Over the past few years, REI has seen more people turn to their mid-sized vehicles as a preferred way to go a bit farther, camp using their car, visit new places and try multisport adventures in new outdoor destinations,” says Melissa Paul, REI senior merchandising manager for camp. “This camper is a bit more spontaneous, is interested in being more self-sustained, and goes out a bit farther off the grid to camp.”

To introduce more people to vehicle-supported camping, Miranda in the Wild, an REI employee and YouTube outdoor adventurer, kicked off a nationwide tour, driving coast-to-coast in a Subaru Forester Wilderness Edition while stopping to teach Backpacking 101 classes and conduct meet-and-greets at select REI locations.

The Subaru, like many mid-sized vehicles REI Co-op customers already drive, is outfitted with accessories from brands including Dometic, NEMO, Snow Peak, Thule and REI Co-op.



Rooftop tents often lead to increased sales of related overlanding items. (Photo courtesy Body Armor 4x4)

And since they pack down low and tight, they debunk another common misconception, notes Jenn Crooks, office manager for BunduTecUSA, which is “that they affect fuel consumption in a major way.”

Moea Theroux, U.S. marketing manager

for ARB 4x4 Accessories, also counters that opinion.

“Considering the added comfort they provide, their slimmer transport profiles and bed-rack mounting options, a rooftop tent brings incredible value to a vehicle's overlanding setup,” she says.

As self-contained units, they also maximize storage space—another benefit for serious overlanders.

“Our tents allow for storage of bedding and various smaller items while packed up and on the go,” notes Snyder. “More storage in your vehicle without the struggles of sleeping bags and pillows leaves room for the essentials where you need them most.”

### GATEWAY TO ADVENTURE

It's safe to say that overlanders like their stuff. And when it comes to their sleeping arrangements for nights away from civili-

zation, there's an opportunity to upgrade the entire system.

“If a customer doesn't have a factory roof system, the opportunity to sell and add a complete roof rack is there for the installer,” says Patel. “Tents are only one aspect of the build. Tents lead to selling other accessories such as annexes, awnings, showers, and the list goes on.”

Brown agrees that the tents open the door to repeat business.

“A lot of times, if a consumer decides to purchase a rooftop tent, that is just the start of their build. Once they have the rooftop tent installed, you can count on them coming back to your shop for more accessories to complement their camping/overlanding setup.”

It's about improving the overall overland experience, says Snyder of Tuff Stuff Overland.

“Offering customers our rooftop tents

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# the HIGH Life



Rooftop tents can provide some added security in the great outdoors. (Photos courtesy Overland Vehicle Systems)

allows easy add-on sales opportunities with some other related products such as our new quick-deploy 180/270 awnings, camp lighting and even restroom options,” he says.

Also add 12V coolers and refrigerators to the list, says Ammerman.

“Any camping or overlanding gear you may have in inventory becomes a quick and easy upsell to someone already purchasing a rooftop tent.”

Combined, it all makes for an enjoyable, memorable trip.

“Overlanding is a unique experience. It truly allows for a very comfortable and safe way of traveling and camping,” says McClure. “The benefit for shops is that customers will want to accessorize their experience even further with bat wings, annexes, outdoor lights, air mattresses and much more.”

And connects with a wide and growing audience.

“Those interested in rooftop tents are staying out longer and need a broad range of quality accessories to support longer trips,” says Theroux from ARB. “Rooftop tents attract couples and families who consider their gear an investment.”

## WHERE THE TRAIL ENDS

With so many great selling features for rooftop tents, some inevitably fly under the radar. One that’s often missed is their versatility.

“They have a large customer base,” Crooks notes. “Rooftop tents are utilized in so many innovative ways that apply to various industries—not just camping and overlanding. For instance, the tents are used by research communities when out in the field, as well as by the mining industry,

outreach programs and even the boating industry.”

Another lesser-known benefit is that they command top dollar.

“The margins from selling rooftop tents can be higher than the margins of other products, which means that the shop can make more profit-per-square-foot and attract new customers looking for this product specifically,” Bates says. “Additionally, by selling rooftop tents, the shop gains the opportunity to sell off-road camping gear, which is an adjacent market. This increases sales and attracts new customers who may not have considered shopping at the store before.”

Finally, their high market visibility means customers recognize and trust the products from the start.

“So many people love these tents, they almost sell themselves,” says Christie.



Think beyond the traditional overlanding community to expand sales of rooftop tents. (Photo courtesy BunduTecUSA)



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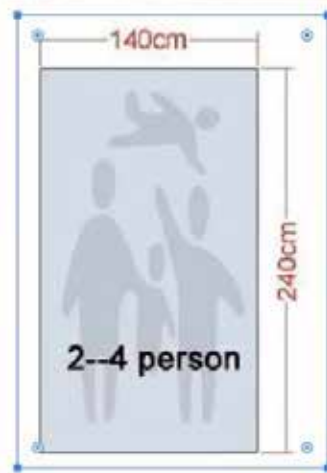
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# the HIGH Life



RTTs practically sell themselves. (Photos courtesy Napier Outdoors)



With the proper setup, many types of vehicles can accommodate a rooftop tent. (Photo courtesy Pittman Outdoors – AirBedz)



Most customers want to accessorize their overlanding experience, meaning more business for shops. (Photo courtesy Pittman Outdoors – AirBedz)

## COMBINED EFFORTS

If you're looking to establish or expand your rooftop tent business, here are some collaboration and partnership ideas that may help.

"We are currently working with a few wheel and tire shops that broadened their scope of work, which led to level lifts, bumpers and expanding into the camping and overlanding scene," says Patel from Body Armor 4x4. "Tents are just one aspect of the camp life and often lead to outfitting the vehicle with more accessories."

Crooks highlights a recent collaboration between BunduTecUSA and the HAB-ITAT XR team that utilizes virtual reality to bring conservation to life and works with TV personality Ellen DeGeneres to raise awareness.

"Our tents allow the wildlife photographers to go to hard-to-access places—places that are truly wild—and stay safe and warm," Crooks notes.

Traditional off-road clubs have welcomed the overlanding crowd, creating an expanded, yet tight-knit, community, says McClure from Pittman Outdoors – AirBedz.

"As an avid Jeep, I have collaborated with several large Jeep groups and initiated some Jeep overlanding groups. The numbers are growing and the popularity of the RTT as a Jeep accessory is skyrocketing," he says. "The rooftop tents market is still very new. Customers are looking for better, more innovative and safer ways of camping, and overlanding is the answer."

Offering or highlighting instructional

courses can help attract customers new to the camping and off-road lifestyle, says Bates from OVS.

"One of the biggest misconceptions in overlanding is that you have to be an expert to enjoy this type of adventure," she says. "No one is born with the knowledge of any one hobby. Some clubs and events give tutorials on recovery gear, tents, vehicle knowledge and beginner trails. Everyone has a point in life to get their feet wet, and overlanding offers terrific adventures for novices and experts alike."

Look no farther than industry shows and expos to see its rising popularity.

"As seen at SEMA over the last few years, the overlanding segment is growing as more and more manufacturers lean into the outdoor adventure space," says Quadratec's



The overlanding crowd has the disposable income to support large project builds and accessory purchases. (Photo courtesy Tuff Stuff Overland)

Ammerman. “Simply put, the overlanding crowd has the disposable income to support large project builds as well as the purchase of accessories.”

Even the carmakers are getting in on the act.

“OEMs such as GM and Nissan are outfitting vehicles for the overlanding category with items such as all-terrain tires, bed rack systems, tonneau covers and more,” says Christie from Napier, “and the highlights of these vehicles by far are the rooftop tents.”

Ultimately, electrification and new vehicle introductions should provide even greater opportunities to expand the market in the years to come, predicts Brown from OFFGRID Outdoor Gear.

“With vehicles such as the new Rivian R1T coming out to the market, it’s clear that overlanding is making its impact in the industry and auto manufacturers are going to continue to follow suit,” he says. “We’ve only scratched the surface of the potential that rooftop tents have.” **TS**



RESTYLING/ALTERMARKET ACCESSORIES

Rooftop tents have taken the overlanding industry by storm. (Photo courtesy Quadratec Inc.)



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Myers is an angler on the Major League Fishing (MLF) tour, having competed in more than 130 tournaments throughout his career.

# REEL NICE CARS

Restyler & pro angler Britt Myers turns hobbies into businesses.

By Maura Keller

recalls. “When I was 19, I actually got a loan for \$5,000 to get started. Twenty-eight years later, we now employ 27 people. We’re one of the largest single-location automotive accessories stores in the Carolinas.”

Nearly three decades is also more than enough time to collect a basketful of awards and recognition, particularly surrounding the shop’s renowned custom work. CS Motorsports also caught the eye of KYB Americas Corp., earning preferred shop status from the shock maker for its suspension services.

**B**ritt Myers, owner of CS Motorsports in Gastonia, North Carolina, has been providing off-road, street performance and mobile electronics customers with premium automotive accessories for more than 28 years.

With over 28,000 square feet of retail and installation space, Myers and his team deliver a wealth of products and services including wheels, tires, lift kits, lowering and leveling kits, window tint, spray-on bedliners, car audio and electronics, 4x4 accessories and more.

And not just for today’s cars, trucks and SUVs. CS clients also bring their boats, classic cars, ATVs and golf carts to Myers as well, often looking for everything from heated and/or leather seats to remote starts

and alarm systems.

It’s a role Myers seemed destined to play from an early age.

“My mom worked at a shop when I was a kid, so I was always around car stuff,” he



CS Motorsports in Gastonia, North Carolina, provides off-road, street performance and mobile electronics customers with premium automotive accessories.

**PROFESSIONAL ANGLING ON THE SIDE**

For many enthusiasts, installing custom components truly makes a vehicle their own. It's a community that CS Motorsports (csmotorsportsnc.com) embraces and celebrates.

"Our main customers are just good ol' car and truck enthusiasts. They could be anyone from a kid just getting a driver's license to an NFL player. We're really diversified in the services we provide," Myers says. "And we've built some really cool projects over the years for companies like Toyota, the NFL, Visa and many more."

Among his favorites was the Ultimate Fishing Tundra, a Toyota the shop built years ago to take to the SEMA Show.

His fondness for that pickup is maybe not a surprise, considering Myers is also an angler on the Major League Fishing (MLF) tour. He has competed in more than 130 tournaments during his career, calling it another hobby that turned into a business.

"What's crazy is the tremendous impact that the fishing world has had on CS Motorsports," he explains, tying the two



Britt Myers got started with a \$5,000 loan when he was 19. Nearly 30 years later, his shop now has 27 employees.

together. "It's pretty much every day that we're building a custom truck for an angler or a fishing company from somewhere across the country—from California to the Carolinas. It's just insane the number of parts that we ship out to anglers within

the fishing community. I can't express just how fortunate I am to customize vehicles and bass fish, both at the highest levels, and how effective the business is."

That's despite spending the last couple of years battling the pandemic and recent

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The biggest issue with current supply chain interruptions is completing projects within the customer's expected timeframe, prompting the shop to boost its inventory.



With over 28,000 square feet of retail and installation space, the CS team can provide a wealth of products and services.

supply chain issues, of course.

“Business has been extremely busy throughout,” he reports. “We attribute this to people spending more time in their cars, trucks, boats and RVs—and we work on them all—instead of traveling in other forms of transportation.”

The biggest issue with supply chain interruptions, he continues, is completing projects within the customer's expected timeframe.

“It creates a lot more work and effort when locating and purchasing parts,” Myers says. “You have to be open to purchasing products from multiple sources

until the supply issue is resolved.”

That's prompted CS Motorsports to boost its inventories, particularly of later-model car and truck parts.

“We've learned over the years that it's hard to sell if you don't have it in stock.”

**GROWTH STRATEGIES**

Myers notes that CS Motorsports couldn't continue to thrive and grow without its dedicated crew.

“We have employees who have been here for a very long time—some as long as 25 years,” he reveals. “I have made it my mission to always take care of, and provide

multiple benefits for, my employees. Even though working in a shop like this can be challenging at times, my best guess is that when you like what you do, it makes it easier. We're all car and truck enthusiasts, so what better job than to work around them all day?”

It's also a career suited for people who enjoy new challenges.

“A small business of this size is very demanding on all its employees. We must stay positive and attack each hurdle as it arrives,” Myers says. “I truly believe all of the success of this particular business is 100% because of the employees we have.”



CS Motorsports also caught the eye of KYB Americas Corp., earning preferred shop status from the shock maker for its suspension work.

When it comes to setting prices and maintaining profits, Myers says that flexibility is important.

“We don’t have a certain percentage or margin that we target. Some services you just can’t make much margin on, but somehow it just all works out.”

The shop’s longevity offers yet another benefit—Myers doesn’t have to spend as much as he used to on advertising.

“It sounds crazy, but a few years back we cut out 90% of our advertising and we never noticed any decrease (in sales),” he says. “We attribute this to a small town-type business, word-of-mouth marketing and just being in business for so many years.”

CS Motorsports does utilize Facebook and Instagram when communicating with customers and prospective customers, recognizing that the two social media channels target different demographics.

“But, in my opinion, they are equal in value,” Myers says.

As a mainstay in its community, the shop doesn’t try to do it all on its own. CS Motorsports has made an effort to partner and cooperate with multiple local businesses over the years, particularly car dealerships.

As Myers explains, it’s not just the dealer business that they send CS Motorsports that’s beneficial—it’s the fact that the new car dealers are recommending their customers to Myers’ store for other services as well.

Top products include wheels, tires, lift kits, lowering and leveling kits, window tint, spray-on bedliners, car audio and electronics, 4x4 accessories and more.



“This gives the customer a great deal of confidence that their vehicle will be handled in a professional manner,” he explains.

Even approaching three decades in the business—and with those big bass calling—Myers isn’t eyeing a slowdown anytime soon.

“It’s become a way of life and I absolutely love the entire process of helping customers customize their vehicles,” he says. “At the end of the day we’re selling fun, and I love seeing the customer happy and smiling when they get to see and enjoy the work we performed.” **TS**

**MAURA KELLER** is a freelance writer based in Minnesota. She can be reached at [maurakeller@yahoo.com](mailto:maurakeller@yahoo.com).

# BRIGHT SKIES



[MORE ON THESHOPMAG.COM](https://www.theshopmag.com)  
Champion Acquires Webasto Sunroof Line:  
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Sunroofs have become an aftermarket mainstay. **By Josh Poulson**

Like many in the restyling community, I felt like there were some products when I first started in the industry that were easy to install and I never worried about the outcome.

All that changed my fourth day on the job when I was assisting a technician. That was the day he grabbed a screwdriver and a hammer and pounded a hole right through the top of a brand-new car!

After the initial shock wore off, I realized he was being a little overdramatic just to get a rise out of me. He then proceeded to show me how to install a popup sunroof. To this day, I wonder if a little bit of that shock is still there when I see one of my techs about to cut into the metal on a new vehicle.

This was the beginning of my love/hate relationship with sunroofs.

## FORECAST: SUNNY

I say *hate* because I was never that good of a technician and I struggled installing many products, sunroofs included.

I guess if I say I *hate* sunroofs, however, then I must also hate 12V electronics,

truck accessories, interior accessories and a bunch of others as well, because I wasn't very good at installing them, either! (That is also probably why I was soon promoted to customer service.)

Regardless, at the same time I have to say that I love sunroofs, mainly due to the success we've had selling and installing

them over the last 30 years. Initially, it was mainly popup sunroofs, but now those are mostly out of the picture.

These days, sunroofs usually mean power sunroofs or *moonroofs*, including top-sliders that are installed in sports cars or vehicles with little roof space, and full internal power sunroofs that allow the glass to go



Sunroofs such as the one found in this limited-edition Rolls-Royce Cullinan Black Badge from 1016 Industries offer strong potential for restyling shops. (Photo courtesy 1016 Industries)





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Sunroof installation takes skill and an artful touch—and has shown tremendous staying power as an in-demand service over the years.

back into the vehicle between the headliner and the metal top.

For us here at Auto Additions, our main business comes from those full internal sunroofs, which have been and continue to be a core product and have catapulted us into many other products and services as well.

It's really quite easy to use sunroofs as a steppingstone to additional accessory sales—you simply tell your retail customers or dealerships, "Since you trust us to cut a hole in the top of your car, then you can trust us as we install (fill in the blank)."

### SUNROOF SKILLS

Power sunroof installation is a work of art and takes a lot of skill. The invasive nature of the systems, with no room for error, speaks to the talent, courage and outright professionalism of any company willing to take on this Mt. Everest of products.

Not only do you have to remove parts of the car including the headliner, the metal roof, metal bracing and more—you have to then put them back together, but now with a large piece of glass, a sliding sunshade and stronger supports than what were removed, all the while making it look like the sunroof was there all along and no one was ever inside the vehicle.

This is no easy task, but when mastered is a big reason why many restyling shops have been able to build their businesses around this core product over the years.

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## THE GREAT THING ABOUT SUNROOFS IS THAT WHETHER THEY ARE AFTERMARKET OR FROM THE FACTORY THEY BASICALLY WORK THE SAME WAY

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I have many times wondered about the future of sunroofs. In fact, 10 years ago I predicted sunroofs would be a thing of the past. Perhaps some of you felt the same way.

It wasn't because I believed that every car would have a sunroof straight from the factory, but because it seemed that cars were becoming so advanced that we wouldn't be able to cut holes in them, wire them up or, at a minimum, make any money on the time-consuming installs.

A decade ago, I was looking at the profit on a 7-inch overhead DVD system and thinking, "If we could just do these all day long instead of sunroofs, we would make a lot more money!" I look back now and see how wrong I was—if we do one overhead DVD system a week these days I'm thrilled, compared to the ever-steady sunroof business that never died off or even slowed down.

I'm glad I didn't give up on them. I look at the current crop of new vehicles, which are far more advanced than the vehicles of 10 years ago, and admit they still have four

wheels, are still made from metal and still run on 12 volts.

As long as that is the case, and the OE manufacturers don't start putting sunroofs into every vehicle, then I don't see the product riding off into the sunset like DVD players, simulated convertible tops, T-tops, radios, moldings and so many other products whose best days are behind them.

### SPACIOUS SKIES

The pandemic has helped our sunroof sales. We've been getting requests to put sunroofs in cars in cases where normally a customer who wanted a sunroof would have simply chosen a different vehicle on the dealer lot.

These days, however, they are having to take whatever the dealership has in stock or en route and then add the accessories they want.

We just recently installed a power moonroof in a 2022 Jeep Wagoneer that stickered at \$82,000 MSRP. To my point, the market remains strong and growing.

Sunroofs have also allowed us to become

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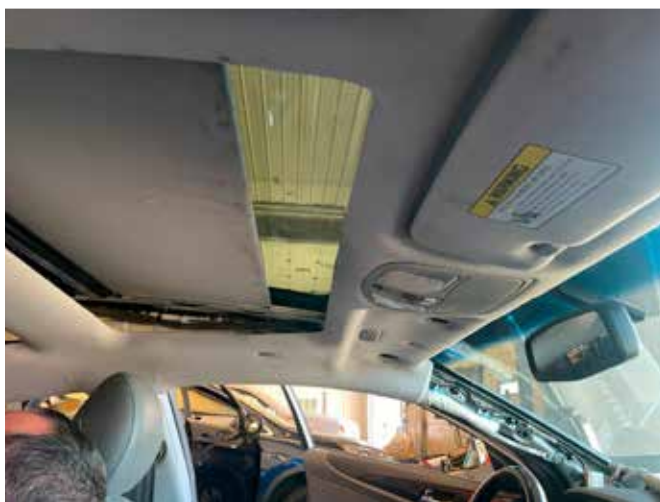
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BRIGHT SKIES

RESTYLING/AFTERMARKET ACCESSORIES



Our shop also offers repair services on OEM and aftermarket sunroofs. Here we tackled a factory Hyundai panoramic roof.

specialists in another area that is just as profitable, if not more so—the repair business.

The great thing about sunroofs is that, whether they are aftermarket or from the factory, they basically work the same way. There is a motor, glass, track and rails, sunshade and drain tubes—and all of them can go awry and cause a sunroof to not work properly.

Sometimes the roofs even get stuck open, leaving most consumers no other choice than to seek professional help. But, if they take the vehicle to their usual mechanic, he or she is usually going to tell them it is out of their realm of expertise.

Next stop is usually the dealership, where again the customer finds out pretty quickly that the technicians don't always understand how to work on sunroofs. In my experience, dealerships either turn down the business or estimate the repair so high that it scares away the customer.

Then the driver finally finds us—the company that not only installs sunroofs but also repairs all makes and models,

including OE and aftermarket brands. We schedule the appointment and tell the customer upfront that it is a one-hour labor charge to diagnose and close the sunroof (if stuck open).

If the customer decides to move forward with the full-price repair, we put that first hour of labor they already paid toward the total job. Thus it's a win/win for the customer and for us as a shop.

Many times it needs a new motor, or the track or rails are broken, and we can fix it just by buying and installing the parts. Other times it requires a complete rebuild where we must buy a new or used sunroof and then replace most if not all of the components.

Either way, it's usually less expensive than what the local car dealership was going to charge, and the customers know it will be done quickly and properly.

To this day, we not only have consumers bringing us their sunroofs for repairs, but also all of our car dealership customers that take in used cars on trade or buy at auction as well. If it wasn't for us installing sunroofs

from the very beginning, I don't think we would have built our repair business as large as it has become.

So, yes, I do hate sunroofs—but only if I'm the one who has to install them, and at this point I don't think that will ever happen again. But I also love them for the challenge, the experience, the profit and the consistency they have brought to my company over the years.

I also love their bright future. So, look up and hopefully you'll see the bright sky, too—if not, then maybe you need a sunroof. **TS**



**JOSH POULSON** is the principal of Auto Additions in Columbus, Ohio, which was named Restyler of the Year, 2012-'13.

Auto Additions offers a complete line of product upgrades including 12V and appearance packages with a specific focus on the dealership segment. Josh is chairman of the SEMA PRO council and was named 2015-'16 Person of the Year at the 2015 SEMA Show.



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For more information on Cargo Helper, visit [huskytow.com](https://www.huskytow.com)





### Bronco Shocks

**ICON Vehicle Dynamics**, Riverside, California, presents EXP Shocks for 2021-up Ford Bronco applications. Designed to combine the performance of a fully rebuildable, 2.5-inch-diameter premium shock with the convenience and cost-benefits of re-using the Bronco's factory coil spring and other components, the EXP line bridges the gap between spacer lifts and threaded coil-overs. The shocks provide suspension lift, custom-tuned performance and maximum travel in an economical package.

### Modular Grille Guards

**Westin Automotive Products**, San Dimas, California, presents HDX Modular Grille Guards. Designed to deliver bold styling and heavy-duty front-end protection, the guards feature a three-piece design that has proven its strength on emergency responder vehicles in a wide variety of high-stress environments. Each application is engineered with strategically placed gusseting and reinforcements to provide structural rigidity that eliminates unwanted vibrations. The uprights include 2-3/4-inch-wide rubber push pad strips for added coverage.



### Jeep Front Seats

**Quadracat**, West Chester, Pennsylvania, introduces a new line of Front Seats for Jeeps. The Quadracat Heritage Premium Front Seats are designed to replace factory seats on 1976-'95 Jeep CJ and Wrangler YJ models, and can also fit 1997-2006 Jeep Wrangler TJs with the use of adapters (sold separately). The seats feature a high-back vinyl construction with an integrated headrest, fixed back support and reinforced side bolsters to keep the driver centered. Each premium seat comes standard with a double-stitched pattern in three custom colors.



### JLU Soft Tops

**MasterTop**, Golden, Colorado, introduces two new Soft Tops for Jeep Wrangler JLU models. Available in both 28-ounce Black Diamond vinyl or the company's signature three-layer MasterTwill fabric, the MasterTop Complete and Fastback Soft Tops are durable and easy to use. The MasterTop Complete Soft Top features a fold-back sunroof that allows for an open-air experience. Quick-release knobs can be unhooked and repositioned in the rear for an expanded sunroof.



### Trail Boss Rear Suspension Enhancement

**Timbren Industries**, Toronto, introduces a new Timbren SES upgrade that fits the rear suspension of Chevrolet Silverado 1500 Trail Boss models. The kits mount to the frame using existing holes and requires zero maintenance. They prevent sag, reduce sway and enhance ride quality under load without compromising unloaded drivability.



### F-Series Door Sill Replacements

**California Pony Cars**, Ontario, California, presents Carbon Fiber Truck Door 4-Piece Sill Replacements for 2015-'21 Ford F-Series models, the latest addition to its NXT-Generation Ford F-Series truck line. Designed to give pickups an elegant, sporty look with a show-quality finish, the sill replacements include recesses for the front doors to accommodate OEM nameplate badging (badges not included). The sills are made of 100% real carbon fiber and fit Super Crew Limited, Raptor, Platinum, Lariat, King Ranch and other models.



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**F-150 PowerBoost Suspension Kits**

**Air Lift Co.**, Lansing, Michigan, presents new LoadLifter 5000 series suspension kits for 2021-'22 Ford F-150 PowerBoost hybrid models. Available in LoadLifter 5000 and LoadLifter 5000 Ultimate configurations, the air spring kits are designed to work with the existing suspension system to properly level the vehicle, eliminating squat and correcting frequent issues while towing or hauling including poor headlight aim, unresponsive steering, body roll and bottoming out.



**Jeep 4xe Ditch Lights**

**KC Lights**, Williams, Arizona, presents Ditch Lights for Jeep 4xe applications. Also known as A-pillar lights or cowl lights, the ditch light systems improve nighttime vehicle performance with a variety of lighting options that include the company's PRO6 kit as well as Flex Era 3 and Flex Era 4 offerings.

**Ford Lift & Leveling Kits**

**DPI Offroad Brands**, Phoenix, presents **Tuff Country** Lift & Leveling Kits for late-model Ford vehicles including F-150 and Bronco models. Available systems include a 2-inch lift for Ford Broncos and 3-inch lift kits with or without shocks for F-150s. The kits are designed to be simple and affordable.



**Gladiator Rear Track Bar Relocation Bracket**

**Synergy Mfg.**, San Luis Obispo, California, presents a Jeep Gladiator JT Rear Track Bar Relocation Bracket that restores factory handling by raising the vehicle's roll center. The bracket adds 3 inches to the factory track bar mounting location, allowing use of a stock rear track bar at 3.5 inches of lift height. The system prevents interference between the rear driveshaft and gas tank skid when used with long-travel shocks.



**Hitch N Go Cart**

**Great Day Inc.**, Tallulah, Louisiana, presents the popular HNGC-350 Hitch N Go Cart, now with new features. The hitch-mounted cargo carrier attaches and detaches from a vehicle in seconds, even when fully loaded. Newly introduced features include optional fishing rod holders, balloon tires and a convenient grab handle.

**Rooftop Tent**

**Napier**, Niagara Falls, New York, presents the Napier Rooftop Tent, designed to fit on most vehicles with aftermarket rack crossbars. The tent sleeps two adults on a 56-by-95-inch high-density foam mattress that includes a washable cover. The tent is manufactured of ripstop polyester canvas with a 2,000mm PU waterproof coating that is UV- and mold-resistant. Rainfly and travel cover are included.







### Sierra Lowering Kits

**Aldan American**, Signal Hill, California, presents its Road Comp Series Suspension Kits, with applications for 1999-2006 GMC Sierra 1500 models. The bolt-on kits are made in the USA and designed for an OEM-like fitment that offers full adjustability of the front coil-over and rear tunable shocks. The kits lower the vehicles 0-2 inches with modern technology.

### Tundra Performance Exhausts

**MagnaFlow**, Oceanside, California, presents its line of Performance Exhaust Systems for new Toyota Tundra models. Systems include options from both the Street Series and Off-Road Pro Series lines. Dual split rear, dual split rear behind rear tires, single passenger side rear, turndown in front of rear tire, and dual same-side behind passenger rear tire exit styles are available. Each exhaust kit features either black coated, polished or satin finished tips.



### LED Roof Bars

**T-REX Truck Products**, Corona, California, presents **ZROADZ** Front Roof Multi LED bars and kits. Designed as a quick and easy way to add forward-facing lighting to a vehicle, the systems feature simple bolt-on installations that use factory bolt locations. Features include 1.5-inch-diameter tubing and an off-road-inspired design. ZROADZ Front Multi Roof LED Mounts are available in

complete kits with light and wiring harness, and most can be ordered with all-white or a combination of white and amber lights, or just as brackets only.



### Rooftop Tents

**ARB 4x4 Accessories**, Auburn, Washington, introduces two new Rooftop Tents to its overlanding lineup. The hard-shell Esperance and airy Flinders were designed to balance comfort and vehicle performance. The Esperance features a clamshell design that is easy to deploy and packs down to 13 inches tall when closed. It weighs 123 pounds. Meanwhile, the Flinders can sleep two adults and is built to enhance the camping experience with a skylight, easy setup and five zippered windows (with dual midge-proof screens) to maximize airflow.

### Slide Track Running Boards

**Raptor Series**, Hayward, California, presents 5-inch, OEM-style Full Tread Slide Track Running Boards that feature slip-resistant step treads along the entire board for traction and safety. Offering a stylish look with unique angled end caps and a black textured or brushed aluminum finish, the boards are constructed of anti-corrosion, aircraft-grade aluminum for long-lasting durability and weight savings.



### Dual-Color Fog Lights

**RIGID Industries**, Gilbert, Arizona, presents its 360-Series dual-color selective yellow/white fog lights. The street-legal lights feature an integrated thermal management system and can be toggled between dual, selective yellow or white light. **TS**

# Changing Your Ways

A dozen bad habits shop owners should avoid.

By Jason R. Sakurai



Identifying and eliminating bad habits is an important part of growing and developing as a business owner.

**W**hether you're a new shop owner or an old pro, listening to suggestions from others who have made mistakes is a good way to avoid making them yourself.

We all mess up from time to time, and accepting this inevitability is a good way to put your gaffes into perspective. Avoiding as many mistakes as possible, of course, helps eliminate costly lessons learned with customers, staff members and suppliers.

In no particular order, here are a dozen bad habits shop owners should avoid:

## 1 NOT BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

Employees want to believe in and trust their boss. Shop owners should make time to interact with their workers in meaningful, productive ways to get the greatest productivity and loyalty from them.

Failing to create a strong bond can lead to

poor employee relations and higher turnover, while spending time working with them can result in quality relationships and more trust.

Owners fixated solely on making money sometimes sacrifice opportunities to get to know their staff better. This can make it appear as if they don't care and create obstacles to retaining good workers.

## 2 FORGETTING THERE IS NO 'I' IN TEAM

As a leader, you need committed followers to implement a shared vision of a better future for your company and all concerned. For this to occur, your focus needs to be on facilitating your team's success and not on fulfilling your own personal ambitions and gaining recognition for yourself.

Effective leaders keep the best interests of the company and their employees ahead of their own. No one person's needs, abilities or ideas should be more important than the combined skills and efforts of the entire group.

In the workplace, the purpose of a team is to harness the expertise of all its members to accelerate progress and improve performance. The team should be collectively more intelligent than the smartest individual and be able to make better decisions than any one person.

## 3 GETTING BEHIND IN SETTING UP AN ONLINE PRESENCE

If you have no online storefront to call your own, you're losing viewers and customers to other shops that do.

Even if your nearest competitor doesn't post to social media, that's not a reason



Make time to interact with your employees in meaningful, productive ways. (Photo by Jason R. Sakurai)

why you shouldn't. Think beyond local boundaries if you want to attract business statewide, regionally or even nationally.

Having a website alone isn't productive. You need a website that's optimized and organized, with a design that's responsive and imparts information about your company, your products and your services.

Consider creating a landing page for special offers and/or a blog that generates more inbound traffic. Some shops send a digital newsletter at least once a month to their customers, subscribers and followers to inform them about what they may have missed.

Make sure your website, newsletters, blogs and anything pertaining to your shop also include the social media icons for the platforms you and your main clients use the most.

#### 4 LEAVING TOO LITTLE TIME TO PLAN

Getting caught up in every aspect of the business may help today, but where will you be tomorrow? Do you have contingency plans should something disastrous happen to you or your shop?

More proactively, have you thought about expanding your business—new lines or services you would like to add and how you could go about attracting new customers?

A shop owner who is overwhelmed or solely focused on daily operations may lack

the time and drive to plan for the company's future and anticipate the next steps needed for growth. This results not only in missed opportunities that affect the company's longevity, but also keeps employees out of the planning process.

Make time for goal-setting sessions and learn to share duties so you can find opportunities to focus on the future you want to achieve.

#### 5 NOT DELEGATING AUTHORITY

Meanwhile, let's follow up on failing to delegate. When you attempt to oversee every aspect of your operation, you're not instilling a sense of responsibility or pride among your staff.

If every decision is incumbent upon you and employees have no authority, there's no growth taking place and learning is limited.


Think of it this way—why would you hire employees you don't trust? Stifling their growth is among a myriad of reasons why they would leave, and you already know that hiring and training replacements is difficult and time-consuming.

#### 6 LIMITING OPPORTUNITIES

Together with not delegating comes a failure to create meaningful growth opportunities for your workers. Shop owners who don't take the time to teach their staff new skills impede their potential, resulting in a lack of motivation and/or a feeling of being unappreciated.

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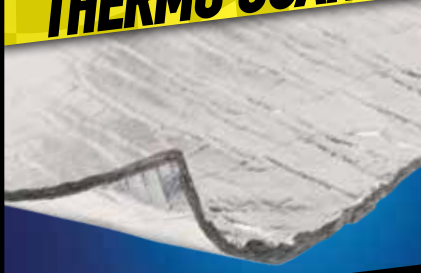
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Harnessing the team's expertise accelerates progress and improves performance. (Photo by Jason R. Sakurai)



Successful shops have a devoted, ambitious staff and opportunities for advancement. (Photo by Jason R. Sakurai)

Successful businesses can't operate without a devoted staff, and employees are more ambitious when they receive positive feedback and are asked to tackle important tasks. Remember that as your business prospers, opportunities for advancement need to occur or workers will go elsewhere.

## 7 SETTING UNREALISTIC GOALS

Somewhat related to item No. 4, as a new business entity you have no way of knowing how well your shop will do despite the income projections you've made. Unrealistic expectations are a way of setting up for failure.

If you think your business is underperforming because it has yet to reach earlier lofty projections, it may cause you to believe it's failing when it's really not. It's far better to set realistic goals, note achievements as they occur and keep moving forward incrementally.

Being optimistic about the future of your company is healthy, especially for a small business just starting out, but you should also realize that things take time. While you want to be more successful than your competition, let it happen naturally. Make your presence known and get the word out gradually.

From there, growth will happen at a healthy rate instead of becoming an overnight sensation that's here today but possibly gone tomorrow.

## 8 BEING CARELESS WITH COMPANY INFORMATION

One of the worst things you can do is be careless with sensitive data that is vulnerable to hackers and security breaches. Make every effort to ensure your data is secure and that information about your employees and customers is protected.

Business owners need to be aware of the financial losses that may occur when sensitive data is compromised. Educate your staff on how to manage company data in the safest way possible so you or they won't be liable if a breach does occur.

## 9 NOT PAYING ATTENTION TO THE MARKET

It is imperative to know how the market is behaving, what dynamics affect it and how your company is performing. This includes knowing the competition and how your business fits into the marketplace.

Timing everything correctly can have a profound effect on your company over the long haul. Overreaching, on the other hand, may spread your efforts too thin, and have a negative impact on how customers respond.

A shop that chooses to expand too soon after encountering initial success is one example. While opening another store-

front can be a positive development, it also stretches resources and can create untenable overhead costs.

## 10 NOT KEEPING WORK/LIFE BOUNDARIES IN PLACE

Blurred work/life boundaries can have harmful consequences, affecting everything from motivation and relationship satisfaction to mental and physical health. If you work more than 55 hours per week, studies show there's a tendency to neglect your personal life.

A Grand Canyon University survey found that 48% of family relationships and 47% of friendships suffered significantly among those with a poor work/life balance. You also have a 1.66-times higher risk of depression, a 1.74-times increased risk of anxiety, and a 1.3-times greater risk of coronary heart disease and stroke.

Meanwhile, companies that encourage a healthy work/life balance enjoy increased productivity and retention and reduced healthcare costs.

## 11 NOT TAKING ENOUGH TIME OFF

Putting your health on hold could cost you, not only in medical bills but also in productivity. You may think you need to sacrifice your health to be successful. In reality, however, you'll end up sacrificing your health *and* the business.

Your health is among your most valuable assets, and prioritizing it by eating a healthy diet, exercising and getting enough sleep also means you're caring for your shop's well-being.

Thinking along these lines, when was the last time you went on vacation that wasn't a working vacation? Your kids aren't getting any younger, and missing activities and trips with them can't be replaced at a later date.

## 12 PROCRASTINATING OR MISMANAGING TIME

There are tasks that need to get done and when you procrastinate you can get to the point where they all need to be done *now*.

Some people are more prone to procrastination than others, and it can be a difficult habit to break. But it's important to try. Juggling untold numbers of tasks while simultaneously growing the company may not work, despite all the hours you devote to it.

If you're prone to procrastinating or mismanaging your time, start by doing tasks faster and delegating some of them to your employees. Take advantage of management software to keep you and everyone else on task and on schedule.

If there are accounting or marketing tools that can be used to streamline or speed-up jobs, consider what it costs for you, the highest paid person on the payroll, to be doing them.

Identifying and eliminating bad habits is an important part of growing and developing as a business owner. Bad habits can drive away good employees and hurt your bottom line.

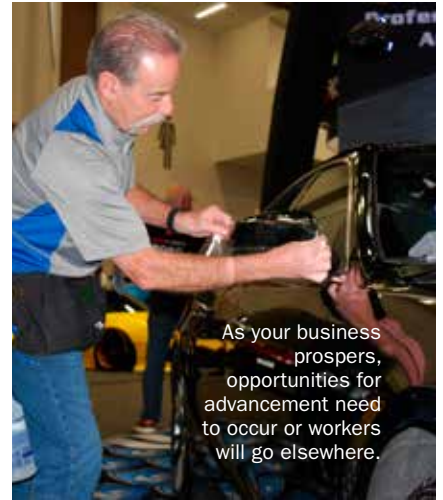
Be honest about the things you do that may be detrimental to your shop's growth.

Once you have identified the bad habits you need to break, you can start changing yourself and your company for the better.

**TS**



**JASON R. SAKURAI** heads up Roadhouse Marketing, a marketing, advertising and sales solutions firm dedicated to the automotive aftermarket. A frequent contributor to *THE SHOP*, Jason's byline appears in many enthusiast and trade publications, in print and online.



As your business prospers, opportunities for advancement need to occur or workers will go elsewhere.



It is imperative to know how the market is behaving.



Bad habits can drive away good employees and hurt your bottom line.

# NEW VEHICLE REPORT

FALL 2021

A sampling of the latest models, special editions & updates.



Carmakers are busy rolling out new models, special editions and notable updates as 2023 vehicles begin appearing nationwide. Here's a sampling of what restylers may soon encounter on dealer lots.

## 2023 KIA SOUL

### Refreshed inside & out.

The new 2023 Kia Soul features refreshed design elements inside and out, a simplified lineup, new colors and two option packages focusing on technology and convenience.

Launched in 2009, the small-car favorite has steadily evolved, growing its appeal through its boxy styling, practicality and efficiency, according to the company.

“The Soul defined a whole new segment of small cars when it first entered the Kia lineup and it continues into the 2023 model year with as much fun, practicality and style as ever,” says Steve Center, COO & EVP, Kia America. “The basic form remains, which is what more than 75,000 happy Soul owners loved so much about the funky runabout last year, representing a nearly 5% increase over sales in 2020. The new 2023 Soul is set to continue that trend with its refreshed design inside and out, advanced technology and feature-packed trims.”

Simplifying the lineup for 2023, the Soul is offered in LX, S, EX, GT-Line and GT-Line Tech trimlines, each featuring a long list of standard and available equipment.

For 2023, Soul is powered by a single powertrain. The efficient 2.0L inline-4 produces 147 hp at 6,200 rpm and lays down 132 pound-feet of torque at 4,500 rpm through the front wheels. Kia's Intelligent Variable Transmission is standard across all variants.



The 2023 Kia Soul debuts with refreshed design elements inside and out.

## 2022 JEEP GRAND WAGONEER

### An award-winning interior.

The all-new 2022 Jeep Grand Wagoneer serves as a premium extension of the Jeep brand while building on a rich heritage of American craftsmanship.

Blending comfort with 4x4 capability, it's what's inside that counts. The premium SUV was named a unanimous winner of Wards 10 Best Interiors & UX (user experience) for 2022.

"The sheer artistry of the Jeep brand's lavish new interiors is breathtaking," says Drew Winter, Wards editor. "The Grand Wagoneer easily earns its way into the six-figure SUV club on the power of its interior design."

The Grand Wagoneer cabin is created with a modern American style, finely crafted



Wards recognized the 2022 Jeep Grand Wagoneer interior for its styling and user experience. (PRNewsfoto/Stellantis)

details, elegant appointments including Blue Agave leather and textured metal trim, and leading-edge technology such as available Amazon Fire TV and exclusive McIntosh audio, according to the brand.

Looking to recognize the user experience, the awards program considered 22 vehicles with new or heavily redesigned vehicle interiors and user-experience technology for the competition.

## 2023 TOYOTA 4RUNNER

### Special edition celebrates fun at 40.

The Toyota 4Runner will mark its 40th anniversary with the 2023 model year. To celebrate, Toyota is offering a distinctive 4WD-only 2023 4Runner 40th Anniversary Special Edition.

Appropriately, Toyota will make 4,040 of them for the U.S. market, based on the SR5 Premium grade and available in three colors: White, Midnight Black Metallic and Barcelona Red Metallic.

The vehicles will stand out from the standard lineup thanks to bronze-colored 17-inch alloy wheels, a body color-matching TOYOTA heritage grille and a bronze-colored 40th Anniversary exterior tailgate badge.

The biggest eye-catcher is the unique heritage graphics package marking the 4Runner's early days in off-road racing, created especially for the anniversary model.

Inside the vehicle, the anniversary theme continues with exclusive badging on the center console, a bronze-colored cross-stitch shift knob, bronze-colored seat stitching, 40th anniversary floor mats and a 40th anniversary logo on the Black SofTex-trimmed seats. Topping it off is a standard power moonroof.



The 2023 Toyota 4Runner 40th Anniversary Special Edition (above) celebrates the models' off-road racing heritage.

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## 2023 TOYOTA VENZA



Out of the darkness comes the 2023 Toyota Venza Nightshade Edition.

### Nightshade edition emerges from the darkness.

For 2023, the Toyota Venza's unique style gets an extra infusion of coolness with the new Nightshade Edition. Based on the XLE trim level, it is available in three exterior colors—all featuring blackout trim for a distinctive presence.

Highlights include a fashionable and quiet cabin, the Toyota Hybrid System II and electronic on-demand all-wheel drive, which comes standard on all Venza trims.

The new Nightshade Edition adds designer touches, starting with the acrylic front grille trim, black painted outer mirror caps, door handles and rocker panels, and available black roof rails. The lower bumpers are complemented in front and rear by smoked chrome moldings, with a black shark fin antenna the crowning touch.

It rolls on 19-inch gloss-black multi-spoke aluminum alloy wheels and includes blacked-out rear badges. LED fog lamps, now standard on XLE and Nightshade, can also be paired with the available Star Gaze panoramic roof.

Offering ample room for five in a highly maneuverable package, the Venza also includes the Toyota Safety Sense 2.5 suite of active safety systems.

## 2023 TOYOTA HIGHLANDER



2023 Toyota Highlander gas models feature a 265-hp, 2.4L turbocharged 4-cylinder engine.

### New turbocharged engine for gas models.

The Toyota Highlander, the No. 1 retail midsize SUV for six years running, is entering 2023 with an all-new engine for its gas-powered models, plus larger multimedia screens and other amenities for greater value across all grades and powertrains.

For 2023, the Highlander gas models receive a 265-hp, 2.4L turbocharged 4-cylinder that uses balance shafts for smooth performance and delivers 309 pound-feet of torque—a 17% increase over the previous 3.5L V-6.

The new Highlander turbo models have seven- or eight-person seating and are equipped to tow up to 5,000 pounds. Towing features include Trailer Sway Control (TSC), which uses the Vehicle Stability Control (VSC) system to help control unwanted trailer movement, Hill Start Assist Control (HAC) and Downhill Assist Control (DAC) (available on gas turbo AWD only).

The 2023 Highlander turbo models get a grip on just about any road with a choice of FWD or two different available AWD systems. For the Highlander Gas L, LE and XLE models, the optional AWD system can send up to 50% of available torque to the rear wheels to help counter wheel slip when necessary.



## 2022 DODGE DURANGO R/T



The 2022 Dodge Durango R/T is now available with a muscle car-inspired HEMI Orange accent package.

### Get your three-row muscle car with HEMI Orange.

The Dodge brand's three-row muscle car is sporting a new look this summer with an available HEMI Orange package first introduced last year for the Dodge Challenger and Dodge Charger.

The Dodge Durango R/T HEMI Orange option is inspired by the original orange color of the iconic Hemi engine that powered Dodge muscle cars for decades, according to the brand. The Durango R/T is fueled by a 5.7L Hemi V-8 engine.

"HEMI Orange is a hot option for the Dodge Challenger and Charger, and now we're expanding its reach by offering the Dodge Durango R/T HEMI Orange," says Tim Kuniskis, Dodge brand chief executive officer – Stellantis. "The Durango has a muscle car attitude, and the eye-catching HEMI Orange appearance embraces the Dodge performance DNA that is our foundation."

The HEMI Orange Plus Package adds orange accents and features including a power sunroof, 19-speaker Harman Kardon sound system and advanced safety systems. The HEMI Orange Tow N Go Package—available only for AWD models—adds advanced towing features, 20-inch Lights Out wheels, orange Brembo brake calipers and a Bilstein high-performance suspension.

## 2023 SUBARU LEGACY

### Styling & power to spare.

Subaru of America presents the 2023 Legacy AWD midsize sedan with updated styling and enhanced safety and in-vehicle technologies. Also new, the Sport trim level comes standard with the 2.4L turbo Subaru Boxer engine.

For the 2023 model year, Legacy will be available in Base, Premium, Sport, Limited and Touring XT trim levels.

The lineup receives a bolder look thanks to a new front fascia incorporating a more prominent grille and redesigned LED headlights. The sedan comes standard with the latest generation of EyeSight Driver Assist Technology.

Meanwhile, the latest version of the Subaru STARLINK 11.6-inch Multimedia Plus system comes with wireless Apple CarPlay and wireless Android Auto with full-screen display. The updated system now offers improved on-screen controls for audio, HVAC and vehicle features.

Legacy looks to deliver an optimal blend of comfort and perfor-

## 2023 LEXUS UXH



The 2023 Lexus UXh F SPORT enhances the hybrid driving experience.

### Enhanced hybrid crossover.

Lexus says the new 2023 UX 250h mixes urban dweller style and improved driving dynamics. Enhancements to the hybrid crossover include the addition of Lexus Interface, a larger touchscreen and Lexus Safety System+ 2.5.

"The new UXh aims to enhance the appeal of electrified vehicles, especially hybrid EVs, by further evolving the driving experience and advanced safety equipment in a uniquely Lexus way," says Mitsuteru Emoto, chief engineer, Lexus International. "With thorough attention to detail, the Lexus team worked to develop these two key features so that customers around the world could enjoy a sense of luxury and a comfortable, safe and secure driving experience."

The new 2023 UX 250h delivers a more refined driving performance through updates to steering response, handling stability and refined ride quality.

In the U.S., the UX will only be available with a hybrid powertrain.



The refreshed 2023 Subaru Legacy AWD sedan adds power and styling.

mance with standard Subaru Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive, Active Torque Vectoring and Vehicle Dynamics Control, the brand notes. Continuing its focus on safety, the Legacy is built on the Subaru Global Platform, which has been optimized for rigidity and crash absorption.

## 2023 MITSUBISHI OUTLANDER PHEV

### Plug-in hybrid adds power, range.

Since the Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV (plug-in hybrid electric vehicle) launched in 2017 as a 2018 model, the vehicle has reinforced its credentials as the best-selling PHEV sport utility vehicle in the world.

The all-new 2023 PHEV model of Mitsubishi's flagship SUV brings together the company's expertise in electrification and Super All-Wheel Control (S-AWC) all-wheel drive systems, while also incorporating an array of advanced technologies.

The 2023 Outlander PHEV shares the comfortable ride, roomy interior and wide-ranging functionality of its gas-powered counterpart, while adding smooth-yet-powerful acceleration.

The all-new Outlander PHEV is equipped with the next generation of Mitsubishi



The 2023 Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV leads the way for hybrid SUVs.

Motors' twin-motor 4WD PHEV system. The front and rear motors offer more power than the previous model, and the size of the drive battery has been increased, allowing

more frequent operation in electric mode. Overall driving range has also been extended, through both the increased capacity of the battery and a larger gas tank.

## 2023 TOYOTA GR86 SPECIAL EDITION

### Sports car driving is back.

Toyota is celebrating the pure fun of sports car driving with a limited-edition GR86 for 2023. The second-generation GR86, introduced for 2022, increased power over the first-gen model and improved design and handling characteristics.

Built on the GR86 Premium Grade platform, the 2023 GR86 Special Edition includes Solar Shift orange paint, a GR

cat-back performance exhaust system with stainless steel pipes, black chrome tips and debossed GR logo, and GR matte-black, 18-inch wheels with black center caps and black lug nuts wrapped in Michelin Pilot Sport 4 tires.

Inside touches include a black GR C-pillar graphic and Ultrasuede/leather-trimmed interior with a GR special edition badge accent.

The special edition celebrates the improved performance of the second-gen GR86, which includes a 2.4L engine rated at 228 hp, an Electronic Power Steering (EPS) system with a column-mounted integrated motor and control unit, a Torsen limited-slip rear differential, sport-tuned independent MacPherson front struts and double wishbone-type multi-link rear suspension, and a 6-speed manual transmission option.



The 2023 Toyota GR86 Special Edition celebrates the fun of driving a sports car.

## 2023 TOYOTA GR COROLLA MORIZO EDITION

### Ready to jump from the street to the track.

How does Toyota Gazoo Racing squeeze even more excitement into the ultra-hot GR Corolla? Engineers take it to the garage and figure out how to add power, reduce weight and enhance handling—all while keeping an eye on building a hot hatch that's ready to jump from the street to the track.

The purpose-built GR Corolla MORIZO Edition adds heat to Toyota's GR lineup, which includes the performance-ready GR Corolla Core Grade, launch-year-only Circuit Edition, as well as GR Supra and GR86.

The MORIZO Edition was named for GR Master Driver and Toyota president Akio Toyoda. The track-oriented version of the GR Corolla was designed to meet specifications desired by Toyoda himself, with tight handling, a high power-to-weight ratio and a rigid body. Only 200 numbered units will be produced for model year 2023.

Like the Core Grade and Circuit Edition, the MORIZO Edition comes with a 3-cyl-



The purpose-built GR Corolla MORIZO Edition adds heat to Toyota's GR lineup.

inder turbo engine rated at 300 hp, with torque bumped up to 295 pound-feet. It has an exclusive close-ratio intelligent Manual

Transmission (iMT) and shorter differential gears, and features the new GR-FOUR All-Wheel-Drive system.

## 2023 TOYOTA RAV4

### Woodland Edition is ready for adventure.

Toyota is taking the RAV4 Hybrid AWD to the next level of adventure with the new

2023 Woodland Edition.

Equipped with everything needed for an outdoor excursion, the RAV4 Hybrid Woodland Edition—available in Midnight

Black Metallic, Cavalry Blue and Ice Cap exterior colors—offers a distinctively rugged exterior and premium interior styling.

Ride enhancements include a TRD-tuned suspension for improved body control and small-bump isolation, off-road-tuned coil springs, bump stops that maximize compression-direction wheel travel, and twin-tube shocks that feature internal rebound springs for optimal roll control and unique valving to aid in body control over large bumps and dips.

Special touches include raised black roof rack crossbars, a 120V inverter to power-up an array of compatible household items, flow-formed bronze-colored wheels, custom all-weather floor and cargo mats, black badging, black mud guards, and a dual black chrome-tipped exhaust system.

The Woodland Edition also comes standard with LED projector-beam headlights and integrated fog lights, handy storage solutions, and a reversible floor insert and side nets for the rear cargo area. **TS**



The 2023 Toyota RAV4 Woodland Edition is ready for adventure.

# PERFORMANCE

SEPTEMBER 2022

Sport Compact p.54

Vintage Trailers p.62

Performance Products p.66

Clean Shop p.70

Sport compacts offer a blend of high-tech innovation and old-school passion. (Photo courtesy AEM Performance Electronics)



## SMALL & IN CHARGE

The sport compact market keeps making inroads.

By John Carollo

**W**hile the sport compact market has shifted over the past 20 years from young upstart to established niche, there's still room for growth and development.

Combining an old-school passion with high-tech innovation, and embracing motorsports in all its forms, there's plenty to like—and plenty to learn—when it comes to these small-stature, high-horsepower cars and the enthusiasts who love them.

Product manufacturers share their obser-

vations on the state of the sport compact market, including common misconceptions, positive trends, successful collaborations and hot new products.

### SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

In the beginning, sport compacts were oftentimes thought of as all show and no go. Those times have changed.

“The sport compact market has evolved in all aspects, including drag racing, Time Attack and even on the streets. It was once thought of as a fad that was passing

by, but the evolution over the years has proven more than a few people wrong,” says Cris Santellan, director of U.S. sales and marketing for Turbosmart USA. “You no longer pull up on a Honda Civic in a Mustang or Camaro and think to yourself, *I've got this, easy win*. Now, you tell yourself that a 600-hp turbo K-series is very attainable and can easily make it a long day for anyone driving a forced-induction muscle car. These cars are here to stay, and they hold their own. I personally have owned both (sport compact and muscle car) and



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## Sport Compact Products

■ **HOT PRODUCTS:** CD Carbon Digital Dash Displays

■ **FEATURES & BENEFITS:** Integrate and communicate with aftermarket or 2008-up OEM ECUs; dramatically reduce wiring complexity and setup; CD-5 5-inch and CD-7 7-inch dashes receive inputs over CAN bus; open architecture design; older-model applications available.

AEM Performance Electronics  
Lawson Mollica  
Director of Marketing & Public Relations

■ **HOT PRODUCTS:** Sport Compact Exhausts  
■ **FEATURES & BENEFITS:** Top sport compact markets include Toyota BRZ, Ford Focus, Toyota Supra, Civic Type R, Subaru STI and WRX, Golf GTI and R; proper exhaust sound with anti-drone technology; T304L stainless construction; mandrel-bent, U.S.-sourced tubing.

AWE  
Jesse Kramer  
Vice President, Marketing

■ **HOT PRODUCTS:** Oils & Additives  
■ **FEATURES & BENEFITS:** Suitable for sport compacts and all U.S. makes and models; performance oil change consists of LIQUI MOLY Pro-Line Engine Flush, fresh oil, LIQUI MOLY Cera Tec anti-wear additive and Jectron that removes harmful deposits on the injectors.

LIQUI MOLY USA  
Sebastian Zelger  
CEO

■ **HOT PRODUCT:** Subaru WRX EJ 25 PowerPak Piston Set  
■ **FEATURES & BENEFITS:** Phosphate coated; GRAFAL skirt coating with a slipper skirt forging.

MAHLE Motorsport  
Joseph Maylish  
Program Manager

■ **HOT PRODUCT:** Kompact EM Series Blowoff Valves  
■ **FEATURES & BENEFITS:** True plug-and-play option for any computer-controlled diverter valve replacement; works like stock with the performance benefits of a higher-flowing design; billet construction.

Turbosmart USA  
Cris Santellan  
Director of U.S. Sales & Marketing



Sport compact enthusiasts are generally well-researched and aren't afraid to ask questions. (Photos courtesy AEM Performance Electronics)

respect anything that can be modified and made more fun.”

There was also a time when it seemed the two sides couldn't get along. Again, that's no longer the case.

“A racer is a racer; an engine builder is an engine builder,” says Joseph Maylish, program manager for MAHLE Motorsport. “They all want to work with the best products, from Formula Drift to Bonneville.”

Lawson Mollica, director of mar-

keting & public relations for AEM Performance Electronics, says a misconception he's heard often is that sport compact enthusiasts don't care about quality and only want the least expensive products.

“That's simply not true. Our sport compact enthusiasts are generally well-researched and aren't afraid to ask questions,” he notes. “If you can show them the value proposition of a quality product and back that up with quality



The right upgrades add performance and style to today's sport compacts. (Photos courtesy AWE)



Drivers want products that work properly and will last. (Photo courtesy AWE)

work, they won't hesitate to spend more on products that work properly and will last."

Some of that past thinking, he continues, may have come from the lower entry-level price point of many smaller vehicles.

"We were all new to performance at one time, and I know I made mistakes starting

out due to lack of knowledge," Mollica admits. "If you can educate the sport compact customer, you will have a loyal customer who makes good purchasing decisions, and that's a win-win situation."

Sebastian Zelger, CEO of LIQUI MOLY USA, agrees that sport compact customers

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## Hyundai's EV Sport Compact Concepts

Hyundai Motor Co.'s high-performance N sub-brand has revealed two electric vehicle concepts to demonstrate the company's commitment to future-focused zero-emissions technologies.

RN22e and N Vision 74 were designed to be inspirational examples of N's electrification vision, according to the brand.

"RN22e and N Vision 74 play an important role in the strategic development of our entire product lineup; especially our electrified, high-performance vehicles," says Thomas Schemera,

executive vice president and head of Customer Experience Division at Hyundai Motor Co. "Rolling labs represent the continuous development of our most advanced technologies."

Over the past seven years, Hyundai N has become the fastest-evolving performance brand, says Till Wartenberg, vice president of N Brand Management & Motorsport Sub-Division at Hyundai Motor Co.

"N is moving forward to set new standards in sustainable high performance."

The modern RN22e offers racetrack-ready performance by refining and optimizing Hyundai's E-GMP platform and packaging it in an IONIQ 6-based streamliner design.

"As Hyundai N's first rolling lab based on the E-GMP, RN22e shows

the electrified N brand's vision and direction while opening the possibility of a high-performance EV model in the future," the company states.

Meanwhile, inspired by Hyundai Motor's heritage, N Vision 74 is a high-performance hydrogen fuel cell hybrid with a throwback appearance that underlines the company's sustainable performance technology.

In 2012, Hyundai embarked on Project RM to showcase its expertise in developing new technology and innovation. N will also stay true to its philosophy in the era of electrification.

As the initial big step, Hyundai Motor's first electric N, IONIQ 5 N, will hit the global market in 2023.

*This article originally appeared on theshopmag.com. Visit today and sign up for the free daily eNewsletter.*



Hyundai Motor Co.'s RN22e and N Vision 74 concepts from its high-performance N sub-brand are inspirational examples of N's electrification vision.

will pay for quality—both for initial parts and then for quality service and maintenance items.

"Most of them love their cars and want to keep them in good shape," he says.

Jesse Kramer, vice president, marketing for AWE, notes that the industry has moved beyond many product limitations of the past.

"From an exhaust standpoint, the misconception is that the consumer has to choose between ultra-aggressive tones and sophisticated *Bluetooth-friendly* exhausts, but we loved bringing our AWE 180 Tech-

nology to this market to produce the best of both worlds," he says. "There's a misconception you can't make these sound good, but you can if you do it right."

### MOST AGREEABLE

Now that many of the early myths have been shattered, it's easy to see why drivers love the sport compact market. Again, one of the most prominent aspects of the niche is the accessibility it provides to entry-level performance for customers of all ages.

"We have made it easy for enthusiasts to enjoy minor modifications to their cars

without having to make major changes," says Santellan. "We also make boost control products for those who are looking to modify their vehicles beyond entry level and push the limits of the race class of their choice. If it makes boost, we will control it."

There are also a lot of great vehicles to modify.

"If I had to pick a favorite, well, I can't. But we've really enjoyed and are surprised by the Honda Civic Type R—it's one of the best-handling vehicles out there for the price and you can fit a family in it and a





Sport compact owners love their cars and want to keep them in good shape. (Photos courtesy LIQUI MOLY)



Honda Civics compete in the FIA World Touring Car Cup. (Photo courtesy LIQUI MOLY)

lot of groceries,” says Kramer. “With the right upgrades it’s a super-fun ride. I also always dig a good STI or WRX, and who can’t love a Golf R? These cars are real do-it-all vehicles.”

Innovation and creativity are also promi-

nent parts of the industry.

“What we like is how engine builders and racers push the limits,” says Maylish.

Dedication and enthusiasm mean a full investment.

“The owners of these cars are willing to

invest more into their vehicles, as it’s their passion,” Zelger explains. “Our products are a natural fit for that segment.”

In fact, there are people and companies that have made sport compacts their sole focus.

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## The Civic Turns 50

A 1975 first-gen Honda Civic shows how far the model has come in its now 50-year history.



**F**ifty years ago this summer, Honda held the global introduction of a fun and fuel-efficient three-door hatchback that would go on to change the automotive landscape—the Honda Civic.

A half-century later, with sales approaching 30 million globally, Civic is the longest-running automotive nameplate in Honda history and the best-selling Honda automobile of all time.

Since going on sale in America in early 1973, Civic's 11 generations

have been recognized for their quality, reliability, fuel efficiency, low emissions, driving dynamics and safety, according to the company.

The model also played an important role in the early days of the sport compact movement.

"Civic embodies Honda's commitment to delivering clean, safe and fun products of the highest quality for each generation of car buyers. That's been the magic of Civic and the key to its success for 50 years," says Mamadou Diallo, vice president of auto sales at American Honda. "Civic is deeply woven into the fabric of American car culture and we are thankful for the loyalty and trust that our customers have placed in Honda and Civic over the last five decades."

During its run, Civic has been named North American Car of the Year three times, received *Car and Driver* magazine's 10Best honor eight times, and won MotorTrend Car of the Year in 2006.

And, while Civic built its success through the loyalty of baby boomers, its popularity continues with younger buyers. Since 2011, Civic is the No. 1 vehicle among millennial buyers, and has captured the most Gen Z, first-time and multicultural buyers in the industry for the past six years.

Introduced in July, the 2023 Honda Civic Type R features a powerful 2.0L turbo engine.



Sport compact builders and racers continue to push the limits. (Photo courtesy MAHLE Motorsport)

"We don't like the sport compact market—we love it, because we grew up in it!" says Mollica, noting that AEM Performance Electronics was founded in 1987,

but didn't start manufacturing until 1997. "Our focus was on the import segment, creating products for Honda, Mitsubishi and Toyota cars. We were fortunate to

work with many pioneers of sport compact racing, drag, drift, road race and more, and because of their efforts, we've developed products that provide proven performance for a reasonable price for everyone. We like to joke that we've been supporting and have been fans of sport compacts since before it was cool!"

### PROUD PARTNERSHIPS

The market wouldn't have come as far as it has without partnerships, and Mollica says many advancements were built on cooperative efforts to match manufacturers' products with racers' needs.

"From our W partnerships with PRO drifters like Fredric Aasbo and Papadakis Racing, Chris Forsberg and Jhonnattan Castro; road racers and teams like Mark Jager and Bryan Heitkotter; numerous import drag racers who are forging new



Many enthusiasts love these small-stature, high-horsepower cars.



There's still room for growth and development.



Many sport compacts are real do-it-all vehicles.



Innovation drives the sport compact market. (Photo courtesy Turbosmart USA)

records that no one thought possible; and our collaborations with enthusiast influencers like Emir Kurtovic from Driving 4 Answers, Rob Dahm and others, we are incredibly fortunate to have relationships with people who don't simply use our products, but educate people on how to get the most out of them, and

challenge us to keep improving."

In turn, the manufacturers do all they can to strengthen the industry.

"We're very actively supporting the sport compact market, be it our headliner sponsorship of RallySport's Flat 4 Throwdown or our large presence at Carlisle Imports. AWE loves proving

you can make a sport compact or hot hatch sound and perform as it should," says Kramer, who referenced a new exhaust system for the MK8 Golf GTI, "which is a throwback to our first markets in VW in 1991."

LIQUI MOLY's Zelger also sees the market building loyalty with companies that support its efforts.

"We had a huge raffle of a Volkswagen MK8 Golf GTI for which we partnered up with significant players in the aftermarket, such as Bilstein, RECARO, Oettinger, Yokohama and more," he says. "The interaction we got with the community was mind-blowing."

Turbosmart USA has developed similar relationships with industry insiders and their projects, including Kyle Wade of BoostedBoiz' record-breaking MR2 and drag racers such as James Kempf's AWD Civic from SpeedFactory Racing.

"We have been blessed to work with many drivers across the industry and it's an honor to know that our product helps them push the limits of what was considered impossible at one point," Santellan says. "Overcoming impossibilities and exceeding limitations is where our team shines. The sport compact market has taught us that one can easily exceed the limits of the stock components. It's what we do about it that improves the industry."

In fact, great collaborations are becoming the norm.

"There are too many to mention," says Maylish from MAHLE Motorsports. **TS**

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# Starlight Trailer Court



Serious classic campers love old signs, furniture and other fun items that add to the nostalgia.

CLASSIC IN THE FRONT,  
Party in the Back

The vintage trailer market may offer a campground full of secondary potential.

By Tony Thacker

As a kid, I grew up taking family vacations in a trailer. The UK can be cold, wet and damp; nevertheless, I have fond memories of those carefree, simple times.

Maybe that's what attracts people of all ages to the burgeoning vintage trailer scene.

Lately I've seen them all over the freeways, but only when I followed a nice 1963 Chevy truck loaded with two-wheelers towing an aluminum Airstream can to Bonelli Park in California did I discover just how big the scene really is. There were dozens of vintage trailers, and almost as many classic cars and trucks towing them.

I make the point because it means that, like racers, these enthusiastic families typically own a fleet of four, five or even more vehicles, making them excellent potential customers.

#### ADD-ON & GO

The trailers themselves may not offer huge potential for the conventional aftermarket shop as we know it, but there are opportunities. For example, located in San Diego is Southern California Vintage Trailer (SCVT), a shop that can restore your trailer or find you a trailer to have restored. They say, *by phone, Skype or in person*, they'll guide you through the restoration process,

from design and spec to build.

By their nature, trailers are compact, and, like tiny houses, they need careful planning to maximize the use of available space. I examined one trailer that had an open-plan toilet that might be a little too much for people who like their privacy. Hence the need for thoughtful preparation if a total makeover is planned.

SCVT quotes construction budgets from \$3,500 to \$6,000 per linear foot—yes, per foot—making the restoration of a 16-foot trailer around \$56,000 to \$96,000—not an unsubstantial amount.

I point this out because there might be businesses out there that have an under-



Helping campers find what they need can prove your shop's worth when it comes to the automotive work that's your bread and butter.

utilized shop and/or staff and this could be profitable work, albeit somewhat specialized.

Besides full restoration shops that are located across the country in places as far and wide as Brainerd, Minnesota, Townsend, Montana and Panama City, Florida, there are also numerous companies that supply trailer components, from aluminum to awnings, solar systems, tires and wheels, plus all the requisite furnishings, fixtures and fittings. I even found Vintage Trailer Gaskets in Walnut, California that specializes in, well, gaskets and associated products for doors and windows.

There's a boot camp for learning about restoration techniques operated by Caroline and Paul Lacitola, who also publish *Vintage Camper Trailers* magazine.

Hand in hand with the trailers goes a requirement for vintage furniture and props to add to the nostalgia. Obviously, these aren't items necessarily distributed through the automotive aftermarket, but occasionally things such as vintage coolers, bicycles including electrics, signage and even furniture might pop up as part of your inventory or could be something easily acquired to make a customer happy. It's all about customer service.

We spoke to Greg Dravis, who services this community with new, vintage-inspired signs of various designs.

"Original trailer-related signs are few and far between," he says, "so the market is quite happy with a new sign, painted or neon or a combination thereof, that looks old."



Bob & Peggy Beck use a 1956 Chevrolet wagon to tow their trailer.



Can your conversion skills help an entrepreneur use an old trailer as the basis for a new business?

CLASSIC IN THE FRONT,  
Party in the Back



While not always a direct fit, vintage trailers can lead to relationships that bring in new business.



The relaxed vibe of camper life blends well with the classic vehicle market.

**UP-FRONT**

Back at the park, beyond the actual trailers, I'd estimate that 50% of them were towed by some kind of classic car or truck, and that's where I think this group offers the aftermarket some potential. As I said earlier, most of these families own multiple vehicles and are therefore prime prospects.

Obviously, tow vehicles are all different, so if your shop specializes in one brand, you're not going to be able to service everybody. For example, well-known West Coast race announcer Bob Beck and wife Peggy use their '56 Chevy wagon to tow their trailer—a setup that differs from, say, a Dodge pickup truck full of motorcycles.

“The vintage trailer hobby is a continua-

tion of the old car hobby,” says Bob Beck. “Car people are gravitating to the trailers, as it opens up new challenges as well as new friends. Besides, if you sleep in your old trailer, nobody cares. Try that in your car!”

You can see that there's a market here for any number of modifications and upgrades to make these vehicles tow-worthy. Everything from hitches and receivers to helper springs, air-bag suspensions and air conditioning. Also, most of them have been hot-rodged to some extent with bigger, hotter engines, transmissions and rear ends.

And, of course, all these vehicles need wheels and, very importantly, tires. In fact, Bob's '56 Chevy was highlighted in a *Vintage Camper Trailers* story about

tires and the need to monitor and care for them because of the extra loads on the tow vehicles and the fact that the trailer tires sit, sometimes for months, in one spot and therefore can deteriorate long before the tread wears out.

One aspect of the tow vehicle that definitely needs attention is the brake system. Most cars of the 1950s and '60s had drum brakes. For towing, they'll require a disc brake conversion, preferably vented, that can be enhanced with a power booster, power-assisted rack-and-pinion steering, and possibly a front end swap with all-new suspension components.

That type of package should be easy to sell and install for most reputable shops.



When you see a vintage trailer, it's often being towed by a classic or specialty vehicle.



Why not pair classics up front and in the back?



Service and service parts such as brakes, plugs, wires, coils, etc. are likewise important aspects of the scene. Drivers might also benefit from extra engine and transmission coolers, as well as electric fans.

Think it through and there's no end to the list of ways you can help an old vehicle pull an old trailer.

### A COMMERCIAL COMPONENT

A final aspect of the vintage trailer phenomenon is to look beyond the pleasure-seekers to see the practical use of these old tow-behinds as vending machines.

Companies from mom-and-pops to large corporations have all seen the benefits of an interesting trailer converted into a retail outlet, be it for coffee, food, clothing or furniture. It's another side to the business that typically demands professional conversion, as it would be beyond the skills of many DIYers or wannabes.

Some enterprising people are even parking trailers, particularly Airstreams, on their properties and renting them out as temporary accommodations on Airbnb. That old trailer sitting in a nearby lot could be someone's vacation home.

Vintage trailers are a growing market that you might never have considered as an adjunct to your main business, but if it appeals to you and makes sense then it's worth investigating.

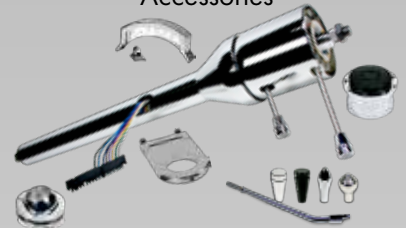
After all, if your classic car can get you where you're going, why not stay a while? **TS**



Born in England, **TONY THACKER** is an accredited automotive journalist, author and book publisher, and served as marketing director at the famed SO-CAL Speed Shop.

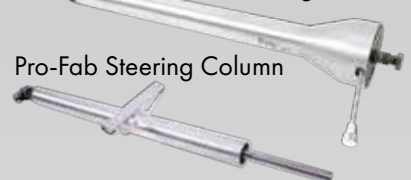


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### Knitted Exhaust Sleeves

**Design Engineering Inc. (DEI)**, Avon Lake, Ohio, presents Titanium Knitted Sleeves, now available to fit 3- to 3.5-inch O.D. exhaust and turbo pipes, up to 36 inches in length. The sleeves have a max temperature rating of 1,800 degrees and a continuous rating of 1,382 degrees. They can be cut to fit any application



and are also available in special-order custom lengths. Kits include locking ties and tool to secure the sleeves to pipes.



### 2022 Ram Tuning

**DiabloSport**, Sanford, Florida, presents its inTune i3 Performance Programmer for 2019-'22 Ram truck applications. Not available for sale or use on pollution-controlled vehicles in the state of California, the programmer improves throttle response, optimizes drivability and adds bottom-end horsepower. The inTune i3 is pre-loaded with dyno-tested performance programs.

### Ford Bronco Cat-Back Exhaust

**BORLA Performance Industries**, Johnson City, Tennessee, presents its Cat-Back Exhaust System for 2022 Ford Bronco Sport models that improves horsepower and torque. The S-Type system delivers a unique sound without drone or resonance inside the vehicle. It is made from T-304 stainless steel and features all-welded construction for durability and long life. Black coated tips are available.



### Penetrating Oil

**Lucas Oil Products**, Indianapolis, introduces Lucas Penetrating Oil, a penetrating lubricant that provides protection from the elements while dissolving rust and fighting corrosion. The proprietary formula is fortified with corrosion inhibitors to protect metal parts from the elements, especially wet conditions. The product features a unique technical formulation, giving it the properties of a heavy-weight oil and the penetrating qualities of a solvent, but with a thin consistency that allows it to work its way deep inside rusted bolts, bearings, chains and more.



### Octane Booster

**DeatschWerks**, Oklahoma City, presents Octane Booster for increased boost and timing. Offered in two unique formulations, the products deliver proven octane results backed by third-party lab testing. The boosters clean the fuel system as they work and contain no alcohol, toluene or MTBE. A calibrated mixing chart helps identify the right product for each application.



### GM In-Line Modules

**Edge**, Ogden, Utah, presents its Pulsar LT in-line modules, now for use with 2020-'22 Chevrolet Silverado/GMC Sierra 2500/3500 6.6L Duramax applications. The modules offer complete adjustability of several features using steering wheel controls without modifying the truck's ECM. Adjust throttle response, tire size, gear ratio, TPMS and top-speed limiter.





## Ford Truck Air Suspension

**Ridetech**, Jasper, Indiana, presents an Air Suspension System for 1965-'79 Ford F-100 and F-150 pickup models. The system revamps every aspect of the Ford suspension, including removing the entire factory front crossmember in favor of a bolt-on front crossmember and replacing the old leaf spring rear with a four-link. The package can be ordered with either Shockwaves or coil-overs.



## GM-Style Fuel Filter Regulators

**Holley EFI**, Bowling Green, Kentucky, presents Fuel Filters with built-in regulators that provide a simple and clean means of fueling LS swaps. Available with either OEM-style or -6AN connections, the filters feature an internal regulator set at 58psi, along with an integrated 5 nominal micron-rated filter. The fuel filter regulators are suited for LS engine swaps or any other fuel injection swap that is designed to run at 58psi of static pressure.



## Injection Fluid

**VP Racing Fuels**, San Antonio, presents VP Speed Sauce Plus, a new, ethanol-based injection fluid designed to boost horsepower and torque. Shown to provide 4% more power than methanol-based injection fluids and produce up to 15% more horsepower and torque than stock with proper tuning, the injection fluid delivers added octane when needed with the ethanol's plus-115 octane rating. Both Speed Sauce Plus and the original Speed Sauce are available in 1-gallon bottles and cases of four gallons.



## Chevelle Interior Products

**TMI Products**, Corona, California, presents Interior Products for 1966-'67 Chevrolet Chevelle models. Available products include molded door panels, quarter panels, kick panels, molded rear seats, dash pad ('67 only), carpet kits, floor mats, console, headliner with sail panels, package tray and multi-piece trunk kit. Available patterns include the company's Double Diamond Stitch with Stripe.



## TREMEC TKX Front Shift Kit

**Silver Sport Transmissions (SST)**, Rockford, Tennessee, offers a Front Shift Kit for **TREMEC TKX** transmissions. The STX Shifter kit delivers smooth, short and positive throws. The compact, double-trunnion shifter is made of steel and billet aluminum components for durability. With the front shift kit, the TKX's shifter can be moved up to a bench seat-friendly 12.68 inches behind the bellhousing.



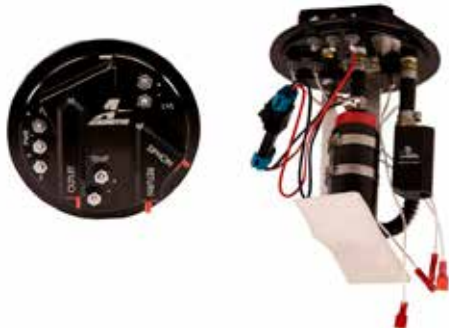
## Injector Test Bench

**Dynocom Industries**, Fort Worth, Texas, presents its all-new AiC8 Injector Test Bench that allows flow and testing of up to eight high- or low-impedance injectors sequentially (1 through 8). A dual fuel pump option allows flow and testing of up to eight low-impedance large atomizer-type injectors (up to 8A/2A peak-and-hold) sequentially. The system includes **Quantum's** state-of-the-art QUAIC software via an ethernet connection.



### Subaru Drop-In Fuel Pump

**Aeromotive Inc.**, Lenexa, Kansas, presents a new Phantom Direct Drop-In Fuel Pump Module for 2008-'20 Subaru WRX and STI models. Available with a single 450-lph pump or single or dual 340-lph pumps, the modules come preassembled for quick, easy installation. They work with the factory fuel tank, utilizing the OEM lock ring, gasket and fuel level sender. Each pump incorporates the patented Jet Siphon system with foam and bladder technology to control fuel slosh and maximize fuel pickup.



### Bluetooth Radio

**Custom Autosound Mfg.**, Fullerton, California, presents its Secretaudio SST-V. A 200W AM/FM radio with USB MP3/WMA flash drive, iPod control, CD control and satellite compatibility via Bluetooth auxiliary, the hideaway SST-V features an RF (radio frequency) remote control and is ideal for street rods and classics.



### Tacoma Supercharger

**Magnuson Superchargers**, Ventura, California, presents a Supercharger System for 2016-'22 Toyota Tacoma 3.5L applications that is now emissions-legal in all 50 states. Featuring calibration and a handheld controller, the highly efficient TVS1900 supercharger system is matched to the Tacoma's V-6 engine, offering power numbers of 370 hp and 330 pound-feet of torque at the crank.



### Thunderbird A/C

**Vintage Air**, San Antonio, presents a new Under-Dash Air Conditioning System for 1955-'57 Ford Thunderbird models. Available as either a Complete Kit or an Evaporator Kit, it is designed to install with minimal modifications to the original dash and firewall. The Complete Kit uses a Thunderbird-specific precision-engineered Y-block compressor bracket and a crimped refrigerant hose kit to ensure a direct fit. Also included is a bolt-on condenser kit with a binary safety switch. The Heritage Series under-dash evaporator blends with the T-Bird's artful trim.



### Jeep Exhaust Suite

**AWE**, Horsham, Pennsylvania, presents an Exhaust Suite for Jeep JK, JT and JL applications. Made in the USA, available products include loop pipes, mid-pipes, axle-back and cat-back systems that fit two- and four-door models. Tread Editions feature patented drone-canceling 180 Technology, and Trail Editions deliver maximum clearance. Shown to increase horsepower and torque, the systems are available with a variety of tip options.



### Gear Oil

**Nitro Gear & Axle**, Cashmere, Washington, presents Nitro Synthetic Plus 80W-140 Gear Oil. Available by the quart or by the case, the gear oil is engineered to reduce friction and lower operating temperatures by up to 35%. It can also reduce wear by up to 25% without adding friction modifiers.



### 6.7L Cummins Exhaust Manifold Gasket Set

**BD Diesel**, Abbotsford, British Columbia, presents an Exhaust Manifold Gasket Kit for 2013-'18 Ram 6.7L Cummins cab and chassis applications. The kit includes an OEM EGR port gasket and exhaust port and turbo mount gaskets made from multilayer steel.

### Stacker Trailers

**Aluminum Trailer Company (ATC)**, Nappanee, Indiana, presents its line of 2022 RōM Stacker Trailers. The trailers are available in 22-, 24- and 26-foot offerings that are equipped to haul multiple vehicles including cars, ATVs and motorcycles, and are easier to tow behind RVs; as well as in 28- and 30-foot models for serious automotive racers needing an 18-foot tilt-deck lift that offers lifting capacity for longer cars of 21 feet or more with wheelie bars. The ramp door provides a long transition flap to assist in loading low-profile vehicles.



### Ram Lift Kit

**Belltech**, Clovis, California, part of **KW automotive North America**, presents Suspension Lift Kit Systems for 2019-up Ram 1500 2WD applications. Precision-engineered in the U.S., the systems offer a comfortable ride and include patented, front height-adjustable Trail Performance coil-overs and rear Trail Performance twin-tube shocks. **TS**

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# SECRETS OF A By John Gunnell CLEAN SHOP

‘A restoration starts with the facility—not the car.’



The shop's first section was made to look like a 1930s Chevy dealership.



There's no misplacing parts or tools in this shop.

One day, a group of car enthusiasts who meet for breakfast and shop visits toured Larry Fechter's auto restoration business in Iola, Wisconsin. Later on, Fechter ran into one of the visitors at a car show.

The man said, "Hey, I remember you—you're the guy with the clean shop!"

Fechter, in fact, is sort of a clean shop specialist.

His ability to run a tight ship at his shop stems in part from jobs he's had managing facilities, from city parks to a school district maintenance program. And he isn't shy about sharing his secrets.

How does he keep his work environment so incredibly clean and organized? How is it that the wall behind his grinder and wire wheel has no debris on it? Why is there no media on the floor under his two blast cabinets?

He's since sold his restoration shop, but his cleanliness techniques still apply.

**Q HOW COME DO YOU DO THIS "NEAT GARAGE" THING BETTER THAN MOST FOLKS?**

**LARRY FECHTER:** It has a lot to do with my working background and belief that a restoration starts with the facility—not the car. A shop has to reflect what the car will be like when you're done.

As I restore a car, I need to work clean and spotless. It makes the project go better. What makes the shop look the way it does

is the restoration, but the restoration also drives the shop's appearance.

### Q HOW DID YOUR OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND HELP YOU BUILD THIS?

**LF:** I was in building trades and facilities management for over 30 years. I've constructed commercial buildings, school buildings and residential buildings. I built four of my own homes.

Being a school maintenance director made me become a jack of all trades. You learn how to do a little bit of everything.

### Q DID YOU SPEND A MILLION DOLLARS TO BUILD THE PLACE?

**LF:** I'm not a millionaire. I'm a blue collar worker. I can do quite a bit myself.

### Q HOW BIG WAS YOUR BUILDING?

**LF:** The first section was 34-by-78-feet, and the second addition was 34-by-28-feet, so close to a total of 3,000 square feet.

### Q DID YOU BUILD THE BUILDING YOURSELF?

**LF:** Well, the rough-in part of it I farmed out. I used to build all that myself, but I have really good people who can do things. I let them do the rough-in part. But I probably did 95% of the finishing.

### Q IS THE BUILDING A BIG RECTANGLE?

**LF:** Yes, it's basically a rectangle, but it's got two different height levels. The backroom is what I called the *dirty room*, although people laughed when I'd say it's dirty, since it was as clean as the front room.

I did the grinding, the buffing, the painting of small parts and powder-coating there. There's no chance of overspray. If I had to sandblast a part, I could also do that in the dirty room.

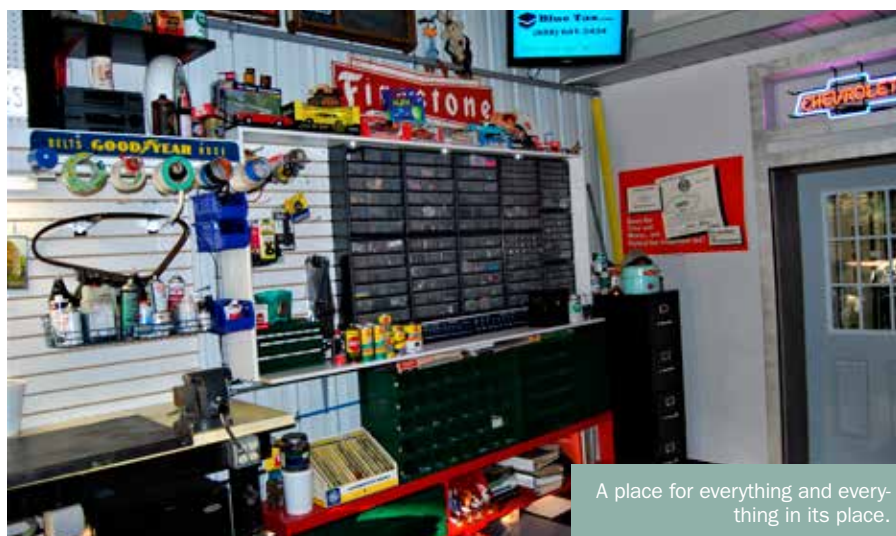
### Q HOW SPOTLESS WAS THE CLEAN ROOM?

**LF:** I just kept the front part of the building a clean environment. It's just the way I like to do that as I tear cars apart. I'd tear two cars completely down to nothing. Then, when I started to reassemble one, I'd put it in the bigger front room, and I set up tables all around it.

All the pieces are set on rosin paper. It's a clean environment. It looks like an operating room. But, if I have to paint something, I want to do it in the dirty room, not in the front room.



Fechter wall-mounted his hand tools over his workbench



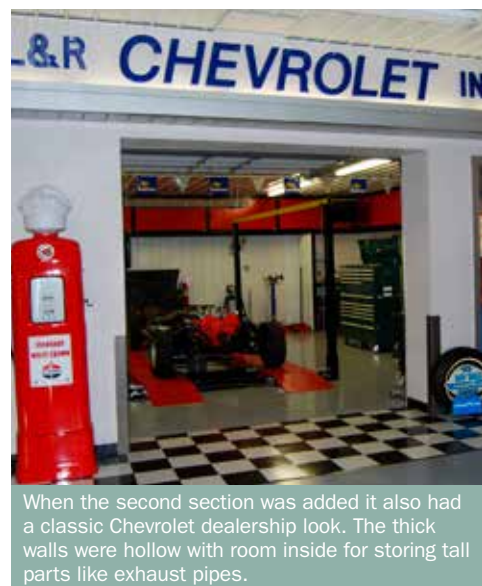
A place for everything and everything in its place.



Larry Fechter with a car he carefully disassembled without making a big mess.



Believe it or not, this was the "dirty room" where most of the work was done.



When the second section was added it also had a classic Chevrolet dealership look. The thick walls were hollow with room inside for storing tall parts like exhaust pipes.

**Q YOU BUILT THE PLACE JUST TO RESTORE CARS? IT'S NOT FOR STORAGE?**

**LF:** It was built just for my passion, which is restoring cars. And that's what it is all about—a passion for the restoration of automotive history.

**Q HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO GET THE BUILDING TO THE POINT IT WAS AT WHEN WE VISITED?**

**LF:** It had been about a six-year off-and-on project in two stages. The first stage was done and then the second stage was added about five years later.

**Q DID YOU SPEND ALL OF YOUR TIME WORKING ON THE PLACE?**

**LF:** As much time as I could. I'd be lying if

I told you there wasn't some frustration at times, but it's like someone going golfing and shooting 18 holes. Some days they don't shoot a good game, but they're still doing what they love.

**Q YOU USED A MULTI-COLOR TAG SYSTEM FOR ORGANIZATION?**

**LF:** If you spend time on a restoration, you must be organized. You might start a step, put it aside for a while and then go back to it.

In my shop you'll see overhead cabinets No. 6, No. 7, No. 8. I have a list that tells me where specific parts are. I go to my list and there it is. Brake cylinder, Cabinet 6.

I'm always trying to figure out ways of condensing time used and equating it to

dollars. In my buildings and grounds career I had a budget and had to be organized.

**Q THE TAG SYSTEM YOU DEVELOPED HAS FOUR COLORS?**

**LF:** Right. My tag system uses cards that indicate:

1. Parts to be ordered
2. Parts to be refinished
3. Parts to be sent out

So, if I walk away from that job, I can go right back to it later.

I'd like to develop some kind of a software package based on my system. If you're going to restore a car, you need to take the time to tag and bag it as you're taking it apart. Otherwise, you're going to have that



Cars stored in the front section were on skates so they could be moved easily.

mess and wind up losing interest. That's when you see For Sale ads.

### Q WHAT KINDS OF RESTORATION TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT DID YOU HAVE?

**LF:** I sent out bodywork and engine work. Those are two things I don't do. I had lifting equipment. I had powder-coating equipment. I had sandblasting equipment. I set up two blasters so I could use glass beads, or I could go to aluminum oxide for rust removal—I don't change material for a particular job.

I had a parts washer and two powder-coating ovens—I actually found a double-stacked kitchen oven. I could do everything up to A-arms. I could do all the brackets.

### Q HOW WAS THERE NO "SKID MARK" ON THE WALL BEHIND YOUR BUFFER?

**LF:** When I worked for cities and took care of the park system I had to think about vandals or what happens when a thousand people use something. You think of a clean house for your wife and a couple of kids. I learned to think of the school as my house, but with 1,000 kids dragging in mud.

So, when I built my shop, I kept that in mind. I used epoxy paint. I put an exhaust system in. My buffing wheel had a big fan behind it. When I buffed, all that stuff got sucked into the fan and went right out of the room. All my shop fixtures were clean-up-able.

### Q WHAT MADE YOUR SHOP BUILDING UNIQUE?

**LF:** The outside front had a 1930s-'40s-'50s

Chevy dealership theme. Inside, the two sections were divided up by a replica of a 1960s Chevrolet dealership. If you looked closely, you'd see the steel fascia and soffit that was done by a commercial builder.

I made the interior walls look thick and they had built-in cupboards to put signs, mufflers and long stuff in. I didn't waste any room.

### Q WHAT DOES IT LEAVE BEHIND FOR THE NEXT OWNER?

**LF:** It's built so that it can be used for a lot of things. As a car restoration shop, it wasn't only a shop. It was a showroom. A party place. A gathering spot. **TS**



**JOHN GUNNELL** has been writing about classic cars since 1972. He is also the owner of Gunner's Great Garage in Manawa, Wisconsin. He owns 11 cars and seven motorcycles.

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# EV ROUNDUP

Recent happenings in the ever-changing world of electric cars.

Things are happening quickly in the world of electric vehicles. Here's a look at some recent EV news of importance to aftermarket shops.

## EV TRAINING & CERTIFICATION

Electric vehicle repair training is becoming easier to find.

Legacy EV, which offers aftermarket elec-



Refined touches inside and out highlight the BRABUS interpretation of the fully electric Porsche Taycan Turbo and Turbo S models. (Photos above and right courtesy BRABUS)





An electric vehicle certification course from Legacy EV will be available in the fall to students at the Carroll Shelby Automotive Program at Northeast Texas Community College. (Photo courtesy Legacy EV)

tric vehicle kits, components and training, has announced that automotive technician students at the Carroll Shelby Automotive Program at Northeast Texas Community College can earn an EV certification.

Calling it the nation's first program offered by an accredited college to prepare students to work on EV systems and conversions through a comprehensive curriculum and hands-on training, Legacy

officials made the announcement in May during the 10th annual Carroll Shelby Tribute and Car Show in Gardena, California.

"As EVs continue to make up greater market share among drivers, the demand for technicians who are trained in repair and maintenance is critical," notes Mavrick Knoles, president and co-founder of Legacy EV. "Working with the Carroll Shelby Automotive Program, we are establishing a new standard for EV education as we train the next generation of auto mechanics."

Legacy EV's certification for the Carroll Shelby Automotive Program will include a five-part curriculum that offers an in-depth education on EV history and technology including motors, batteries, chargers and converters, according to the company. During the hands-on training portion of the course, students will work on EV motors and learn how to apply what they already know about gas engines to the new technology.

Shelby American introduced the Shelby Mustang Mach-E GT concept during the 2021 SEMA Show in Las Vegas, part of the organization's mission to embrace an electrified future, as stated in a press release.

"Carroll Shelby was committed to embracing new technologies and blazing new trails," says Jon McCullough, executive vice president for advancement at Northeast Texas Community College. "Before he passed, Carroll forecasted the automotive industry's embrace of electric technology. That future is coming to fruition, and we're honored that his automotive program will be the first in the country to offer an on-campus EV certification from an accredited college."

Legacy EV's certification will be available as a full semester elective course beginning in the fall of 2022 for Northeast Texas Community College students.

#### EXPANDED SEMA EV SECTION

The 2022 SEMA Show will feature an expanded SEMA Electrified section. Located in the North Hall, the specialized exhibit area will feature the latest advancements in EV technology, including new products and solutions for electric platforms and conversions, according to the trade group.

"The EV aftermarket is evolving quickly and continues to change; we're curating a unique collection of the latest products





# EV ROUNDUP



The 2022 SEMA Show will include an expanded SEMA Electrified section featuring EV products and technology. (Photos courtesy Specialty Equipment Market Association)



related to electric vehicles and the aftermarket,” says Tom Gattuso, SEMA vice president of events. “SEMA Electrified will help businesses see the latest trends and understand how the EV market has evolved. Visitors will gain an understanding of the advancements and opportunities for the future.”

While alternative powertrains currently represent just 1% of the 250 million cars, SUVs and light-duty trucks in operation on American roads, studies show sales and interest in EVs are increasing rapidly.

According to recent SEMA Market Research, the electric market includes several areas of opportunity for the aftermarket, including:

- Development of parts and products to

aid in the conversion of older internal combustion vehicles

- Building and modifying new project, racing and purpose-built vehicles
- Expertly accessorizing new OEM electric offerings

The organization states that “SEMA is dedicated to helping its member companies identify those opportunities and adapt to the growing segment of the industry. While the dedicated SEMA Electrified section will highlight the endless possibilities in the electric market, EV projects and products will be displayed throughout the SEMA Show.”

The 2022 SEMA Show is set for Nov. 1-4 at the Las Vegas Convention Center. Learn more at [semashow.com](http://semashow.com).

### EV-FRIENDLY ROAD TRIPS

Concerns over long-distance travel without the security of knowing where their next charge will come from are among the top concerns of drivers who say they are hesitant about purchasing an electric vehicle.

A recent roundup of EV-friendly U.S. road trips compiled by [findthebestcarprice.com](http://findthebestcarprice.com) could alleviate some of those concerns.

The list includes some of America’s most historic and beloved drives, ranked after considering factors such as the total distance of the route and the number of charging points available, based on a 200-mile EV range.

The top three were:



Route 66 (also known as the Will Rogers Highway) came in first and scored 28 out of 45 points for EV road trips.

It is one of the first national highways for motor vehicles in the United States and is an icon in American popular culture.

The highway opened in 1926; however, much of the route was not paved until decades later. Highlights include the Oklahoma State capitol building, Devil’s Elbow Bridge on the original route, the Cadillac Ranch and Santa Fe, New Mexico.

■ **NUMBER OF STOPS:** 12

■ **TOTAL STATES PASSED:** 7

■ **TOTAL NUMBER OF EV CHARGERS ACROSS STOPS:** 1,822

■ **TOTAL DISTANCE (MILES) CONSIDERED:** 2,192

■ **ESTIMATED DURATION:** 32 hours, 34 minutes

- **ADDITIONAL STOPS REQUIRED:**  
6 (ex. St James)
- **TOTAL HOTELS WITH EV CHARGERS ACROSS LOCATIONS:** 56
- **TOTAL CHARGE STOPS REQUIRED:** 18
- **COST TO CHARGE FOR THE ROAD TRIP** (at 4-cents-per-mile): \$87.70



San Francisco to Utah came in second place and scored 26 out of a possible 45 points for EV road trips. The distance between San Francisco and Utah is 592 miles, and the road distance to take an EV is 739.7 miles.

Notable stops along the way include Sacramento, Napa, Reno, Calistoga, South Lake Tahoe, Healdsburg, Sonoma, St. Helena, Glen Ellen and Yountville.

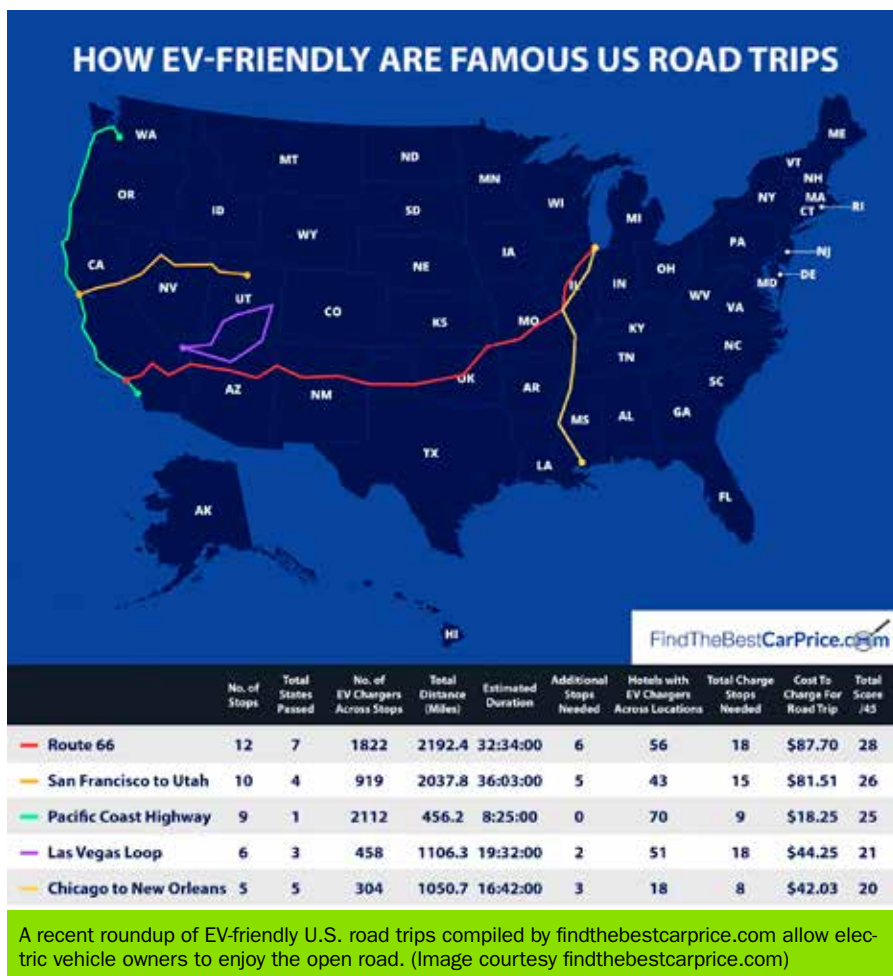
- **NUMBER OF STOPS:** 10
- **TOTAL STATES PASSED:** 4
- **TOTAL NUMBER OF EV CHARGERS ACROSS STOPS:** 919
- **TOTAL DISTANCE (MILES) CONSIDERED:** 2,038
- **ESTIMATED DURATION:** 36 hours, 3 minutes
- **ADDITIONAL STOPS REQUIRED:** 5 (ex. Fresno and Bakersfield)
- **TOTAL HOTELS WITH EV CHARGERS ACROSS LOCATIONS:** 43
- **TOTAL CHARGE STOPS REQUIRED:** 15
- **COST TO CHARGE FOR THE ROAD TRIP** (at 4-cents-per-mile): \$81.51



The Pacific Coast Highway came in third place and scored 25 out of a possible 45 points for EV road trips. The highway was first created in the 1930s and hugs over 600 miles of California coastline.

PCH offers EV drivers scenic views of cliff-top scenery, hidden coves, forests and sandy beaches.

- **NUMBER OF STOPS:** 9
- **TOTAL STATES PASSED:** 1
- **TOTAL NUMBER OF EV CHARGERS ACROSS STOPS:** 2,112
- **TOTAL DISTANCE (MILES) CONSIDERED:** 456
- **ESTIMATED DURATION:** 8 hours, 25 minutes
- **ADDITIONAL STOPS REQUIRED:** 0
- **TOTAL HOTELS WITH EV CHARGERS ACROSS LOCATIONS:** 70
- **TOTAL CHARGE STOPS REQUIRED:** 9



- **COST TO CHARGE FOR THE ROAD TRIP** (at 4-cents-per-mile): \$18.25

To see the full list, visit [findthebestcarprice.com/ev-friendly-road-trips](https://www.findthebestcarprice.com/ev-friendly-road-trips).

### ELECTRIFIED PORSCHE TAYCAN TURBO S

Here's the approach upfitter BRABUS takes with its latest Porsche Taycan Turbo projects.

BRABUS fulfills the custom requests of owners of a Porsche Taycan Turbo S or Taycan Turbo with an exclusive refinement range for the high-end electric car from Zuffenhausen.

In a first step, BRABUS offers exclusive refinement options for the bodywork and interior of the sedan. The range spans from sporty aerodynamic enhancement components made from exposed carbon to 22-inch high-tech forged wheels and a BRABUS MASTERPIECE interior crafted from leather, Alcantara and carbon, which is available in any desired color and with custom designs.

BRABUS employed state-of-the-art 3D scanning and CAD technology to develop the precise-fit aerodynamic components that received their finishing touch in the wind tunnel. The carbon material is permanently sealed with a choice of high-gloss or matte coatings.

BRABUS also offers a special suspension setup for the Taycan Turbo models to match the low-profile tires. The company's engineers and test drivers developed a special control module for the adaptive air suspension of the sedan, lowering the ride height by 0.8 inches.

Inside, occupants are welcomed by carbon scuff plates with backlit BRABUS logos, featuring colors that automatically alternate between red and white. Aluminum pedals and footrest add a sporty touch.

Other elements include customized instrument panel, center console and door panels to match the aerodynamic enhancement components for the bodywork. **TS**

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# Celebrity Car Customizations Revealed!

**C**elebrities—they're just like us! They like car customizations, too.

A recent study by confused.com revealed some of the most expensive vehicle modifications by celebrities in the worlds of television, sports and music. The goal was to determine how much the upgrades could potentially increase insurance costs.

What it showed for our industry, however, are some of the preferred customizations for high-end clients. They include body shaping, engine upgrades and custom wraps.

Leading the way was an estimated \$76,644 restyling of a Chevrolet Corvette (no vehicle year given) for American wrestler-turned-actor **John Cena** that included a custom-molded fiberglass body with no doors and an open *ceiling* and custom headlights.

Following were identically estimated \$73,595 mods on **Justin Bieber's** Ferrari 458 (custom blue wrap, blue wheels) and **Kim Kardashian's** Lamborghini Urus (custom SKIMS Cozy fabric wrap).

Some of the other top 30 include:

- **David Beckham**, Maserati MC20 – custom paint and interior (\$39,054)
- **Von Miller**, Chevrolet Camaro SS – custom wheels, speakers, exterior lighting (\$27,250)
- **Kanye West**, Lamborghini Urus – beige ceramic-coated wrap, leather (\$26,412)
- **Zac Efron**, 1965 Ford Mustang – self-restoration (\$26,412)
- **Odell Beckham Jr.**, Mercedes-AMG CLS63 – custom wrap and engine (\$20,660)
- **Lady Gaga**, Chevrolet El Camino – custom exterior (\$19,526)

- **Flo Rida**, Bugatti Veyron – gold chrome wrap, gold rims (\$10,251)
- **Jay-Z**, Maybach Exelero – custom engine, extended rear seats, 21-speaker system (\$10,251)
- **Leonardo DiCaprio**, Fisker Karma EV Speedster – hybrid engine (\$9,749)
- **LeBron James**, Lamborghini Aventador Roadster – floral print wrap (\$9,749)
- **Kendall Jenner**, 1957 Corvette Stingray – restored engine (\$3,905)
- **Cristiano Ronaldo**, Bugatti Centodieci – custom CR7 logo (\$3,053)

Regarding the study, confused.com obtained a seed list of the most popular celebrity car customizations by checking online sources including The Drive, Motor Junkie and various articles from HotCars and Auto Bizz, according to the company. Celebrities were then sorted into categories.

Car expert Charlie Howes at CarSite valued the price of the personalized modifications made to each celebrity's car, taking into account the car model and each upgrade.

The estimated cost of car insurance for the modified cars was then valued by Hannah Tweedie, insurance expert at Alan Boswell Group, who provided a predicted annual cost of insurance required for each celebrity's modified car based on figures supplied by CarSite.

Confused.com offers more information on insurance for customized vehicles at [www.confused.com/car-insurance/guides/modified-car-insurance](http://www.confused.com/car-insurance/guides/modified-car-insurance). **TS**

**Confused.com**

## The most expensive celebrity car modifications, revealed

|    | Modification estimate (\$)               | % Increase Insurance |   |
|----|--|----------------------|---|
| 1  | <b>John Cena</b><br><b>\$76,644</b>      | 62.5%                | <p><small>Custom fiberglass body; open glass body ceiling, headlights</small></p> |
| =2 | <b>Justin Bieber</b><br><b>\$73,595</b>  | 15%                  | <p><small>Custom blue wrap, blue rims, and wheels</small></p>                     |
| =2 | <b>Kim Kardashian</b><br><b>\$73,595</b> | 25%                  | <p><small>Custom skims wool wrap</small></p>                                      |
| 3  | <b>David Beckham</b><br><b>\$39,054</b>  | 20%                  | <p><small>Custom paint job and interior</small></p>                               |
| 4  | <b>Von Miller</b><br><b>\$27,250</b>     | 33.3%                | <p><small>Custom wheels and speakers, as well as exterior lighting</small></p>    |
| =5 | <b>Kanye West</b><br><b>\$26,412</b>     | 33.3%                | <p><small>Beige ceramic coated wrap, new leather interiors</small></p>            |
| =5 | <b>Zac Efron</b><br><b>\$26,412</b>      | 33.3%                | <p><small>Self restoration</small></p>  |

**Methodology:** Confused.com sought to discover the celebrities with the most expensive personalised cars. Car expert at CarSite then valued the price of the custom modifications. The estimated increase in car insurance prices were subsequently determined by insurance expert at Alan Boswell Group. Data was collected between 29/04/2022 - 05/05/2022 and is accurate as of then.

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