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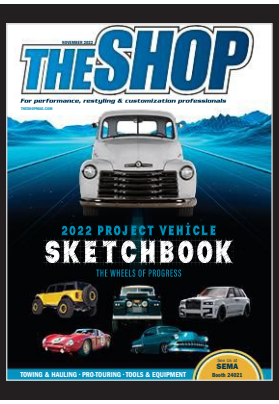
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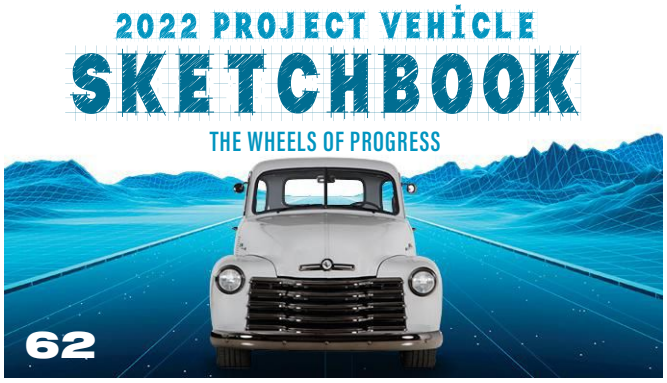
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Jef White
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Cars Spark Big Dreams

Each year, Toyota sends an update on its worldwide Dream Car Art Contest, which invites students from around the world to create artwork illustrating the vehicle of their dreams.

Unbound by physical limitations, the entries almost always depict soaring, hopeful ideas designed to do something good for the planet while getting people where they want to go.

This year, Ava Yeh, a 15-year-old artist and musician from Mercer Island, Washington, won first place in both the U.S. and worldwide categories for the 12-15 age group. Her piano ship vehicle performs classical music for passengers and passersby while floating high above the traffic.

"My car plays music everywhere to soothe people and improve their mental and physical health," she says. "I added beautiful plants and flowers to my design to emphasize the importance of preserving nature and to inspire people to nurture their own homes."

The contest isn't just a fun idea; it has relevance to our industry because it shows that young people have an interest not only in vehicles, but personalized vehicles that reflect their individuality.



Toyota Dream Orchestra Car by Ava Yeh.

Delivering those types of vehicles is what your shop does every day, and it's especially significant this time of year, as trade show season brings with it a focus on project builds that demonstrate the imagination, skill, creativity and passion that makes this industry so special.

Many consider the upcoming SEMA Show the epicenter of the project vehicle universe. It's where builders roll out their best-of-the-best customs, restomods, classics, off-roaders, race vehicles and specialty creations—real-life dream cars.

This issue's Project Vehicle Sketchbook introduces a collection of showcase builds, including some you'll want to see out at the show. And while the sheer number of vehicles in and around the Las Vegas Convention Center can be overwhelming, I always remind professionals to stop a moment and admire the details of those that catch their eye, searching for elements that might spark an idea for their own shop creations.

An even deeper dive is available for those who work with wholesale clients. Turn to page 52, where Josh Poulson outlines opportunities available through SEMA's Professional Restylers Organization and the PRO Cup Challenge.

Trade show season is when dream cars come to life. Just like Ava's soaring piano, every memorable build started as a hopeful idea in someone's imagination. ***TS***

THE SHOP

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Message Received

content is king



Content really is king & here's why you should care. **>>> By Barry Alt**

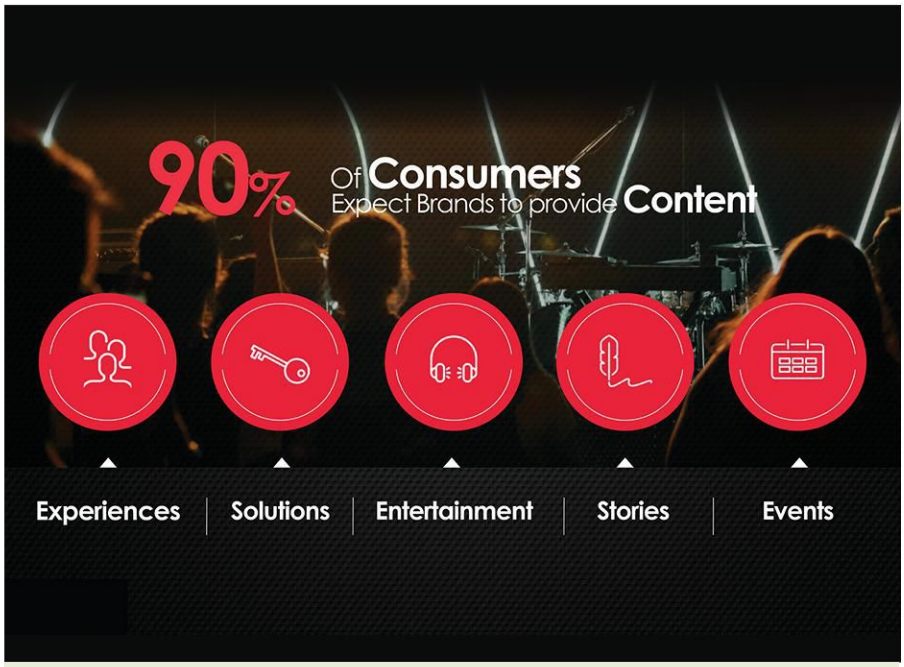
Content has always been king amongst marketers—or at least since 1996 when the term was first used in an article by Bill Gates.

He stated that content was where the real money was, and 26 years later, content is still firmly in the king position on the throne. But what exactly does *content is king* mean?

Well, without content there'd be nothing to connect you to your customers. There'd be no lifeline attracting interested parties to your aftermarket shop's website.

Content or content marketing focuses on the client, and it always has. It highlights how businesses can help their audiences and nurtures relationships with prospects. It's the proper message sent and received.

Today, we're going to show you exactly why content marketing is successful and why it really is the king. We'll also let you



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Content marketing must focus on the customer.



in on a few secrets regarding using content to your shop's advantage.

WHY IS CONTENT KING?

People may disagree on the most crucial aspect of a company's website and online presence, but without content, you'd be a bit lost online.

Content helps you connect with your audience, builds awareness of your company and brand, and encourages people to check out your products and services.

Studies show that 90% of consumers who engage with businesses expect brands to provide quality content that answers their questions or addresses their objections—so don't let them down! If done correctly, great content will help with customer acquisition as well as retention.

Here are four reasons why content is truly the king of the marketing world:

1 CONTENT BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS WITH PROSPECTS & CUSTOMERS

Great content builds strong relationships with your prospects and customers; the stronger the relationship, the more likely your audience will want to work with you and come back again and again.

People like to work with those they trust. So, if they already have a relationship with your brand and associate you with positive emotions, they will convert.

High-quality, valuable and informative content will also improve your brand's reputation and enhance your online credibility. This will help people see you as an expert in your field.

For example, if you post images and video content and put a face with a name, you'll easily connect with your audience by showing them there are real people behind your brand.

One of our clients that does an exceptional job at this is Level 7 Motorsports in Marion, Illinois. Owner Jesse Vaughn records and consistently posts videos on YouTube and Instagram showing what's happening in his performance shop.

His content shows how they handle specific tasks, discusses new products, reviews the projects they're working on in the shop and updates what's happening with their very popular C10 autocross race truck.

Vaughn shoots videos freehand with a GoPro and includes members of his staff in the videos from time to time, helping put faces to names and making a personal connection. This has resulted in Level 7 establishing trust with its audience, generating a strong following of loyal, repeat customers and Vaughn being seen as an expert in his field.

Improving your reputation and keeping your current customers happy with a continuous supply of helpful content will also improve the chances of them becoming repeat customers.

What kind of content improves your



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customer relationships? Some of the best types include:

- Step-by-step articles or videos
- How-to guides
- Shop tours & project updates
- Up-to-date project photo galleries
- Visual content like informative videos
- Personal content, including behind-the-scenes or on-location photos
- Entertaining blogs with educational value
- Content that is authentically you
- Content that includes your clients & staff

PRO TIP: Only post relevant content to your website and social media. Content that doesn't have anything to do with your company could turn away business prospects instead of helping get them on board. Adding a bit of personal content like photos of a vacation or teambuilding event now and then will help people get to know you on a more personal level, but keep it to a minimum.

2 CONTENT IMPROVES BRAND RECOGNITION

By creating good content, you can easily establish your business as a trusted and reliable brand online.

The more you post online and engage with your audience, the more people will recognize you, your company and your team. Word will spread about the quality auto restoration, race, restyling, or performance products and services you offer.

How do you use content to boost your brand recognition? By being consistent.

If you post regularly and consistently, you will build more and more awareness about your brand. If all the content you're uploading is high quality, educational and entertaining, you'll quickly improve your brand recognition.



THE BEST PROTECTION IN ANY WEATHER

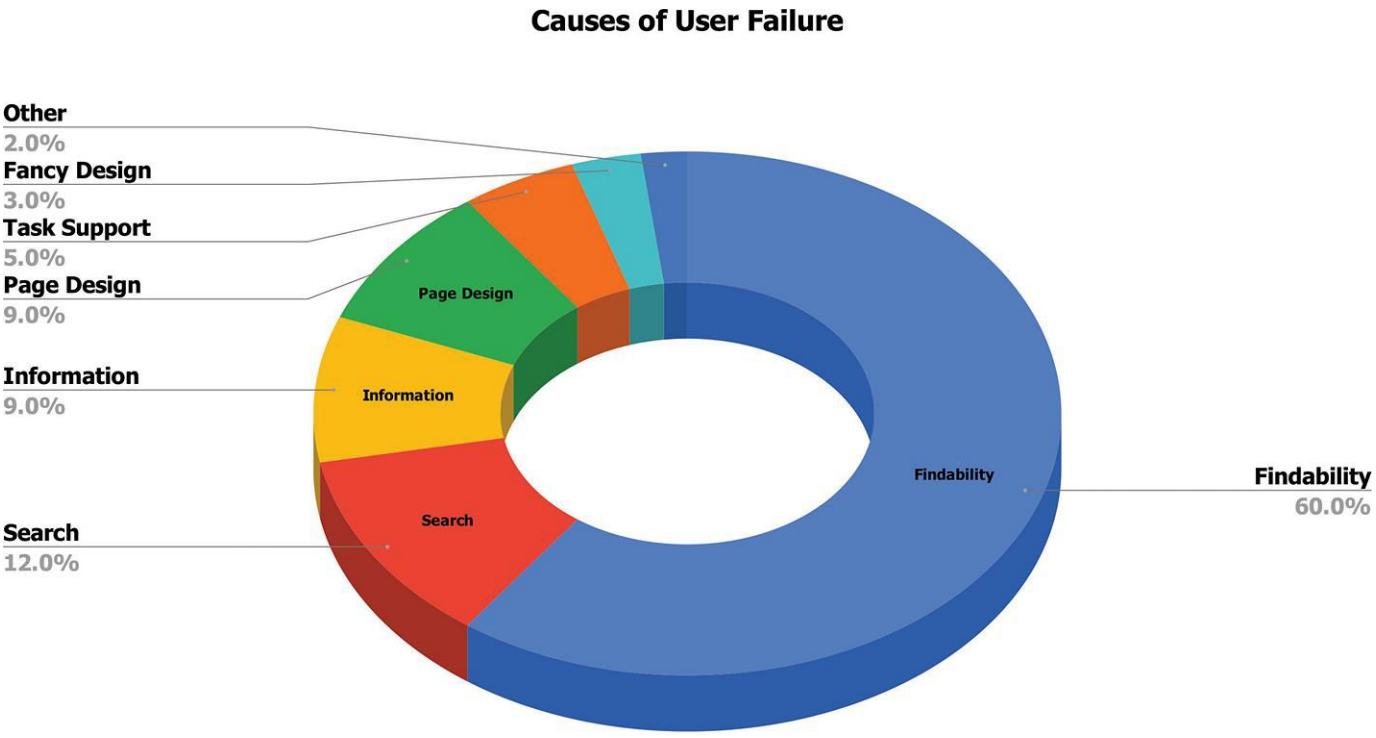
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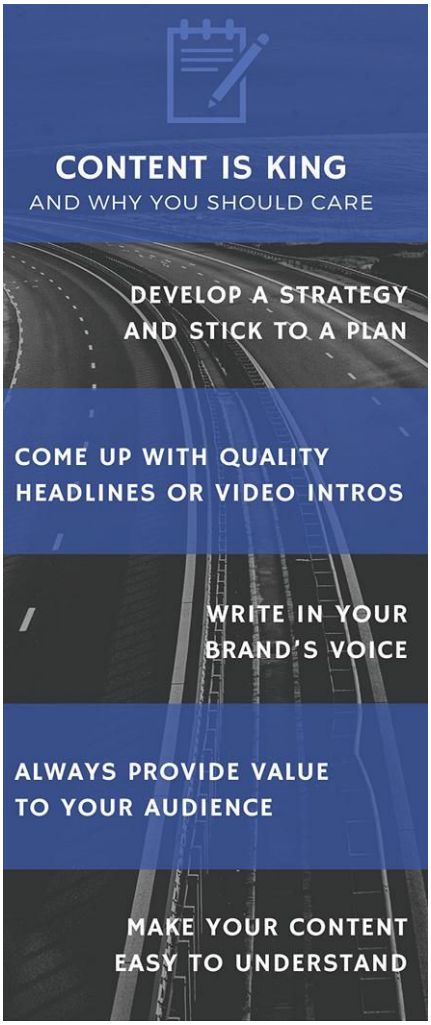
PREMIUM PERFORMANCE IN EXTREME CONDITIONS

The BAKFlip MX4 features heavy-duty aluminum matte finish panels and an enhanced premium density foam core. The MX4 is equipped with upgraded latch housing components and an integrated tailgate seal that allows the tailgate to close with the cover up or down.

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One note: keep in mind that when we say *high-quality*, we don't mean that you have to go out and hire a production company and edit each piece. For social media, off-the-cuff, informative content shot with a good-quality camera or smartphone will work and is what people are used to seeing. Just make sure the audio and video are clear.

PRO TIP: Having an easy-to-read and recognizable logo, as well as identifiable company colors, also help improve brand recognition. Be sure to use them consistently across all of your content.

3 CONTENT IMPROVES YOUR SEO

Search engine optimization (SEO) is necessary for getting your company's website high on the search results page. Uploading new content regularly to your website and other social media platforms easily enhances your SEO.

Without good content, your website has no opportunity to rank high in search results, and if you don't rank well for relevant keywords, your prospects won't be able to find you online.

Improve your SEO by posting valuable, keyword-rich content. It will help enhance your local and organic traffic. The more you improve your SEO, the more you'll attract interested leads.

Don't forget that YouTube is the second most visited site on the planet and all those videos that you're posting to social media can be uploaded to YouTube. Along with a great keywords-rich title and description, be sure to post to YouTube—it's a very important search engine no one is talking about.

PRO TIP: If you have a Google Business Profile, don't forget to upload content there as well. It's the perfect place to improve your SEO. And if you don't have a Google Business Profile, you're missing out on a great, free marketing tool.

4 CONTENT INFLUENCES CONVERSIONS

When you have a lot of premium content on your website, you'll easily attract prospects. Plus, with a good CTA (call to action), you'll be able to convert those leads into paying clients.

Approximately 96% of marketers say that content marketing has been effective for their brand, and the more effective it is the more leads it generates. Great copy and clarity convert.

You can improve conversions through

your content by:

- Customer testimonials (video testimonials are the best)
- Highlighting what you're an expert at
- Using irresistible CTAs
- Posting about the projects you're working on
- Uploading photos & videos of your work
- Sharing content with clear titles & descriptive copy

PRO TIP: If you engage with comments and shares on social media, you'll be able to improve conversions, too.

BOOSTING BUSINESS

How should aftermarket restyling, restoration, race and performance shops use content to boost business?

These seven tips on how to write and create meaningful content for your business will spark sales and energize your company in no time.

1 DEVELOP A STRATEGY & STICK TO A PLAN

By developing and utilizing a strategy, you'll be able to create and organize the right content to ensure everything gets posted when and where you'd like.

Having a content calendar in place will keep you on track and consistent. As we've already discussed, consistency is key to improving conversions when it comes to content.

Without consistency, people that follow you on social media might lose interest and stop paying attention to your posts. Social media platforms may not show your content as often either, making it more difficult for your audience to find your posts.

A plan will also help you write, develop and create structured pieces of content instead of letting your mind wander. You'll be able to distribute the various types of content and posts evenly. For example, posting too many written pieces might get boring for your audience, so be sure to schedule a video or two now and then, or even a podcast.

PRO TIP: Don't forget to set goals for your strategy. Without goals, you won't have anything to aim for, and your plan might fall apart. For example, how many clients do you want to reach with your content? How many views do you want your videos or blogs to get each month? What steps will you take to increase traffic if needed?

2 COME UP WITH QUALITY HEADLINES OR VIDEO INTROS

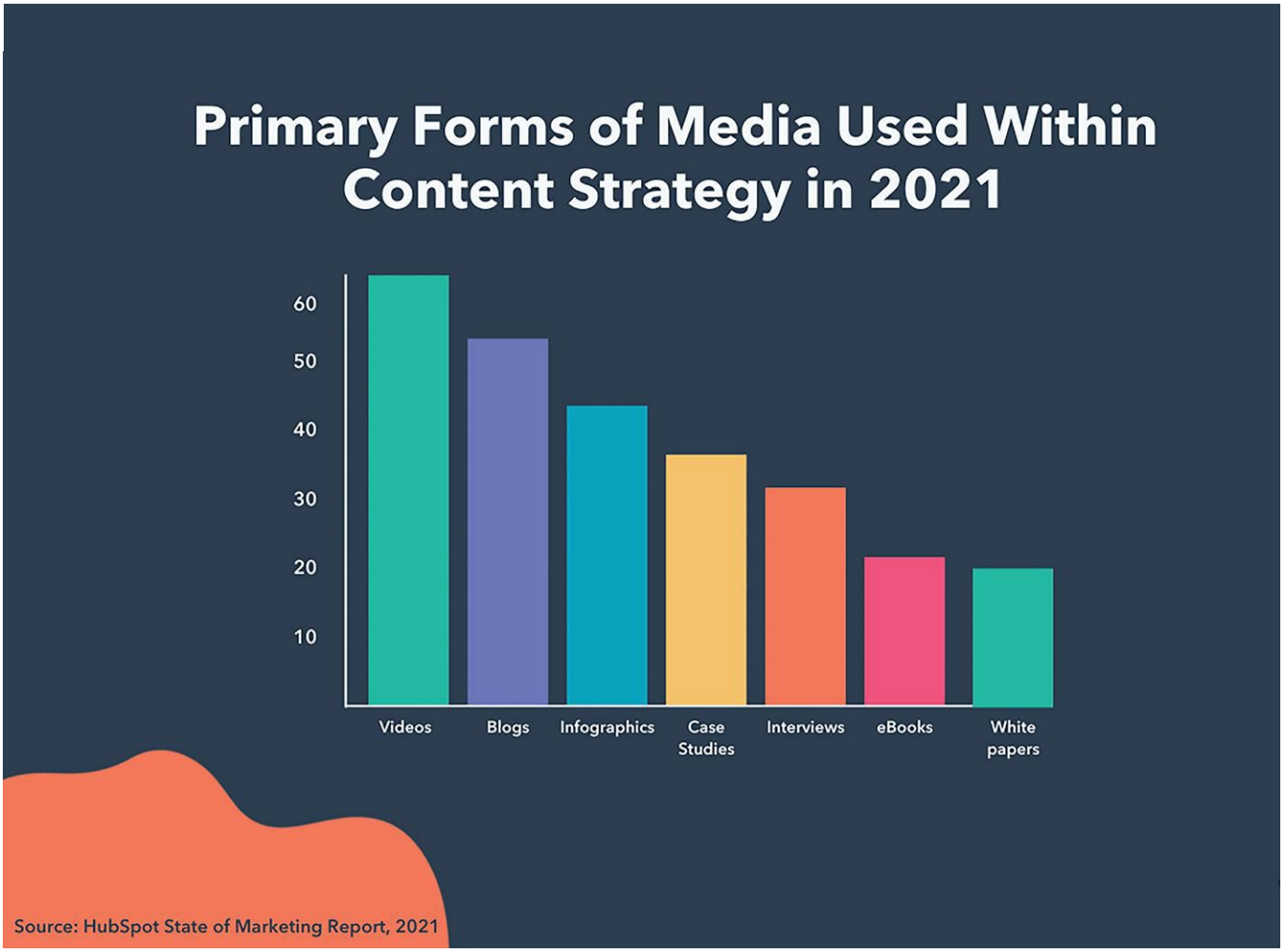
A good headline is key to getting your users to interact with your article, video or podcast episode. No matter what type of content you're posting, you should ensure that the title is impossible to resist.

By writing an irresistible headline, or developing a cool video intro, your followers will immediately click on your content to learn more about what you have to say, what's happening in your shop or how you can help them with their projects.

Your headline or intro does the heavy lifting for your content; without it, nobody will read your article, watch your video or listen to your podcast. So, if you want interactions with your audience, your headline must be good.







PRO TIP: People want to consume content that teaches them something, excites them or makes them smile, so be sure to demonstrate that in your headline or intro.

3 WRITE IN YOUR BRAND'S VOICE

Writing in your brand's voice is key to improving your brand recognition and making it easier for clients and prospects to engage with your content.

They're your target audience, so speaking in your brand voice and using words and phrases they're familiar with will make them feel more comfortable about working with you.

If you're worried about not writing in your brand's voice, create a document detailing everything that makes it unique. This can include:

- Values & mission statement
- How your audience speaks
- Ideal customer persona
- The relationship you have with your audience (casual or formal)
- Words and phrases you use & those you avoid

PRO TIP: Avoid using obscure industry jargon, industry acronyms that only you understand or words your audience typically wouldn't understand. You're there to help them, not confuse them, so stick to words they know. We like to use the KISS method—Keep it simple, stupid.

4 ALWAYS PROVIDE VALUE TO YOUR AUDIENCE

Nobody wants to read an article or watch a video that won't benefit them in some way—that's why they clicked on it, after all.

When writing or developing copy or video content, make sure you're providing your target audience content with value. They want to be able to walk away from what they just read or watched satisfied that they've learned something from it or, in some cases, were entertained.

If they feel like they've wasted their time, chances are they won't be back.

As much as we've noted in past articles that a great website design is important, findability is more important. You may be wondering what that means? Well, most people use a search engine, YouTube or other platforms to search with intent. They're looking for an answer to a question or to address an objection.

You can have the best-looking website in the world or hundreds of videos on YouTube or social media, but if your content doesn't answer a question or address an objection, Google and other search engines may not list it in searches, meaning people won't find it.

Remember, Google is not there to help you; it is there to help its users (customers)

find exactly what they're looking for as quickly and accurately as possible.

More importantly, if people do find you and you're not answering a question or addressing an objection, they will most likely leave.

Ensure that your articles, podcasts, images and videos contain information your audience can benefit from. Based on current statistics, you have about three seconds to grab someone's attention.

If they see that you can provide them with valuable information, they'll view you as an expert in the industry and feel better about possibly bringing their vehicle to you in the future.

PRO TIP: If you're unsure what you should talk about in your next video or blog post, head to social media and ask your audience if there's anything they want or need help with. You can also use info from the inquiries you get from your customers. What do they keep asking about? Develop content around those questions.

5 MAKE YOUR CONTENT EASY TO UNDERSTAND

When writing or developing content, regardless of its format, make it easy for your readers and viewers to consume and understand. Nobody wants to scan through walls and walls of text or watch a long video and get nothing out of it.

In the case of the written word, break up your text with:

- Images
- Graphs
- Bulleted lists
- Highlighted or bolded important info
- Statistics
- Related facts or tips
- Videos

Give your readers a break from all those words by adding in relevant images and other media—they'll be more likely to read to the end.

Meanwhile, if you're creating videos, keep them short. If you're developing long-form videos, break them up into segments.

PRO TIP: Don't forget to make your call to action easy to read. If your CTA is too difficult to understand, nobody will click on it or follow through.

6 MIX IT UP

If you're posting blog after blog or uploading simple text posts to your social media over and over, your audience will get bored.

Don't forget to take advantage of other forms of media.

Use video to your advantage by uploading snippets of custom builds and behind-the-scenes looks at events you've attended. People love to watch videos and are more likely to interact and comment on a video than a blog post. Reports show 88% of video marketers say that video always gives positive ROI.

Most aftermarket shops take hundreds if not thousands of photos of their projects to document each build. Consider posting some of them in image galleries on your



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site and share the projects' processes online.

You can also use audio to your advantage by uploading audio tips to your social media or email marketing deployments—many people find it easier to listen to audio than to read guides. And if you're ready to take the next step, then consider a podcast.

PRO TIP: Pictures speak a thousand words, so use them to your advantage when creating written content. Include graphs, pictures, diagrams and other visual aids to help your reader interact with your blogs, articles and social media posts.

7 REMEMBER 'WHO NOT HOW'

You're probably reading through this thinking "How can I find time to do it all?" It's important to remember it's not about how you do it, but about who you can get to help you achieve it.

Content is king, but if other important aspects of running your shop demand your attention, then delegate the task of content creation to one of your employees, or hire a new face or third party expert to take care of it for you.

Content is vital for the success of your shop online, but this doesn't mean you should feel stressed by all these new tasks or pressured while trying to take care of your business. Don't take time away from those important projects or from selling and engaging with your clients. Find the perfect person to take care of it for you.

(For more on the Who Not How *concept, check out* Think Who Not How *in the August 2022 issue of* THE SHOP *magazine.)*

PRO TIP: There are a lot of small tasks in every business that can be delegated to your employees. If you think something is taking up too much of your time, find out if somebody on your team or a third party expert can take care of it for you.

TAKEAWAYS

So, now do you believe content is king?

There's a lot to take away when it comes to developing, writing, filming and editing content for your business, but it's all worth it. The more content you provide your audience, the more they'll begin to see you as the go-to expert in your field. ***TS***



BARRY ALT *and his team at Motorhead Digital have over 25 years of experience in digital marketing and website development. They offer their Location, Site and Marketing Maximizer programs that will supercharge your site, your social media and your entire online presence so you can attract better, higher-value leads to your shop. Contact him at (585) 766-9785, balt@motorheaddigital.com or motorheaddigital.com.*



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LET'S GET TOGETHER

Strong connections drive the towing & hauling market

By Jef White

Whether for work or for play, more and more drivers seem to be hooking up a trailer and going places. That means more possibilities for shops that offer the towing products, accessories and knowledge needed to make every trip safe and enjoyable.

A wider variety of towing vehicles and trailers equates to more fitment options and unique setups that require a professional touch. Throw in an assortment of add-on accessories to help with everything from efficiency to aesthetics, and today's aftermarket shop needs to be more immersed in the market than ever just to stay relevant.

Towing and hauling product suppliers are here to help retailers succeed, identifying trends and opportunities to boost sales with drivers wanting to stay connected to their towables.

WE WANT MORE

At first glance, towing products may seem fairly straightforward as far as their design, installation and use. But, just like the rest of the automotive space, technological advancements and high customer expectations mean that suppliers are always looking for ways to improve the towing experience.

"The market is continuing to evolve," says Jesse Bauer, director of product/marketing – automotive for Lippert. "We've seen a shift in consumers demanding more from their towing products, whether it's a growing preference for concealed hitches, or technology-enabling towing solutions like our Echo brake control line. Our innovation team has been helping us keep pace with this demand."

As the automotive industry evolves, the towing aftermarket must keep pace, says Greg Sarkozi, product manager – aftermarket towing & electrical products for Horizon Global Americas.

"Ten years ago, Ford Motor Co. was still producing a full line of passenger cars. People then gravitated to SUVs and pickup trucks. Now we're entering the EV stage, where some vehicles such as the Hyundai IONIQ 5 and KIA EV6 are rated to tow up to 2,300 pounds," he notes. "Tow-behind



Whether for work or for play, more and more drivers seem to be hooking up a trailer and going places. (Photo courtesy Ford)

HOT TOWING PRODUCTS

■ **HOT PRODUCTS:** LoadLifter PROSeries Kits
■ **FEATURES & BENEFITS:** Air springs feature premium anodized aluminum end caps paired with stainless steel attaching hardware; adjustable from 5-100 psi; provide up to 5,000 pounds of load-leveling capacity; standard and Ultimate kits offered; most feature bolt-on installation.

Air Lift Company
Cody Wolgamott
Product Marketing Manager

■ **HOT PRODUCT:** Hidden Hitch Series by Draw-Tite
■ **FEATURES & BENEFITS:** Mounts behind the vehicle's fascia so it stays hidden; detachable, easy-to-insert/remove receiver assembly; durable hard plastic storage case for receiver assembly; designed for specific vehicle makes and models; lockable receiver (keyed); anti-rattle hitch pin.

Horizon Global Americas
Greg Sarkozi
Product Manager – Aftermarket Towing & Electrical Products

■ **HOT PRODUCT:** RockerBall Gooseneck Ball #60654
■ **FEATURES & BENEFITS:** Includes ShockDrop Cushion Technology that easily retrofits onto most existing aftermarket underbed gooseneck hitch systems without replacing the large trailer coupling mechanism; just drop it in and enjoy smoother, more comfortable towing.

Lippert
Jesse Bauer
Director of Product/Marketing – Automotive

■ **HOT PRODUCTS:** Trailer SumoSprings
■ **FEATURES & BENEFITS:** Vibration reduction for trailers and fifth wheels; reduce g-force inside the trailer by 68% and cut vertical displacement in half—in other words, they cut spike loading in half.

SuperSprings International
Tom Bateman
Director of Marketing

■ **HOT PRODUCTS:** Timbren SES Kits
■ **FEATURES & BENEFITS:** Available for virtually every pickup, SUV and van on the market today; has all the features of an air bag system but without any air—no compressors, hoses or valves; set it and forget it; easy installs.

Timbren Industries
Andrew Hodgson
Sales & Marketing Director







Many of today's trucks are outfitted with softer springs that can lead to truck bed sag when towing. (Photos courtesy Timbren Industries)

and fifth wheel trailers are getting larger and pickup truck towing capacities are increasing tremendously. There seems to be a race to have the best fuel milage and the highest towing capacities. Who knows where the ceiling is?"

When it comes to the specific vehicles consumers use to tow these days, Andrew Hodgson, sales & marketing director for Timbren Industries, notes that a desire for a less-jarring ride affects a pickup's capabilities.

"The biggest change to the towing market has been the springs truck manufacturers are using. As full-size trucks like the Ram 1500, Ford F-150 and Toyota Tundra become staple family vehicles, OEMs have opted to go for softer springs to give a more comfortable ride," he says. "The tradeoff to softer springs, however, is that these trucks sag a lot easier than they ever have before, which creates serious suspension sag and safety concerns. So, the need for quality suspension upgrades like helper springs has never been greater."

Smaller vehicles are being asked to do more, adds Cody Wolgamott, marketing manager for Air Lift Company.



Helping customers choose their products quickly and effectively can lock-in the sale. (Photos courtesy Air Lift Company)

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STRUCTURED LEARNING FOR DRIVERS NEW TO TOWING

New best practice information is available for customers that may be new to towing.

The American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) has incorporated U-Haul Safe Trailering best practices into the latest version of its Model Driver's License Manual, which is used as part of its Noncommercial Model Driver Testing System (NMDTS).

AAMVA develops and maintains NMDTS for use by motor vehicle agencies to assist with testing new drivers.

The updated AAMVA Model Driver's License Manual includes a section dedicated to safe trailering, with content provided by the U-Haul Safe Trailering Driver Education program. The program offers trailering education to the North American public for the purposes of preventing injuries, hazards and fatalities.

"Trailering activities have broadened each year, and the need for safety education has increased accordingly," says Joe Cook, U-Haul vice president of government relations. "We are proud to partner with AAMVA to provide practical trailering information and basic guidelines for new drivers. Nearly everyone is exposed to trailer towing in one form or another. Understanding the elements involved is vital for safety. With U-Haul Safe Trailering content adopted into AAMVA best practices, jurisdictions can convey necessary information to new drivers before they begin their tow."

The NMDTS establishes uniformity between jurisdictions for the testing of noncommercial operators and provides a base of core information for driver manuals and graduated driver license (GDL) parent instruction guides.



AAMVA has incorporated U-Haul Safe Trailering best practices into the latest version of its Model Driver's License Manual.

"AAMVA and our members are committed to promoting highway safety and preparing drivers to be safe when they get behind the wheel," says Anne Ferro, AAMVA CEO. "The new guidance in our Model Driver's License Manual, including new information on safe trailering developed with our partners at U-Haul, will strengthen our already robust training materials and bring us closer to achieving our goal of Safe Drivers, Safe Vehicles, Secure Identities, Saving Lives."

The U-Haul Safe Trailering initiative is adaptable to an assortment of audiences, including driver's education professionals, highway safety offices, law enforcement agencies, youth safety groups and public safety organizers. More information is available by emailing trailerdemonstrator@uhaul.com.

"We are seeing more and more lighter-duty vehicles come out from manufacturers with heavier towing capacities, as well as changes to suspension styles for increased comfort," he says. "While these are both great, oftentimes these vehicles have softer suspensions that can squat and cause other concerns while towing. We have created solutions for these types of vehicles to return the vehicle to a stable state while maintaining a comfortable ride."





Consumers continue to demand more from their towing products. (Photos courtesy Lippert)

UPHILL CLIMB

The pandemic, of course, sparked an increase in recreational towing that has helped push the market to record numbers heading into 2023. The industry, however, still faces its share of uphill climbs.

"The rising cost of commodity goods has been a challenge over the last couple years," Bauer admits. "We are always looking for ways to stay competitive for both the customer and consumer while providing quality products that meet the highest testing standards."

While still strong, Sarkozi points to slowing sales of RVs, boats and passenger vehicles as challenges the industry needs to monitor.

"Inflation, material shortages and new vehicle availability has greatly affected the towing market over the past one to two years," he says. "For the first time since the start of the pandemic, RV dealer outlook is negative on current market conditions. Gasoline prices are the highest since 2012,

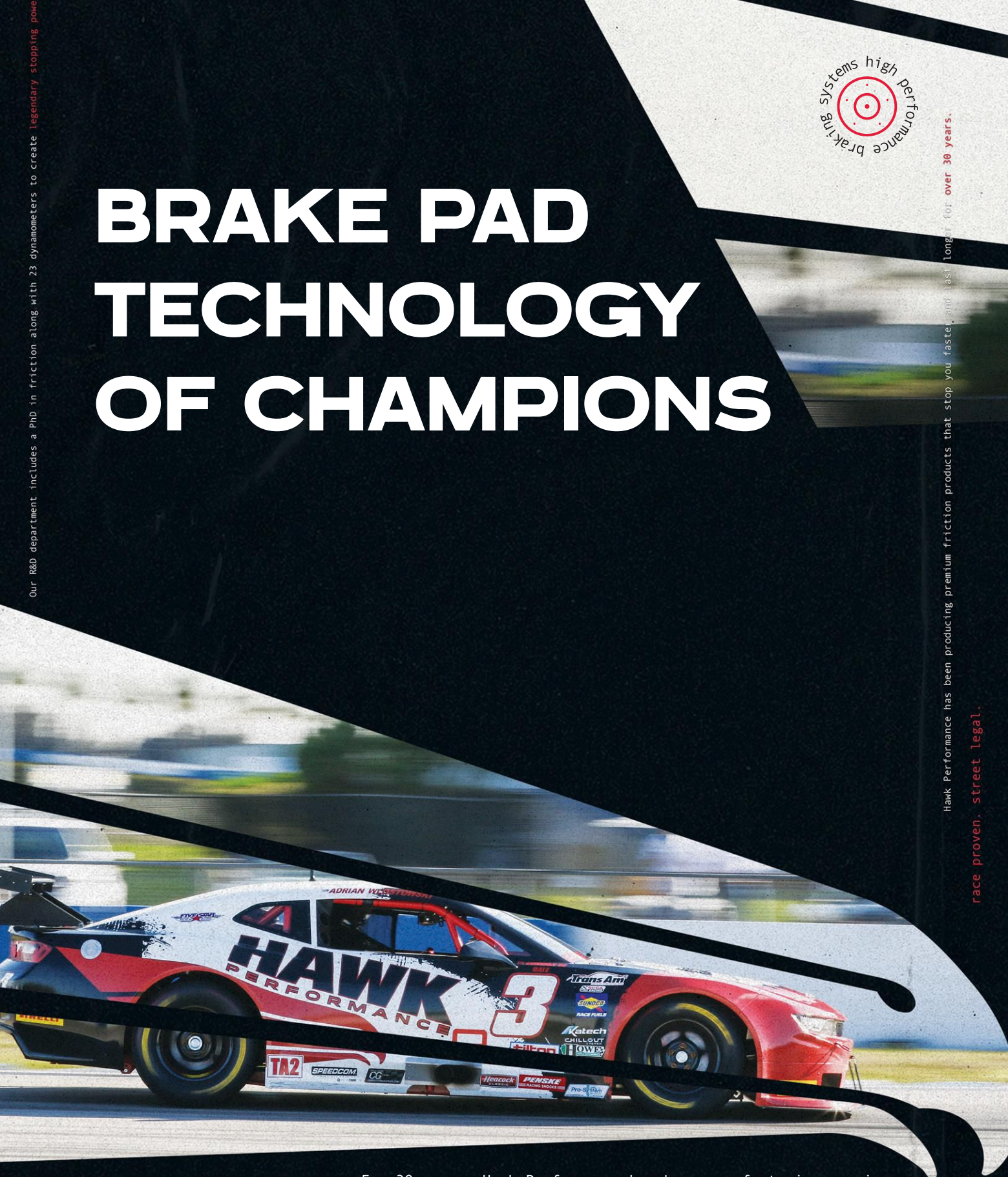
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HAWK PERFORMANCE





As the automotive industry evolves, the towing aftermarket must keep pace. (Photos courtesy Horizon Global Americas)



Keep plenty of inventory and know your market so you have the right products on hand. (Photo courtesy Horizon Global Americas)

and consumer spending data suggests people are pulling back spending in other areas due to high gas and food prices."

And the challenges could last a while.

"The downturn in the economy is going to affect everything," says Tom Bateman, director of marketing for SuperSprings International. "With interest rates rising, shops should anticipate more upgrades and opportunities to help as customers invest in their current vehicles and RVs."

LET'S HAVE SOME FUN

A safe, secure towing experience is always a top priority for everyone involved, from the shop to the consumer. Still, it pays to remember that many customers will be using their setups for recreational activities.

"We're seeing more and more people getting outdoors and traveling with their friends and families, whether it is towing campers, trailers, toys or something similar," says Wolgamott. "This has made a positive impact on the market. We believe this to be partly from people being stuck inside during the pandemic and now wanting to get out and enjoy their summers."

Therefore, a connection with adventure-seekers is important.

"Two big factors have affected the market recently. First, the towable RV market has exploded over the past two years as consumers have been forced to keep their travels domestic," Hodgson observes. "Secondly, more consumers are getting into the powersports market than ever before, and where there are powersport toys, there are trailers. Everyone who tows a trailer needs a suspension helper spring to keep their vehicle level and, most importantly, safe on the road."

And business is likely to increase.

"So many more consumers have chosen to purchase trailers and fifth wheels for vacations," says Bateman. "With a turn in the economy on the horizon, upgrading and maintaining existing assets is going to be a huge advantage for dealerships and shops."

MAXIMUM RETURN

Shops that offer towing and hauling products and services can maximize returns by considering these sales-boosting suggestions.

"Recognize all of the cross-sell opportunities," says Lippert's Bauer. "When purchasing a trailer hitch, you need a few accessories like a ball mount, trailer ball, hitch lock, tube cover and so on to complete the towing setup. It can easily be







Drivers are holding onto tow vehicles longer, resulting in added upgrade opportunities for shops. (Photos courtesy SuperSprings International IG)



The 2023 Ford Super Duty line shows the power and versatility of today's tow vehicles. (Photo courtesy Ford)

overlooked, but providing a comprehensive solution ensures that your customers have the right equipment based on their towing needs and lifestyles. It also helps shops grow their business and become a more reliable supplier of towing products."

Are you looking to increase towing and hauling sales? Timbren's Hodgson has one word for you.

"Ask. Ask what your customers are doing with the trucks they own. If they're using a truck to tow anything, then store owners and employees need to take the time to explain the safety benefits and features of having a helper spring system," he explains. "If they don't want to pull the trigger on a big ticket item like air bags, then show them a simpler and more economical solution like a Timbren SES kit. Customers want to keep their vehicle, and most importantly their family safe, so show them a product that can make that happen when they're towing."

Drivers want to know the shop has their best interests in mind.

"Provide education that isn't bias-based on a product or company," suggests Bateman from SuperSprings. "Consumers want help purchasing and upgrading their rigs with what's best for them. Shops should work on providing education and helping customers while genuinely caring about helping them."

Building that reputation as a towing and hauling expert also requires a deep understating of the products.

"With so many options and fitments available, it's ideal to learn and understand the product itself—both in reference to air spring kits as well as the compressor systems," says Air Lift's Wolgamott. "With all the available options, it can be confusing to the consumer. Being able to help them choose their product quickly and effectively can lock-in the sale."

And you'll want to have those products in stock and readily available, adds Sarkozi from Horizon Global.

"Keep plenty of inventory and know your market so you have the right products on hand, because chances are if that customer leaves, you're not getting them back unless they're a repeat customer," he says. "Keep up on the trends and always be willing to adapt to change. Do whatever it takes to be ahead of the game, so you have what the competition doesn't." ***TS***



Building Bridges

Community outreach makes you more than just another shop.

Story and Photos by
Jason R. Sakurai



Build your shop's reputation and establish long-term relationships by participating in community outreach efforts.

Growing up in what was then a small town in the Southwest, there was always a crowd at Wilky's Speed Shop. A feeling of camaraderie existed, but this isn't exclusive to our industry.

Bob's Sporting Goods in Longview, Washington, for instance, has been in business since 1947, and each day hunters, fisherman, outdoor enthusiasts and bike riders congregate there.

In marketing terms, it's called *community outreach*—an attempt to build bridges with the groups you impact. When interacting with your target audience, you want to connect with them in meaningful ways to grow participation and build sales.

Think of it as a way to engage your neighbors at times when they may not need what you have to offer. Outreach can be as simple as social media posts or appearing in a local newspaper, but today we're going to delve into what happens when you devote time, space, staff and money to strengthen your outreach efforts.

Community outreach requires you to proactively create value for your community. If successful, the community will treat you as a respected resource. That's where the importance of having and maintaining a good reputation comes into play.

Outreach isn't about free money or giving away your services, but an effort by shops like yours to add benefits to your environment by incorporating all the resources and



Adams Avenue Donuts created a community fondly known as Donut Derelicts that's grown exponentially.

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PDX Overlanders has built a community that supports outfitters throughout the area.



The layout of Deus Ex Machina's Deus Café is conducive to starting conversations with fellow enthusiasts.

support you can provide and marketing your products and services by appealing to the goodwill of your neighbors.

Companies that engage in community outreach have found that these efforts help attract new customers, increase employee morale and promote a positive image in their neighborhoods. Think of it this way: Outreach rewards the community, and this in turn benefits your shop.

Let's look at some retailers who have participated in community outreach, and the results of their altruism.

HANGOUTS

Hangouts help people find and connect with other enthusiasts. In communities full of enthusiasts like Southern California, it appears that everyone has a cool car and is looking to interact with other like-minded individuals.

There's also a lot of competition in gathering devotees. Venice, California's Deus Ex Machina is a motorcycle and auto custom shop, purveyor of men's clothing and accessories, and the home of Deus Café, an eatery, meeting space and gallery. Large tables with bench seats inside and outdoors are conducive to conversing with others over breakfast, lunch or a cup of coffee.

Takeaway: Your shop can be the place where enthusiasts find each other and make connections in your area. For some,



Just a fraction of the toys Carolina Kustoms collected for its most recent Christmas toy drive.

this requires more of an effort to make people feel as though they are included, like Deus' designated motorcycle parking in the midst of a very crowded area around Santa Monica and Venice Beach.

CREATE CURIOSITY

What separates Santa Ana, California's Outlaw Offroad from its competitors? Maybe it's Off the Grid Expeditions, the shop's guided off-road excursions using SxS UTVs.

These expeditions range from single-day outings to two- to seven-day runs that cover 400-1,500 miles. Designed to attract the curious and adventurous to adrenaline-pumping, action-packed off-roading, Outlaw challenges customers to go beyond their comfort zones, creating a great community builder.

Off the beaten path, fast-paced adventures like this to destinations in Mexico can't be found in a tour book. The company is a first-class tour operator with certified mechanics and paramedics at the tail end of the pack. Fully outfitted chase trucks are in constant communication via MSAT satellite radios and are stocked with parts, tools, trailers and cold beverages to ensure the adventure doesn't end badly.

Takeaway: Introducing your customers and others to a new adventure in the form of SxS UTV trail rides or an overland

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PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

BROWN ADDRESSES CONGRESS SUPPORTING RPM ACT

Just days after winning the NHRA Top Fuel Race in Indianapolis, Antron Brown made his way to Washington D.C. to urge Congress to pass the SEMA-supported Recognizing the Protection of Motorsports (RPM) Act.

The three-time Top Fuel world champion appeared before Congress on Sept. 7 to share personal stories about the need for federal law to protect grassroots racing and tens of thousands of jobs in the motorsports parts industry.

With his two sons and wife at his side, Brown shared how motorsports taught him to set goals, work hard to achieve them, and other important life lessons.

"Racing is much more than just a pastime for me," said Brown. "I have countless fond childhood memories and have learned many life lessons at the racetrack. I have built a life on the track and am building a business through AB Motorsports. I feel strongly that we must keep the path to entry into motorsports accessible to future racers."



NHRA driver Antron Brown spoke in favor of the RPM Act to the U.S. Committee on Environment and Public Works in September.

The practice of converting street vehicles into dedicated race vehicles had gone unquestioned until 2015, when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a draft ruling stating that it is not legal to convert production vehicles into dedicated race vehicles. Although the ruling was never finalized, the EPA maintains its position that such conversions are not legal and continues to enforce against the production and sale of high-performance parts.

Brown emphasized during his testimony that the RPM Act is focused solely on dedicated race vehicles that are trailered to and from the racetrack. Opponents to the RPM Act acknowledged during the Senate hearing that such vehicles do not have a measurable or meaningful impact on the environment.

"Americans all over the country enjoy the hobby of modifying vehicles into race cars," said U.S. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.), Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. "The bipartisan Recognizing the Protection of Motorsports (RPM) Act would clarify that vehicles to be used solely for competition are not to be treated like the cars that drive on our nation's roads. This legislation would ensure small businesses that help hobbyists who transition vehicles into race cars, which are not driven on the roads, are not unfairly punished or targeted through EPA enforcement. It was a pleasure to welcome champion driver Antron Brown today and hear his life's story, which reinforces how the RPM Act would protect the future of motorsports by making clear those who want to pursue their passion can affordably do so without fear of Washington bureaucrats."

The saveourracecars.com website has resources to help identify and contact the appropriate policymakers about the RPM Act.

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

outing is a great way to make connections. These expeditions broaden your customer base, and people will respond if you've made it easy to participate.

INVOLVEMENT IN THE ISSUES

Some shops support local fundraisers. If you do too, be careful to avoid causes that might provoke divisiveness among your customers.

Pick things that all enthusiasts can agree upon, such as supporting an auto shop class at a high school or community college. More can be accomplished by bringing people together, and your shop can champion them throughout the area.

Neutrality could end when it comes to the Right to Equitable and Professional Auto Industry Repair (REPAIR) Act, however. This important legislation will ensure the preservation of consumer choice, a fair marketplace and the continued operation of the country's 288 million registered passenger and commercial motor vehicles.

This Right to REPAIR Act preserves consumer access to high-quality, affordable vehicle repair by ensuring that vehicle owners and shops of their choice have access to necessary repair and maintenance tools and data as new vehicles continue to become more advanced. The Right To REPAIR Act also ensures that all tools and equipment, wireless transmission of repair and diagnostic data, and access to on-board diagnostic and telematic systems needed to repair a vehicle be made available to the independent repair industry and to vehicle owners.

As vehicle technology continues to advance, new barriers to a competitive auto repair market are emerging. These barriers limit consumer choice regarding where they can repair their motor vehicles and increase the cost to repair and maintain vehicles. Advocates believe the Right To REPAIR Act will reduce these barriers, putting consumers' interests first.

▸▸ *Takeaway:* Avoiding divisive issues makes everyone feel more comfortable in your shop, and supporting education

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Outlaw Offroad's chase trucks ensure that its Off The Grid Expeditions SxS adventures don't end badly.



Outlaw's Off The Grid support vehicles carry everything needed for an enjoyable expedition.

is beneficial in many ways. This measure being debated in Congress can't be sidestepped, especially if you and your successors plan to be in business for years to come. Get in front of it, be a leader and crusader in your district, and find your voice when you need to be heard.

WAVE YOUR FLAG

Following up on the Congressional issues our industry is facing, make it known where you stand among your customers and in the community. As the industry progresses toward adoption of both the Right to REPAIR and RPM Acts, let your friends, followers and supporters know that you are out in front of these issues through social media, in your newsletters, with the local press and in discussions with your customers.

The Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA) and the Auto Care Association both have materials pertaining to these legislative initiatives that can be printed out, posted in your shop and discussed with your staff.

Posting your stand and how the industry is faring in your social media lets community members know you have their interests in mind. You, in turn, want them to know that you support these initiatives and are a leader when it comes to protecting these rights. Urge them to write to your elected officials—you can even provide them with contact information and copies of the letters you've written to get them started.

Takeaway: Your shop's record of community support may increase customers' willingness to buy from you and utilize your services, even if it means spending more than they would with a big box store, local mechanic or an auto center. They can find someone with a cheaper price, but what they can't replace is your commitment to the community and your record of participation.

SUPPORT THOSE IN CRISIS

Carolina Kustoms has used its visibility in Portland, Oregon and throughout the region to launch an annual Christmas toy drive for a children's hospital. For all the years in which owner Lonnie Thompson has been conducting the toy drive, he's also created a custom T-shirt to raise additional money for this endeavor.

"A lot of families who have kids in the hospital don't have money to provide toys for them or their siblings," says Thompson. "We try to bring a little joy to all of these kids, and relief for their parents who are struggling just to make ends meet."

Takeaway: It's not only the dollars raised, or the number of families touched by the toy drive, it's the connectivity felt by the shop's employees, customers and enthusiasts who participate in this undertaking together. Seeing the excitement of the kids is one thing; fostering a sense of connection among employees and others who watch the toys accumulate is another.

ADOPT A TRIBE

Huntington Beach, California's Adams Avenue Donuts, better known as Donut Derelicts, is home to a Saturday morning cruise-in that fills the parking lot beyond capacity. While the donuts are a matter of taste, there's no denying the attraction of a lot full of hot rods and other custom vehicles.

Quite likely one of the original iterations of the cars and caffeine theme, this donut shop is well-positioned geographically to serve hundreds of rodders.

Takeaway: A bond between the donut shop owner and local rodders served as the initial affiliation, but what really strengthened the relationship was an emphasis on car culture. This spread the word on Donut Derelicts well beyond its local borders, making the shop famous throughout the region and beyond.

THE CULMINATION

Community outreach only works when shops incorporate it as an integral part of their overall mission, and not just as a short-term effort to increase sales. Making friends and forming bonds and connections in the community is important for both shops and their customers.

Businesses that become involved in the framework of their community enjoy a higher profile and a more stable customer base. Customers who feel they are a part of a community will support those shops over the long term. ***TS***



JASON SAKURA *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.*



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gimme some air

Compressor systems are vital tools for off-roaders.

///// By Mark Bach

Air compressors are a vital tool for off-roaders, so it makes sense for shops to offer quality air systems for sale and installation.

The products not only make for a comfortable off-road ride but serve multiple other purposes, allowing customers a safer, more enjoyable outdoor experience.

The 4x4 community knows that reducing the air pressure in their tires while off-roading improves traction. As a bonus, the softer tires also deliver a smoother ride.

But what happens when drivers reach the end of the trail and need to head home on asphalt? Typically they would have had to drive cautiously to the nearest gas station and hope that the air pump was working.

With an onboard air compressor, however, those worries are eliminated. Plus there are many other uses for the systems, from filling inflatable mattresses to powering overlanding accessories.

AIR DELIVERY

When Overland Expo recently developed a 2022 GMC Sierra 1500 AT4X to be its showcase vehicle for this year (it will later be auctioned for charity) the list of available accessories was long. Leading the way of must-haves, however, was an air compressor.

Mule Expedition Outfitters, with retail stores in Washington and Oregon, oversaw the installation of the components on the Overland Expo GMC Sierra. Jon Snow, MTS brand manager, notes that an air compressor "for most people offers the ability to air down a ride for a forest road. On a trail, a bigger footprint aids in the traction of the vehicle."



Air compressors have quickly become must-have products for off-roaders and overland adventurers. (Photos courtesy Overland Expo)

Overland Expo's 2022 GMC Sierra 1500 AT4X showcase vehicle includes a VIAIR system installed by Mule Expedition Outfitters.

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gimme some air



Solidly mounted air compressors free up cargo space and offer peace of mind on the trail. (Photos courtesy Ian Smart)



Consider accessories that allow air delivery to fellow travelers in need.

The Sierra received an Expedition High Pressure compressor from VIAIR Corp. Ryan Morgan, VIAIR sales manager, says the system can air up the GMC's 37-inch tires from 15-30 psi in 1 minute, 19 seconds.

Furthermore, the 2.5-gallon tank can air up from 0-200 psi in 5 minutes and its onboard air system includes all the fittings and components for a professional installation. Morgan recommends a mounting system with a hose long enough to reach not only all the rig's tires but perhaps those of a fellow trail mate who comes up next to you in need of inflation.

SALES CONSIDERATIONS

Snow says that many customers come into the shop specifically requesting air compressors. For these off-roaders the discussion begins with the size and style of system that will best fit their needs, and how it will be mounted or carried on the vehicle.

It seems once off-roaders see a fellow trail rider using an air compressor, he adds, they recognize the value and immediately want one of their own.

Meanwhile, customers with a new vehicle wanting to properly outfit the unit for 4x4 or overlanding adventures but unfamiliar with what all is available might need some education and an explanation of why an air compressor is an essential element to add to their truck or SUV outfitting plans.

Scott Frary, sales manager for the northwest region for ARB, has been off-roading since 1988. He notes that the first consideration for many users is a portable compressor.

People can take a portable unit in different vehicles and might even use it around their house as well. But the disadvantage to a take-along unit, Frary explains, is that it takes up valuable storage space.

Meanwhile, drivers with a permanently mounted air compressor can get the air they need without sacrificing cargo room.

Whether portable or permanently mounted, however, air compressors are in high demand, says Tim Furrier of Arizona's Desert Rat Off Road. He places their priority even above a winch, as "it's hard to compensate for no air" when trouble arises.

His shop usually installs compressor systems under the seat or hood, noting that there are more aftermarket mounting options for Jeeps and Toyotas. Furrier typically only installs one air outlet since the more plumbing that's included the more chances for damage and leaks.

In its showroom, Desert Rat Off Road displays a variety of accessories right next to the air compressors to maximize sales and convenience for customers. System installations typically take less than six hours.

When considering the size of the compressor to choose, Furrier recommends starting with the vehicle's tire size. The bigger the tire, the more air that is needed.

The VIAIR Expedition High Pressure system, as an example, can air up a 31x10.5 tire from 0 to 30 psi in just over 1 minute, while a 33x12.5 tire will take more than 3 minutes to inflate.

When discussing options with a customer, Furrier questions how patient the customer is and how much pain to the wallet they can stand. Most of his customers say they don't want to wait too long for four tires to air up.

As another example, the ARB High Output Compressor can inflate a 35x12.5R15 tire from 15 to 30 psi in 3 minutes, while its Maximum Performance Compressor airs up the same tire in 1 minute, 40 seconds. Multiply that by four, and that's how long anxious overlanders will have to wait until they can get back behind the wheel.

OTHER USES

Besides airing up tires after an off-road excursion, air compressors can serve many other needs. If a mishap occurs and a driver needs to plug a tire after a puncture, for instance, an air compressor can turn a miserable tire failure into nothing more than a minor inconvenience.

Also, if the rig is outfitted with an air

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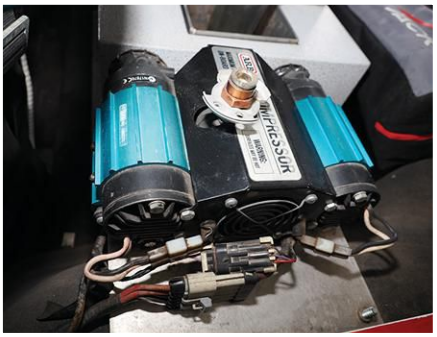
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CONSUMER REBATE FORM

INSTALLER REBATE FORM



Shops including Arizona's Desert Rat Off Road prominently display air compressors and accessories in the showroom to attract walk-in sales.





Systems can be used for more than just tire inflation.



Consider the tire size of the customer's vehicle and then choose an air system that can inflate them in a timely manner.

locker, then an air compressor is going to be needed. Consider upgrading the compressor to service the air locker as well as offering an air fitting for additional uses.

When you think of air compressors you naturally think of air-powered tools. Frary notes that most compressors can work well for tools needing short bursts of air such as an impact wrench, but not so much for consistent long-term airflow as might be needed for an orbital sander.

Of course, outdoor adventuring is supposed to be fun. An air compressor can save somebody's lungs if they bring large inflatable water toys to the lake, and might earn them a few new friends from adjacent campsites looking to fill their own rafts and tubes.

Frary notes that after a long day on a dirty trail, an air compressor hooked up to a blow gun can make quick work of the dust on your clothes and gear, helping to keep tents and sleeping bags tidy. The blow gun can also be used to eliminate dust from camera gear and other sensitive electronic devices.

Add it all up, he says, and "air compressors are becoming a must-have item. All the things you can use them for are great; they're not just for airing up tires."

Do your off-roading sales need a breath of fresh air? Compressor systems may fill the need. ***TS***

MARK C. BACH *is a well-preserved automotive junkie with 30W oil in his veins who remembers feeler gauges and brake springs. He has a love for all things that move, especially old-school muscle cars. Bach covers car auctions and the automotive scene and writes for a variety of outlets, including Chevy Classics, Round-Up Publications and eBay Motors, and maintains Route66pubco.com.*

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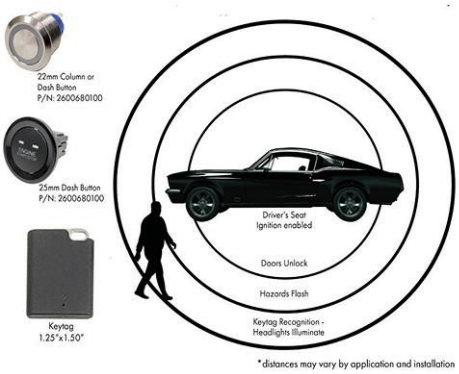
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Silverado/Sierra Exhaust System

BORLA Performance Industries, Johnson City, Tennessee, presents its Cat-Back Exhaust System for 2020-22 Chevrolet Silverado 2500/3500 and GMC Sierra 2500/3500 pickups that improves horsepower and torque. The S-Type system delivers a classic sound without any drone or resonance inside the vehicle. The system is made from T-304 stainless steel and features all-welded construction for durability and long life. An application with black chrome on T-304 tips is also available.



Push to Start Ignition

IDIDIT, Tecumseh, Michigan, presents a new Push to Start Ignition System developed in collaboration with **VAIS Technology**. The system uses SEER (Smart Entry Exit Recognition) technology to bring modern convenience to classic vehicles. A key tag allows the vehicle to sense the driver's proximity and react accordingly—within 15 feet, the parking lights flash; within 5 feet the doors unlock; and when the driver slides behind the wheel the ignition is ready for a pushbutton start. The button can be installed in the steering column or on the dash.

Bronco Four-Door Coil-Overs

Eibach Inc., Corona, California, presents its new PRO-TRUCK-LIFT (Stage 2) coil-over kits, now available for 2021-up Ford Bronco four-door models. Made in the USA and designed to provide up to 4 inches of lift and a balance of off-road performance and control, the kits include two front and two rear PRO-TRUCK Coil-Over 2.0 Shocks, a 6mm adjustment spanner wrench and all required mounting hardware. Height-adjustable threaded bodies allow installers to easily dial-in ride heights to fit larger tires and increase ground clearance.





Nautilus Air Lift Kit

Air Lift Co., Lansing, Michigan, presents a new Air Lift 1000 kit specifically designed for 2019-22 Lincoln Nautilus AWD models. By working with the vehicle's existing coil-spring suspension, the system helps eliminate frequent problems when towing or hauling by properly supporting the load. Vehicle squat, poor headlight aim, unresponsive steering, trailer sway, body roll and bottoming out are eliminated and the vehicle is returned to a level and stable state. The Air Lift 1000 system is air-adjustable from 5 to 35 psi.



Tundra Wheels

ICON Vehicle Dynamics, Riverside, California, presents its complete line of truck wheels from **ICON Alloys**, including new applications for 2022 Toyota Tundra models. Available designs include the Rebound Pro, Compression, Thrust, Vector 6 and classic Rebound. The wheels are available in 17-inch offerings, with the Rebound and Compression also available in an 18-inch size. The aluminum alloy wheels are engineered to reduce unsprung weight and rotating mass for increased vehicle performance, on- and off-road.

Drop Nerf Step Bars

Westin Automotive Products, San Dimas, California, presents all-new Outlaw Drop Nerf Step Bars. The affordable, stylish bars are constructed using mandrel-bent, 1.5-inch-diameter tubes with a welded cab-length top plate. A generous 4-inch drop step with a distinctive die-stamped step plate provides maximum traction while cleaning dirt, mud and debris from boots before entering the vehicle. The steps are designed to fit a variety of late-model trucks including most GM, Ram, Toyota and Ford pickups, as well as new two- and four-door Ford Bronco models.



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Catalytic Converter Security Device

Pop & Lock LLC, Green Bay, Wisconsin, a **Vehicle Security Innovators** company, introduces the CAT-RAP security device for catalytic converters. A patent pending, universal design allows for flexible installation regardless of the vehicle platform or catalytic converter orientation. Made with all stainless steel components to withstand the harshest of vehicle underbody environments, the CAT-RAP creates up to 20 individual security loops/wraps around the vehicle frame and catalytic converter.



Ram 1500 Bed Cover



EGR, Ontario, California, presents its new EGR RollTrac Electric Retractable Bed Cover, now available for all 5-1/2-foot, non-HD 2019-22 Ram 1500 crew cab pickups. Sleek, stylish and built for use in any terrain, the weatherproof cover can be locked with the truck's remote locking system. Designed to operate with the touch of a button, it is equipped with intelligent programming for smooth, safe, variable-speed operation that features anti-pinch technology. A compact canister maximizes bed cargo space.

Jeep Bimini Top



MasterTop, Golden, Colorado, presents a new, cost-effective Strap-Style Bimini Top for 1978-91 Jeep CJ7 and Wrangler YJ vehicles. Easy to install, the top features durable materials and provides protection from surprise rain showers and harsh summer sun. The Strap-Style Bimini Top is available in either upgraded 25-ounce Black Diamond Sail Cloth or MasterTop's signature three-layer, 30-ounce MasterTwill fabric. It attaches directly to the front windshield channel and rollbar, then can be pulled taut and hooked to the rear of most CJ and YJ models.

Tundra Off-Road Bump Stop Kit

Timbren Industries, Toronto, presents its Active Off-Road Bump Stop upgrade for the rear suspension on 2022 Toyota Tundra pickups. The new ABSTORTNDR kit mounts to the frame using existing holes. Timbren's off-road bump stops smooth out the ride by softening axle engagement and disengagement, which reduces stress on the vehicle and gives the driver more control.



Ford Lightning Lock System



BOLT Lock, Milwaukee, offers its patented BOLT Lock Breakthrough One-Key Lock Technology product line, now available for 2023 Ford F-150 Lightning EV pickup applications. BOLT Lock products are permanently programmed to operate using the vehicle's ignition key. The line includes a 5/8-inch receiver lock, coupler pin lock, padlock, cable lock, trailer coupler lock and a locking recovery hook. When drivers insert their ignition key into the lock cylinder, spring-loaded plate tumblers are exactly matched to the key.

Ford F-250/F-350 Steering Assembly



Apex Chassis, Phoenix, presents its Extreme Duty Steering Assembly for 2011-22 Ford F-250/F-350 4x4 models. Featuring stronger ball studs, upgraded steel, big tie rod and drag link adjusting tubes in a no-bent-tube design, the bolt-in, direct-replacement system includes built-in offset and geometry for the forged SAE1045 rod ends, and the adjusting sleeve is a straight 2-1/8-inch DOM tube for minimal flex. It uses jam nuts and the exclusive Ninja Washer, designed as a mechanical lock between the jam nut and hex-end adjusting sleeves to maintain alignment.

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Blind Spot Detection System

Rydeen Mobile Electronics, Torrance, California, introduces the 77GHz BSS-ONE Blind Spot Detection System with Type-III performance that detects vehicles approaching and passing in blind zones. The system adheres to the inside of a plastic bumper using automotive-grade adhesive. Installers may need to remove the bumper, but there's no need for right or left calibration adjustments. The new BSS-ONE includes a single sensor with a 180-degree active field. The sensor operates at 77GHz instead of 24GHz for increased processing power.



Bronco Steps

Raptor Series, Hayward, California, presents Magnum RT and Magnum RT Gen 2 Steps for new-gen four-door Ford Bronco models. The black textured alloy steel steps install easily to the rocker panel for a secure stepping platform.

Super Duty Leveling System



Synergy Mfg., San Luis Obispo, California, presents a 4x4 Leveling System for 2005-newer Ford Super Duty F-250/F-350 models that lifts the front of the truck 2.5 inches. Available for gas or diesel models, the kits include progressively wound springs matched with **FOX** shocks that improve the ride and increase bottoming resistance, allowing for 9-3/4 inches of travel. The longer-travel FOX shocks only require an additional 1-inch bump stop extension. Factory brake lines are retained, and the system allows up to 37-inch tires with correct backspacing and offset.



Interior Ambient Lighting

VAIS Technology, Englewood, Colorado, introduces an Interior Ambient Lighting Kit that includes six light sources that can be mounted anywhere in the vehicle. The kit uses 39-inch fiber optic cables to deliver light from the ECU module to the output. Customers can use the iPhone/Android app to control color and brightness, separated by dual zones. A typical setup includes two lights for front footwells, two lights for rear footwells, one for the central console and one for the cupholder area.



Carbon Fiber Wheels

HRE Wheels, Vista, California, introduces its new CRBN carbon fiber wheel program, designed for supercars and hyper-exotics. Initially, the CRBN line will consist of carbon fiber rims paired with all-new forged aluminum centers. The new Series HX1 will consist of 4 styles—the HX100 Mesh, HX101 Y-Spoke, HX104 V-Spoke and HX107 Split 5-Spoke, which will be offered in 20-, 21- and 22-inch diameters, with expanded fitments to come.

Bronco Front Bars



T-Rex Truck Products, Corona, California, presents new **ZROADZ Off Road Products** Pre-Runner Baja Series Bars for Ford Bronco models. Designed to enhance the vehicle's appearance and provide a functional forward-facing mounting system for LED lights, the bars offer an aggressive forward design with oversized 2-inch tubing. Complete kits include a Pre-Runner Baja Bar, two 4-inch, high-powered LED lights in white or amber, and a wiring harness with relay and toggle switch. The bars install easily into the front bumper using existing hardware.

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Headlight Bulb Upgrades



Lumileds, Farmington Hills, Michigan, introduces two new Halogen Headlights to its line of **Philips** upgrade bulbs. Designed to provide a choice of enhanced style or greater vision, Philips CrystalVision platinum bulbs feature a patented ultra-white gradient coating that creates up to 4000K white light, while Philips NightGuide platinum upgrade headlight bulbs provide up to 130% more vision than standard halogen bulbs with a high-performance beam that enhances driver comfort by reducing fatigue.



Ranger Overland Exhaust

MagnaFlow, Oceanside, California, presents an Overland Series Exhaust for 2022 Ford Ranger models. Developed for high clearance and a camp-friendly sound, the cat-back systems deliver a deep rumble and dyno-proven performance with a no-tip exit for improved departure angles.

Tacoma/Hilux UCAs

SuperPro Suspension Parts, Queensland, Australia, presents Fixed Offset Upper Control Arms for Toyota Tacoma/Hilux applications. A heavy-duty, all-in-one solution for vehicles that have been lifted 2.5 to 3.5 inches, the UCAs provide an increase in caster and camber correction, along with improved neutral ball joint position. They feature heavy-duty construction with higher-articulation ball joints and SuperPro bushings.



Commercial Vehicle Warning Light Kit



Wolo Manufacturing Corp., Deer Park, New York, introduces the Wolo 8000 Series LED Warning Light Kit. Designed for grille and surface mount applications on vehicles that require front warning lighting, the LEDs offer high visibility in bright sun, dense fog and rain. The new warning light series is available in a choice of amber, blue or red lighting and comes as a complete kit with two super-bright linear LED clusters.

All-Terrain Tire

Nexen Tire America Inc., Richfield, Ohio, introduces its all-new Roadian ATX next-generation all-terrain tire. The tire features the latest material advancements designed for wet- or dry-grip, sidewall lugs and deep grooves for improved handling and composure on- and off-road, and a reinforced 3-ply sidewall construction on most LT sizes. Increased sidewall rigidity enhances vehicle stability while cornering under load and heavy-towing scenarios. The tire is available in 63 sizes.





SUV Cargo Drawer

Tuffy Security Products, Cortez, Colorado, presents a Cargo Area Security Drawer for midsized SUVs. The heavy-duty, high-security steel drawer mounts in place of the rear seat in any vehicle with sufficient space. Designed for versatile, tough cargo storage, the large drawer slides on heavy-duty roller bearings and can be securely locked to provide protection for equipment and other valuables. The system comes standard with a 10-digit combination lock, heavy-duty handle, carpet lining and a robust steel tie-down rail.



UTV Bead Grip Wheel

Method Race Wheels, Santa Fe Springs, California, presents the 414 UTV Bead Grip Wheel. With a style inspired by the original Method 401 UTV wheel, the all-new model combines good looks including a new Gloss Titanium finish with patented Bead Grip technology for all types of riding in all terrains. Numerous sizes are available in multiple offsets, with offerings in both four- and five-lug fitments.

Tri-Fold Soft Tonneaus



JC Whitney, Chicago, presents its Soft Tri-Fold Tonneau Covers. Featuring a lightweight aluminum frame and UV-protected, vinyl-coated fabric crafted with precision tri-layer sewing and stitching, the tonneaus are designed to deliver enduring, weathertight protection and a stylish, seamless fit. Quick and easy to install, the covers are available for Ford F-150, F-250 and F-350 Super Duty, Ram 1500 and Toyota Tundra models.



Jeep Chasing Headlight & Fog Light Kits

Heise LED Lighting Systems by Metra Electronics, Holly Hill, Florida, presents Chasing Halo LED 7-inch Headlight and 4-inch Fog Light Kits with Pro Controller, and Chasing Blade Halo RGB LED 7-inch Projector Headlight and 4-inch Fog Light Kits with Pro Controller. The new lighting products fit 2007-up Jeep Wrangler JK and JL models and 2020-up Jeep Gladiator JT models. Designed to provide dramatic, colorful lighting with minimal installation time, the kits include everything an installer needs to upgrade to chasing halo RGB LED headlights and fog lights. ***TS***





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INNER WORKINGS

By Maura Keller

Sculpt Garage takes vehicle interiors to the next level.

When Brent Davison decided to leave the car audio industry after working as a fabricator for many years, he and his wife moved to Texas, bought a house and made plans to start a family.

"I was running a large mechanic shop for a friend of mine for two years in Austin, Texas and my wife Heather could tell I was not 100% happy with what I was doing for a living. She said, 'We need to get you back to your creative side,'" Davison recalls.

So, it was a return to the aftermarket where,12 years ago, Davison took his talent and skills for audio fabrication and spun them off into an automotive upholstery shop, Sculpt Garage in San Marcos, Texas.

"At the time, the car audio industry was declining a lot, but I knew that my fabrication and design skills would translate to working on the whole car interior," Davison says.

He was correct. Today, Sculpt Garage calls a 5,000-square-foot building on 6 acres home, having expanded from its original location in a two-car garage on a 1/2-acre parcel.

INSIDE JOBS

Davison graduated from RITOP School of Mobile Electronics in Boston and has studied commercial and fine arts in Austin—experiences that have helped him envision and then execute quality automotive interiors.

From comfort to aesthetics to sound quality, he explains that each project is an opportunity to build something that has never been done before.

A natural creative talent applies to innovative uses of wood, metal, fiberglass and upholstery, combined with high-tech tools and equipment, for jobs that include dashes, doors, consoles and trunks.

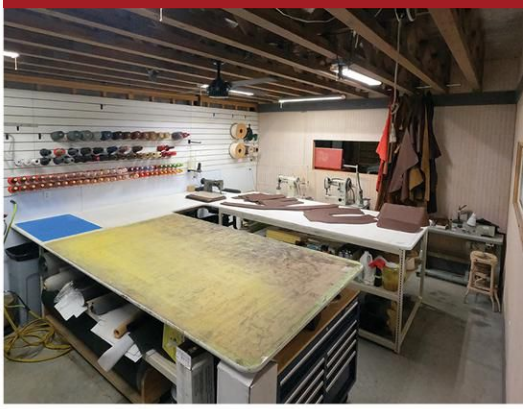
Of special interest are vehicle designs with extreme space limitations or customer requirements, Davison notes. Success in these areas has helped the shop tackle a variety of classic, custom and restomod jobs, including corporate accounts.

Part of this impressive growth can be attributed to word-of-mouth marketing. While Sculpt Garage uses the company's website as its online portfolio and first point of contact for potential customers, referrals from current and former clients have built its name among prospective car owners in Texas and elsewhere.

In addition, Davison has established strong relationships with industry partners including local suppliers.

"There is a water jet business around the

The facility includes separate rooms dedicated to sewing, metal fab, woodworking and assembly, plus an area for its 3D printer.





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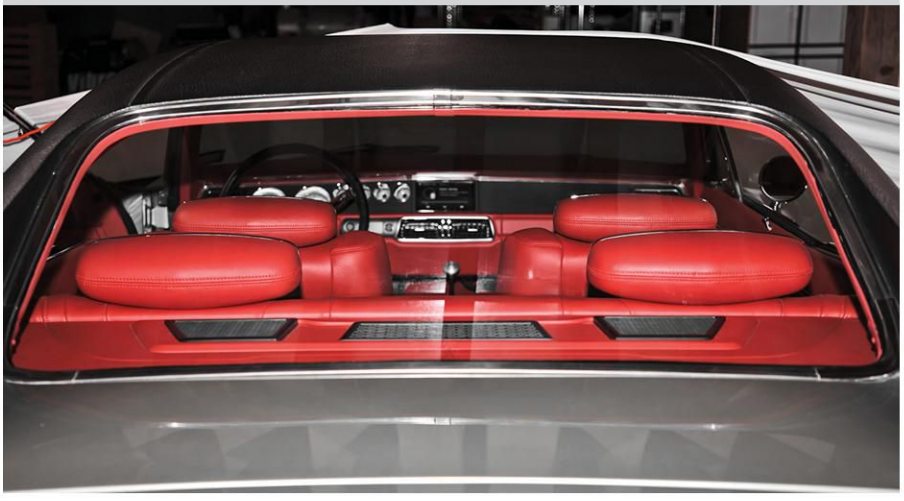
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Sculpt Garage is located in a 5,000-square-foot building on 6 acres in San Marcos, Texas.



The shop makes innovative use of wood, metal, fiberglass, upholstery and high-tech equipment for jobs that include dashes, doors, consoles and trunks.





From comfort to aesthetics to sound quality, each project is an opportunity to build something that has never been done before.

corner that we do a lot of work for, and they do a lot for us," Davison says as an example.

Social media has also positively impacted Sculpt Garage.

"I've relied on Instagram (@sculptgarage) to grow my business to what it is today," Davison says. "Getting other big Instagram accounts to repost your work drives traffic to you and shows off your shop's strengths. Instagram does become time-consuming—watching, fielding questions and competing with all the other great talents out there. I still am really involved in the building, designing and running of the business, and feel like my time is usually better spent focusing on the customers we have in the shop."

Davison estimates that about 50% of



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Automotive interior design and fabrication may seem like an old-school occupation, but Sculpt Garage does it with the latest technology.



The addition of a 2D CO2 laser cutting machine a few years back led to a complete 3D digital fabrication approach using higher-end computers, 3D scanners, 3D printers and software for digital pattern making.

Sculpt Garage's customers are retail clients—mainly baby boomers—and 50% are vehicle builders.

Thanks to this diversity, he and his team have had the opportunity to work on a wealth of different project types, from a 1963.5 Ford Galaxy overflowing with interior custom chrome that took home a Ford Best of Show award at the 2018 SEMA Show, to another memorable SEMA project—a C3 Corvette called *Menace* that tested the speed and talent of Davison and his three-member crew.

"The best parts of my job include having the creative outlet, working with guys that I would call my best friends, working long and hard on a project to see it all completed, and the customers out there showing them off and enjoying them," Davison reveals.

EMBRACING CHALLENGES

While the pandemic brought with it challenges aplenty from a business perspective, it also provided people with a lot of extra time to work on their vehicles.

"That extra demand coupled with the supply chain shortages put a lot of manufacturers behind. There was a lot of lead time for different product lines. This was because of (lack of) supply, but also because the automotive aftermarket activity was going through the roof," Davison says. "The whole reason I built a big shop is because sometimes projects hit a wall or you're waiting on something or someone. The ability to quickly and efficiently jump off of one job and onto another has helped us a lot through the supply chain problem."

To do that, however, requires versatile workers. Davison says his team of employees are truly partners in progress—professionals he continuously counts on for their skills and expertise.

As a result, Davison does all he can to keep them happy.

"I really don't have any employee turnaround. I am very lucky to have a great team," Davison says. "I tell my guys it's all about communication, just like in a marriage. I include them in a lot of decision making that will affect them and our work. We work hard and I give them as many perks as I can."

The team makes the most out of the aforementioned 5,000 square feet of workspace. The facility includes separate rooms dedicated to sewing, metal fab, woodworking and assembly, plus an area for its 3D printer.

One of the more challenging aspects of operating his business is setting and maintaining pricing. As Davison explains, it is impossible to know what kind of time will be put into an interior job. At the same time, he doesn't expect an open checkbook from the customer.

"We ballpark bid the jobs, but it is ultimately billed in time and materials," Davison says. "I built the shop to be organized and efficient. We cannot waste time when it stacks up on these detailed projects."

To keep things moving, he has lots of parts, materials and fasteners in stock, and relies on programs and proven time-savers to stay efficient.

"We use QuickBooks TSheets to track all the time put into each project and it is all broken down into detailed labor times in order to help the customer understand where the time is spent," he explains.

Sculpt Garage just started a work time category for unforeseen labor, so when those unexpected but seemingly inevitable hurdles pop up in a project, they can be separated from the anticipated labor and marked with pertinent notes.

"We try to keep a lot of small parts and pieces on hand for mock-up in fabrication to keep the projects rolling as fast as possible," Davison says. "Then we order what we need."

Sculpt Garage provides the custom interior on every build created by Heartland Customs in Oklahoma, says Jeff Page, founder and CEO.

"Heartland Customs has relied on Brent

Davison for many years to turn out the finest quality custom interiors. He has a firm grasp on modern techniques such as scanning and 3D printing, as well as old-world craftmanship and machining," Page says. "His ability to grasp the period-correct look with modern fit and finish is a perfect complement to the cars and trucks we build."

INNOVATIONS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Automotive interior design and fabrication may seem like an old-school occupation, but Sculpt Garage does it with the latest technology.

The first step came about four or five years ago, Davison says, when he and his team started doing all-out cutting of panels and parts with a 2D CO2 laser cutting machine.

"Wow, what a difference in speed and quality over cutting by jigsaw or routing panels," he reports.

After experiencing such a huge difference by adding the computer-controlled system to its toolset, the shop wanted more.



The company has been honored for its high-end work at events including the SEMA Show.

"We took out a loan to take the leap into 3D digital fabrication," Davison says, "with higher-end computers, 3D scanners, 3D printers and software for digital pattern making."

He admits there was a bit of a learning curve at first, but now the technology is fully integrated into the shop's workflow.

"I wouldn't go back and change that decision," Davison says. "Our large format 3D printer runs 24/7 and has become another specialized employee, at a time when it can be difficult to find the right person for the job."

It's all part of the inner workings of Sculpt Garage. **TS**

Is someone in your business suffering from a catastrophe or illness?

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TACKLE SEMA LIKE A PRO

Don't miss these restyling-specific activities at the show.

By Josh Poulson



The PRO reception is a great place to mingle with peers and make new connections.

MORE ON THESHOPMAG.COM
Josh Joins the Podcast to Discuss the PRO Cup Challenge:
bit.ly/PRO_Cup_Challenge

This year there is a lot of excitement surrounding the SEMA Show. Last year, still in the midst of COVID, the number of exhibitors and attendees was down. This year we could see as much as a 30% increase!

What does that mean for restylers and manufacturers? What events are happening that you don't want to miss?

If you weren't at the show last year, then you will be excited to see the brand-new West Hall with over 600,000 square feet of new floor space. This is where most of us in the restyling and truck accessories industries will be spending most of our time.

With more exhibitors and more research and development that has taken off post-pandemic, we are all excited to see what new products and fitments are being introduced.

Last year could have been called the year of the Bronco, as upfitted models were seemingly everywhere in different booths and show car areas. I think this year will be similar, with even more of these versatile, go-anywhere SUVs being built.

(In fact, my next article will be on a SEMA Bronco build we are doing for the Boostane booth #20034 in the Central Hall. Be sure to check it out.)

There's no doubt Jeeps and trucks will still be plentiful as well. Be sure to always take some time to look closely at the creativity that goes into these remarkable show vehicles and marvel at the craftsmanship of our peers in the industry.

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

Speaking of SEMA builds, this year's PRO Cup Challenge will be more exciting than ever. The Professional Restylers Organization (PRO), a SEMA council, received more than 30 applications from restylers around the country wanting to participate in the annual competition, and we had to



The annual PRO Cup Challenge puts the spotlight on innovative, profitable dealership packages.



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TACKLE SEMA LIKE A PRO



PRO seminars allow restylers a chance to hear from leaders in the industry.



Come celebrate those who've made a difference in the restyling industry and learn how you can get involved.

narrow it down to just seven entries.

This is a must-see attraction, with the contestants' builds featured in the PRO booth #50185 in the West Hall. If you don't know, the PRO Cup Challenge was created around realistic builds with packages that you can take back to your local market and pitch to dealerships.

The rules restrict restylers to a $12,500 wholesale budget including parts and labor, and a maximum of 40 hours of labor to finish the builds. Entries will be judged based on these four categories:

- **MARKETABILITY**—Can the build be replicated in multiple markets across the country?
- **CREATIVITY**—Is it like all the other packages out there, or something unique?
- **REPLICABILITY**—How easy is it for other shops to replicate this package?
- **PROFITABILITY**—What's the profit potential for the restyler and, eventually, the dealership?

The builders will be judged by a panel of professionals who will choose an overall winner. As always, there will also be a fan favorite award chosen by attendees who vote using their smartphones in the PRO booth.

For those in attendance that would like to hear directly from the builders regarding how they chose their vehicles and accessories, a one-hour PRO Cup Challenge panel discussion will be held from 1-2 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 1, in seminar room #W208 in the West Hall.

I, for one, can't wait to see how our restylers fare with their builds. A little birdie told me there may even be a few electric vehicles in the mix this year!

PUT PRO ON YOUR CALENDAR

On the subject of seminars, PRO has one planned for 1 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 2, in room #W208 in the West Hall to discuss *Forecasting the Future of the Restyling Industry*. A panel of professionals from the restyling, accessory manufacturing, OEM and digital services industries will share their thoughts on where they believe the market is heading.

A day earlier, everyone is welcome to attend the PRO reception from 5-7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 1, on the West Hall third floor terrace overlooking the street. This impressive balcony setting allows restylers and manufacturers to network and engage in great conversations, with free food and drinks.

The event will also have a 20-minute awards ceremony announcing this year's Restyler of the Year, Manufacturer of the Year, PRO Person of the Year and PRO Lifetime Achievement award winners. Don't miss this opportunity to meet and talk to leaders in the industry.

SEMA SHOW NEW PRODUCTS SHOWCASE EXPANDS

Consistently voted as the No. 1 destination by SEMA Show buyers and media, the 2022 New Products Showcase will expand to include two new categories. Showgoers will find products related to electric vehicles (EV) and Advanced Driver-Assistance Systems (ADAS), along with items in 16 other categories, in what is the world's largest display of new automotive aftermarket products.



The 2022 SEMA Show New Products Showcase is the world's largest display of new automotive aftermarket components.

"Through the SEMA Show New Products Showcase, buyers, retailers and distributors can easily discover and learn about all the hot products that they may want to carry," says Tom Gattuso, SEMA vice president of events. "They will find details about the products, including the exhibitors' booth numbers. They can then connect directly with the manufacturers on the show floor to learn more. It's no surprise that SEMA Show buyers rely on the New Products Showcase to help them stock their shelves."

Details on all the products from the showcase are also included in the SEMA Show mobile app, giving attendees a year-round resource to help them after the show. A product scanning feature enables attendees to flag items of interest and create custom lists of noteworthy items.

Qualifying products may also be recognized as a Best New Product. Winners and runners-up in all 18 categories will be announced the first day of the show.



Last year could have been called the year of the Bronco. Which vehicle(s) will provide a spark of inspiration this time around?

The last event you'll want to be a part of is Lunch with the PROs from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 3, in room #W219 in the West Hall. This is where you can find out about what the SEMA PRO council is working on to benefit its members, and how you can get involved as a volunteer and have your own voice heard. We'll also take time to discuss challenges and opportunities for restylers and manufacturers, so don't miss this free lunch event.

There are always so many things to do in just four days at the SEMA Show. Hopefully you can arrive on Monday or Tuesday and take advantage of the whole week of activities.

If you see me at any of these events, please come up and say hi. I'd love to introduce myself and hear about the challenges and successes you're experiencing.

See you in Vegas! **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 immediate past-chairman of the SEMA PRO council and was named 2015-'16 Person of the Year at the 2015 SEMA Show.*



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FRONT & CENTER

By Brett Solomon

Next-gen Apple CarPlay seeks new vehicle integration.



Dashboards may be the newest area for customization as the next generation of Apple CarPlay looks to integrate more closely with the entire vehicle and all of its functions.

Once thought to be among the most important pieces of real estate in a car's interior—and one that legacy manufacturers would never give up—the dashboard now just might be the next place for vehicle customization.

We already have configurable dashboard themes from OE manufacturers. Now, at the most recent Apple developer conference, the company discussed the next generation of Apple CarPlay and how it could be used front and center to enhance and control the driver experience.

While previous versions of CarPlay are great for phone and navigation integration as well as music, the latest iteration takes it to an unexpected place—the vehicle's instrument cluster and HVAC controls.

Of course, automakers and customers must opt-in for this type of integration. But, for those younger generations who live attached to their iPhones, the next generation of CarPlay could change the look, experience and how we customize cars in the future.

There's even a safety angle, as familiarity with a user interface can reduce dreaded driver distraction.

WHAT APPLE SAYS

At the developer conference, Apple stated: "CarPlay has fundamentally changed the way people interact with their vehicles, and the next generation of CarPlay goes even further by deeply integrating with a car's hardware. CarPlay will be able to provide content for multiple screens within the vehicle, creating an experience that is unified and consistent."

Deeper integration will allow users to do things like control the radio or operate climate controls.

"Using the vehicle data, CarPlay will seamlessly render the speed, fuel level, temperature and more on the instrument cluster," Apple predicts. "Users will be able to personalize their driving experience by choosing different gauge cluster designs, and with added support for widgets, users will have at-a-glance information from Weather and Music right on their car's dashboard."

More information about the next generation of CarPlay is expected by the end of the year.

Currently, it's unusual to see communication between a vehicle and an iPhone. Sure, we have some aftermarket OBD-II performance apps out there, but not at this level of integration.

When a vehicle is connected to this new wireless CarPlay, a secure connection is



For Apple CarPlay integration today, Sony offers an in-car media receiver with high-resolution audio capabilities.



Apple CarPlay can currently be added to a variety of new and older vehicles, delivering the familiarity and versatility of a smartphone.

established between the vehicle and the iPhone. This allows the system to use the vehicle's screens as a display and port information back to the dashboard—vehicle information once handled by traditional gauges such as rpm, fuel level and temperature.

Within CarPlay's main display, featured on the center screen itself, the user will be able to control key vehicle features. For example, if you press on the temperature button in the lower corner of the display, a submenu opens for HVAC, seat heaters and seat adjustments without leaving the CarPlay interface.

Most manufacturers would never have allowed this until recently. They wanted the user experience to be branded and familiar to their customers.

For example, we all know what Chevrolet, Ford and Dodge fonts are supposed to look like. The latest generation of CarPlay, however, will take over the dashboard to look entirely like an Apple product.

Not all manufacturers are onboard, as of yet. It's understandable. If you are Bentley, for example, are you excited to give up your gauge cluster to look less Flying Spur and more iPhone? Perhaps there's an opportunity for blending the old and the new?

WIDGETS

Just like in a traditional modern car, the space between the speedometer and tachometer can be customized in CarPlay. A core offering of the upgraded system is its variety of personalization options.

The Smart Stack widget uses a menu to choose and then display information directly from the driver's iPhone. Just like phones can track your steps, the Smart Stack widget gives information about the trip. Your iPhone can now monitor your distance traveled and fuel economy. This could work well for employees who use their personal vehicles for easy reimbursement.

There will also be a HomeKit Widget.









There's room for old styles and new tech to interact in today's dash systems.

This will allow the end user to control parts of their smart house, including an internet-enabled garage door opener. The instrument cluster itself is customizable, so drivers can leave gauges for the readings that matter to them the most.

If you tow a lot, for instance, the ability to configure a specific instrument cluster setting when the trailer is attached for oil temp, transmission temp and coolant temp will be very cool (and help make sure they stay cool, too!).

Meanwhile, with Apple Maps, you can have up to 15 stops pre-programmed in your iPhone before you hit the road with the new multi-stop routing feature, which automatically launches the navigation software in the car. The only problem we see here is how the new software will work with the wildly popular but non-Apple Waze or Google Maps.

PAY AT THE PUMP

At the filling station, drivers will be able to make fuel purchases from the center screen. This bypasses having to swipe or scan a credit card at the pump.

HF Sinclair, which manages 1,600 gas stations with a dinosaur theme throughout the U.S., is said to be first onboard.

"We are excited by the idea that consumers could navigate to a Sinclair station and purchase fuel from their vehicle navigation screen," Jack Barger, senior vice president of marketing for HF Sinclair, told Reuters.

With the high price of gas, anything that can give tech-driven stations an edge over competitors and save time is welcome.

SO, WHO'S ON BOARD?

Apple has said an announcement of compatible vehicles will not be made until 2023. However, the company does have letters of intent and initial plans with Acura, Audi, Ford, Honda, Infiniti, Jaguar, Land Rover, Lincoln, Mercedes-Benz, Nissan, Polestar, Porsche and Volvo.

Notably, GM and Stellantis are absent. Stellantis is currently using infotainment from Android that happens to work very well, though it had not released any next-level Android Auto integration plans as of late summer.

GETTING CARPLAY FOR CUSTOMERS TODAY

Until we get to the next level of Apple CarPlay, it is still possible to install the current wireless system into new and older vehicles.

For instance, one might think that some of the most forward-thinking cars out there today—Teslas—would come with wireless CarPlay as an option. They don't. But the aftermarket can come to the rescue of tech-savvy customers who are clamoring for CarPlay in their Tesla Model 3 or Model Y.

Enter RDVFL Automotive Technology, which engineered a solution that includes an additional driver display. The company will only sell to authorized retailers, however, so you will not find this tech floating around online.

Additionally, a monitor mounted in front of the driver alleviates a lot of complaints from Model 3 and Model Y drivers—they finally get a speedometer on an 8-inch screen in the right place where speedos have always been.

The system also gives additional information such as battery life (amount of charge remaining), speed, mileage, transmission PRND, and the common indicators including lights, turn signals, and seat belts.

Drivers have access to more information in their line of vision while enjoying the benefits of CarPlay. It is a very cool workaround that gives more functionality than factory Teslas currently offer.

ADAPTOR OR DECK SWAP?

Your customers can get wireless CarPlay or Android Auto in their current vehicles. The first step is to see if anyone has engineered a solution that uses the customer's OEM screen.

This is called *OEM integration*, and there are a multitude of manufacturers such as AAMP and the aforementioned RDVFL that can help.

Integration allows customers to get





OEM acceptance of, and compatibility with Apple CarPlay helps spread the word about the benefits of integration, prompting those without compatibility to seek aftermarket solutions. (Photos courtesy Stellantis)



RDVFL Automotive Technology has engineered an integration solution that includes an additional driver display.



wireless CarPlay while still retaining their factory screens. However, sometimes an upgrade is warranted, and aftermarket head unit manufacturers offer aftermarket wireless CarPlay solutions.

In fact, Alpine Electronics was one of the first to offer wireless CarPlay, and now it has a large selection of replacement head units that deliver the Apple system.

Another is Sony. The company has reintroduced its ES, or Elevated Standard, line with the XAV-9500ES. This is the first in-car media receiver with high-resolution audio capabilities. With a 10.1-inch display, the 9500ES offers high-quality sound, customizable audio features and Sony's first wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto2 connections.

"Sony's Mobile ES series raised the bar for the premium in-car listening experience when it was previously introduced, and it continues to impress our customers," says Daisuke Kawaguchi, VP. "With the addition of this new receiver, we add even further depth to this impressive lineup."

Along with the wireless CarPlay, the unit allows for wireless streaming of high-res audio files. For customers who are installing the best-of-the-best loudspeakers, this technology takes advantage of a soundtrack that is closest to the original master studio tapes.

According to Sony, its LDAC technology allows users to wirelessly stream audio from compatible devices at 96 kHz/24-bit sampling, which is a significant improvement over conventional Bluetooth streaming. The result is a richer musical experience with the benefits of using wireless technology.

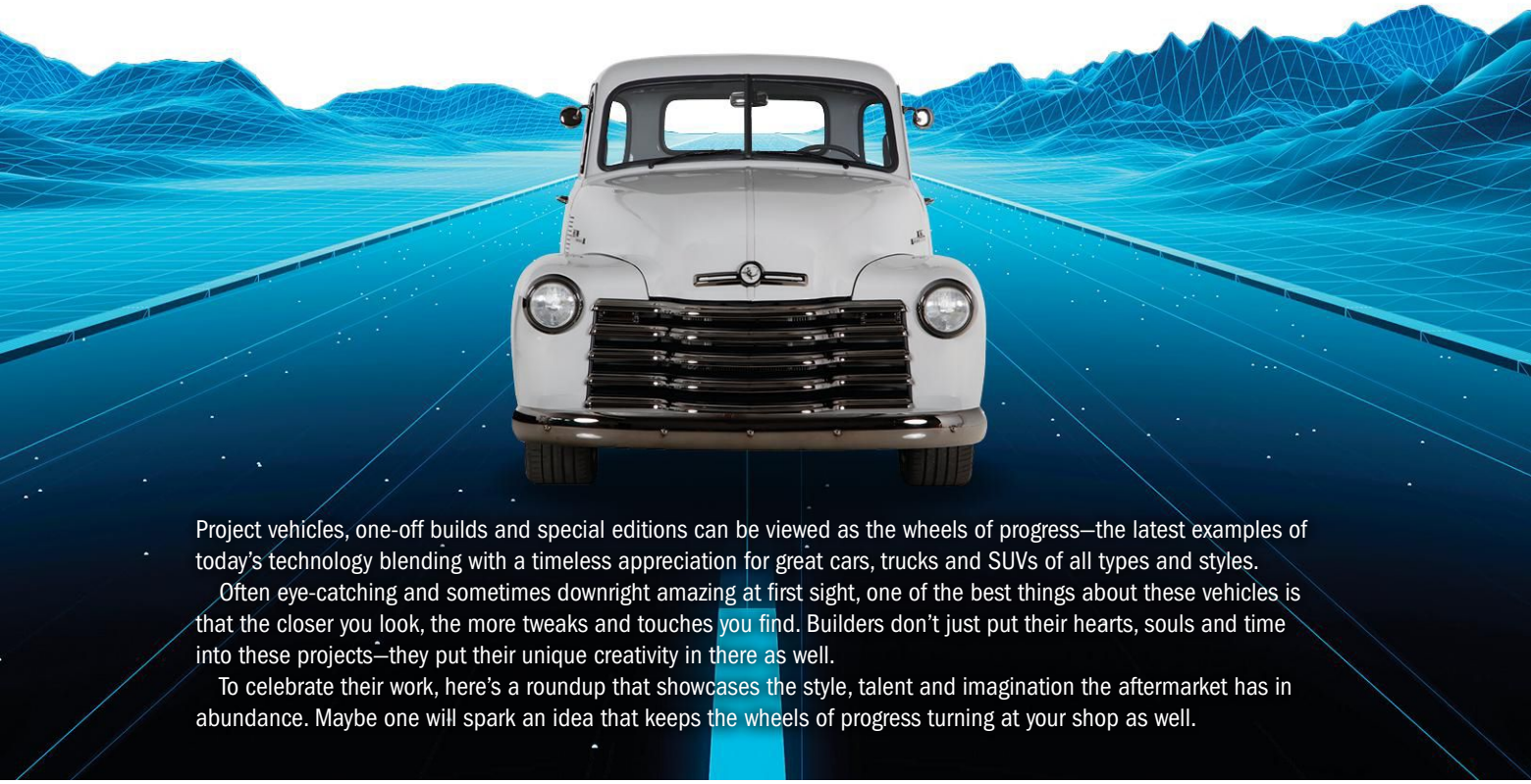
CarPlay and audio quality are not mutually exclusive, and you'll always be able to install better-sounding audio, no matter what CarPlay looks like in the future. ***TS***

BRETT SOLOMON *is a freelance writer based in New York City, specializing in the mobile electronics market.*



2022 PROJECT VEHICLE SKETCHBOOK

THE WHEELS OF PROGRESS



Project vehicles, one-off builds and special editions can be viewed as the wheels of progress—the latest examples of today's technology blending with a timeless appreciation for great cars, trucks and SUVs of all types and styles.

Often eye-catching and sometimes downright amazing at first sight, one of the best things about these vehicles is that the closer you look, the more tweaks and touches you find. Builders don't just put their hearts, souls and time into these projects—they put their unique creativity in there as well.

To celebrate their work, here's a roundup that showcases the style, talent and imagination the aftermarket has in abundance. Maybe one will spark an idea that keeps the wheels of progress turning at your shop as well.

HEARTLAND CUSTOMS CORVETTES

Don't miss two special vehicle unveilings from **Jeff Page**, columnist for ***THE SHOP***, and his team at **Heartland Customs** in Oklahoma, at the 2022 SEMA Show.

A blue **1961 Chevrolet Corvette** will be in the **Holley** booth #22465 all week.





And a beige **'63 Corvette** will be unveiled at 11 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 2, in the **Covercraft** booth #23243, both in the Central Hall.

2022 FORD BRONCO WILDTRAK



The **SEMA Businesswomen's Network** will be debuting an all-female build in the West Hall booth #57061 at the 2022 SEMA Show. A large group of talented women from all corners of the automotive industry participated in the **2022 Ford Bronco Wildtrak** project.

Highlights include: **Ford Performance** (EcoBoost power pack performance calibration); **ARB** fridge/freezer); **TurboSmart** (Kompact EM plumb back valve); **aFe Power** (Momentum GT cold air intake with Pro 5R filter); **AWE** (2.7L cat-back exhaust suite); **ICON Vehicle Dynamics** (Stage 8 3-4-inch lift billet suspension); **Bronco Buster** (steering upgrade package); **ICON Alloys** (Thrust Satin Black wheels); **Milestar** (Patagonia tires); **McGard** (custom-engraved black lug nuts); **Terra Strada Design** (custom wrap & installation); **Advanced Fiberglass Concepts** (2-inch flare, 1-inch rise fenders, quarters & ram air hood); **Baja Forged** (full-size Crawler front & rear bumpers with full-size skid plate); **Warn Industries** (VR EVO 10-S winch); **Factor 55** (UltraHook); **Cascadia 4x4** (hood solar panel); **ARB** (air compressor, recovery boards, jack with mount, spare tire mount); **Ford Accessories** (Yakima roof rack system & tent); **Ford Research and Advanced Engineering** (lit pony); **Dee Zee** (Fender Sight delete kit); **Oracle Lighting** (brackets, switches); **sPOD** (switch panel); **Katzkin** (custom leather seat covers); **Goose Gear** (rear seat delete, icebox module with storage drawer); **Ford Accessories** (floor mats, MOLLE bags); **PPG** (paint); **Adenna** (PPE supplies); and **TRAC** (tire assistant products).

WIDEBODY C8



John and Kim Wargo of **The Custom Shop** in Flanagan, Illinois, believe even the Batmobile has nothing on their latest widebody custom **C8 Corvette** build.

Highlights include 355/25/21 rear and 285/30/20 front tires; black paint with red accents, airbrushed graphics and a satin clear coat sprayed with **ProSpray** paint materials; an **MBRP** exhaust system; **Sigala Designs** widebody fiberglass parts; **RaceMesh** grille inserts; red **Metra** LED lighting; and plenty of custom touches.

2022 JEEP GLADIATOR



Introduced at Easter Jeep Safari in Moab, a special **2022 JT370 Gladiator** build from **American Expedition Vehicles (AEV)** is designed as an adventurist's dream machine.

Outfitted in a Sarge green paint scheme, highlights include the company's rugged stamped steel front bumper, 7000 Series LED off-road lights, 2-inch spacer lift and 2.5-inch DualSport suspension system, plus 37-inch **BFGoodrich** Mud-Terrain KM3 tires and a **WARN EVO** 10-S winch kit.

1948 CHEVROLET STYLEMASTER







Automotive instructor **Ed Stevens** and the hardworking, talented students at **C.D. Hylton High School** in Woodbridge, Virginia are working on a **1948 Chevrolet Stylemaster** build for the 2022 SEMA Show.

Participants include: **SCAT Enterprises, Chevs of the 40's, Tenneco, Steele Rubber Products, Kindig It Designs, Hot Rodders of Tomorrow, Safelite Auto Glass, Keystone** and **Advance Auto Parts.**

The vehicle is also slated to be at the January **Mecum Auction** in Florida.

Follow along with the SEMA build and other projects by searching Hylton Automotive on YouTube.

2022 JEEP WRANGLER 4XE

Quadratec's purpose-built **2022 Jeep Wrangler 4xe** is designed to assist as a support vehicle with the **50 for 50** trail clean-up initiative—a campaign to complete one stewardship project in each state that enhances or improves off-road or public land access.

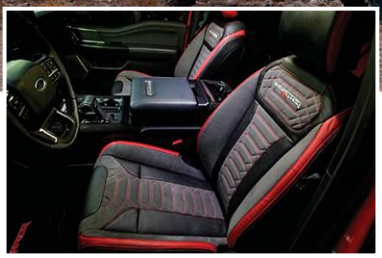
The one-of-a-kind build created by **Unofficial Use Only** is outfitted with a custom truck bed conversion and equipped with off-road accessories from Quadratec's top house brands including **Lynx Wheels**, **Diver Down Seat Covers**, **Lost Canyon**, **RES-Q**, **AccuPart**, **Carnivore Bumpers** and more.

See the official unveiling at 12 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 1, in booth #58085 at the 2022 SEMA Show.



2022 SHELBY FORD F-150 RAPTOR





Shelby American, Las Vegas, a wholly owned subsidiary of **Carroll Shelby International Inc.**, presents the latest-generation **Shelby Ford F-150 Raptor**. The 525-hp truck is available in limited quantities through official dealers nationwide.

In 2021, Ford introduced a fully redesigned F-150 Raptor that boosted off-road capability with an all-new five-link rear suspension featuring improved wheel travel and electronically controlled shocks along with upsized wheels and tires. The high-output 3.5L EcoBoost V-6 engine delivers strong low-end torque for maximum towing and increased payload capability.

The interior has been updated with enhanced materials, new color choices and more storage.

The Ford Shelby Raptor has standard over-the-air updates and a new connected experience for potential features like shareable digital trail maps. There is also SYNC 4 with cloud-connected navigation and voice search, and the FordPass mobile app to check on the truck remotely.

Shelby also adds suspension updates with its race-proven **FOX** Live Valve system, plus 37-inch off-road tires on aluminum forged wheels, functional off-road bumpers, interior upgrades and LED lighting. Participants include **Ford Performance** and **Whipple**.

2022 DODGE DURANGO HELLCAT



Owned by **Hemmings**, a **2022 Dodge Durango Hellcat** designed and built by **Tjin Edition** and partners features a custom green wrap by **Daley Visual**.

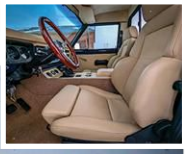
Highlights include custom front bumper bars with **Rigid Industries** 4-inch fog lights, side steps, rear bumper bars by **Unique Fabrication**, a custom roof rack featuring a Rigid light bar, a **Thule** awning and solar panel, fifth wheel setup, gas canisters by **Delux Customs**, a custom dual side-exiting exhaust by Unique Fabrication, 20x10.5 bronze **Vossen** HF5 wheels, **Falken Tires**, **Eibach** suspension upgrades, **Katzkin** interior, a **DECKED** CargoGlide featuring **Power Tank** setup, a toolbox, jack and jackstands, emergency kit, Thule eBike rack featuring a custom Super 73 bike built by **Blur Boundaries** and a **Direct Connection** Stage 1 and Stage 2 tune.

See it in the Dodge booth #23642 at the 2022 SEMA Show.

2022 JEEP HONCHO

Legacy Classic Trucks, Jackson Hole, Wyoming, introduces a diesel-powered classic **Jeep Honcho**. Designed as a special trim variant on the classic Jeep J10 pickup, the original Jeep (J20) Honcho featured a mean square-jawed grille alongside a groovy Seventies swagger through the truck's run in the late-1970s to early '80s.

Highlights from Legacy's 1,200-hour restoration include a 1960s-era Kaiser Gladiator front clip, 2.8L **Cummins** turbo diesel engine mated to an 8-speed automatic transmission, 35-inch **Toyo** tires, **Method** bead-lock wheels, Deep Blue paint livery, **Recaro** seats, square weave floor mats, wood steering wheel, **Dakota Digital** gauges, Bluetooth stereo, brand-new HVAC system and USB charging ports.





2022 FORD LIGHTNING LARIAT

The **Tjin Edition 2022 Ford Lightning Lariat** shows that pickups and electrification make a nice pair. It's easy to spot with a custom Army Green paint job by **LTMW**.

Highlights include: custom **Ford Accessories** Lightning grille by **Ford Research and Advanced Engineering**; customized LED headlights by **Circuit Demon**; **Rigid Industries** fog lights in the front bumper; **Thule** cargo box (painted beige) with built-in solar panels and backup batteries by Ford Research and Advanced Engineering; Thule four-person tent; Thule eBike rack with custom Super 73 bikes built by **Blur Boundaries**; **Air Design** cab and tailgate spoiler; Ford Accessories electric/retractable bed cover by **LEER**; side steps; tailgate lettering; custom front **Recaro** RSPS seats in orange and black leather; custom rear Recaro Podium seats in orange and black leather; custom Army Green seat belts by **Seat Belt Planet**; Ford Accessories all-weather floor mats; vault; dash cam; sport liner by **BedRug**; Ford Accessories BedSlide with Ford Performance fridge/cooler by **ARB**; **Power Tank** setup; custom Air Lift suspension with black **VIAIR** compressors; tank installed by **Hoppo's Custom Suspension Works**; custom **Baer** Orange Grizzly front big brakes and rear brakes (rotors and calipers); and custom 24x10.5 **Vossen** LC2-C2 beige wheels matched up to 295/35/24 **Falken Tires.**



See it in the **SEMA Electrified** booth #11268 at the 2022 SEMA Show.

FORD BRONCO PRORUNNER



Automotive Performance Group, a specialized aftermarket builder and manufacturer based in Orange County, California, announces its **Bronco ProRunner** conversion package, a high-performance off-road upgrade that adds long-travel suspension, offers fitment of up to 40-inch tires and widens the Bronco up to 14 inches over factory models.

Highlights include carbon fiber front and rear fenders, carbon fiber hood insert with LED marker lights and accessory mounts, **King** Race Series coil-overs, APG 3.5-inch wider billet upper and boxed lower control arms, wider heavy-duty steering tie rods, raised and reinforced front shock towers and air bump supports, a 7-inch wider Ultimate **Dana** 60 rear axle and Dana front drive unit, heavy-duty **RCV Performance** axles and a one-piece hardtop.

1972 CHEVROLET K5 BLAZER



Bully is a **1972 Chevrolet K5 Blazer** from **Ringbrothers**. More than 8,500 build hours went into the fully custom 4WD, which makes 1,000 hp thanks to a **Wegner Motorsports**-built 6.8L LS3 V-8 topped with a 2.9L supercharger from **Whipple Superchargers**.

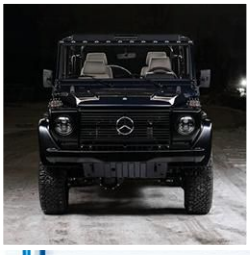
Highlights include a new chassis, four-link suspension, bespoke interior, heavy-duty drivetrain and many unique pieces, including a multitude of one-off 3D-printed and machined parts.

Participants include: **Gary Ragle Design, BASF/Glasurit, Flowmaster/Holley, Motul, C-Tek, E-Stopp, GFS – Global Finishing Solutions, Heatshield Products, Holley Performance Products, HRE Wheels, Miller Electric, MSD/Holley, Painless Performance Products** and **Warn Industries**.

2022 250GD WOLF GELANDEWAGEN

Now available, **Expedition Motor Co**. unveils the newest edition of its Wolf Gelandewagen models with the striking Midnight Blue **1991 250GD**. Representing more than 1,000 hours of restoration, the **2022 250GD Wolf** restomod is a military-grade workhorse that offers more versatility in everyday driving conditions.

Highlights include modern entertainment and climate controls, improved suspension and braking, a 0M602 diesel engine paired with a **Mercedes-Benz** 5-speed automatic transmission and original gearshift lever, modern HVAC system, Bluetooth and plug-in capabilities, all-new fuel and brake lines, fresh body mounts and refinished factory truck axles.





1969 FORD MUSTANG MACH 1



Built with cutting-edge aerodynamics ***The Patriarc*** is the latest Ford Mustang to come from **Ringbrothers**. The **1969 Mach 1** is powered by a **Ford Performance** Aluminator V-8 mated to a 6-speed manual transmission.

More than 5,000 hours were invested in bringing the Mustang to life, and the build features several one-off components including carbon fiber rear fender side scoops that vent air through the 3D-printed taillights. Further highlights include a ***Roadster Shop*** chassis, bespoke interior and **Baer Brakes**.

Participants include: **BASF/Glasurit, Flowmaster/Holley, HRE Wheels, Motul, Gary Ragle Design, C-Tek, Dynamat, E-Stopp, GFS – Global Finishing Solutions, Heatshield Products, Miller Electric, MSD/Holley** and **Painless Performance Products**.

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BIZZARRINI 5300 GT CORSA REVIVAL



Pegasus Automotive Group announces the return of an Italian legend with the new **Bizzarrini 5300 GT Corsa Revival**. Using original blueprints from the 1960s, engineers added some improvements with modern safety regulations in mind, such as a fuel tank created using 3D scanning technology.

Inside, a six-point roll cage protects the two available seats. The period-specific, 400-hp 5.3L V-8 engine with **Weber** 45 carburetors pairs with an independent rear suspension and all-around disc brakes.

For the Rosso Corsa red paint job, the Bizzarrini team color-matched an original body panel hidden from light all of these years. Test drives of the Bizzarrini 5300 GT Corsa Revival reveal the new exotic is more rigid than **Giotto Bizzarrini**'s original car, with a lightweight, single-piece composite body constructed over a steel frame.

LAND ROVER SERIES IIA



Known for restoring vintage Defenders, Charleston, South Carolina's **Himalaya 4x4** presents its latest heritage truck from **Land Rover**'s lexicon with a1960s **Series IIA** custom build. Equipped with a 300-hp **GM**-sourced V-6 engine mated to a 6L80-E transmission—and with a TDI diesel engine option also available—modern performance is paired with a traditionally classic design.

The new Himalaya Series custom rests on a modern coil-sprung chassis that helps the truck handle better and ride more comfortably. An upgraded off-road suspension package features **FOX** components.

Other additions include custom disc brakes, integrated Defender axles, 18-inch Wolf-style wheels in the vehicle's Midnight Blue color, hidden console that features a premium **Alpine** sound system with Bluetooth connectivity, period-correct wood steering wheel, billet aluminum shift knobs and switches, and seats and header fashioned in durable boot suede leather.



1966 FORD MUSTANG

John Wargo and **The Custom Shop** crew in Flanagan, Illinois are building a custom **1966 Mustang** named ***Double Down*** because it is a convertible with a motorized removable hardtop. It rides on a **Roadster Shop** chassis, **Toyo Tires** and **Forgeline** wheels.

Highlights include **Prismatic Powder Coating, Baer** brakes, **Scott Drake** scoops, **Ringbrothers** accessories, a Coyote swap engine, **Ultimate Headers, Pypes Performance Exhaust, Sony** audio system, **Apex Leather**, custom ground effects, tucked bumpers, and paint and graphics sprayed with **ProSpray** products.



Participants include: **ABS Power Brake, AMSOIL, Auto City Glass, Cerakote, C-Tek, Covercraft, Dakota Digital, DiabloSport, Entropy Radiator, Fairchild Industries, Flaming River, Goodmark Industries, Hawkeye Industries, Holley Performance Products, HushMat, Lokar Performance Products, Malco Products, McGard, NGK Spark Plugs, Nu-Relics Power Windows, ODYSSEY Battery, Painless Performance Products, Presta Products, PSTD, POR-15, RainGear Wiper System, Seat Belt Planet, Scosche, Sherwin-Williams, Spectre Performance, Tanks Inc., Trulers, U.S. Chemical & Plastics** and **Vintage Air**.

See it in the Sony booth #11123 in the North Hall at the 2022 SEMA Show.

INFINITI Q60









The wrap job on this **Infiniti Q60** is said to be inspired "by the stunning beauty and ruthless reflection of the Greek gorgon Medusa." A dark monochrome background and mirror finishes give it a mythological, stone-like finish.

Curvaceous Wraps designer **Christina McKay** developed the concept using 3D design software and installers **Jessica Bonifacio (Vinyl Vixen)** and **Michael Shedd (Wrapsesh)** completed the full installation, creating a visually stunning experience for onlookers with a printed, brushed aluminum finish and chrome accents.

Film: Printed on **Avery Dennison** Supreme Wrapping Film, Extreme Texture Series, Brushed Aluminum Metallic, SW 900-812-X, Avery Dennison Supreme Wrapping Film Black Chrome, SF 100-196-S.

1952 CHEVROLET THRIFTMASTER 3100



Vehicle designer **ICON 4x4**, Chatsworth, California, unveils a unique version of its **New School Edition TR** based on a **1952 Chevrolet Thriftmaster 3100**.

State-of-the-art upgrades include an **Art Morrison** chassis with four-wheel independent suspension, 440-hp **GM** E-ROD 6.2L fuel-injected LS3 engine, 6-speed manual transmission, **Brembo** sport brakes, adjustable coil-overs, **Dana** 60 nodular third member, rack and pinion power steering, 18-inch forged artillery-style wheels, shou sugi ban-finished walnut truck bed, **Porsche** chalk white paint, **Pioneer** 8600NEX sound system, **Moore & Giles** leather, and ICON accents including black chrome trim, badging, sun visors, gauges, articulating one-piece dash panel and more.

"Our New School Thriftmaster presents a disarming duality found in all the very best sleepers. At first glance, this is a beautifully restored 1952 pickup, but underneath it all is a vehicle with power and handling that is absolutely off the charts," says **Jonathan Ward**, ICON 4x4 founder.







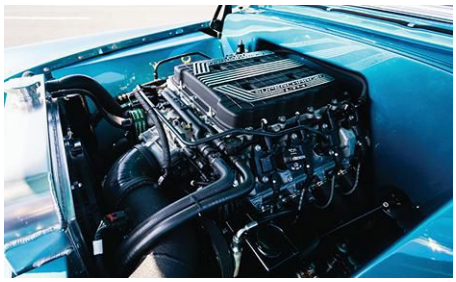
1954 CHEVROLET BEL AIR

Led by **Daniel Valjevac,** North Carolina's **Retro Designs** is known for preserving history's most iconic automobiles with modern engineering and subtle styling touches. Its newest offering is a restored **1954 Chevy Bel Air** made for cruising the modern road with the coupe's quintessentially 1950s-era aesthetic.

The 640-hp LT4 engine includes a custom cold air intake alongside an **ATI** 9.17 lower pulley and balancer. Further performance is provided by a **Billet Specialties** front drive system and **Ultimate Headers**. The finned Bel-Air sits on a custom **Scott's Hotrods** chassis with a special **Ride Tech** air ride suspension for well-mannered driving.

The rear is channeled almost imperceptibly for a sharper silhouette. Other highlights include an 8L90 transmission with **Lokar** shifter, **Wilwood** four-wheel disc brakes, **Boze Alloys** custom billet wheels with specially fabricated wheel tubs, **Michelin** tires, specially made oval stainless steel exhaust, **Tanks Inc.** fuel system, **American Autowire** harness, period-correct **Dakota Digital** gauges, **Rockford Fosgate** entertainment system, and a blue two-tone exterior featuring **Axalta** paint.







PORSCHE 718 CAYMAN GT4





Performance, sound, carbon and handling—four attributes that best describe how German automotive refinement specialist **Friedrich Performance Manufaktur** further hones the already sporty **Porsche 718 Cayman GT4**.

High-end stainless sport exhausts are a company specialty, as are carbon aerodynamic-enhancement and styling components. Add in 10-spoke wheels and choice of three different coil-over suspensions for lowering the ride height of the two-door by up to 45 millimeters while also firming up the damping and you have a 718 Cayman GT4 with even more capability and aesthetics.

AUDI RS 3



On its debut in 2021, the 400-hp **Audi RS 3** immediately set a Nürburgring Nordschleife record for vehicles in the compact class. The 500-hp **ABT RS3-R Sportback**, limited to 200 units, now raises the bar even higher.

Highlights include an ABT Power R performance upgrade, exhaust system, suspension springs and sport stabilizer bars, optional V3 height-adjustable suspension in stainless steel, ABT aero package, 20-inch forged wheels, **Goodyear** tires, refined seats, emblem badge and inscribed door sills, integrated entry lights with the ABT logo, ABT start-stop switch cap and free myABT app for **Apple** and **Android** devices.

1953 CHEVROLET



Project Born Again, a **1953 Chevy**, is designed by **Yancey Taylor** and **Alex Arnold** of **Krashed Kustoms**. Taylor will debut the car at the 2022 SEMA Show in the **BendPak** booth #81030.

The restoration is dedicated to Taylor's uncle and aunt, **Donald** and **Lawanna Andrus**, who were the Chevy's previous owners.



Highlights include an updated suspension, 13-inch big brake kit and Mustang II front end from **Classic Performance Products (CPP)**, C-notch with four-link rear suspension by **Scott's Hotrods**, adjustable coil-overs by **Aldan American**, ZZ4 Chevy V-8 mated to a 4L60 automatic transmission, and a 400-hp Go Street fuel injection system by **FiTech Fuel Injection**.

Participants include: **Eddie Motorsports** (polished front running system); **Steele Rubber Products** (rubbers, felts); **Falken Tires** (Azenis FK510-245/30/20s); **Schott Wheels** (Modsport with bronze coating); **Kindig It Design** (spoon door handles); **Retro Manufacturing** (Apache radio, speakers); **RetroBelt** (seat belts); **Restomod Air** (custom A/C, vents, bulkhead); **Painless Performance Products** (21-circuit wiring harness system); **Ogden Chrome** (shaved front & rear bumpers, grille); **Lesa's Auto Body** (**House of Kolor** KBC-01 Brandywine); **Affordable Street Rods** (**Dakota Digital** VHX gauge cluster); **William Paiz** (custom interior); and **Kevin Webber** (**Werewolf Kustoms** body and paint).

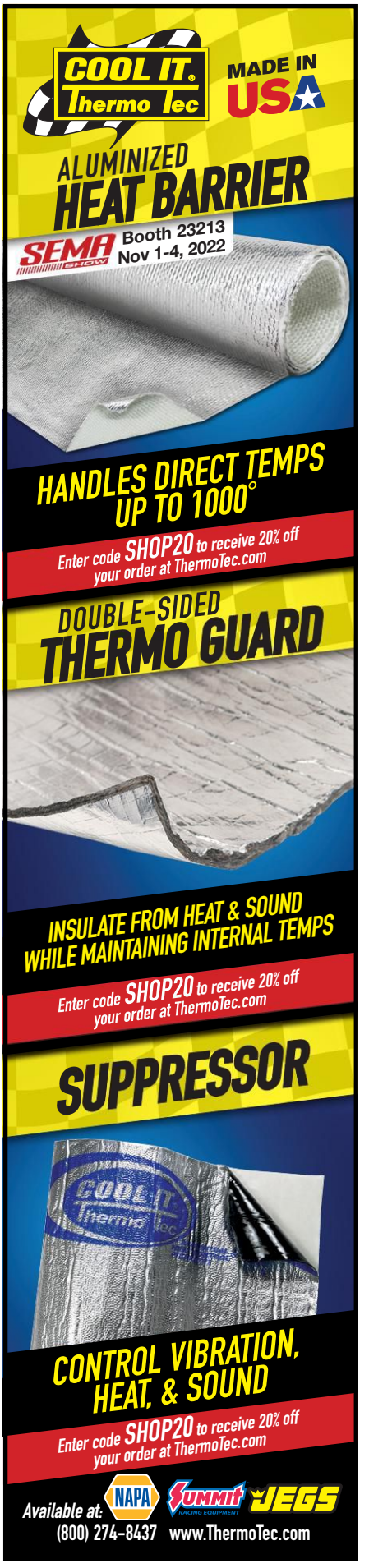
2022 MEGARAPTOR





Megarerxx Trucks, Wilmington, North Carolina, is known for turning diesel-powered **Ford F-250 Super Duty** trucks into striking **Megaraptors**. Its latest build adds a camouflage matte finish to the body, rock rings and bumper trim plates.

This Megaraptor started out as a **2022 Ford F-250 Crew Cab Lariat** with a 6.7L Power Stroke V-8 turbo diesel. Upgrades include the company's Smasher front bumper with light bar and LEDs, bed cage and High & Tight rear bumper, plus a **BDS Suspension** 6-inch lift kit, **BILSTEIN** shocks, **PMF Suspension** radius arms, **ICON Vehicle Dynamics** adjustable track bar and dual steering stabilizers, **AMP Research** side steps, military MRAP wheels, **Michelin** XZL tires and 4:88 gears.



ROLLS-ROYCE CULLINAN BLACK BADGE





LA-based **1016 Industries** introduces a limited-edition carbon fiber design for the **Rolls-Royce Cullinan Black Badge**. With only 30 available, added touches elegantly elevate the Cullinan to even loftier levels of luxury with matched carbon fiber woven throughout.

The 1016 Industries Black Badge features a sophisticated array of carbon fiber elements using 3D printing technology. It features custom widebody flares, a widebody rocker, full rear diffuser, trunk spoiler, grille and bumper. Created using the newest manufacturing techniques, each 1016 Industries Black Badge Cullinan carbon fiber design utilizes rare lightweight materials that are among the strongest and most durable in the world.

2022 OC90

A brand-new **2022 OC90** from **Osprey Custom Cars**, Wilmington, North Carolina, is painted a stately Santorini Black with matching wheel arches and trim.

Highlights include a premium grille with black wire-mesh insert, gloss black light surrounds, matching side intake and forced air wing top vents, upgraded bumpers, heavy-duty swing-away rear tire carrier, HD front and rear axles, **Terrafirma** suspension parts, 18-inch classic steel wheels, **Cooper** tires, 6.2L Corvette LS3 V-8 engine mated to a 6-speed automatic transmission controlled by a custom **PCS** pushbutton gear selector with LED display, heavy-duty LT230 transfer case with center differential lock (CDL), power disc brakes, **Exmoor Trim USA** interior, four side-facing stowable rear seats, modern TDCI Puma-style dash, double-DIN **Atoto** S8 **Android**-based touchscreen head unit with navigation, **Rockford Fosgate** eight-speaker array, **Viper** keyless entry and more.



2022 FORD BRONCO

A handcrafted fiberglass composite *slant-back* top is among the defining features of the ***SoFlo Stallion***, a special **Ford Bronco** offering from **SoFlo Jeeps** in South Florida.

Other enhancements include a 3.5-inch lift with steering stabilizer, 37-inch **Milestar** Patagonia tires, **Fuel Off-Road** SFJ 20-inch alloy bronze rims, a custom front steel bumper fabricated in-house and finished in black Kevlar, steel sidesteps and a **King Ranch** marine-grade tan and dark brown leather interior.



Available customizations can include a 700-plus-hp supercharged V-8 Coyote 5.0L engine upgrade.

"The market for the Ford Bronco is insatiable right now; these vehicles are nearly impossible to find, with hardly any aftermarket companies even attempting to enhance their looks and off-road capabilities, but that's what separates SoFlo Jeeps from everyone else," says Joe Ghattas, owner, engineer and head designer of **South Florida Jeeps** and its sister company **Apocalypse Manufacturing.** "We take the impossible and make it possible. We have these SoFlo Stallion 4x4s in stock now and they are ready to ship."

BRABUS 900 CRAWLER

The **BRABUS 900 Crawler** is designed as the ultimate desert dunes racer. The high-performance, all-wheel drive off-road vehicle includes a high-strength tubular frame and four-seater exposed-carbon buggy-style body.

Calling it an *off-road supercar*, the heart of the Crawler is a 900-hp BRABUS Rocket 900 V-8 twin-turbo engine mated to a 9-speed transmission that can be shifted automatically or manually with paddle shifters on the steering wheel. Top speed is electronically limited to 100 mph.

Portal axles front and rear offer more than 20 inches of ground clearance, and the company developed matching height-adjustable special struts with adjustable damping that provide up to 6.3 inches of spring travel.



McLAREN 765LT SPIDER



The **McLaren 765LT Spider** is one of the most spectacular drop-top sports cars on the market, not only due to its extraordinary long-tail design, but also on account of its performance. And thus it also represented the perfect challenge for the engineers and designers of **NOVITEC** to expand even further on the pre-existing talents with an extensive customization range.

The German automotive refinement specialist developed various performance upgrades for the twin-turbo, eight-cylinder engine, which in top specification reaches 855 hp with a high-performance exhaust.

A long list of interior and styling components adds to the customization, including NOVITEC high-tech forged wheels, developed in cooperation with American manufacturer **Vossen**.



1990 DEFENDER 110 EV

E.C.D. Automotive Design, Kissimmee, Florida, rolls out its third-ever electric Defender build. Named after the company's new home base, ***Project Arizona Desert*** is a **1990 Defender 110** restored and upgraded to the modern era with an electric **Tesla** drivetrain that accelerates from 0-60 mph in 5 seconds.

In addition to putting out 450 hp, the Defender has a range of 180 miles on an eight-hour charge. It's painted glossy Aintree Green with black accents and is outfitted with 18-inch Sawtooth wheels, 20-inch **BFGoodrich** tires, upgraded **EBC** FAST brakes and raised on E.C.D.'s adjustable air ride suspension.

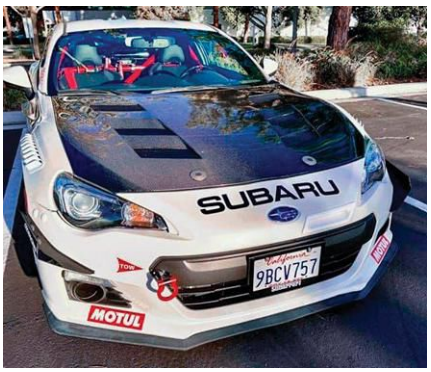
Highlights include a multi-point roll cage with two LED round spotlights mounted on the crossbar, swing-away wheel carrier on the rear door, heated and ventilated **Corbeau** Trailcat front seats, 60/40 bench seats in the mid row and two forward-facing jump seats in the load area, Puma dash, **MOMO** Prototipo steering wheel, custom center console with rear air conditioning, **KENWOOD** eXcelon infotainment system and **JL Audio** speakers.







2015 SUBARU BRZ







Ozman Trad of **Ozman Trad Graphic Design** in California sends info on a 2015 **Subaru BRZ** project. Trad plans to make the Subie a daily driver track car and says it was "pretty raced out before I got it, but I've done a bunch to it as well."

Upgrades include: **Jackson Racing** (C38 supercharger kit, oil cooler/radiator combo); **EcuTek** (tuning equipment – three tunes total); **Delicious Tuning** (flex fuel tune); **DeatschWerks** (700cc injectors, fuel pump); **Tomei** (UEL header, overpipe, 60S exhaust); **KW automotive** (Variant 3 coil-overs); **Vorshlag Motorsports** (top hats); carbon fiber one-piece driveshaft; **EXEDY** (Stage 2 clutch); **Velox** (clutch fork); **Advan** (RGII 17x8 wheels); **Bridgestone** (Potenza 71R tires); **AP Racing** (four-piston front brake kit); **Verus Engineering** (brake cooling ducts); **VIS** (carbon fiber hood & trunk lids); **Titan Motorsports** (roll bar); **Aeroflow Dynamics** (canards, diffuser); and **Beatrush** (bumper brace).

PORSCHE 911 TURBO S



BRABUS offers an exclusive refinement range for the **Porsche 911 Turbo S** of the current 992 series.

The power unit engineers of the world's largest independent automotive refinement specialist developed two BRABUS performance upgrades and a high-performance exhaust system made from ultralight Inconel for the turbocharged flat-six engine. In the top-of-the-range **BRABUS PowerXtra P38S-820** variant, the engine puts out 820 hp.

Visually, BRABUS refines the current 911 Turbo coupe or convertible with a newly developed exposed-carbon aerodynamics upgrade and staggered monoblock high-tech forged wheels. The suspension enhances already agile handling with height-adjustable BRABUS sport springs, and an exclusive Masterpiece interior adds the finishing touch to any 911 model.

FORD F-150 LIGHTNING



Introducing the **Steeda F-150 Thunder Edition** #2022-007, a purpose-built truck with enough power to outrun many of the world's fastest pickups. Starting with a 5.0L Coyote V-8 and 10-speed automatic, it features a bevy of company upgrades including a Steeda/**IHC Performance** suspension system that drops the front 3 inches and the rear 5 inches.

Highlights include: **QA1** coil-overs with 4-inch O.D. springs and dual-adjustable rear shocks, adjustable tubular upper control arms, **Delrin** high-performance bushing kit, rear shock relocation kit, performance leaf spring addition, adjustable traction bars, Steeda/**Whipple** 5.0L Gen 5x Stage 2 supercharger system with CARB-certified high-performance engine calibration, **MBRP** exhaust, **Nitto** tires, **Velgen Wheels**, **Extang** hard folding tonneau, **BedRug** bedliner, Thunder graphic package, color-matched paint package, aero package, tinted windows, **AlphaRex** Luxx-Series LED projector headlights and **Wilwood** front big brake kit.

SHELBY 'CAMMER COBRA' CONCEPT





Shelby American unveiled the **Cammer Cobra** concept at the **Carlisle Ford Nationals presented by Meguiar's** in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. A 427-ci SOHC V-8-powered continuation **Shelby Cobra Daytona Coupe**, the concept follows **Carroll Shelby**'s initial vision for a race car to compete in the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

Often called Ford's greatest engine, the Single Overhead Cam (SOHC) V-8 was based on Ford's 427-ci side-oiler block. The 650-hp engine is mated to a period-correct 4-speed manual transmission.

The continuation big-block Shelby Daytona Coupe has an aluminum body over a 3-inch lengthened chassis with a hood modified to accommodate the big-block motor. The car was assigned Shelby serial number CSX2623 and will be documented in the official **Shelby Registry**.

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1993 NISSAN 240SX









Autarky Designs sends info on a **1993 Nissan 240SX** with flip-up headlights. The project is named ***OEM BUILD***, as the idea is to integrate newer Nissan and Infiniti parts into the 240SX.

The Nissan is powered by a built KA24DE with plenty of tweaks including a 76mm **On3Performance** turbocharger and **ECUMaster** USA EMU Black control unit. The exterior includes pieces from an S13 Silvia, a 2003 Sentra and a 2004 G35 sedan, plus 350Z 35th anniversary wheels.

Interior styling includes a custom dashboard, blended 240SX and 350Z components, a 2017 Altima steering wheel, **Prosport** gauges (to come) and an **HKS** Turbo Timer.

2022 JEEP WRANGLER 392

Wildside Jeep Customs, Naperville, Illinois, sends info on a **2022 Jeep Wrangler 392** build outfitted with naval-themed highlights and a **TeraFlex Suspension** RT3 3.5-inch long arm system that improves the factory **Mopar** 2-inch lift. **Falcon Shocks** give the Jeep options for ride quality, and custom 392 bronze paint-matched wheel hubs and Allen bolts were added to the **Fuel** Off-Road Vapor wheels and **Nitto** Ridge Grappler 37-inch tires. Custom touches can be found throughout.

Participants include: **Fab Fours** (surround tube doors, front & rear bumpers); **Rock Slide Engineering** (electric step sliders); **XKGlow** (lighting upgrades); **Rigid Industries** (E-Series 20-inch LED light bar); Mopar (aluminum pedal covers, door thresholds); **Redline Tuning** (392 hood struts); **DirtyDog4x4 USA** (roll bar pads, netting); TeraFlex (HD rear tire carrier system); and **Viper** (alarm system).



2022 B6 ESCALADE

AddArmor by Quality Coachworks has gained worldwide recognition as an industry-leading vehicle armoring and protection firm. Founded by special operations military veterans, the company showcases its new **B6 Escalade**, the latest in its lineup of Full Protection SUVs.

Designed to feature bank-level security in a completely bespoke ride, AddArmor's Full Protection Packages aim to mitigate a variety of high-level threats out on the open road, including attempted kidnappings and carjackings.









Highlights include $80,000 worth of B6 AR 500 lightweight ballistic protection panels in the sides, roof and floor; siren PA system to help disperse crowds; run-flat tire inserts; executive interior with an Alcantara suede headliner and hand-worked custom leather; two custom captain's chairs with heating, cooling and massage capabilities; **Samsung** Smart TV; **Sony** stereo and subwoofer; reading lights; foldout aircraft tables; manual window shades; heating and air conditioning unit; and sleek woodgrain accents. ***TS***

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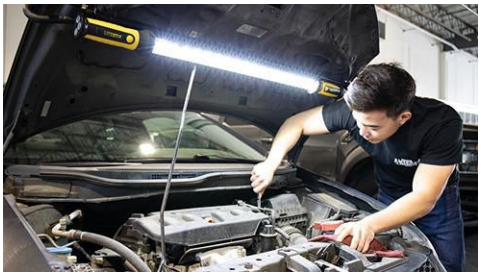
Design Engineering Inc. (DEI), Avon Lake, Ohio, presents its Dyno Strap Heat Guard that prevents damage and burn-through of critical dynamometer tie-downs. Developed to add a protective layer to dyno straps that run close to exhaust exits or other hot areas of an operating vehicle, the protective sheaths are made of a high-temperature-resistant aluminized material to withstand 500 degrees direct heat and 2,000 degrees radiant heat. The covers measure 5-inches-wide-by-36-inches-long and feature an attractive silver finish.



Brushless Impact Wrench

WORX, Charlotte, North Carolina, presents the WORX Nitro 20V 1/2-inch Brushless Impact Wrench. Compact and lightweight, the cordless wrench busts loose and tightens nuts, bolts and lugs. It is equipped with a Nitro brushless motor for enhanced output, performance and dependability. A variable-speed trigger provides complete control of fastening applications and the auto stop feature stops the tool's rotation once the bolt is loosened.

Under-Hood Lighting



BendPak, Santa Paula, California, presents the LITESTIX by BendPak work light. Designed for under-hood use, the bright, versatile LED light is powered by a rechargeable lithium battery and is completely portable. LITESTIX uses 36 LED bulbs to provide 1,200 lumens of bright light. With high and low brightness settings, it operates for up to six hours of continuous use between charges and is designed for heavy-duty environments. The lamp's all-steel telescoping cradle frame extends from 49.5 to 79.75 inches.



Disinfectant Products

Malco Products Inc., Barberton, Ohio, offers Disinfectant Products including EPA-registered disinfectant wipes and a ready-to-use cleaner. Multipurpose Malco Disinfectant Wipes clean, disinfect and deodorize hard, non-porous surfaces in one easy step and are made with an EPA-approved bleach- and alcohol-free formula. Malco Disinfectant RTU Cleaner disinfects, sanitizes, cleans and deodorizes hard non-porous and soft surfaces. Both are effective against bacteria and viruses including COVID-19.



Automotive Electric Service Tool Kit

Cementex, Burlington, New Jersey, presents its Cementex Automotive Electric Service Tool Kit. Designed as a base of insulated tools for use with hybrid and electric vehicles (EVs) as well as troubleshooting and repair to EV charging stations, the kit includes double-insulated diagonal cutting, needle nose, slip joint, crimping and water pump pliers, as well as a variety of double-insulated Cushion Grip screwdrivers. Cementex double-insulated tools are made in the USA.

Portable Car Lifts



QuickJack, Santa Paula, California, a **BendPak** brand, presents QuickJack TL Series portable lifts. The compact, frame-engaging models have an open-center design for complete access to the vehicle's undercarriage, offering more than 24 inches of ground clearance. Designed as a faster, safer lifting alternative to floor jacks, stands or ramps, the professional-grade TL line includes four models to handle everything from cars to light trucks.



ALI-Certified Lifts

Atlas Automotive Equipment, Greenfield, Indiana, offers a line of 11 Automotive Lifts certified by the **Automotive Lift Institute** (ALI). ALI certification ensures that the safety standards for automotive lifts in the U.S. are met. Testing covers structural integrity, proper control functions and overloading the lift beyond its rated capacity to ensure that it safely lives up to capacity claims without bending or breaking.

Industrial Drum Fan



K-Tool International, Plymouth, Michigan, offers a two-speed Industrial Drum Fan for shop, garage or warehouse applications. The fan is 42 inches and features sturdy rubber wheels. A lightweight design and no-slip rubber stoppers make it easy to move without sliding. The fan has a high speed of 14,800 cfm and a low speed of 11,250 cfm, creating airflow as needed in any environment. A belt-driven drive and four-blade propeller enable the working drum fan to operate quietly and efficiently. Cut-off technology eliminates the possibility of overheating.



Oil Dipstick Thermocouple Temperature Probe

The Sensor Connection, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, a division of **Harold G. Schaevitz Industries LLC**, presents an Oil Dipstick Thermocouple Temperature Probe. Made in the USA, the tool is intended for use in research and development applications to measure engine fluid temperatures. The flexible probe slides down the dipstick tube into the pan or reservoir and can be custom-made to any length per the user's specifications. The probe's compression fitting is adjustable, allowing the probe tip to be set at various depths, making it ideal for engine oil, water and transmission fluid temperature measurements. ***TS***



PERFORMANCE

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The best Pro-Touring vehicles are at home on the street or at the track. (Photo courtesy Forgeline Motorsports)

Better Than Ever

By John Carollo

The Pro-Touring market keeps improving on the classics.

Creating a Pro Touring ride means factoring in power and handling, and then using those key characteristics to go out and have some fun.

For shops, of course, it's more fun when these projects add to the bottom line. With a little bit of knowledge, Pro-Touring builders can make that happen.

To help, suppliers serving the professional market outline how the industry has changed over the years, unexpected benefits to serving this enthusiastic clientele, recent collaborations that show the potential of the restomod crowd, and hot new products to get in-house right away.

WHEELS KEEP TURNING

A market that's been widely recognized for more than two decades and dates back even further, it's easy to forget that there was some initial pushback to the idea of combining modern technology into classic vehicles when the first Pro-Touring/restomod vehicles were rolled out at car shows.

These days, the idea is so ingrained in car culture that builders continue to seek new vehicles to update just to keep things fresh.

Dan Oddy, product engineer at Detroit Speed & Engineering, remembers more than a decade ago when his company's 1969 *Twister* Camaro made a splash.

"The market has progressed from there to include Chevy II, Chevelle as well as early Mustang builds. To keep it growing, customers and builders have started using less-common muscle cars like the third- and fourth-generation Camaros and Ford Fox body vehicles," he says. "Over the years, we have had customers ask about Pro-Touring products for trucks. Now you can walk into a shop and see a variety of builds including everything from Fox bodies to trucks to Mopar vehicles."

That variety helps keep the market strong, says Tim Sayers, muffler development manager at Borla Performance Industries.

"It continues to evolve with additional

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Pro-Touring builds are about expanding beyond a shop's comfort zone. (Photo courtesy Canton Racing Products)

products being available, many of which have improved technology," he says.

Trever Cornwell, president of IDIDIT, reveals that demand for Pro-Touring products has eclipsed traditional restoration components in some categories.

"People want to be able to drive a classic vehicle, but they want the handling and reliability of a modern car," he explains.

More street and/or track time is a driving factor of Pro-Touring's popularity.

"The market has been advancing more and more with new products and tech that have been pushing the envelope of the performance of these vehicles," says Iann Criscuolo, tech manager at Canton Racing Products. "One area that can be overlooked is the oiling system and overall engine health, so we strive to provide products that make sure the engine lasts."

A wider market encompassing more vehicle types means a larger group of participants—on the road and at the track, notes Garrett Harmola, president/owner of Aldan American.

"There's a ton of high-quality products on the market today dedicated to Pro-Touring-specific builds. Manufacturers of performance parts are developing products that can be used on daily drivers or show cars that are fully capable at the track," he says.

Even if they never use them, Pro-Touring owners like knowing their street cruisers have a track-worthy appearance and abilities.

"Part of the market is going toward more streetable cars," observes David Schardt, president of Forgeline Motorsports. "The all-out performance track/autocross build is still a large part of our business, but we are also seeing a lot of customers that just want that look but will never take it on the track."

HOT PRO-TOURING PRODUCTS

HOT PRODUCTS:
Road Comp Single-Adjustable & RCX Double-Adjustable Coil-Over Kits
FEATURES & BENEFITS: Combinations of coil-overs, coil-springs and bracketry that allow a full front and rear conversion to a fully adjustable coil-over suspension; true bolt-on design that's fully adjustable for classic muscle cars and 2WD trucks; made in the USA.
Aldan American
Garrett Harmola
President/Owner

HOT PRODUCTS: CrateMufflers
FEATURES & BENEFITS:
Eliminate or drastically reduce drone/resonance on cataloged applications; combination of a muffler that looks like a universal muffler but sounds like a Borla application-specific muffler in one of our Axle-Back or Cat-Back systems.
Borla Performance Industries
Tim Sayers
Muffler Development Manager

HOT PRODUCTS:
Accusump Oil Accumulators & Associated Accessories
FEATURES & BENEFITS:
Provide higher-performance vehicles with sufficient oil control for applications including autocross, drag racing or road racing, or to prevent dry starting; system based on simplicity and universal fitment for any type of performance/street application.
Canton Racing Products
Iann Criscuolo
Tech Manager

HOT PRODUCTS:
DSE 1967-87 GM C10 Truck Speed Kits
FEATURES & BENEFITS:
Speed Kits include components to lower a truck while upgrading the suspension; OEM-quality stamped crossmember includes upgrades such as rack and pinion steering, tubular control arms and coil-over shocks and springs; 100% bolt-on in a single day.
Detroit Speed & Engineering
Dan Oddy
Product Engineer

HOT PRODUCT:
OE1 Three-Piece Wheel
FEATURES & BENEFITS: Steel factory wheel appearance from the 1960s-70s; strong; can take the original center caps of many older wheels; 50% lighter than its steel counterpart; available in 17-, 18-, 19-, 20- and 22-inch diameters in any width for Pro-Touring applications.
Forgeline Motorsports
David Schardt
President

HOT PRODUCT:
1968 Camaro Retrofit Steering Column
FEATURES & BENEFITS: Eight-position tilt; American-made components; high-quality fit and finish.
IDIDIT
Trever Cornwell
President



Demand for Pro-Touring products has eclipsed traditional restoration components in some categories. (Photo courtesy IDIDIT)

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WHO SAYS PRO-TOURERS CAN'T GET A LITTLE DIRTY?

Velocity Modern Classics has revealed its latest build in a new lineup of restomod Ford truck models. The 1970 F-250 dubbed *High Roller* has been rebuilt from the ground up to be a turnkey driver.

It pairs a carefully restored body with a custom drivetrain, Coyote V-8 power plant and handcrafted interior with modern creature comforts.

Starting with a Roadster Shop RS4 chassis, the truck comes equipped with all-new Dana axles—a Dana 44 on the front end and a Dana 60 in the rear. To make it more capable off-road while maintaining ride quality, the build features custom-valved AFCO shocks and a Baer brake system.

The Velocity F-250 is powered by a Ford Performance 5.0L Coyote V-8 crate engine combined with a custom exhaust and proprietary serpentine belt system. Moving everything along is an automatic transmission with overdrive and an Atlas II transfer case to allow for an easy change to 4WD.

The interior and exterior of the pickup have been reimagined to incorporate modern features while maintaining a classic look. The exterior features custom paint and J.W. Speaker LED headlights, and the pickup rides on 33-inch Toyo Open Country tires wrapped around 18-inch paint-matched wheels.







A Ford F-250 restomod from Velocity Modern Classics shows that Pro-Touring builds aren't just for older muscle cars anymore.

All-new glass and weather seals and California-style sideview mirrors complete the makeover.

Inside, Velocity has crafted an interior that includes a custom bench seat made from premium leather, an exclusive Dakota Digital gauge cluster and a custom dash. Sound comes through a Bluetooth-enabled RetroSound Huntington head unit and a Morel sound system complete with subwoofer.

Modern climate control is handled through a Vintage Air system and the truck is driven by a Sparc Industries steering wheel attached to an IDIDIT tilt column.

"The Velocity F-250 is a representation of an incredible, innovative team that brought an idea to life with inspired renderings, calculated visions and passion. Velocity is run by a group of individuals who are consumed with bringing classic restoration artistry to the modern world," says Cody Dabney, director of custom vehicle operations. "The F-250 *High Roller* is the pinnacle of our new Heritage Edition and a beautiful addition to our signature series. We can't wait to see it on the road."

Velocity is now taking reservations for the first five units, with deliveries scheduled for next summer.

BUILDING MOMENTUM

Suppliers note than when you build a quality Pro-Tourer, there are opportunities to build your business at the same time.

"The owners of Pro-Touring vehicles are often influencers within their group of friends and acquaintances," Sayers says. "These owners often will recommend the shop to their friends and acquaintances."

When that happens, Criscuolo suggests shops be willing to stretch beyond their comfort zones.

"It gives shops room to explore other sectors of the automotive market, and they can expand their customer base by catering to more performance-minded customers and the motorsports spirit that comes with Pro-Touring projects," he says. "This, in turn, will expand the shop's capabilities, expertise and overall ability to produce more quality builds."

While restomod builds are often all about uniqueness and creativity, suppliers work behind the scenes to create versatile products that fit and function as intended, and are ready to provide guidance to shops in need when they do stretch their wings.

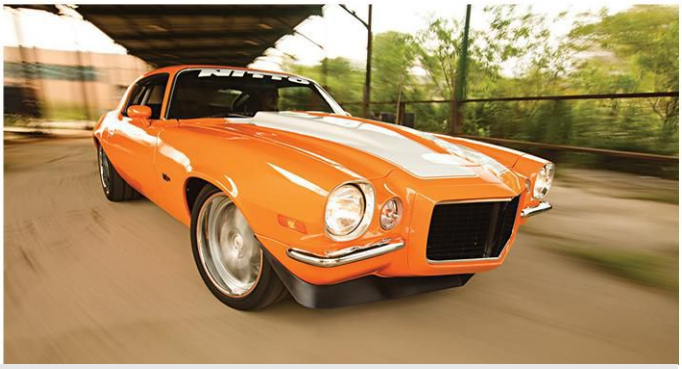
"We offer installation pictures and instructions," Oddy notes. "Over the past few years on our newer products, we have really stepped up our installation and technical/sales videos. This gives a first-time installer the opportunity to install our product in the time that was quoted, since they'll have the confidence to attack the installation after watching our videos."

Hitting those performance and time goals builds trust with customers, making them more likely to come back for more.

"Owners will continue to upgrade these vehicles long after the initial build, resulting in potentially more sales down the road," Schardt predicts.

And the builds naturally have the potential for wide-ranging add-on sales.





New products and technology are advancing the market. (Photos courtesy Canton Racing Products)

"Shops that focus on Pro-Touring products and builds have the opportunity for repeat business," Harmola says. "A client bringing their classic Camaro in for an LS engine swap will most likely need to upgrade their brakes, suspension, wheels and tires to make their project more streetable, capable and enjoyable. Shops that offer high-quality parts and services can gain business in several different product categories with each new incoming client."

Remember, part of the allure is to outpace the original factory performance.

"When a chassis or driveline is being upgraded, sometimes those (new) parts don't play well with OEM parts, or many times the original parts are not up to the demands of a Pro-Touring car," says Cornwell. "If you put a brand-new chassis under a 50-year-old car but keep the original steering column, the part you interact with most while driving is still a 50-year-old component and is likely worn out and tired."

MEET YOUR MATCH

It's rare to see restomod builders or drivers go it alone. When help is needed, the best suppliers are just a phone call away.

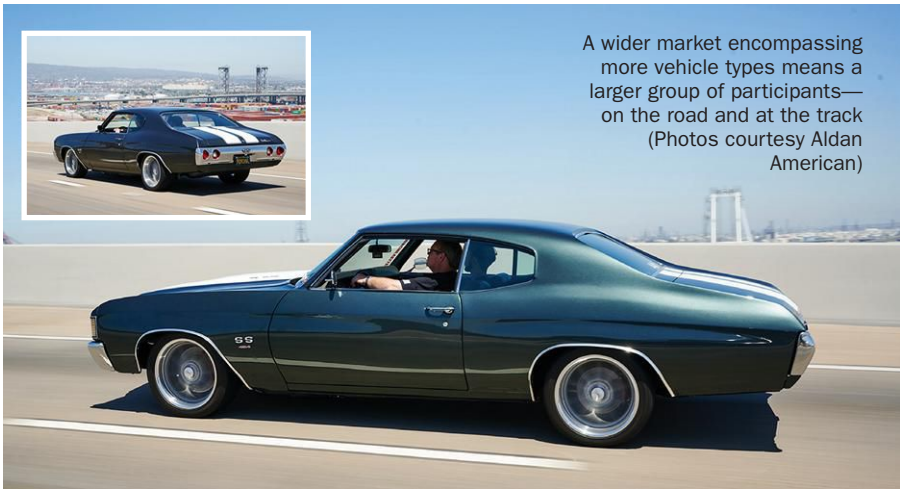
"We have an increasing number of new Pro-Touring vehicle owners that call and troubleshoot issues with their oiling systems and how to remedy these issues with our products," says Criscuolo from Canton Racing Products.

Of course, some of the industry's biggest names build vehicles in the Pro-Touring





Variety keeps the Pro-Touring market strong. (Photos courtesy Borla Performance Industries)



A wider market encompassing more vehicle types means a larger group of participants—on the road and at the track (Photos courtesy Aldan American)

niche, which means there are plenty of chances to get inspired. Forgeline's Schardt suggests a recent 1953 Corvette from Kindig-It Design as a shining example.

IDIDIT's Cornwell adds to the list.

"We work with several high-end builders like the Roadster Shop, Alloway Street Rods, Kindig-It Design and Speedkore Engineering. Salvaggio Design sticks out for the recent builds it completed for customers like Kevin Hart. These builders are taking cars to a completely new level."

And when you're ready to tackle your own project, the manufacturers suggest not operating on an island. Partnerships and collaborations help capture the energy and mood found in the best Pro-Touring vehicles.

"Our 1966 Borla Corvette convertible is a great example of a Pro-Touring project," Sayers explains. "From the outside, the vehicle looks stock. However, closer inspection shows that it has a long list of modifications that have improved the car's drivability, performance and reliability to that of a modern muscle car. Some of the key modifications include a GM LS3 6.0L crate engine, Borla fuel injection system and CrateMufflers, TREMEC 5-speed manual transmission, QA1 suspension/shocks/sway bars and Wilwood disc brakes."

And, as mentioned earlier, Pro-Touring is not limited to cars.

"Two-wheel drive trucks, especially on the West Coast, are being saved and built more and more," says Harmola from Aldan American. "Classic C10s have been popular candidates for Pro-Touring builds over the years. We're seeing more of the 1990s OBS



Owners will continue to upgrade these vehicles long after the initial build, resulting in more sales down the road. (Photo courtesy Forgeline Motorsports)



The Pro-Touring category continues to cover new ground. (Photo courtesy Detroit Speed & Engineering/ detroitspeed.com)

Chevy trucks being built into Pro-Touring models. Stay tuned to the team at Black Widow Exhaust, which is taking a 1990 C1500 and converting it into a track-capable daily driver—LS swap, wheels and tires, manual transmission and Aldan American coil-overs."

Such truck builds are the perfect example of what can be achieved in the Pro-Touring market, says Oddy, pinpointing a collaboration between DSE and Level 7 Motorsports on a suspension upgrade for customer Keith Sadler's GM square body pickup.

"Keith has been competing with our suspension for over a year now, hitting a ton of events and beating on our product relentlessly," Oddy says. "One of his favorite features is the steering upgrade we made with our power rack and pinion that bolts to the stamped crossmember. I can tell you that driving these old work trucks now feels like you are driving a modern muscle car." ***TS***





THOUGHTS FROM THE HEARTLAND

Tips on forging a career building restomods. **By Jeff Page**

The Heartland Customs building in Purcell, Oklahoma was built in 1949. It was originally a Buick, Pontiac and GMC dealership and the glass *bubble* showroom is still intact today.

October is always an interesting month for custom car builders. The positive is the miserable summer temperatures begin to wane, which makes priming and painting vehicles much easier.

Spirits seem to rise around the body shop, but it also means that we're getting closer to the annual SEMA Show.

SEMA is an enormous automotive trade event held in Las Vegas that brings the best of the best into one arena to show off the results of their hard work. It's a time to check out other builders' vehicles and network with vendors and industry professionals.

For those that have been asked to feature a car at SEMA, October means you have less than a month to get your vehicle(s) show-ready. As the crew at Heartland Customs and I gear up for the hectic month of October leading up to SEMA, I was asked to reflect on my almost 16 years as a professional car builder.

During that time, I've had some of the same conversations over and over, asking about my experiences and preferences. I always take the time to respond, but I thought this might be a cool medium to post the most asked questions and answers.

Q: HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN BUILDING CARS?

PAGE: I started restoring my first car in 1994 when I was 14 years old. It was a 1968 Camaro that would be my first car when I was 16.

After that, I did some CJ5 and CJ7 Jeeps and some square body Chevy trucks. I always had a passion for taking stuff that looked like junk and turning it into something beautiful.

Q: WHAT GOT YOU INTO THE CAR HOBBY?

PAGE: When I was 14, I decided to search out my mom's 1968 Camaro that she bought new at the age of 16. After some research, we located the car and purchased it back from the lady that owned it after my mom.

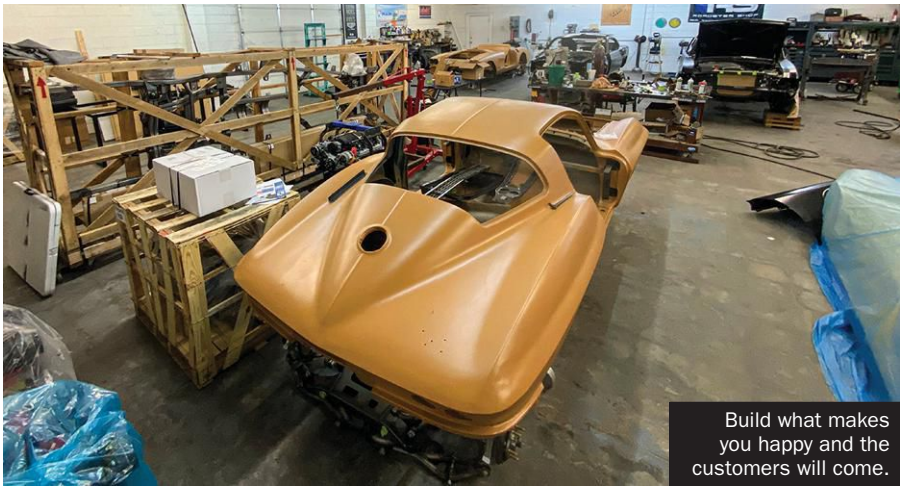
It took my dad and I nine months of nights and weekends to restore that car. It is what spawned my interest in the classic car industry and also gave me one of the coolest cars ever to drive when I was 16.

I still own that car today and it is in line for another complete redo, this time as a full restomod.

Q: HEARTLAND CUSTOMS HAS ONE OF THE COOLEST LOOKING SHOPS IN THE COUNTRY. WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE BUILDING?

PAGE: The Heartland Customs building in Purcell, Oklahoma flanks the South Canadian River and was built by the Sparlin family in 1949. It was originally a Buick, Pontiac and GMC dealership and the glass bubble showroom is still intact today.

Originally, the Chrysler dealership was across the street and the Chevrolet dealership was to the south. Canadian Street was



Build what makes you happy and the customers will come.

an Automobile Alley back in the 1950s and '60s. The building has been completely renovated over the years, and we'll be adding on to it later this year.

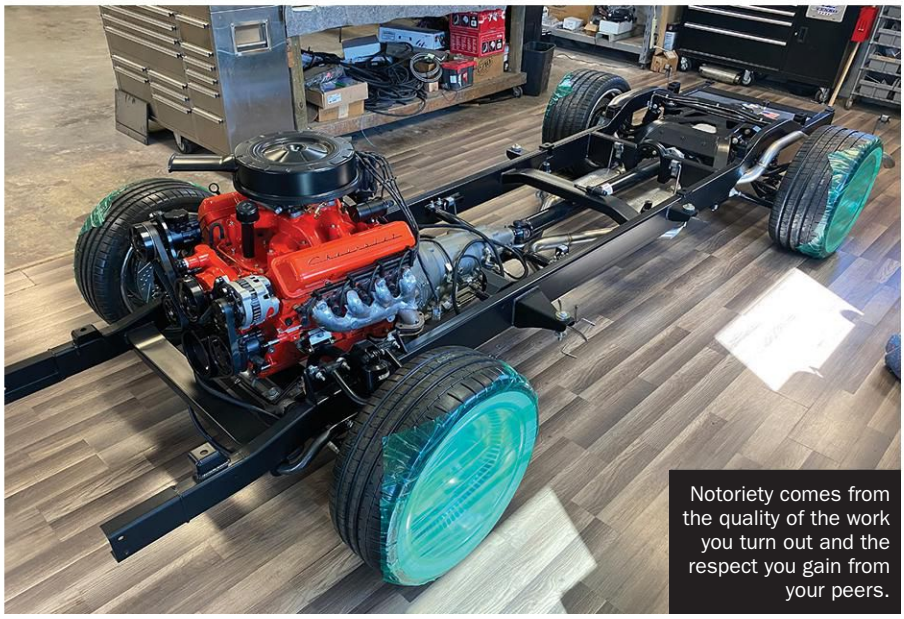
Q: HOW BIG IS YOUR SHOP?

PAGE: The original 1949 building is 5,000 square feet. In 2018, we expanded into a nearby building as well, which added another 6,000 square feet. Later this year we have plans to expand the original 1949 building by 9,000 square feet.

The design of the expansion will reflect the styling of the original building for a cohesive look.

Q: WHAT WAS THE FIRST BUILD YOU COMPLETED AT HEARTLAND CUSTOMS?

PAGE: The very first complete Heartland Customs build was a 1969 Camaro owned by a local pizza restaurant owner. It was supposed to be for his 16-year-old son. However, once we completely restored the car and he saw the quality of the bodywork and paint, I don't think the 16-year-old got to drive it very often.



Notoriety comes from the quality of the work you turn out and the respect you gain from your peers.

Q: WHAT HEARTLAND CUSTOMS BUILD ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

PAGE: We are blessed to have been able to do so many nice builds and meet so many cool customers over the past 16 years. They all hold a special place in my heart.

If I had to choose the one that stands out the most, it would be David's 1955





The team at Heartland Customs has been a part of many nice builds and met a lot of cool customers over the past 16 years.



The shop's passion is evident in everything it does.



Chevy Bel Air. The short version of the story is that David came to us with a body in primer, milkcrates full of parts and a dream. His dad had purchased the car for $100 and a .357 magnum pistol and titled it in David's name when he was 3 years old.

Well, David was now in his 40s and at a place in life where he could afford to have the car built right. Since he had owned the car for almost 40 years, he knew in his head exactly how he wanted it to look.

Once we extracted the info and nailed down some restomod upgrades to make it more comfortable to drive, we stripped it to bare steel and went to work. A little over a year later we unveiled that car to David and his family and about 200 onlookers at a local show.

There wasn't a dry eye in the place after I told the story over the microphone of how this car came to be (mine included). After the show, a 300-pound offensive lineman for the University of Oklahoma walked up to me and thanked me for what we had done for David. He was crying too and didn't even know the car owner!

We are still friends today with David and Paula and the car is part of their forever family.

Q: DOES HEARTLAND CUSTOMS ATTEND A LOT OF SHOWS?

PAGE: I try to make some Goodguys shows and we go to SEMA every year, but we are so busy in the shop and chasing our son around the country playing baseball that we rarely have time to attend many car shows anymore.

I'm sure once our son graduates from high school and goes to college we will have more time to pick back up on the show circuit. I'd really like to attend some Concours shows like Amelia Island and Pebble Beach in the next couple of years.

Q: WHAT CAR OR TRUCK HAVE YOU NOT GOT TO BUILD THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO?

PAGE: I have been hired to build so many Corvettes, Camaros, Chevelles, Novas and, yes, even Mustangs over the years. I have always loved the big cars of the 1950s—Buicks, Oldsmobiles, Chryslers, etc.

The one big car that I have on my bucket list to build is a 1950s Cadillac convertible. There are those huge body panels to work to perfection, tons of chrome, and the styling of those cars was absolute perfection. I may have been Elvis Presley in my past life with my love for Cadillacs.

Q: DO YOU HAVE A SHOP AT HOME?

PAGE: I just completed a brand-new shop at my house for personal projects. After 16 years, I figured it was about time to build some cool stuff for myself.

It has a shop side that has every tool needed and a new BendPak two-post lift. It also has a finished showroom to serve as the clean room for assembly and a place to display my own builds.

Most importantly, I air-conditioned the entire thing so I can use it year-round.

Q: WHEN DO YOU THINK EV CONVERSIONS WILL BE A MAJOR PART OF RESTOMODDING?

PAGE: This is a great question I got recently on social media. I know there are EV conversion companies and technology popping up everywhere, and even an EV section at SEMA this year that I will definitely be checking out.

Heartland Customs is working on some EV stuff and has a couple of customers interested in building EV Corvettes. I think the battery technology and packaging is really the only thing that is hindering the EV market all around, but especially on the conversion side for classic vehicles.

Trying to integrate modern internal combustion drivetrains and suspension packages is hard enough, but then trying to find a place to store heavy batteries and maintain as close to a 50/50 weight ratio in, say, a 1963 Corvette is a nightmare for a custom builder.

My opinion is that when the battery technology catches up and packaging gets much smaller, you will see more and more EV restomod conversions. At that point I will begin missing the smell of America coming out of the exhaust tips.

Q: WHAT IS YOUR DAILY DRIVER?

PAGE: I get this one all the time. As much as people want to hear me say it's a restomod Corvette, it isn't. I drive the company truck, which is a 2021 GMC Denali 3500HD dually. I only commute about 5 miles to and from work each day, so driving that beast around isn't too bad.

I do have a 1969 Camaro RS/SS convertible and a 1950 Chevrolet five-window truck that are both about to go under the knife at my home shop to become restomods. When those are completed, the dually will get parked unless we are hauling a trailer, and either the '69 Camaro or the '50 five-window will be my daily driver.

Q: FINAL THOUGHT FOR CURRENT OR BEGINNING CAR BUILDERS?

PAGE: If I have one piece of advice to give current and/or beginning car builders, it is to focus on building what you have a passion for. Build what makes you happy and the customers will come.

Don't chase awards and plastic trophies, which we all have done. The notoriety will come from the quality of the work you turn out and the respect you gain from your peers—not from a $4 plastic trophy or a wood plaque. ***TS***



JEFF PAGE *is the founder and CEO of Heartland Customs in Purcell, Oklahoma. The shop is world-renowned for its ability to build completely modernized classic vehicles while retaining the original OEM look. Its restomod Corvettes are considered the market benchmark and have won numerous top awards nationwide including SEMA General Motors Car of the Year. Jeff is very active in giving back to his community and sharing his experience and knowledge with fellow builders and enthusiasts. Visit heartlandcustoms.us.*



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Non-Requested Copies Distributed Outside the Mail	281	49
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Total Distribution	15,349	15,108
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Percentage Paid and/or Requested Circulation	92.9%	92.0%
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Requested and Paid Electronic Copies	1,993	2,033
Total Requested and Paid Print Copies + Requested/Paid Electronic Copies	16,248	15,934
Total Requested Copy Distribution + Requested/Paid Electronic copies	17,342	17,141
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The quick turnaround, increased overall productivity and attention to quality that go into remanufactured products can positively impact a shop's bottom line. (Photo courtesy Zumbrota Drivetrain)

REMANUFACTURING PROFITS

Save time, money & possibly the planet. // **By Evan Griffey**

With the skyrocketing prices of both new and used cars, daily drivers are staying on the road longer than ever. The shelf life of a typical vehicle climbed to an all-time high of 12.1 years in 2020, according to research firm IHS Markit.

As vehicles get long in the tooth, major systems like transmissions, transfer cases, engines and electronic components begin to show their age and require replacement. When one of these products reaches the end of its life cycle, owners come to a crossroads—do they refurbish, rebuild, replace or remanufacture?

It's a tough call because fewer and fewer youngsters are growing up working in home garages, resulting in a shortage of technically affluent workers capable of rebuilding complex automotive hardware.

If your shop offers any type of repair or replacement services, here's a rundown of options to keep your customers' cars on the road and money in their wallets.

THE FOUR RS

Refurbish, Rebuild, Replace, Remanufacture.

Refurbishing returns a lightly used but poor-performing part to its original specs. This is usually a very minor operational fix or may merely address the part's cosmetic appearance.

Rebuilt products address more critical failures. Rebuilding consists of inspecting, cleaning and replacing worn or broken parts. Functionality is restored, though the unit may not be held to OE-level quality control standards and parts of widely variable conditions of wear may be used in the rebuilding process. Further, some used components may be from a different core/base unit altogether.

Replace is self-explanatory. It's swapping the component in question for an OE factory new replacement part. This method delivers the most quality assurances but comes with a hefty price tag.

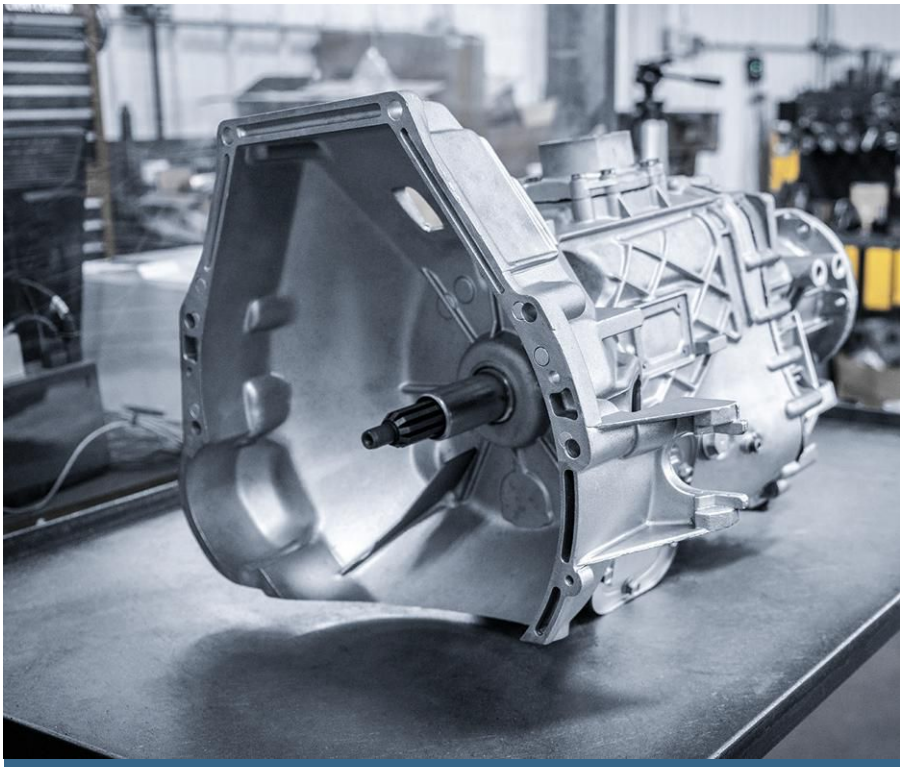
Finally, going beyond a repair shop workbench, **remanufacturing** takes the OE assembly line approach, has the tooling and talent to build to or beyond OE quality, and does it at a much more competitive price point. This means shops can turn vehicles quickly by removing and replacing aged or faulty units versus taking the more labor-intensive repair route and waiting for parts.

PROS OF THE PROCESS

The advantages of remanufacturing.

The advantages of remanufacturing are evident at the beginning of the process where the incoming core is inspected and cleaned. These operations go far beyond a perfunctory peek and wipe down.

The core material—i.e. housings, internals, etc.—is checked for wear, stress



Shops can turn vehicles quickly by removing and replacing aged or faulty units with remanufactured parts. (Photo courtesy Zumbrota Drivetrain)



REMANUFACTURING ADVANTAGES

- Less Downtime
- More Invoices Per Week
- Work Performed in a Factory-Like Setting
- Stock OEM or Better Performance & Reliability
- Replaces More Parts Than Any Other Reuse Process
- Products Backed by Stronger/ Longer Warranties
- Economy of Scale Savings for Shops & Drivers
- Superior Quality Assurance



When the proper conditions exist, remanufacturing becomes the preferable option. (Photo courtesy Zumbrota Drivetrain)



Units are quality-checked at various stages of the remanufacturing process to ensure proper performance. (Photo courtesy Zumbrota Drivetrain)

cracks, heat damage, stripped threads and whatnot. Many units are quality-checked at multiple stages of the remanufacturing process to ensure proper performance.

Some remanufacturers like Zumbrota Drivetrain take cleaning to the extreme, using proprietary processes that include media blasting and hot-tanking on its remanufactured transmissions, transfer cases and differential assemblies. The Minnesota-based company says the benefits of this are more effective inspections, less chance of contamination during assembly and a better customer experience, as the unit looks like new instead of a greasy piece that has received some mechanical form of CPR and may still not be long for this world.

The advantages continue when looking at the assembly process of a remanufactured component. The core of a remanufactured product is broken all the way down to its most basic parts, while a repaired product will only have the problematic part replaced.

Economically, the volume benefits of remanufacturing win the day. Since remanufacturers have a set list of parts that require replacement, they can make batch orders, reducing the overall cost of the unit in question and having those parts in stock and ready to go. Meanwhile, a repair facility won't know what is needed until the job is well under way.

So, better price for the customer, better profit margin for shops and quicker turnarounds—it's a win/win/win.

QUALITY & TESTING

The backbone of any successful business.

The remanufacturing process is conducted in a factory-like setting, in some cases with dedicated clean rooms. Quality assurance testing is performed at various stages of assembly.

After the last bolt is tightened, most repair shops set off to install the unit. However, many remanufacturers first perform functionality tests to confirm the proper operation of the product before the time-consuming task of installation begins.

JASPER Engines & Transmissions live-tests its engines, evaluating operating temperatures, oil pressure, vacuum and compression while also checking for oil leaks via black light illumination testing.

Zumbrota has an extensive verification program for its manual transmissions. Once the transmission is built, an experienced technician performs a visual and basic functionality test. Then the unit moves to the company's special transmission dynamometer, where another dedicated technician fills it with fluid and brings it up to temperature. Zumbrota checks for noise, shift quality and gear retention under load while spinning in both directions.

BBB Industries, which remanufactures starters under the Remy banner, performs an intensive computerized load and power testing process on its own proprietary test equipment.

These types of validation tests eliminate any false starts where the improper functionality of the product isn't revealed until a technician test drive, or worse, when the end-customer drives away thinking all is well.

WORK YOUR CORE

Streamlining the core return process.

One of the biggest trends in remanufacturing is sustainability. It's been more than a buzzword for a few years now and cores are at the heart of the movement.

Rebuildable cores allow more parts to be reused, which keeps more metal off the scrap heap. The process is good ecologically and good economically.

Along with a financial incentive in the form of a core charge, leading remanufacturers have gone to great lengths to make the core return process easy for customers, be they an installation shop or a do-it-yourselfer working in a driveway.

Ready-made totes designed specifically for the part in question make it simple to get cores headed out of the shop and cash headed into your account.

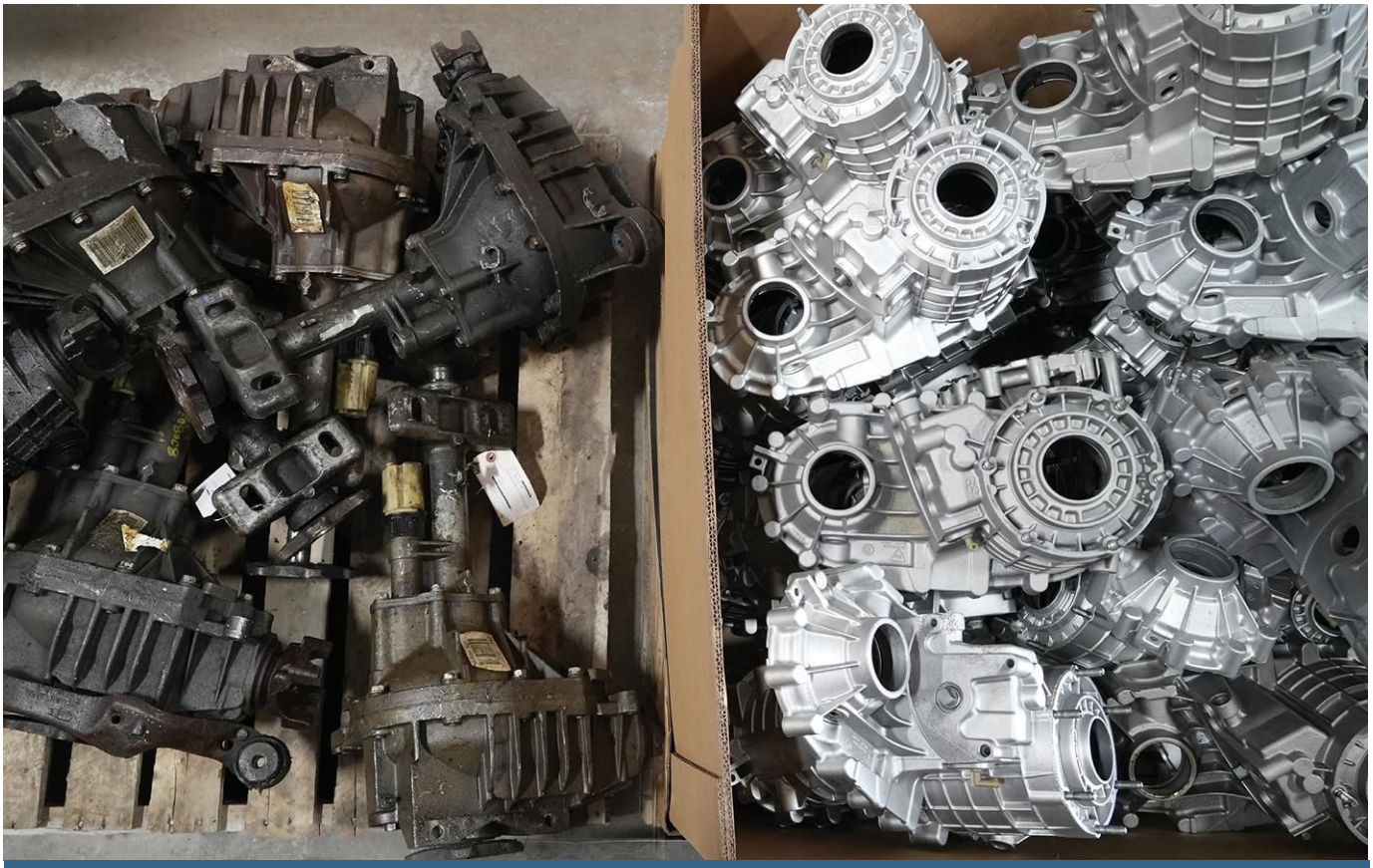
THE TIME IS NOW

Getting in on the action.

Remanufacturing is a smart way to do business that's getting bigger. According to the *Global Industry Analysis, Trends, Market Size, and Forecasts to 2026* report from researchandmarkets.com, the global automotive parts remanufacturing market is slated to grow with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.1% over the forecast period from 2020 to 2026.

The study covers the analysis of the leading geographies such as North America, Europe, Asia-Pacific and RoW for the period of 2018 to 2026.





Rebuildable cores allow more parts to be reused, which keeps metal off of the scrap heap. (Photo courtesy Zumbrota Drivetrain)

The bottom line—now is the time to cash in on the high margins and bigger profits that remanufacturing represents.

EXAMPLE TEST CASES

Remanufacturing success in the real world.

Still need convincing? Here are some real-world test cases that show the power of remanufacturing as an option.

YOUNG'S GEAR LLC

Anchorage, Alaska
Owner: Justin Herrin

Overall, Herrin reports remanufactured products make up more than 50% of his business. He is quick to point out that this rate is higher in the unforgiving winter months, which are hard on drivetrains.

His shop uses remanufactured transfer cases, front differentials and manual transmissions.

"The trend is on the rise," says Herrin. "Because of COVID and staffing shortages, I've had to venture out heavier into the remanufactured market. The attraction is the quick turnaround and overall increase in productivity from the labor side. I have 30 reman transfer cases and/or front diffs on my shop floor right now. Having a proper inventory, especially up here in Alaska, makes sense. The fast R&R (repair & return) of reman is more profitable for a shop like mine. I'd also say the used car market is tough and new cars are expensive. The age of the car and the total repair costs are the likely deciding factors when it comes to fixing any given vehicle. I've seen higher repair tickets on vehicles that customers would never have paid to get fixed two or three years ago."

TRIANGLE IMPORT REPAIR

Bremerton, Washington
Owner: Ken Wilson

This general shop does all sorts of repairs up to head replacements, but farms out engine swaps, transmission repairs and rear end jobs. The attraction of remanufactured parts is their cost advantage.

"A solid 70% of my starter and alternator repairs are remanufactured replacement units," says Wilson. "However, I see that percentage trending downward as the cost of new, non-OEM units from the likes of Bosch, Nippondenso and Hitachi are equalizing. A reman starter for a BMW X5 I recently worked on was $135 and I could get a new one for $140. Every vehicle is different, but…"

AAMCO

Seattle, Washington
Owner: Christopher Kim

Kim says remanufacturing makes up 20% of his business but knows your results may vary.

"The percentage will be very different depending on the type of employees at each shop," he notes. "We have all options available, and for us it's a quicker turnaround to rebuild; doing it in-house makes

money. Our whole operation is set up on rebuilding, while other shops may have no choice but to go used or remanufactured. The need for reman is specific to any shop, be it a Pep Boys, a mom-and-pop operation or another AAMCO franchise."

TOWN & COUNTRY AUTO REPAIR
Chico, Washington
Contact: Adam Carter

Town & Country is a general repair shop that will swap engines but tends to refer transmission work. When it goes reman, Town & Country uses reputable remanufacturing companies that stand behind their products with a proper warranty.

Carter says remanufactured parts are 10% to 15% of his total business.

"Of small-part jobs, 40% to 50% of starters and alternators that go through the shop are reman units. We very much prefer new OE components, but they cost three times more and that's just too prohibitive. I will say we have experienced a supply shortage of new products, so reman is becoming a much more popular path for us."

IN CONCLUSION

It's clear that the quick turnaround, increased overall productivity and attention to quality that go into remanufactured products can positively impact a shop's bottom line. And people factor into this equation as well.

The knowledge and skill of its technicians determines the ultimate capabilities of a shop, expanding or constricting the types of jobs it can accept and complete in a timely and profitable manner.

When the proper conditions exist, remanufacturing becomes the preferable—and not just a viable—option. ***TS***



EVAN GRIFFEY *is part of the content team at RANDYS Worldwide. He is a former magazine editor, freelance automotive journalist and photographer with more than 30 years of experience in the aftermarket performance industry.*





By Tony Thacker

BUCKET List

Fad T-bucket builds bring a style all their own.



It's a fad that we might have thought we'd seen the backend of a long time ago, but suddenly Fad T-buckets (T-bucket roadsters fabricated from new parts) are back—complete with no front brakes, skinny wire wheels and Jaguar rear ends. I, for one, am pleased.

You can trace the origin of Fad T-buckets back to 1955 when Norm Grabowski's *Lightnin' Bug* graced the cover of the October issue of *HOT ROD* Magazine. In April '57 it was on the cover of *Car Craft* and then Grabowski—a part-time actor—was featured heavily in the seminal issue of *LIFE* magazine that covered the hot rod and drag racing scene.

Grabowski's *Bug* also appeared on the late-50s hit Warner Bros. TV show *77 Sunset Strip* as *Kookie's Kar*. There wasn't a kid around who didn't tune in to see actor Edd *Kookie* Byrnes jump into that car and take off.

Kookie's Kar had a huge influence, especially on actor Tommy Ivo, who first saw the car at Bob's Big Boy in Toluca Lake, California. As he later recalled, "Grabowski came riding in with a little Model T-bucket. I thought to myself, 'Man, that car is the ticket. If I could come to Bob's on Friday and Saturday nights in a car like that, it would be bitchin.'"

Soon after, Ivo measured up *Kookie's Kar* before going out to the desert, where he found an abandoned T Touring with a Yucca tree growing out of it. Once home, Ivo cut the phaeton body down to a two-door, added a shortened Model A pickup bed and installed a Buick V-8 in a Model A chassis.

Ivo's bucket enjoyed similar popularity to Grabowski's when it hit magazines such as *HOT ROD* in August '57 and appeared in movies such as



"Kookie's Kar" made quite the splash after appearing on the show "77 Sunset Strip."



Californians may still spot the famed "Texas T" cruising local highways with its split steering wheel and, of course, no front brakes.



Dragstrip Girl and *Bikini Beach*.

The popularity of these buckets was not lost on pinstriper and showman Ed *Big Daddy* Roth. Roth bought a short-wheelbase bucket from Bob Johnston called *Tweedy Pie* and it was a hit—but not as big of a hit as the next Roth-mobile, *The Outlaw*.

Instead of using a desert-found body, Roth fashioned his own stylized bucket out of fiberglass, along with a combined grille/quad headlight nacelle. It was wildly different, and Roth soon made it more so when he swapped the rear tires for drag slicks and the regular front wheels for a pair of dragster-style wires with—wait for it—no brakes.

The Outlaw was quickly made into a plastic model kit by Revell, as were *Kookie's Kar* and Ivo's bucket. According to Dave Boule, who worked at Revell, *The Outlaw* "was a huge seller and they called Roth back time and again to make more models."

FIT & FINISH

Back in those days, if they made a model kit of it, then it was officially a fad.

The mold had been set and the style of T-buckets that followed the originators all included severe rakes, open engines, short beds and *big n' littles* (big tires on the back; small on the front), of which the rears were often slicks while the fronts were invariably dragster-style wires sans brakes.

It wasn't long before the industry started producing T-bucket kits. After all, a T frame was nothing more than two sticks of 2x3 box section steel with a couple of crossmembers—one to hold a *suicide* buggy spring front axle and another to secure an independent rear suspension, most often pirated from a Jaguar.

In the Bay Area, Andy *The Rodfather* Brizio built a bucket, *Instant T*, that went on to win the America's Most Beautiful Roadster award at the Oakland Roadster Show in 1970.

Brizio's simple kit inspired others, and in 1970 Bill and Diane Keifer opened California Custom Roadsters (CCR) in Orange, California. Still owned and run by the same family, CCR continues to offer everything from frame plans to nearly complete cars.

Readily available bucket kits caused a nationwide boom, and nowhere more so than in California where the weather cooperated with a T's extreme big n' littles and lack of brakes or fenders.

Indeed, there was a loophole in the California Department of Transportation Vehicle Code 27600 (California Mud Flap and Fender Laws) that "did not apply to vehicles having an unladen weight of under 1,500 lbs. or any vehicle manufactured and first registered prior to Jan. 1, 1971, having an unladen weight of under 1,500 lbs."

Paraphrasing the law, it meant that if your bucket weighed under 1,500 pounds, you could get away with having no fenders. Bingo, every bucket punched underweight.

BUCKETS O' FUN

Influential hot rod clubs such as Early Times and Vintage Tin soon counted

BUCKET List

The Fad T-bucket trend started back in the 1950s, and the shiny rods continue to attract attention today.



The rolling throwbacks include severe rakes, open engines, short beds and "big n' littles"—big tires on the back, small ones on the front.



Ed "Big Daddy" Roth fashioned his stylized bucket "The Outlaw" out of fiberglass and a combined grille/quad headlight nacelle.

buckets aplenty in their rosters, and because those groups were tight with the magazine publishers, the fad soon went nationwide—even in states where they made little sense because of harsh weather.

The bucket trend didn't die quickly, but it did eventually fade as rodders desired more practical rides. Fast-forward to the modern era, however, and more than a few rodders have rediscovered the Fad T.

You could see the roots of the rebirth begin to grow when Troy Ladd's Hollywood Hot Rods created the famous 1960 Monogram model kit *Black Widow* for customer Michael Feinstein in 2009. Feinstein had been a huge fan of a model kit designed by Roger Harney and eventually had the opportunity to build the real thing.

Another young hot rodder reimagining his childhood sweetheart is Piero De Luca of Mad Fabricators. De Luca didn't set eyes on Roth's *Tweedy Pie* until 2006, but when he did it was love at first sight.

"I made a trip out to the Detroit Autorama to film the Ed Roth spotlight display for Mad Fabricators," he reports. "I never paid much attention to *Tweedy Pie* until I saw it in front of me and I instantly fell in love, saying to myself, 'I'd like to build something like that someday.'"

Now, he and his friend *Lucky* Burton are baking a new *Pie*.

It's original buckets, however, that are all the buzz with people unearthing them from garages across the country.

Texas T, one of the most famous originals from back in the day, was built by the late Jim Ewing, founder of Super Bell Axle Co. and, in turn, suspension company Belltech. Ewing was quite the character and told great stories of gatecrashing the T into the Pomona drags, shouting, "No brakes!" He wasn't lying.

Texas T changed hands several times until Matt and Todd Robbins, owners of the SO-CAL Speed Shop, were able to purchase



California Custom Roadsters (CCR) in Orange, California offers everything from frame plans to nearly complete cars.



Troy Ladd's Hollywood Hot Rods created the "Black Widow" for customer Michael Feinstein in 2009.

the remains. In 2020, the Robbins' sold the car to Don Piper who has continued the restoration with Evin and Justin Veazie at Veazie Bros. Fabrication in Pomona, California.

"Driving the *Texas T* on the freeway in today's traffic is a little scary, especially with the split steering wheel," Evin Veazie admits, "but Don appears to have a handle on it, even without front brakes."

Finally, there's the story of Vintage Tin member Gary Lorenzini, whose T was powered by a Junior Fuel motor with 12:1 compression and a 4-speed—all in an 86-inch wheelbase frame.

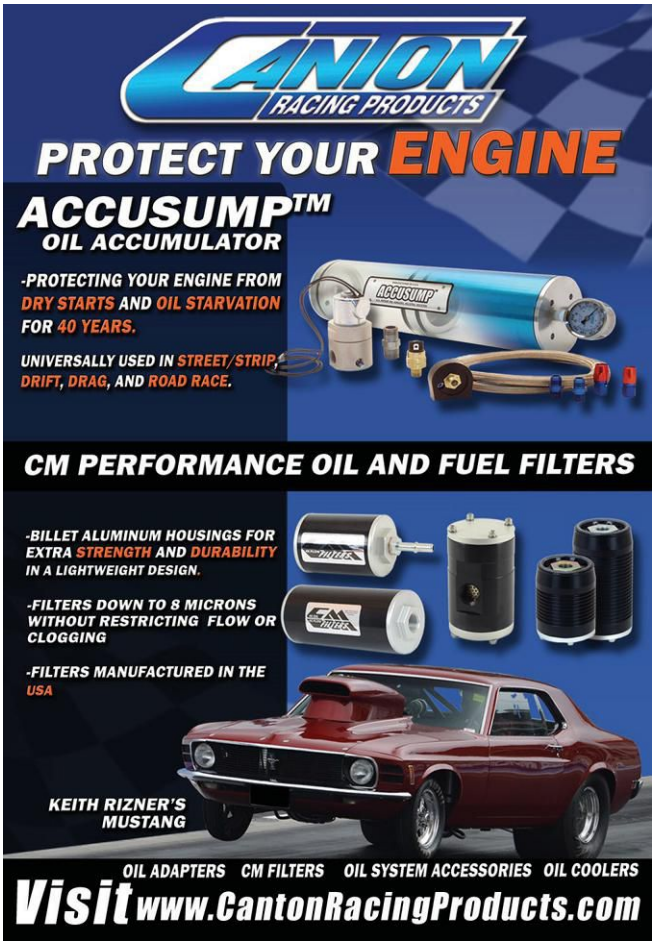
After finding it in a storage yard where it had sat for decades and secretly restoring it, Lorenzini's son Scott presented his father with the car on Father's Day 2010.

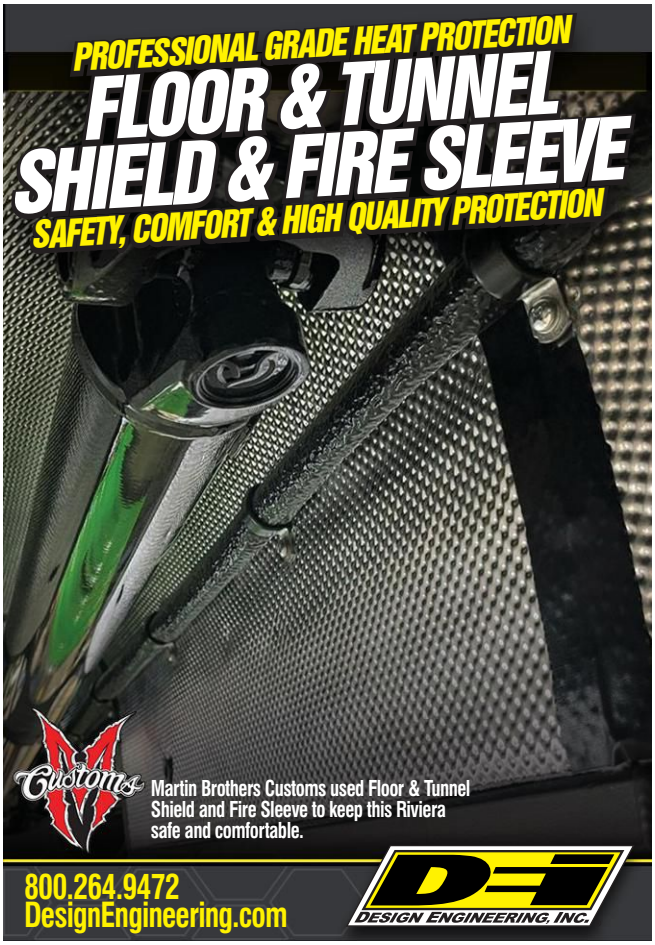
Gary had built the car in high school with hand tools. It had a suicide front end, 12-spoke mag wheels and, of course, no front brakes. Upon seeing the car for the first time in 30-plus years, he instantly recalled doing a 180 into a guy's front yard.

It's what T-buckets were, and are, all about. ***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.*







Mustang Tachometer Conversions

Scott Drake, Bowling Green, Kentucky, a **Holley Performance Products** brand, presents 6,000- and 8,000-rpm In-Dash Tachometer Conversions for 1967-68 Ford Mustang applications. The mini-tachs add a factory-looking tachometer to the instrument cluster without sacrificing other gauges. They install easily in the optional clock hole and provide an OE appearance. No modifications are needed for the instrument bezel, but minor trimming to the backside of the instrument cluster assembly is required for proper installation.



Wrangler 392 Exhaust

MagnaFlow, Oceanside, California, presents its Jeep Wrangler 392 Street Series Cat-Back Performance Exhaust System. Designed as the latest evolution in exhaust sound and dyno-proven performance for 2021-up Jeep Wrangler 392 models, the 3-inch main tubing meets dual free-flowing, straight-through mufflers and NDT (No Drone Technology) resonators before terminating in a quad rear exit with 4-inch black chrome tips.

Fairlane Coil-Over Kits

Aldan American, Signal Hill, California, offers Coil-Over Kits for 1962-70 Ford Fairlane models. The bolt-on coil-over conversion kits are made in the USA and provide up to 2 inches of lowering. Fully adjustable and tunable shocks deliver an improved ride and better handling.



JK Hydraulic Throwout Bearing

Centerforce, Prescott, Arizona, presents a new Hydraulic Throwout Bearing for 2007-18 Jeep Wrangler JK models. Engineered to solve the bearing rattle noise that commonly affects JKs with manual transmissions, it is an easy upgrade to worn-out factory components. It also converts the problematic OEM external slave cylinder and mechanical fork arrangement into an efficient internal hydraulic throwout bearing. The kit features a conversion hose for a simple bolt-on installation.





Buick/Olds A/C System

Vintage Air, San Antonio, presents its all-new Gen IV SureFit Kit air conditioning system for 1982–88 Oldsmobile Cutlass and 1986–87 Buick Grand National and Regal models. The systems are available as either a Complete Kit or an Evaporator Kit and are designed to install with minimal modifications to the original firewall. The powerful, intelligent climate control units employ a fully electronic microprocessor control system that eliminates cables or vacuum connections. A bolt-in LED backlit control panel maintains the factory appearance.

GM Off-Road Exhaust Suite

AWE, Horsham, Pennsylvania, presents its new 0FG Exhaust Suite tailored for off-road-oriented Chevrolet Silverado ZR2/GMC Sierra AT4X models. The systems feature true dual T304L stainless steel construction, drone-deleting 180 Technology, and two tip options for the flat bumpers—quad 4-inch tips in chrome silver or diamond black, or the company's BashGuard. Extra design measures prevent side-to-side exhaust movement.



Diesel Fuel Additive



Hot Shot's Secret, Mt. Gilead, Ohio, presents EDT+ Winter Defense diesel fuel additive. The new seven-in-one anti-gel fuel booster is formulated for use during cold winter months. Designed to boost power, increase cetane, add lubricity and clean injectors, the additive also solves cold weather gelling and icing problems by minimizing the size of wax crystals to allow fuel to travel through the fuel filter at up to minus-40 degrees. It is recommended for use in any diesel-powered vehicle. See it at SEMA Show booth #20221.

High-Performance 16-Inch Fan



SPAL USA, Ankeny, Iowa, introduces its 30107328 flush-mount fan, the latest model in its 16-inch Sealed Brushless (SBL) fan line. The new fan features a 500W brushless motor and utilizes the same mounting footprint as SPAL 16-inch VA18 and VA33 brushed fans. In free air conditions, the flush-mount fan is rated at 2,433 cfm. All SPAL SBL fans feature motors sealed to IP6K9K standards, integrated power and signal electronics, soft start technology that eliminates electrical in-rush spikes, digital control, temperature sensor options and more.



Universal Fuel Cell Plate

Aeromotive, Lenexa, Kansas, presents a Universal Fuel Cell Plate with bolt patterns to fit most fuel cells with a 6-by-10-inch outlet plate. The fuel cell plate is engineered for use with most Aeromotive fuel pumps and allows for local or remote filling without the need to purchase an additional fill neck. The system with fuel pump and accessory mounts provides maximum safety and durability for fuel cells at least 10 inches deep. It features an integrated rollover valve, a billet fuel filler neck and cap, and provisions for a tube-style sending unit.



Circle Track Piston

JE Pistons, Cypress, California, presents its ultra-lightweight IMCA/USRA 2-Barrel Piston. Maximized for off-the-corner acceleration in circle track racing applications, the piston features bore sizes ranging from 4.030 to 4.065 inches with 0.005-inch increments to maximize block compatibility; strut lightening holes that help remove mass and improve windage; a 0.043-inch gas nitrided top, 0.043-inch Napier second and 3mm oil ring design that reduces drag; accumulator and contact reduction grooves; and double pin oiling.



TA Road Race Piston Kit

MAHLE Motorsport, Fletcher, North Carolina, presents a shelf-stock LS3 Flat Top Homologation Gasported PowerPak piston kit designed specifically for Trans-Am and TA2 racing. Available with three bore sizes with incremental bore sizes available by special order, the kit comes complete with a steel 1.0mm top, 1.0mm second and 2.0mm oil file-fit performance ring set, heavy-duty tool steel wrist pins and race-proven round wire locks. Manufactured from 2618 alloy, the kit delivers extreme duty, power and performance.





LS Engine Swap Products

Doug's Original Headers, San Dimas, California, a **PerTronix Performance** brand, presents an offering of LS Engine Swap products for 1963-72 GM C10, 1964-67 Chevelle and 1970-81 Camaro/Firebird applications. Available as individual pieces, the swap products include transmission crossmembers and motor mounts, a low-profile oil pan, and exhaust and header systems.

1966 GT Mustang Grille Kit

California Pony Cars, Ontario, California, presents its 1966 GT Mustang Running Horse and Corral Grille Kit. The Ford officially licensed diecast replicas are made with quality materials and then triple-chrome-plated for a long-lasting finish. Made in the USA, each part is available individually or as part of a kit.





Headliner Kit

Heatshield Products, Escondido, California, presents the db Headliner Kit. Designed to add a layer of heat and sound insulation between the headliner and the roof of older vehicles, the system includes two components—Stealth Shield that can handle up to 1,800 degrees of constant heat and is 1/8-inch thick, and db Skin liquid sound damper that applies easily with a paint brush, roller and certain spray guns and dampens panels against vibration over a range of 10 to 40 KHz. The combination delivers a significantly cooler and quieter interior.



Jeep Differentials

Eaton Vehicle Group, Galesburg, Michigan, offers ELocker Differentials for 2018-up Jeep Wrangler JL and 2020-up Jeep Gladiator JT models equipped with manual or automatic transmissions. The electric locking differentials need just one wire to actuate and require no additional components such as air lines or compressors. Designed for drivers that want full control and traction on demand, they feature net-forged gears for strength and durability, and electronic controls that provide driver-selectable operation and added reliability.

Replacement Brake Fluids

Continental, Allentown, Pennsylvania, presents its complete line of ATE Replacement Brake Fluids featuring special formulations designed to help maximize brake system performance in all types of electronic, hydraulic and racing systems. The full line includes ATE Super DOT 5.1, ATE SL.6 brake fluid replacement for ESP, ABS and ASR electronic brake systems, ATE SL for hydraulic brake and clutch systems, and ATE TYP 200 for high-performance and racing applications.





Front Dragster Tire

Mickey Thompson Tires & Wheels, Stow, Ohio, presents its new ET Front Dragster tire. Available in a 22x2.5-17 size for all Sportsman dragsters, the ET Front has a lightweight tubeless design acceptable for high-speed use. It features a bias-ply construction and new white vinyl letters. Benefits include reduced unsprung weight and lower rolling resistance.

Mustang Anti-Roll Bar Kit



UPR Products, Lake Worth, Florida, presents a bolt-in Anti-Roll Bar for 1979-2004 Ford Mustang applications, part of the Pro-Series suspension kit. Designed to eliminate body roll and stabilize the car down the track, the setup features roller bearings and a solid 1-1/4-inch bar. Not compatible with stock tailpipes, it is designed for drag race use only.



Mustang Vertical Links

G Force Performance Products, Akron, Ohio, presents Vertical Links for 2015-22 Ford Mustang models. Designed to eliminate unwanted wheel hop, reduce suspension flex and improve handling characteristics, the links are made in the USA and feature a high-strength spherical bushing design and billet aluminum housing.



Mercedes Titanium Exhaust

Akrapovič, Horsham, Pennsylvania, presents Evolution Line (Titanium) exhaust systems, now available for Mercedes-AMG GLE 63, GLE 63 S, GLE 63 S Coupe and GLS 63 applications. The systems feature three exhaust valves operated by a specially developed control kit—one on either side of the muffler. The fully sandblasted exterior is completed with a new tailpipe design constructed from handcrafted carbon fiber with a titanium inner sleeve. The system delivers a power increase of 8.6 hp and a torque gain of 15.7 pound-feet at 2,800 rpm. ***TS***





Laid-Back Garage brought a flatbed hauling a Ford woodie to the 2016 SEMA Show.

RAMPED UP

Race car transports don't have to be boring.

///// **By John Gunnell**

There was a time when race drivers drove their cars to the track, then blanked out the headlights and took off the wheel covers before going racing. After they completed their laps—if they avoided any accidents—they then drove the car back home again.

It was in the early 1950s that ramp trucks began showing up at the Friday night jalopy car races. Most of them were home-built haulers like the 1947 Ford COE (cab over engine) truck that Noel Clemmer of Lake Lynn, Pennsylvania, drove to the 2016 Iola (Wisconsin) Car Show with a fenderless Model A five-window coupe on the back. Clemmer had fitted his old truck with a newer diesel engine, but both the truck and car had authentic old-school racing graphics.

Clemmer's combo mirrored a new and growing trend in the collector car hobby. As



A homebuilt 1947 Ford COE (cab over engine) ramp truck that Noel Clemmer drove to the 2016 Iola Car Show demonstrates the fun and creativity of the hauler restoration niche.

interest in vintage racing cars has grown, so has a passion for retro race trucks and ramp trucks to haul, or at least complement, the competition coupes and racing roadsters of the past.

We photographed a plain white Ford ramp truck in a Pennsylvania collection in 2009—just ahead of a real growth spurt in the niche.

RAMPS & RIVALS

The ramp truck trend saw a spike in 2013 when the film *Snake & Mongoose* debuted.

Its star cars were displayed at the Las Vegas Convention Center during the SEMA Show and then became a headline attraction at the 2014 Barrett-Jackson auction in Scottsdale, Arizona.

In the early 1970s, Don *The Snake* Prudhomme drag raced the bright yellow Mattel *Hot Wheels* Plymouth Barracuda, which he carried on a Dodge truck transformed into a race car hauler. His rival, Tom *The Mongoose* McEwen, raced a Plymouth Duster hauled around on a 1967 Dodge D-700 truck, both painted bright red.

In 2008, Prudhomme had the last remaining car from his Wildlife Racing venture in his shop. It was a fully functional '70 Barracuda Funny Car built as a replica of his racing car. The yellow Plymouth Barracuda hadn't ever actually raced, but it was the same car he had taken on the Mopar-backed Rapid Transit System dealership tour in 1970.

That's when Prudhomme got the idea to find and restore his old truck to carry the car around the country. Prudhomme discovered that a man in Saugus, California still had the truck, which the racer had sold him in 1973. However, it needed a complete body-off frame restoration.

Prudhomme first hoped that he could just have the truck painted when he returned with it to his Vista, California shop.

"I went to look at it and didn't even recognize it," he told an interviewer. Someone had bolted a semi-truck front bumper on the Dodge and the owner could only run it by feeding gas to the engine from a milk jug.

Prudhomme knew his shop could make the truck look new again, so he started a two-year restoration. By the time he was done, it was like the old hauler had gone back in time.

With car No. 1 and hauler No. 1 restored,



"The Snake" ramp truck sold for $247,500 at the 2014 Barrett-Jackson auction in Scottsdale, Arizona. (Photo courtesy Barrett-Jackson)



A former AMC van-style race hauler redone by Kettle Moraine Preservation & Restoration with Penske Racing Sunoco DX livery.



This is an old photo, but collectors have been known to restore vintage auto transporters.

RAMPED UP

RAMP TRUCKS AT BARRETT-JACKSON

This was the Barrett-Jackson Catalog description of Don Prudhomme's Dodge D-700 ramp truck before the set of two race cars and two haulers from the Hot Wheels "Snake vs. Mongoose" promotion was auctioned in 2014:



NASCAR team owner Rick Hendrick ultimately purchased the two ramp trucks and accompanying race cars auctioned as the Hot Wheels "Snake vs. Mongoose" package at Barrett-Jackson in 2014.

Lot No. 5042—Don "the Snake" Prudhomme's frame-off and fully restored 1967 *Hot Wheels* Ramp Truck, which famously transported his Funny Cars during the 1970s match racing era.

Upon its discovery by Dick Maxwell from Plymouth, the 1967 Dodge D-700 crew cab *Hot Wheels* Ramp Truck was originally purchased by Prudhomme in Greensboro, N.C. in 1969. It had been previously owned by Richard Petty.

The ramp section was then customized and installed per Prudhomme's specific racing needs. The ramp truck then went into service, beginning in 1970, as an integral part of Mattel's legendary Hot Wheels "Snake vs. Mongoose" promotion.

These events saw Prudhomme and Tom McEwen square off in match races across the country, while also making countless appearances at toy stores, retail outlets and other locations. From 1970-1972, photos of the ramp truck appeared in many magazine articles, news stories and packaging for Hot Wheels toys, models and track sets.

Upon conclusion of the Hot Wheels promotion at the end of the 1972 season, the ramp truck was sold by Prudhomme to a buyer in California. Thirty-five years later— having already restored many of his older Funny Cars (including the yellow 1970 Plymouth *Hot Wheels Snake I* Funny Car)—Prudhomme wanted to locate, purchase and restore the ramp truck in order to have a complete original touring package.

Using the original VIN and with some assistance from local law enforcement, Prudhomme tracked down the vehicle in early 2008 and found that it was still owned by the same buyer who purchased it from him in 1973. The truck had, in fact, never left the State of California.

Once relocated to his Vista, Calif. racing headquarters, Prudhomme personally oversaw the truck's complete, frame-off restoration, which was done largely in-house with long-time employee Willie Wolter serving as the project manager.

The Barrett-Jackson sale also included an original Bill of Sale, the original work order for ramp modification, an original spare 1966 426-cid stock HEMI cast-iron motor and Prudhomme's original driving suit, helmet and uniform.

Here was the Barrett-Jackson Catalog description of Tom McEwen's Dodge D-700 ramp truck:

Lot No. 5043—In 1967, Plymouth ordered the manufacture of the Dodge D-700 for the pioneering NHRA Pro Stock racing team of Sox & Martin. The truck was then sold to Tom *The Mongoose* McEwen in 1970 and modified to match Don Prudhomme's own yellow '67 D-700 for the beginning of Mattel's Hot Wheels "Snake vs. Mongoose" promotions.

Forty years later, Prudhomme located the truck with its original Chrysler vehicle identification Certicard in Riverside, Calif., where it had sat neglected for several years. He oversaw the complete, frame-off restoration, which took nearly two years.

Now complete, both original "Snake & Mongoose" Hot Wheels trucks are the signature pieces of Prudhomme's collection.

Prudhomme began to dream about tracking down McEwen's hauler. It was found, sitting in very rough condition, behind a house in Riverside, California.

However, the original Dodge Certicard, which had been issued to Sox and Martin, was still in the glovebox. Prudhomme bought the second truck and he and his team restored it using old photos to make everything look period correct.

When Prudhomme learned the *Snake & Mongoose* movie was going to happen, he made sure that both trucks would be used as props. Prudhomme told *Hemming's Motor News* that the trucks were a big part of the *Hot Wheels* days.

"You'd pull into the tracks to match race and the kids would gather around to *ooh* and *ahh* and look at them. Life just didn't get any better," he recalled.

With the movie completed and released

in 2013, all four of the old race-bred vehicles were consigned to the 2014 Barrett-Jackson Auction. Heavily promoted in the auction's advertising and in magazine articles and press releases, they were also displayed in a new Auction Salon Collection building.

"Included in the sale are the original frame-off and fully restored 1967 Dodge D-700 Ramp Trucks, which hauled both Funny Cars during the 1970s match racing era," one writer reported.

All the vehicles in the display were used in the movie. All except McEwen's Plymouth Duster were original vehicles used by the racers in the 1970s.

They were consigned to the well-known, year-starting auction with a reserve price on them. Despite all the hype and media attention, bidding on the four items—to be sold as one lot—stalled at $1 million, which was not enough to clinch an on-the-block sale.

However, Rick Hendrick—who's a car collector in addition to being a NASCAR racing team owner—put together a deal to purchase the two cars and two trucks and Barrett-Jackson reported that the two Dodge D-700 ramp trucks had sold for $247,500 each.



A clean Ford ramp truck photographed in a collection around 2009.



The ramp truck concept is reflected in some of today's powersports haulers.


Ramp trucks can be a fun way to show off special builds.

RIDING HIGH

After the sale, it seemed as if all the leading vintage racing car collectors wanted to find an old ramp truck, race van or COE with a flatbed to haul their racing cars around. The 2015 SEMA show had such trucks in several vendor booths.

In 2016, Kettle Moraine Preservation & Restoration brought a van-style race car transporter to the vintage races at Road America in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin. It was based on a 1972 International Fleetstar truck chassis with a custom aluminum body built by Trail R Van, originally for American Motors' NASCAR racing team.

Tiger Tom Pistone then bought the truck to haul cars raced in the Goody's Dash Series and at other short track events. After 1989, the truck sat outside Pistone's shop in Charlotte, and in 2004 it was auctioned off on eBay and then restored with Sunoco DX livery.

After its restoration, it won Best in Class for retired racing machines at the Road & Track Concours d'Elegance at Elkhart Lake. The following day it took Best Overall in a related event at the track.

The interest in race car transporters and trucks that actually competed in drag events and at various truck series events opens up a new niche with added business for specialty automotive shops.

As Prudhomme discovered, a race truck restoration can take up to two years, and that was for one that he had researched and tracked down before the restoration work began.

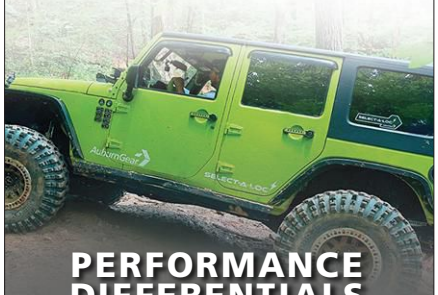
If a racer asks a shop to find a truck, bring it home and then restore it, the project can get even longer and more lucrative. And if the truck has a pedigree—like most of those pictured here—the project becomes even more interesting. ***TS***



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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Foose Decorates Greg's Speed Shop Wall

By John Gunnell

The lineup of celebrity guests at the 50th Anniversary Iola Old Car Show in July was headlined by Chip Foose, whose vehicle display at last year's SEMA Show was recently featured in *THE SHOP* magazine. Other celebs at the Wisconsin show included Linda Vaughan, Jo Coddington (widow of Boyd), actors Kevin Sorbo, Cindy Williams, Candy Clark and Mackenzie Phillips, West Coast pinstriper Von Hot Rod, and Bob Fryz, owner of the *ShBoom* car.

When the show ended on Saturday some celebs headed home, but Foose, Coddington, Von Hot Rod and Fryz attended an after-show party at Greg's Speed Shop in nearby Waupaca, Wisconsin.

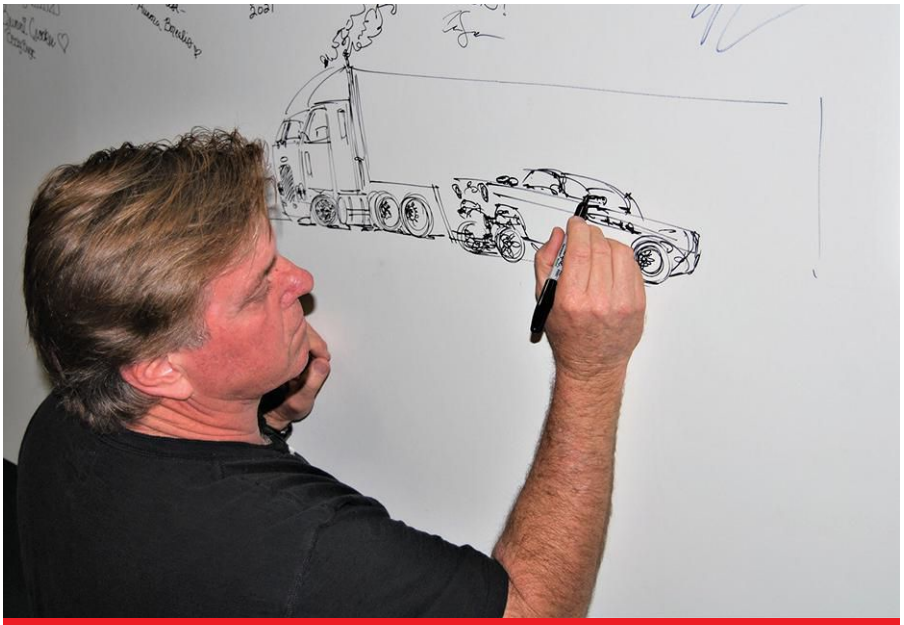
THE SHOP was invited too, and we got there in time to view the highlight of the evening—Foose doing a rendering of the speed shop's *The Joker* race car and hauler on the shop's wall of fame.

We've told this story before, but in 2018 Greg Stelse told his wife Leah that he had decided to sell his trucking company and take a deep dive into the business of building hot rods and fixing-up old cars. Greg had already amassed a car collection that featured about 40 vehicles, from drag race cars and lead sleds to stock classics.

Stelse's collection included a race car he called *The Joker*. Today, the two-tone green 1957 Pontiac Star Chief two-door hardtop is usually on display inside Greg's Speed Shop if it's not speeding down a Midwestern drag strip. A matching Freightliner truck and trailer came later to haul *The Joker* around in style.

Apparently, Foose was impressed when he saw the shop's rig at the Iola Old Car Show. When Stelse asked guests at the afterparty to autograph his wall of fame, Foose took the opportunity and ran with it.

Rather than scrawl his signature on the white wall in a couple of seconds, Foose spent 30 minutes or so drawing a scene with *The Joker* rearing up on its haunches, parked next to the race truck.



Partygoers watched as Foose memorialized "The Joker," the shop's 1957 Pontiac Star Chief race car, along with its Freightliner hauler and trailer.

While the other partygoers watched, Foose intently captured the lines of the truck and the car without as much as looking at a photo or model. Starting with the Freightliner's distinctive grille and winding up with the familiar Greg's Speed Shop oval logo on the trailer, he created a never-to-be-washed piece of artwork on the wall—a wall that also carries the signatures and greetings of hundreds of car and truck lovers including shop customers, racers, pin-up queens and even legendary West Coast customizer Gene Winfield.

The only spot where there was enough free space for the sketch was low on the wall, so Foose perched on his knees the whole time. Needless to say, Stelse and all those in attendance were thrilled with the result.

The Iola Old Car Show is held annually the second weekend of July and Greg's Speed Shop (gregsspeedshopllc.com) always has something exciting going on during that time. The shop is also active during the nearby Symco Rod & Kustom Weekender and other car shows, as well as in the drag racing world. ***TS***



Greg and Leah Stelse with Chip Foose after he decorated the wall of fame at Greg's Speed Shop.



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