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Desert-Motors Magazine

July/August 209

Editor-in-Chief

Patrick Erzen

Copy Editor

Nick Erzen

Contributors

Dian Baylor

Otis Blank

Dean Micalizio

Marcus Morton

John Schlicting

Brian Stupski

Seth Wood

Special Thanks

Rodney Davies

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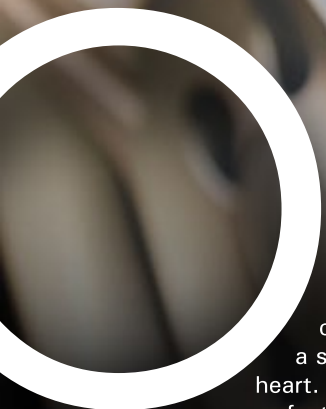
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f all things in the automotive world, coachbuilders hold a special place in my heart. Unlike major auto manufacturers who have to focus on an entire vehicle from the first technical drawing to the last bolt, a coachbuilder is focused solely on the physical appearance of the vehicle. They take one of the most elementary requirements of an automobile and elevate it to an art form.

Dating back several centuries, the art of coachbuilding has sadly changed and faded greatly from its heyday in the early 20th century. With the advent of unibody construction, mass production and everything-under-one-roof business models, coachbuilding in the traditional sense has become increasingly less financially viable. Where it once applied to a wide range of automobile types and price points, it has now been relinquished to only the most exotic and luxurious of automobiles.

However, many coachbuilders have survived and reshaped themselves with the times.

In the case of Zagato, one of the world's most prominent coachbuilders, it's much more than simply making something that's pretty. Founded at the end of World War I by Ugo Zagato, they were one of the first builders to apply aircraft industry technology and construction techniques to passenger vehicles. Not surprisingly, Zagato not only became synonymous with lightweight and aerodynamic design, but also with beauty and grace.

Zagato has had a long history with Aston Martin beginning in 1960 with the prominent and now highly sought after DB4 GT Zagato. More recently, they teamed up on the DB7 Zagato in 2002 and a year later, on this, the DB AR1. Restyling an existing car is one thing, but restyling Aston Martin's most successful car of all time and a car that is widely considered one of the best looking modern designs is another. It's like saying, "okay, what you did is great,

but here's how it should've been" and I love that kind of arrogance. Or rather, I love it when it turns out like the DB AR1.

Making its official debut at the 2003 Los Angeles Motorshow and designed specifically for California, the American Roadster is the first and only car Aston Martin has developed for a specific market. Offering absolutely no weather protection, unlike the Vantage Volante it is based on, it is really only suitable for temperate, dry climates making it an outcast in its native Britain. Aston Martin only built 99 AR1s and orders came in very quickly with virtually all of them making their way to North America. Mechanically there aren't many changes from the Volante. The 6.0-liter V12 received a slight increase to 435hp and the wheels and brakes were swapped for more aggressive units.

The DB AR1 was the very last variant of Aston Martin's iconic DB7 and, with the help of Zagato, certainly one of their very best.





EVERYONE KNOWS...
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The Detailing Garage Great Car Washes

Words: Marcus Morton

I know one thing to be true. **Life's Better In A Clean Ride!** I am excited about sharing with you on a professional level some auto care tips, how to do's, and product knowledge for maintaining and preserving your ride. Whether it's your daily driver, sunday cruiser, or perhaps a whole collection, the end result should have the same exhilarating feeling as smashing the pedal to the floor on an open road. I am honored to be able to bring to you some of my experiences and share them with you in Desert-Motors Magazine.

I am often asked, "what is the best product for...?" Although I do have my favorite products that I will share with you in the coming issues, my response is simple. If you enjoy the results that you achieve with the products you are using then stick with them. I know that this is often a way of asking what else is out there that I should try? I also like trying different products as a lot of the way a product behaves on a car can be very different from make, model, and ultimately the paint that is used. In this issue, you will find some recommendations for a great car wash.

The easiest and fastest way to get your ride looking pretty and maintained is a simple bubble bath. There are some techniques in washing a car that will minimize the impact and prevent minor blemishes and paint imperfections from occurring. Without using the proper products, washing your ride alone can cause scratches to appear that weren't there before you started. Although they may not be deep, they can often be very apparent in an adequate light

source or the sun. It is normal over time, however, to eventually have a few of these "micro" scratches as just a part of normal wear and tear from being on the open road along with maintaining your vehicle. This is why it is recommended to professionally detail your vehicle often.

Water:

Clean warm water is needed. For those of you who suffer from hard water, it might be necessary for optimum results to invest in some type of filtration system to minimize water spotting that could occur during the wash process.

Soap:

It can be overwhelming when walking into a store to buy a new car soap. I have tried several from the cheap stuff to paying a premium amount for different soaps. Some with waxes and others that claim they remove bugs and tar. In my opinion, the most expensive has not been the best. I look for soaps that have a thick viscosity and create a cloud of bubbles when purged with water. To the touch, it should feel somewhat "slimy" as this tells me that there is plenty of lubricity to glide your wash mitt/sponge along the surface. It is always important to wash a panel at a time rinsing your wash mitt/sponge each time. Here are a list of some soaps that I recommend: Carnu-B Auto Shampoo, Surf City Garage, and Griot's Garage

Wash Mitt or Sponge?

It doesn't matter to me what you choose as a preference, just not your dirty sock or wash cloth. I like a true micro fiber mitt as

they absorb plenty of soapy water and appear to be gentle on almost all surfaces. It is important to separate a wash mitt/sponge for painted surfaces and another for your wheels and tires.

Drying Towel:

To prevent water spots from etching into your paint or clear coat, drying your vehicle is an important last step. Find a good soft towel or chamois to gently dry your ride. Once again, I like a quality micro fiber towel and only use it for drying the vehicle. A bath towel or other more aggressive texture can actually do harm to the paint, so finding a good towel for drying your vehicle is important. It is recommended to have a different towel for drying wheels and tires as well.

It can be a great debate as to what products are the best. In my garage, it is not uncommon to have several different product lines on the shelf. Each one with a different use. With new technology, complex paints, and different materials flooding the market, it is hard to say what will be the best product for tomorrow's car. Until next issue...happy washing and safe motoring!

Marcus Morton is the owner of Pit Stop Auto Detailing, LLC located in the Scottsdale Airpark in Scottsdale, AZ. Marcus can be reached via email at mmorton@azdetailing.com For specialty products to maintain your ride, please visit www.azdetailing.com or the Scottsdale Airpark location. Your questions are always welcome!

More Than Just Muscle

Muscle Car 1000 Delivers Adventure for a Worthy Cause



Car collectors usually enjoy taking their beloved classics for a short ride down scenic boulevards and highways because it's fun and often turns into a "best in show" experience. Let's face it, we all love to strut our cool cars, but did you know there's an amazing car rally called Muscle Car 1000? Now in its fifth year, this six-day, all-inclusive, event takes muscle car enthusiasts and their muscle

cars on a 1000-mile course offering absolute luxury and one-of-a-kind experiences, like drag racing down marine airbase runways! From gourmet meals, private car collection tours, to five-star resorts and a Concours d'Elegance, Muscle Car 1000 is one of the most exclusive car rallies in the country and it's all for a good cause. There are a limited number of teams that comprise the route,

so spaces fill up quickly. To qualify, participants must own 1964-1973 American Muscle Cars, 1955-1973 Corvettes, and 1962-1967 Cobras. From October 4-9, Muscle Car 1000 teams will travel Southern California from San Diego, to Palm Springs, and through Santa Monica and Santa Barbara.

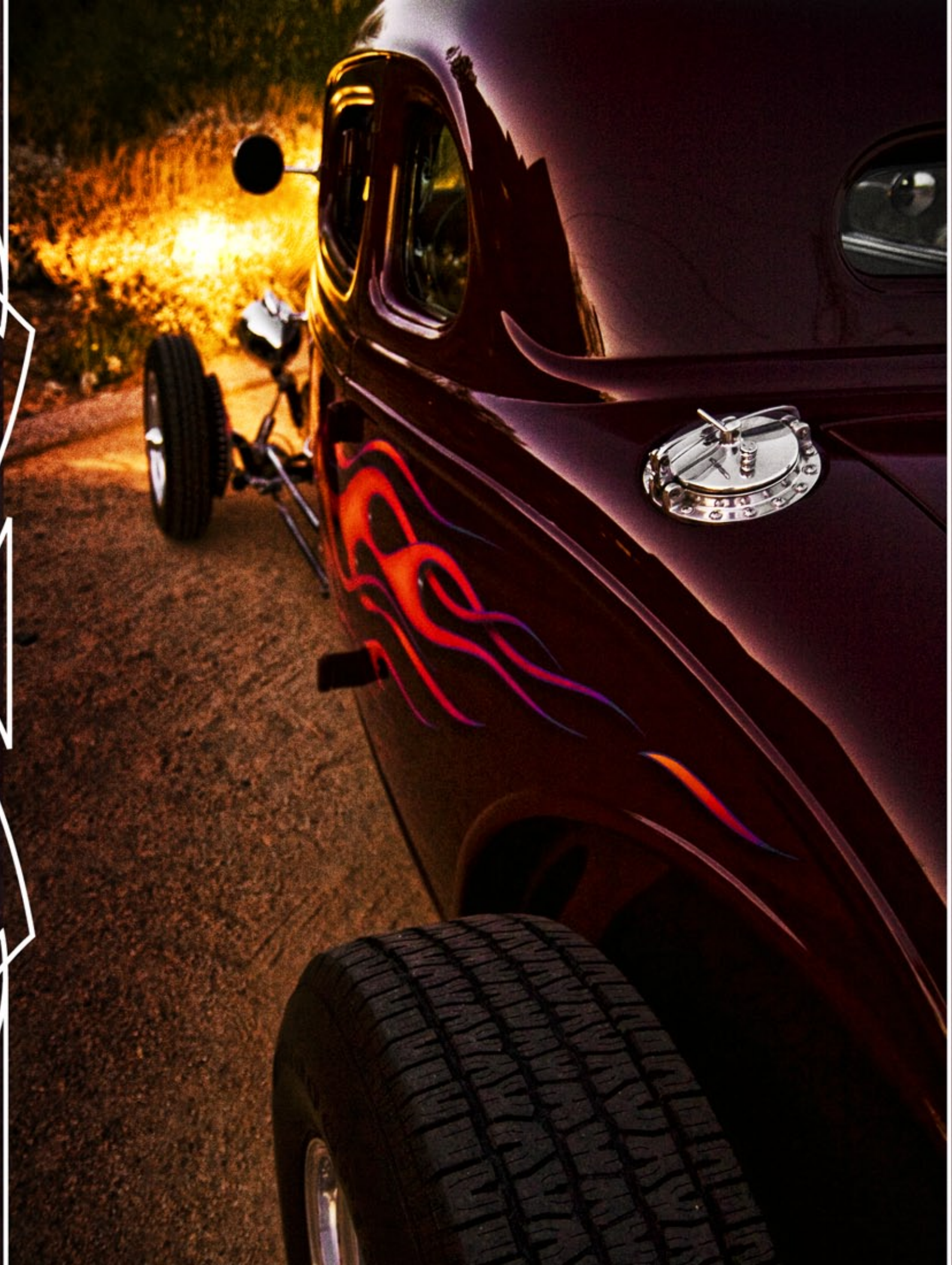
Founder Chris Hoskins says Muscle Car

1000 doesn't just offer bonding time with cars; it's designed so you can bring your wife, friend, or even mother to enjoy all of its amazing amenities like poolside bungalows at the La Quinta Resort in Palm Springs. Most importantly, Hoskins created Muscle Car 1000 to benefit The Hunger Relief Organization (HeRO), a nonprofit established in Honduras that works to eradicate child hunger in

developing countries. After his own "once-in-a-lifetime" experience traveling through the Himalayans, Hoskins initiated the idea of combining his passion for cars and his passion for helping others into something really extraordinary. The support of Muscle Car 1000 rally teams and its sponsors have enabled HeRO to expand and open seven feeding centers since the program started in 1992.

Each year, the Muscle Car 1000 rally gets more pumped and adventurous. This year, event producers promise another wildly insane and exhilarating experience. Up to 50 teams will join the route and experience the ultimate "stay-cation" on wheels. To reserve your space today, please visit www.musclecar1000.com.

Story: Diana Baylor Photos: Seth Wood



Quintessenza



As long as there's been hotrods, there's been roddeed '30s Fords. Over the past seven decades, nothing has been modified more times and in more ways than these once humble coupes, sedans and roadsters.


With so many factory replacement and aftermarket parts available and a rich history of customization steeped in tradition, it's the blank canvas of choice for countless enthusiasts, builders and designers who aim to achieve their vision of perfection. Fashion is a fickle thing and while trends will come and go, only a fraction of these styles and trends have managed to truly stand the test of time. Case in point: this all steel '33 Ford Coupe. Though the foundation is an original Henry Ford steel body and boxed chassis with the initial build coming in the late '90s and reworked within the last year, the car could've been built to these same specs using similar parts fifty years ago. Everything on the car is vintage hot rod, from the American Racing Torq Thrusts to the famous Moon gas pedal.

Mated to a four speed T10 transmission that eventually terminates into a polished Richmond Gear quick change differential, the Chevrolet powerplant is a late 327 bored to 331 with fuelie angle plug heads, a 3-duece setup with Rochester 2 G carbs and gets some extra oomph from roller rockers and functional headers feeding into to stainless mufflers.

While I have a hard time calling a car that's been flamed front to rear "subtle", its exterior and body modifications manage to walk that fine line between wild and mild. While there are a large number of changes all around, everything is tasteful and timeless and the design choices add to each other, not distract from one another like so

many other custom cars. Those flames come by the way of the legendary Art Himsl and are continued onto the body beneath the hood so that they continue right to the end of the body work whether open or closed. The body has been chopped by four inches and the roof filled. Unlike many body modified '30s Fords, it retains the original grill, the cowl vent and rear window remain operational and the turn signals have been integrated into the original Guide head lights. A genuine '50s Indy car fuel filler adorns the rear fender like a mechanical jewel and hints at the Ford's performance underpinnings.

The interior received a similar treatment, seamlessly merging factory and aftermarket. Nostalgic Stewart Warner Wings gauges replace the stock units behind the factory panel and are accompanied by a roof-mounted tachometer. Where there was once a bench now sits a pair of Porsche 356 buckets that, along with the rest of the interior, are covered in oxblood Naugahyde upholstery. A fifteen inch steering wheel mounts to a custom quick connect steering column that makes its way to a Vega box and chrome four bar front suspension with a four inch drop. Rear suspension is Pete and Jake's ladder bars with Aldan coilovers and stopping power comes from So-Cal hidden discs in the front. The Ford retains its drums in the rear.

All that being said, it's no surprise that this car has won a number of awards and accolades, including Street Rodder Top 10 and is a multiple GoodGuys and Blackie's Fresno Autorama winner. The 1930s Ford will always be a key player in the custom car world and when done right, it's clear to see why it has become what it has: the quintessential hot rod. 







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(e46/m3)/2



For nearly 40 years BMW has billed their cars as “The Ultimate Driving Machine” and nothing epitomizes this in road-going form more than their highly lauded M3 model. Since its introduction in 1986, it has been praised for its phenomenal driving characteristics, benchmark defining performance and has been awarded top honors by virtually every publication it’s ever appeared in. Though based on the more pedestrian 3-series, the differences are wide-ranging with completely reworked suspension, a high-performance engine and a number of body modifications, amongst other things.

The 3rd generation M3, the E46, was first introduced in October 2000 and is powered by a 333hp 3.2l inline-six, BMW’s most

powerful naturally-aspirated production power train up to that point. For many it was love at first sight and that love only grew once behind the wheel. Its pre-Bangle styling is classic BMW. It’s clean and elegant, yet aggressive at the same time. With styling staples that date back around 40 years to the BMW New Class, there’s no mistaking it for anything other than a BMW. It immediately began racking up accolades from journalists and enthusiasts alike and quickly became a darling of gearheads around the world. In 2009, Road and Track Magazine labeled the 2006 M3 with SMG transmission, the highly praised optional gearbox, as their favorite sports car of all time, well after the introduction of the newer, more powerful E9X M3.





That SMG transmission finds a home in this pair of E46 M3s: a silver 2003 and black 2006. The older and more extensively modified of the two has been around the block a few times, with more than 100,000 miles on the clock and is currently daily driven. A good number of those miles have been racked up going to, from and on a number of tracks, including Laguna Seca, Phoenix International Raceway, Southwestern International Raceway, Manzanita Speedway and even on the field at Qualcomm Stadium, home of the San Diego Chargers.

Vorsteiner CSL style carbon fiber front and rear bumpers, bootlid and an OEM CSL rear diffuser give the car a slightly more aggressive appearance and shave a few

pounds along the way. Other visual modifications include carbon fiber kidney grills and side gills and black vinyl covering the roof to compliment the dark gunmetal OEM ZCP wheels and overall black on silver theme. The modifications, while subtle, give the car a bit of a hardcore edge and that effect is intensified with a significant drop thanks to JIC/Cross Competition 15-way adjustable coilovers. But the suspension modifications serve to do more than just make the M3 look pretty. In addition to the coilovers, the car's world-class handling is enhanced with JIC/Cross Competition front camber plates and rear shock mounts, a UCC front sway-bar and Powerflex bushings. Power and sound output also receives a bump from a Miltek exhaust system and Streamline air filter.







This jet black with black Nappa leather M3 has the same SMG gearbox, but has taken a more mild, understated approach. Modifications come mostly in the way of smaller, visual modifications such as smoked signals, painted reflectors and 19" CSL style wheels. The interior has received a number of changes, including Alcantara SMG and e-brake boots with tri-color stitching, a Eurotray and dry-weave carbon fiber and chrome accents throughout. The car is one of the few E46s that left the factory with manual seats and without a sunroof, both features desirable amongst M3 enthusiasts.



5 Tips for Choosing a Hot Rod Designer

Images: Brian Stupski, Tim Strange, Shawn Ray, Dave Neal
Words: Brian Stupski

Over the last decade, we’ve seen explosive growth in the hot rod and custom car industry and hobby as a whole. This can be attributed to the popularity of television shows like Overhaulin’, American Hot Rod and others, as well as Powerblock TV, the Barrett-Jackson Collector Car Events, and of course, access to great personalities like Chip Foose, Stacey David and others. This brings in new enthusiasts, and naturally, more project cars!

Not since George Barris snapped thousands of photos and wrote hundreds of articles promoting the hobby back in the 1950’s and ’60’s have we seen so much attention on our hobby, and it’s amazing to witness. Yet, while there’s all of this excitement, many of these new fans and participants are feeling lost when starting a project. It can be a daunting task to say the least, but when taking those first steps, having the right footing can make all the difference in the world.

Naturally, any success in a project requires a plan, and building or modifying a car requires very careful thought at this stage. I’ve often heard guys say “I just build as I go... no plan, just what feels

right”, and sadly, it certainly doesn’t look like it must feel in many cases. Disjointed design, half-assed “fixes” to make parts fit, and often unsafe “engineering” (“engine-beering”, most likely) have sent many a project to an early grave.

The best advice would be to bring on an experienced designer to help guide you along. As a professional hot rod and custom car designer with over twenty years experience in the auto industry (from parts and service to body and after-market accessories), as well as training in design and fine art, I’m here to offer some advice on taking those first steps.

The importance of having a vision on paper, especially when working with shops and others on a team, can’t be overlooked.

- The end goal of selecting you car designer is:
- A vision of the finished product for everyone to work from
 - Avoid gaps, mis-communications and errors in describing ideas
 - Get what you want for your custom car dream!



5 Things To Consider When Hiring a Custom Car Designer:

1. Pick a Designer Who’s Style You Like

Not only are you hiring someone to assist in laying the groundwork for your project, but the designer must also be able to convey your ideas and tastes, as well as create a piece that will inspire your build team.

You’ll want some “wow” factor, but also be sure that your designer draws with pro per scale and proportion! Taking a cartoon-like image or shoddy “Photochop” to an experienced builder will get you laughed out of the shop. The kid you hire in a forum might make that ’58 Edsel bumper look like it fits your Monza in the drawing, but in reality, would it? And, are you looking to blow your budget on wild changes before the car even hits primer?

Look around, and study the artist’s styles and prior work.

Much like you choose a car that excites you, be it for nostalgia reasons, a certain feeling it gives you, or just the fact that you liked it overall, you’ll be miles ahead by selecting a designer in the same way. When the car is torn apart and looking bleak, the artwork will serve as an excitement generator.

2. Find A Designer You Get Along With

Spend some phone and email time talking with designers. Do you, “get along”? Can communicate freely? An open exchange with your designer will pay off in a HUGE way during the project. Look for a custom car designer who:

- Can help guide you
 - If asked, but also take an idea you have and run with it.
 - Simply hiring a “wrist” to make some lines based only on what you say is boring, and will leave your design “flat”.
- Is a good listener!
 - Nothing can be more disappointing than a guy who doesn’t listen
 - Is the designer looking to create a portfolio piece on your dime?
- Is more than just a talented artist
 - Doesn’t simply re-hash the same 3D model their last 40 customers got (but with different paint and wheels) because, you’ll get, well, the same car as those other 40 guys!
- Can follow your budget
 - Make your budget known and understood

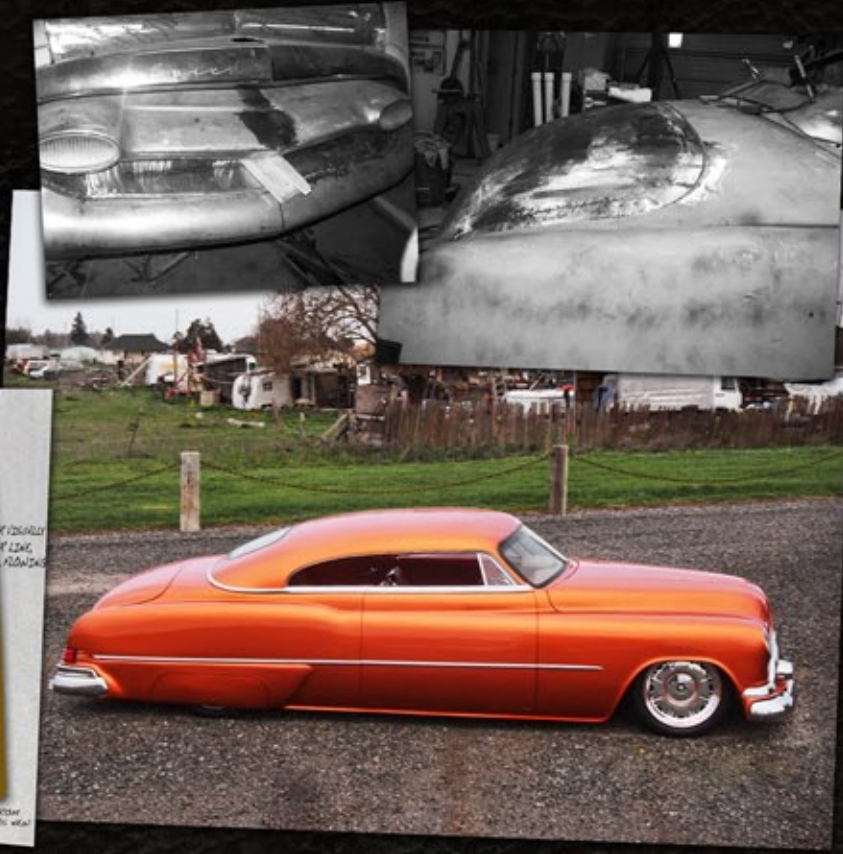
Make it an open exchange where ideas can flow freely, and you’ll be pleasantly surprised how an idea can grow or be refined to mind-blowingly cool in the right hands.

3. Understand The Designer’s Terms

- Get the terms and details of the design ironed out immediately.
- How many revisions will you receive?
 - What’s the cost for additional revisions?
- How will the work be delivered?
 - Hard copies? (one for you, the shop, and maybe for promotional purposes?)
 - Digital copies for magazine ink? (how about sponsorship proposals?)
- Can you use the artwork to promote the car?
 - Who owns the Copyright?

A professional designer will provide a contract explaining these important terms allowing for worry-free design time. Pay attention from step one, and you’ll avoid starting over when your forum buddy disappears with your PayPal payment.

Understand, too, that “you get what you pay for” applies with car designers. If you want your designs quickly (or just on time) and at a high quality, be prepared to pay a bit more, and respect the time required to perfect a design. Much as you wouldn’t rush a surgeon reconstructing your body, give your car-body the same consideration for equally functional results!





That guy is the enemy of designers, and it translates to “headache” to any pro. Have an idea at the first consultation, even if it’s vague, and ask for direction/advice if needed (see step 2). Know what you’d like to do with the car. Will it be restored? Modified? A combination of the two? Something wilder? A professional designer will offer examples, and throw ideas around with you, hitting on your likes and dislikes before pencil hits paper. Many great cars develop during these “bench racing” sessions, and you’ll save a ton on revisions.

Research the hell out of your project and ideas. Go to shows, cruise nights, rod runs... Pick up magazines, books, videos... Look around

It's during this hugely important stage that you and your designer will determine a "direction" for the project.

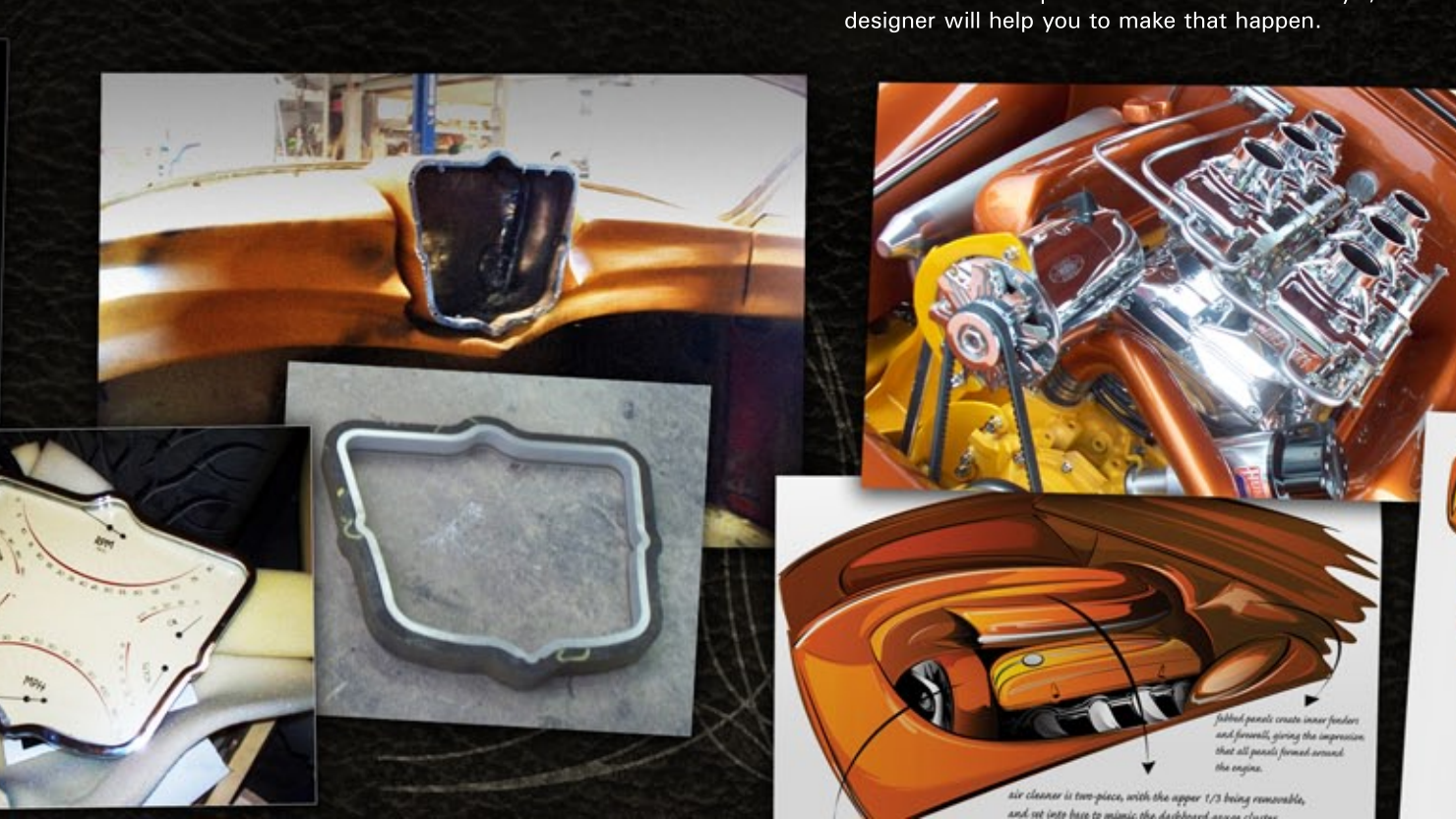
If you've seen a teal green and gray car with a tweed interior and 15-inch billet wheels lately and thought "wow... the 1990's called, and they want their car back", imagine what response a car built in a trendy style today will elicit in ten or fifteen years.

Much as you may have enjoyed looking at Alyssa Milano on TV, did you marry her? Chances are, you found someone who fit your life, who matched that often undefinable set of criteria that just “did” something for you. This project car should be no different. It should be a unique reflection of YOUR style, and a talented designer will help you to make that happen.

Seek out a designer who understands the style you're planning to build your car in, and can offer unique approaches to design problems that not only make your eyes pop out, but will prevent your hard earned dollars from doing likewise from your wallet.

That said, head on out and explore... look at work, compare styles, and talk with designers. Your decision should go beyond price, and be the RIGHT FIT for your project. Seek out a designer that can listen, offer ideas, and above all, nail your design. After all, simply setting sail on the ocean might take you SOMEPLACE, but is it where you WANTED to go? Hiring a designer will help chart that course AND reach the end of the journey. When plotted correctly, your designer will have you itching to hoist the sails again, and that's what this whole car thing is all about anyway... feeding that passion.

See more hot rod and custom car articles and pictures at Arizona's largest car community, MyRideisMe.com.





ELEMENTAL

PHOTOS/WORDS: PATRICK ERNZEN



Despite considerable renown in certain automotive circles, the Ultima GTR is relatively unknown to most. Taking the GTR to car shows or out for a Sunday cruise results in many puzzled looks and baffling guesses as to exactly what it is. But that unknown factor doesn't stop people from gawking and, in fact, adds to it. Even just taking it out to the grocery store for milk, people reacting with waves, thumbs-ups and cameras out of car windows is the norm. Be it Ferrari, Lamborghini or otherwise next to the Ultima, the Ultima is getting most of

the attention. Out on the street juxtaposed to a sea of mundane, gray sedans and SUVs, the GTR looks more like a spaceship than a car. Like it doesn't belong and shouldn't be legally allowed on public streets. But then, it is more or less a street-legal race car and, sitting in either of its deep leather buckets, it feels like it. The cabin is tight and loud, visibility is limited and the ride is harsh... and I'd complain if it wasn't. The quick-release steering wheel, toggle switches and function-first Stack display further add to the track-ready

aura that engulfs you and if there is any passion for speed in you at all, it calls to you. But it's not without creature comforts. This particular car has a full stereo, carpeting and air conditioning, so it is actually fairly livable for such an extreme vehicle. With about 600bhp and 500ft/lbs of torque feeding through a Porsche G50 transaxle and a pair of rubber steamrollers in a car that weighs right around a ton, it goes without saying that the performance is staggering. The carbide Motown 427 SBC

brings the power fast and hard and with just a thin divider of metal, fiberglass and about six inches separating you from full ceramic coated headers feeding directly into a pair of some of the hardest working mufflers in the business. It's a full body experience. But the Ultima is far from a drag car. With extensive on-track development and tuning and with unequal length a-arms, adjustable coilovers and massive AP Racing brakes on all four corners it is truly at home on road courses and amongst the very best street-legal track toys.







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"It's All About Goin' Fast!"

Enthusiast Profile

Words: John Schlichting



As long as he can remember, Dino has been in love with exotic cars in general and Ferrari in particular. When all of his friends in the 5th grade were talking about the latest Mustang or GTO, he would wax on about the handling characteristics of the Porsche 911.

It all started at the New York City auto show in 1969. While he and his dad were wandering the floor, Dino became mesmerized by the Ferrari stand and a Giallo 365 GTB/4 'Daytona'. The salesman behind the ropes, either in an effort to limit the drool around their display or in an act of making a kid's day, let him behind the ropes to get a closer look. He then opened the door and offered the kid a 'seat; behind the wheel. He remembers being hit by the aroma of Connolly leather that is still as fresh in his mind today. Barely able to see over the steering wheel, that seat was all it took. He was sure that one day he would be a Ferrari driver.

As the years went on, and elementary school gave way to high school, reality sets in, and it was obvious that pumping gas wasn't going put his butt in a Ferrari, so he started honing his driving skills in everything he could get his hands on. MGBs, Alfa Romeos and Lotus Cortinas on the twisty mountain roads of North Western New Jersey were the order of the day. He talks about digesting all the information he could find on proper apexing of corners, double clutching, trail braking and what types of corners required what type of technique, etc. He took pride in being able to outrun his buddies, who were driving Corvettes, Mustangs and other big horsepower muscle cars, on windy roads while driving 'inferior' cars. A practice that has continued to this day. If you have ever been on a mountain road or track and tried to follow Dino, you know what I mean. His girlfriend, who he affectionately calls his

CBBSCD (Carbon Based Biological Speed Control Device), calls even a drive to the store "practice"!

Cars took a 'back seat' for a number of years while he was in college at the University of New Mexico, attending on a tennis scholarship. College life gave way to a professional tennis career where he battled with the likes of McEnroe, Villas and other top pros of the day. As his competitive tennis career was coming to a close he decided to buy his first Ferrari. It was a 1980 Mondial 8. Not the fastest and most prestigious of the line up, but it was the current Ferrari of the day. There was a catch... it was wrecked. He still jumped in and spent the next 9 months juggling a return to school in preparation for chiropractic college, teaching tennis and repairing the Mondial. He recounts that it was quite a hectic schedule.

In less that a year the Mondial was back on the road and abusing as many windy roads in the North East as possible. When it came time to pack up and move to Iowa for Chiropractic College at Palmer, the Mondial had to go... at a profit! "That car helped pay for school, and give me a taste of Ferrari ownership". It was probably the only Ferrari in student parking at Ramapo College of New Jersey! It was 'fun', but it really couldn't get out of its own way, recalls Dino.

The Mondial was replaced with a brand new Fiat X 1/9, which became the workhorse for the next 175,000 miles. That car did everything. It did the daily drive stuff. Long trips to and from school and, with a little tweaking, even won several SCCA autocross series. He recalls even giving a Ferrari Boxer a hard time with the X 1/9 at a Lime Rock track day in Connecticut!

Once his professional Chiropractic career began, it became apparent that another Ferrari was a distinct possibility. A 308QV was next on the list and was followed by a 348, Testarossa, Mondial t, several Lotuses, M3s and 5s, Porsches and AMGs. An F40 even graced the garage for a number of years.

All of the cars have seen regular duty at hillclimbs and track events. "No garage Queens", is his motto, as well as, "Life is too short to drive boring cars". There was even a 1987 March/Cosworth Indycar in the stable for a while. "750 turbo charged horsepower and 1500 pounds, can be pretty exciting", states Dino. "Once you get used to the power, it really is the down force and the braking that changes your perception of performance".

In the late '90s he and several other 'car guys', started what has become the Ferrari Club of America - Desert Region. He served a number of years as the Regional Director, and most recently as the Track Events Director and Chief Driving Instructor, until the current board eliminated that position, stating a 'lack of interest in track events'.

Some recent health issues have forced him to make the transition from three pedals to two. "As much as I love 'Dancing on the pedals', it's a bit tough right now, and I have to admit that I am faster over a given stretch of road with an F1 gearbox. In the end, it really is all about how fast you can go."

So if you happen to be on your favorite windy road or track and can't seem to shake the car that is looming in your mirrors and find yourself being out braked into a corner and left for dust, there is a real good chance that it was Dino. But don't worry, he will be waiting up the road for you, with a big grin, ready to say "hi", and talk cars. Because that's the kind of guy he is.





presents a



production...



Paragon



When Japanese cars first started landing on U.S. soil, they were little more than cheap, economical cars that existed to get you where you needed to go and little else. Useful, but boring. Until the introduction of the Datsun 240Z and Toyota 2000GT, Japanese cars didn't even register on the sports car market, let alone compete in it. It took years for these now classics to fight their way to recognition, but even after these cars, their successors and other Japanese offerings gained clout and became some of the premier options for high performance motoring, there was still something missing: The Japanese supercar. Enter our dashing protagonist.

Going by the numbers, the NSX is far off current supercar standards; yet, even today it is amongst the very best driver's car and, in its day, was nothing short of revolutionary. Hand built by a small number of skilled craftsmen in Japan, it's extremely rigid, lightweight all-aluminum monocoque chassis sits atop all-aluminum unequal-length a-arm suspension front and rear and is covered in, you guessed it, all-aluminum body panels. The first of its kind, the body panels and suspension components alone save more than 400lbs over steel equivalents. Its high-revving V6 was the world's first production motor to feature titanium connecting rods and

forged pistons and the first to feature variable valve timing in the US. All of this adds up to performance and quality that not only met, but, in many cases, surpassed its European rivals and at a fraction of the cost. The NSX was quickly dubbed "the everyday supercar" and, given its technology, manufacturing process and the end result, it's a much deserved title.

If you're still not convinced, maybe these guys will be more persuasive: Gordon Murray, Ayrton Senna and Alex Zanardi. More than your typical NSX owners, Gordon Murray has said that the NSX was

a major contributor to the design direction of the McLaren F1 and considered the NSX's ride quality and handling to be his target for the F1's. Ayrton Senna's input played a part in the car's development in a big way. Senna worked directly with Honda's chief engineers while developing the NSX prototype at Honda's Suzuka Circuit, giving invaluable feedback regarding both its chassis and driving dynamics. After winning back-to-back CART championships in 1997 and 1998, the Alex Zanardi Edition NSX was introduced and, fittingly, Alex himself received the first of the 51 produced and sold exclusively in the US.

But if you're still not convinced, have no fear. There is plenty that can be done to bring the car up to speed and in the case of this particular 1994 NSX, plenty of it has been. There's little that remains untouched, but at the heart of the transformation is a substantially reworked V6 that more than triples the original motor's output, putting down a staggering 665rwhp. A jump in power that drastic doesn't come easy and, in this case, it's forced. A Precision Turbo PT67 pulls in copious amounts of air and pounds it through a custom air-to-water intercooler and into the sleeved cylinders. That air is quickly evicted from its new home, but not

before a half dozen very angry ScienceofSpeed forged pistons squeeze it for every last drop of power and expel it through a custom, four inch turbo-back exhaust system. And judging by the sounds that come out of the back of the car, that air is none too pleased by all of this.

While a beauty in factory form, this car's gone under the knife for some extensive cosmetic surgery to get its low, dark and handsome look. The most drastic changes come from a Cantrell Studios wide body conversion package and GT-Series front bumper. The NSX shaves eight years off



its age with the facelifted 2002+ headlights and a 2002+ style carbon fiber composite hood. The Grigio Telesto (a 2007 Lamborghini LP640 paint color) beast is dropped on a set of black Volk Racing GT-V wheels by way of TEIN Mono

Flex coilovers and it is immediately apparent that this car is all business. NSX-R chassis reinforcements, stabilizer and bushings, Dali Racing sway bars, an Okuyama rear shock tower brace and Movit 4-pot calipers and 12.5" rotors

ensure that it devours corners just as easily as it does long stretches of straight tarmac.

Going 14 years relatively unchanged, it's only natural that the NSX slowly lost some

of its notoriety as one of the greatest sports cars of all time. As technology and performance standards increase, those of the NSX slowly appear increasingly mundane and even Honda's current Accord puts out similar horsepower and

acceleration numbers. However, it is important to remember that cars are about much more than just numbers and that not only did the NSX bring new things to the table, but it did so in remarkable fashion and at a price that embarrassed the

competition. Even judged by today's standards, it is a masterpiece of engineering and styling and a platform that, if put into the right hands, is something truly spectacular.



Three Simple Tips to {BETTER PHOTOS}





While part natural ability, photography, like many things, is largely knowledge and persistence. In this case, natural ability is the photographer’s artistic vision and eye: their ability to look at objects and a scene and compose them in a way that is interesting and appealing. While lucky few are born with this ability, fortunately for the rest of us, most of it can be learned and much of it comes with experience. However, compositional understanding isn’t the only important knowledge for a photographer. Understanding how the camera’s settings, the environment’s lighting and any number of other things will affect a shot is equally important. The other most important part of the puzzle is persistence: simply getting out there, trying new things and taking photos. The number of photos I’ve taken over the past several

years is well into six digits and I’m still learning new things and improving my abilities almost every time I get the camera out. If I didn’t feel like I was, I would stop taking photos.

You may have noticed that I didn’t mention photography equipment as part of the equation. While quality gear will improve the photos of a quality photographer, far too often people fall prey to the notion that good photos come from good equipment while in reality, good photos come from good photographers. Put a knowledgeable, quality photographer with a cheap point-and-shoot up against a complete novice with \$10k in full-frame digital gear and have them shoot the same scene. The better shot will come from the point-and-shoot every time. Besides, these

articles aren’t intended to pixel-peep, complain about autofocus hunting or help you decide if you should go Canon or Nikon. With this series of articles I intend to pass on a little of what I’ve learned over the years, increase both your compositional and technical knowledge, explain things in a way that’s easy to understand and, hopefully, convince you to go out and take some photos.

Regardless of the situation, subject or what you’re shooting with, there are a number of often overlooked, simple things that can drastically improve your photos. The three of these that I’m going to address in this article and how they directly apply to automotive photography are: the rule of thirds, being aware of your background and varying your photo height.

{ 1: “Good things come in threes” }

Often overlooked by beginners, but apparent once pointed out, the rule of thirds plays a big part in great compositions. Googling “rule of thirds” yields almost a quarter-million results and is one of the most common pieces of advice given to novice photographers and for good reason. Applying to all visual arts and appearing as early as the late 1800s, the rule states that an image should be viewed with a pair of horizontal and a pair vertical lines placed parallel and equal distances apart, dividing the image into 9 equal parts. Points of interest should be placed on these lines and/or their intersections. This generally creates a more dynamic, appealing image that tends to create movement in even static images and draws your eye to and

throughout the image more than if the objects were centered. However, as is the case with all rules, there are exceptions. The rule of thirds should be considered a guide to improve your art, not a rule to hold you back. There are certainly instances where photos may be improved by not placing the objects based on these conventions. For example, centering an object can work well in situations where you’re going for a very geometric, rigid look and can work well when dealing with reflections and symmetry. Generally speaking, it’s important that when taking this kind of shot that the object is very much centered. When taking a direct profile shot of a car, for example, try to be completely perpendicular and centered to

the wheelbase or body of the car. Having the car just slightly angled, but still centered often looks unintentional and can give undesirable results.

Which line and/or intersection your objects and point of interests should be placed on will be determined by the individual scene and composition, but generally speaking, with automotive photography I think of how the vehicle would be traveling and what kind of movement or tension the positioning creates. While much of automotive photography is static shots, the very nature of automobiles is movement and this should be kept in mind in nearly all situations.

▼ Rule of thirds in practice



{ 2: “Sir, I believe there is a tree growing out of your car” }

It seems so obvious when pointed out, but it’s amazing how many photos I come across that are generally well composed, technically spot on, but there it is... a lamp post sticking right out of the roof of the car. Telephone poles, stop signs, palm trees... all things that many people get so used to seeing in their daily life that they become almost invisible, even when composing a photo. While in many locations, especially outdoor car shows, these things are everywhere and unavoidable, where exactly they are in your shot is up to you. More often than not, a simple move of a few feet to the left or a slight bend of the knees can reposition such objects to a place where they’re less obtrusive. Nothing kills the lines of sleek Ferrari or Lamborghini quite like a garbage can jutting out of the engine bay. With car shows, sometimes these objects are people and can be even more unmovable. In these cases, patience is a virtue and, with any of these objects, a little Photoshop can go a long way. There will be situations where almost everything is perfect, but there’s just that one tree sticking out, ruining everything. It is times like this that your best option, if possible, is

to just take the shot and worry about it later. Worst case scenario, you have a good shot with a less than ideal distraction or you wasted a few megabytes on your card (or a frame of film, if that’s how you roll).

{ 3: “THAT’S why kids love sports cars” }

Nothing is more stale than 150 car show shots taken from ¾ at standing head height. Fine if you’re selling cars on eBay, not so great if you’re trying to create photography that keeps people looking. This is especially true when shooting around 50mm, but that’s another article. Varying your height not only gives your photography some variety, but it can create perspectives that you don’t see in everyday life, making for more interesting compositions. A change of just a few feet up can allow you to see details you might not normally be able to see or a few feet down can give a high performance sports car an even more aggressive appearance.

In addition to how height can affect the appearance of your subject, it can play an equally important role in its surroundings. Dropping the camera a few feet is often enough to allow the vehicle to block distracting shorter objects, such as people,

bushes or distant stop signs. Raising the camera can eliminate the distractions caused by taller objects by raising the horizon in the frame, blending the object into the rest of the background.

When possible, I bring a small stepladder to any event at which I plan on taking a large number of photos, especially if I’m not sure what the surroundings will be like. At only about 3x2 feet in its folded form, it fits into virtually any car and can be carried and stored easily at events, but still allows for a significant increase in height, especially when coupled with outstretched arms. However, there are generally plenty of objects at events that will allow you to shoot from a new perspective. I’ve been known to stand on top of walls, poles, electrical boxes, small children... whatever it takes to get the shot.

Remember that while rules of thumb and tips such as these will generally improve your photos, they’re just that. Rules of thumbs and tips. Never let “rules” and convention stifle your creativity and always take the shot that you like. After all, if you don’t like your own photos, who cares what others think?



▲ The two extremes of subject placement. ▼



▲ An example of a photo doesn’t follow any of these tips. ▼ Two variations that do.



▲ Camera height increase for a simpler, less distracting background. ▼





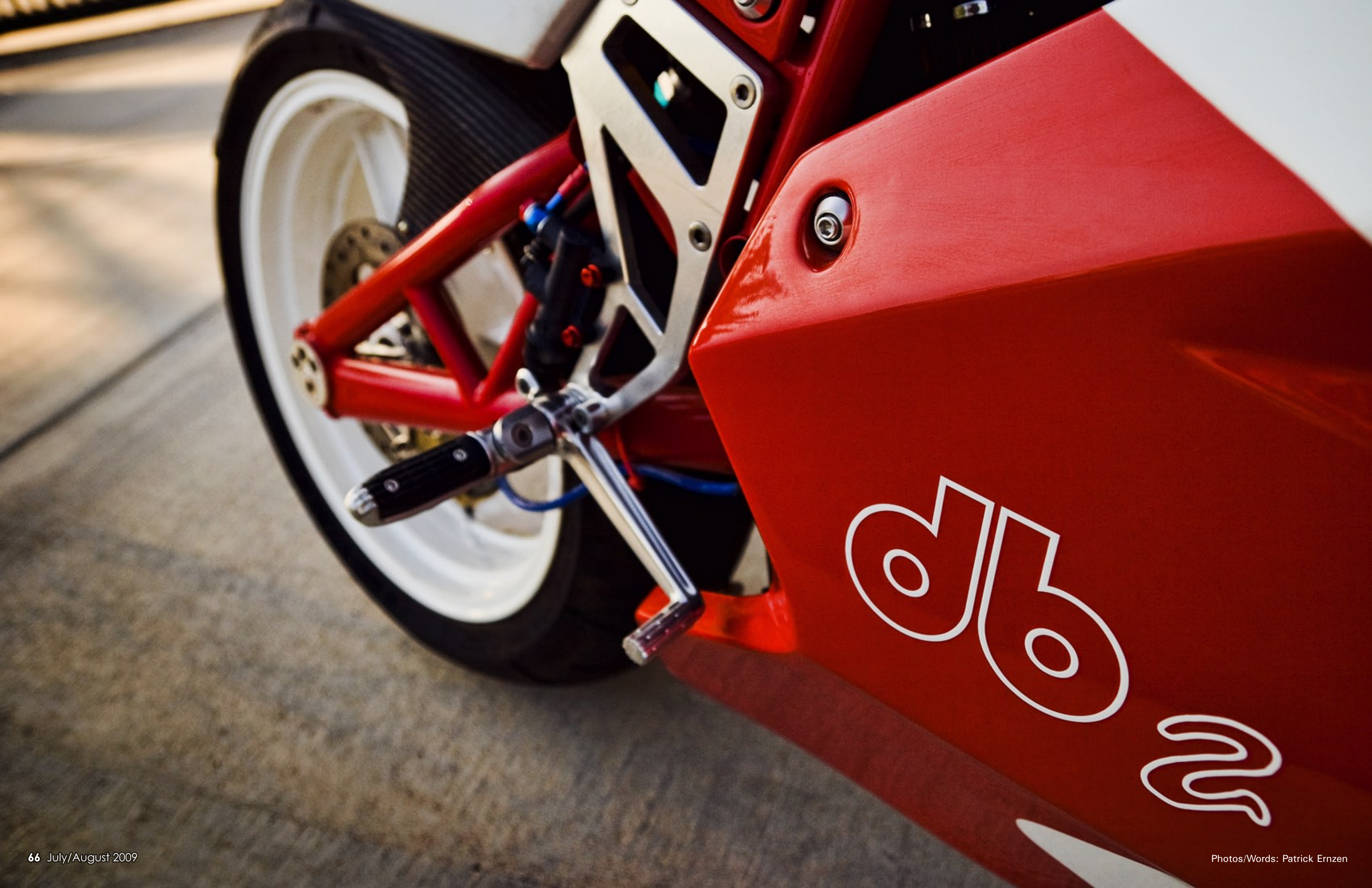
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When it comes to the world of motorcycles, there's nothing quite like an Italian-built superbike. While Japanese bikes offer great looks and outstanding performance at an unbeatable price, they lack the panache that makes exotic Italian automobiles so special. For the past 25 years Bimota has been taking these already breathtaking machines to the next level. Unimpressed with the state of current frame and overall package design, the Rimini, Italy based company began by taking Japanese sportbike motors of various makes and building entirely new bikes around them. Starting with Honda, Kawasaki and Suzuki in the 1970s, they later added Yamaha and Ducati power to their lineup.

Sourcing its V-twin engine from the Ducati 900SS and first introduced in 1993, Bimota produced only 408 DB2s (123 with half fairings and 285 with full fairings, such as this example). While far from the fastest bike in the world by today's standards, producing 86hp with a top speed of 140mph, Bimotas are about much more than just the motor. With Ohlins suspension, Brembo brakes and typical high quality Bimota chassis design, what it loses in the straights it makes up in the corners. Besides, even if a modern, Japanese 600 will make short work of the Bimota around a track or on the street, you'll still look damn good and chances are you aren't going to run into another DB2 along the way.







Op-ed: An Open Letter to President Obama...

When will politicians learn to just STAY OUT of private industry? As we here in the States listen to the plethora of well pitched spending programs that has led to US Government ownership of banks, insurance companies and now the US auto industry, and if he gets his way, health care, not to mention firing of CEO's (GM), and forced return of contractually mandated bonus' (AIG), all put together with the experience and thought process of neophytes at best and communists at worst, and spent with the fervor of a college student who just received his student loans. Additionally, all of this 'assistance' is always under the guise of "We don't want to run (fill in the blank)", but he takes it over anyway, and the people sit back in their easy chairs, watching a media overexposed president make ever better 'sales pitches, their freedoms shrinking, and do nothing, because he "Looks like a good guy". When this President's term is over, if there is still a country left, he will have a solid future in TV infomercials, or in reality TV, as the "The Ultimate Pitchman". I would be happy to broker that deal!

Never has the term, "If one doesn't learn from the past, one will be doomed to repeat it", ever been more true as it is today. A simple look at previously government run auto companies reveals the future. Forget Communist run Lada, but take British Leyland for instance, which was destroyed by the labour unions, not to mention out dated designs and poor quality control which destroyed the British motor industry with cars like the Morris Marina, which was widely

regarded as a dismal product, and the Austin 3 Liter, which had no recognizable place in the market. Well thought out products, both. NOT! But one doesn't have to think things through if one really doesn't have to compete in the free market and actually turn a profit. It wasn't until Jaguar and Land Rover went back to the private sector that they had anything resembling quality and reliability.

In the US, the labour unions have now been 'given' a controlling stake in General Motors (50% +) by Mr. Obama, while the bond holders who invested real, hard earned money in the company were forced by the same 'Benevolent Leader' to accept pennies on the dollar instead of going through traditional, free market bankruptcy, and now the Pension and health care fund known as General Motors does not have to negotiate a realistic contract with the unions and produce products that anyone either inside or outside the US would even remotely want to buy. If one thinks that the Pontiac Aztec was atrocious, I can't wait to see what Obama Motors' creations are going to look and run like! I am sure that they will be decidedly unenthusiastic. But the sheer fact that Mr. Obama has decided to cut in half, the 20 cars and trucks that GM actually turns a profit with, under the guise of the new religion, global warming. In the US we have a Constitution, and the last time I read it, there was nothing about the President taking over private industry, no matter how much you think you can 'help'. Could it be anything more than a power grab? I think not!



It all sounds so nice, the government can relieve us of our personal responsibilities and take care of us... as long as we are willing to give up more and more freedoms in the process, and be willing to accept mediocrity. If memory serves me right, I believe that it really didn't work in the former Soviet Union, or for that matter anywhere it has been tried. Sure, there is a world wide financial challenge right now, but as with any financial challenge the answer is not irresponsible spending into bankruptcy, but measured, responsible fiscal restraint. If one doesn't handle their family's finances that way, guess what happens!

But I digress. The West in General and the US in particular are based in risk/reward and free market solutions to providing goods and services. In other words, "He who builds a better mouse trap, should reap the rewards of his efforts". It is this philosophy that has given us some amazing advances in medicine, energy, and every industry I can think of, including the automobile. Not government control and limiting of rewards.

It is overdue for car enthusiasts to take to the streets and cry, "I am mad as hell, and we're not going to take it anymore"! No more speed cameras! No more taxes! No more irresponsible government spending, and no more crappy, government mandated, designed and built cars. F-R-E-E-D-O-M, innovation and choice is the answer.

Dr Dean Micalizio

BACKTRACK



Phoenix International Raceway - October 7th, 2007 - Photo by Otis Blank

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