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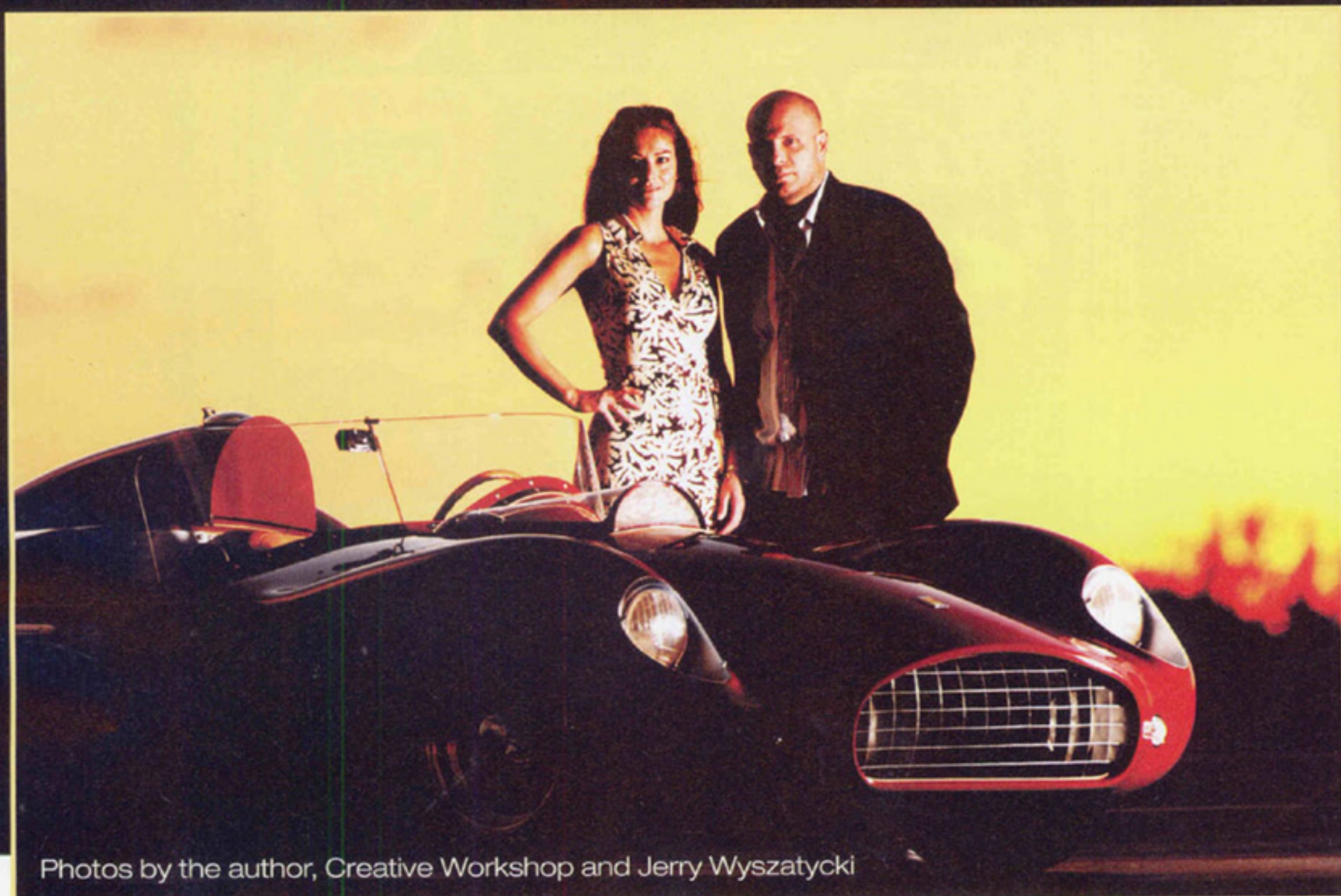


**Long Live the Pony Car
The Ford Mustangs**
An Historical Retrospective



The Creative Workshop

On the Road to Perfection



Photos by the author, Creative Workshop and Jerry Wyszatycki

The Creative Workshop gives the illusion of something that Jason Wenig might have inherited after being passed down thru the generations. Most restorers start at an early age – often as an apprentice – and mature into owning a business. Not so with Jason – he was a New Yorker with a Master’s degree in marketing and advertising enjoying the corporate hustle on Madison Ave. However, there was another side to his persona, one that enjoyed tinkering with cars and engines and participating in America’s Cup 12-meter vintage sailing. In the middle of the internet boom he became involved with car parts procurement for the back yard mechanic and sponsorships for NHRA Top Fuel Dragsters. By now Jason and his wife Kim were ready for a change ... and a new career that would combine automotive design and craftsmanship. He wanted to be involved in the creation of beauty

and to be recognized not as a mechanic but as an automotive “couture workshop.”

Moving On

They retained a consultant and reviewed more than 15 companies before they discovered a run down car restoration company in Dania Beach, Fla., with only a few active employees and whose facilities had fallen into disrepair. For Jason and Kim it was the “bingo” moment.

Imagine Florida the way it used to be, farm fields and orchards growing crops for the northeast markets, and a strip of beach which attracted the northern snow birds. Serving the farm community was a grain store in Dania just off the historic Rt. 1, which has experienced the transition from the agricultural heritage of southern Florida to its reincarnation as the workshop for the creation and preservation of automobiles. The

Jason and Kim Wenig with the Sport Speciale (photo by Jerry Wyszatycki). Having an earlier career in advertising on Madison Ave., Jason has not forgotten how to put a little sizzle into the images of his creations. The car was created to deliver the driving excitement of a '60s racer with the convenience of a contemporary 21st century sports car.



The Creative Workshop on Hill Street in Dania Beach is located in a historic building that was originally a grain store. Within close proximity is the sizzle and excitement of Miami and Florida's famed Gold Coast.

workshop at 118 Hill Street is near the custom yacht building yards of south Florida and the glitter of Florida's Gold Coast.

The Shop

Upon entering into the 10,000 sq. ft. building one discovers a high ceiling space with a wooden floor whose patina comes only from age. The setting is like a museum and an artist's workshop with historic cars alongside book cases of automotive reference books. Jason's office is in a loft and his

desk was created with two car doors for support. The shop reflects Jason's energy and his eclectic tastes.

The projects have historic lineage, and the shop's equipment combines traditional methods with the latest techniques and technology. The company went through what Jason refers to as the, "initial survival year, then the stabilization years, and finally the growth years." It has grown from two employees into an energetic staff of more than 12 dedicated craftsmen.

Currently the company is involved



Looking into the main bay of the Workshop, which was originally a farm supply store. From Jason's loft office he can monitor work in progress. Front is the 1953 MG TD by Motto (yellow) and the 1953 Stanguellini Bialbero (red) surrounded by other work in progress including a 1970 Mustang March 1, a 1967 Jaguar E-type, a 1955 Mercury Montclair Sun Valley, and a 1966 Corvair Custom Rallye. In the far back is the "Rat rod" being constructed from perfectly patina'd parts sourced from around the country and shop inventory.



In the "show room" of the former grain store that contains the shops and offices for The Creative Workshop is a 1951 English Connaught L3/SR racer and a 1927 Citroen "Le Trefle." Shelves on the walls of the shop are several libraries that include workshop manuals from 1900-1975 and detail archives on each restoration project.



A modern day necessity in a restoration shop is the computer for doing historic research and sourcing parts.



in all facets of restoration and new "one off" designs. At any given time the shop has approximately 20 on going projects and they have a significant backlog of projects with multiple repeat customers.

The Synergy of Creation

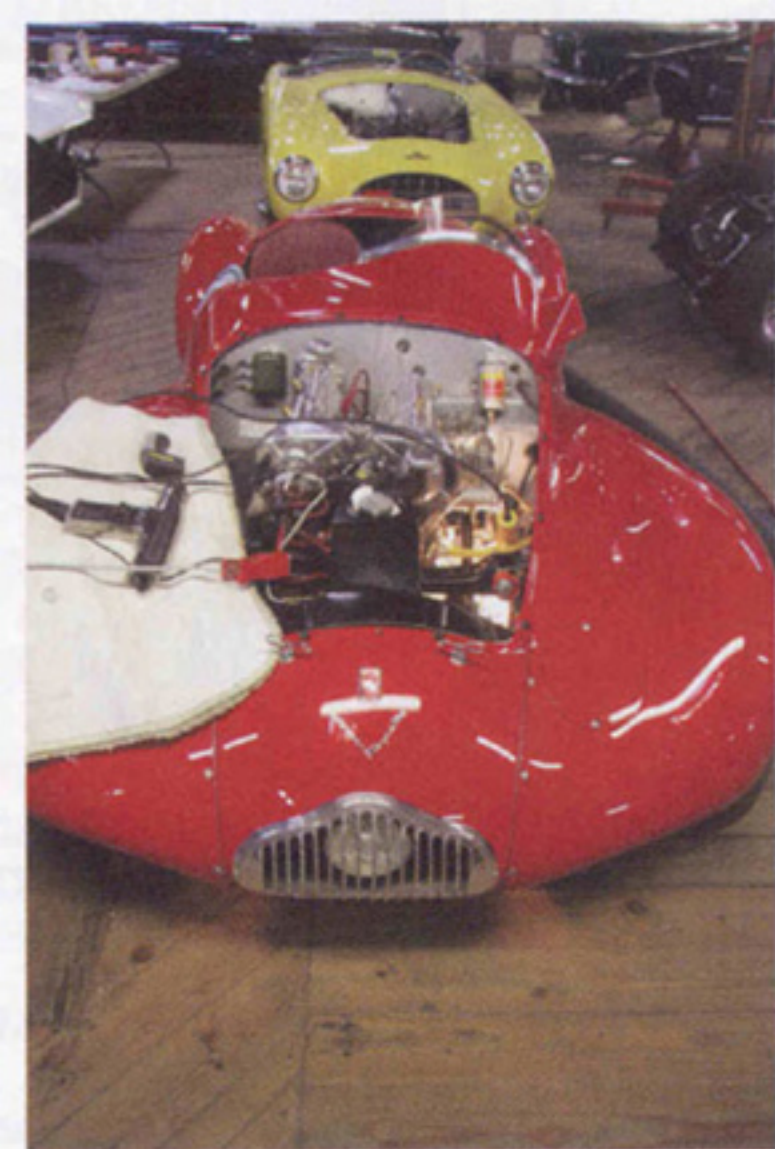
The shop is dedicated to restorations and the creation of "one of-a-kind" rides which are the fantasy of its clientele. Jason is animated and excited as he leads you from one project to another and you feel the synergy that only a group of devoted mechanics and craftsmen can create. Details are never compromised, and the results are stunning.

Jason is also a realist. He writes that, "as a professional restorer, I am faced with having to explain to many clients that the value of the car after restoration will surely not return its investment," yet they proceed as they know the satisfaction of owning an item that is the result of engineering craftsmanship. This clientele appreciates the quality, detail and historic attributes of automotive art and the inherent beauty of the design. Jason speaks of the excitement of the process, "metal craft is the buzz and meticulous researching down to the last screw for historical correctness is what distinguishes prized cars." The focus of the Workshop is expansive and includes creating "conversions" from historic platforms, new bespoke custom creations, and detailed "forensic" restorations.

Historic Conversions

Jason prides himself that he can take a car which has driving or handling limitations due to the

The aluminum body shell of the 1953 racer by Vittorio Stanguellini is nearing completion. Over 60 percent of the body required replacement and required "forensic" investigation, which included historic photographs and numerous conversations with the Stanguellini Museum (with translators) in Modena, Italy. The workmanship on this body is a tribute to the craftsman and metal shapers at the Creative Workshop.



The finished restoration of the Stanguellini gets fine tuning in the main bay of the Workshop. Originally owned and raced by Briggs Cunningham and powered by a Stanguellini 750cc engine, the racer was subsequently fitted with a 750 Mercury outboard engine by Carl Keikhaefer (after he blew up the Stang powerplant on his dyno) and set speed records at Daytona Beach.

mechanics of the era in which it was produced, and by incorporating subtle, or not so subtle mechanical improvements, can provide his client with a car that has the visual appeal of the original mated with modern-day driving capabilities. Jason has even developed his own term for “converted restoration” to describe the process that combines classic automotive forms with contemporary performance.

Following is a description of some of the recent projects that have been completed by The Creative Workshop and notes from the current design/build process of the “Durango Concept.”

The Sport Speciale

The car has been referred to as “a devil in a red dress” and its performance is as dangerous as its appearance. Take the assignment, devote



Soon to become “the Devil In a Red Dress” the frame of a Sport Speciale is being created “on the fly” as a piece of sculpture, the “fantasy” creation for owner Barry Smith.



The ultimate thrill of being the creator of a "fantasy ride" is the road test. Jason admits that while doing trials in the Sport Speciale, aka "a devil in a red dress" that he never took the car beyond half throttle – speak of raw power!



As the frame is created, sheets of paper are placed over the skeletal frame so that the craftsman can assess the shape and make modifications to the sculptural form.

almost two years and 6000 man hours, commit a cool 500+K, and presto – a brand new one off – a Sport Speciale.

The car was conceived by Barry Smith of Scottsdale to deliver the driving excitement of a '60s racer with the convenience of a contemporary 21st century sports car. Smith wanted to drive his car and didn't want to be married to a crew of technicians. The creation of this custom hand-built car would satisfy the owner's criteria and passion.

The body was fabricated at the Creative Workshop's metal working shop and incorporated the traditional techniques of the Italian carrozzeria around a birdcage frame of tubular steel. The body frame was created "on the fly" and Jason describes it as an organic process. The process takes advantage of the collective years of experience of the shop crew and without detailed engineering drawings the rule is "over build it." As the manachino frame takes form, it is covered with paper to simulate the final aluminum skin and becomes a sculpture in progress.

The completed car is fantastic. It is powered by a V12 BMW engine with a top speed calculated at 250mph but (given the car's brute power) neither Smith nor Wenig have admitted to pushing the car beyond half throttle!

MG Speciale

Generations of MG "T" series have seen duty on the racing venues of the world, but none have the visual impact of the TD specials from the Italian works of Rocco Motto. Dave Ash, who raced MGs in the early 1950s with their importer to the U.S., Inskip Motors of New York, conceived the car. Dave was

determined to create a racecar which would compete with the OSCA's and Porsche 550s, and mated a spaceframe chassis by Gilberto Columbo with the curvaceous lines of a custom racer created by Rocco Motto. The racer was powered with a modified TD engine from the MG factory. The Speciale was raced extensively on both coasts and in the 1954 Sebring 12 hours where it finished in 11th place. After being retired, the car went into storage for 35 years. The Creative Workshop recently completed a frame off restoration and the car has been shown at prestigious venues in the southeast including Amelia Island, where it won a blue ribbon.

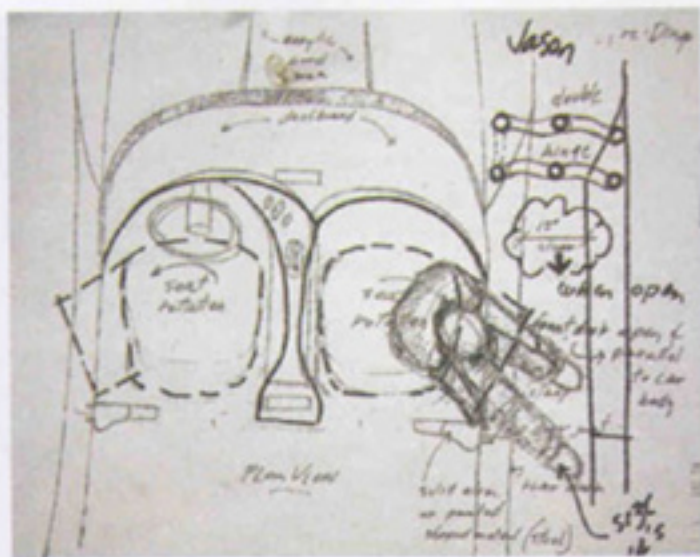
The 1951 Connaught L3/SR

The Connaught Engineering racecars were built by Rodney Clarke, a formidable race driver who had a taste for vintage Bugatti. His shop created Formula One racers and performance sports roadsters at the works in Surry, England, between 1948 and 1956. Between 1949 and 1953 a total of 27 sports/racing cars were crafted



The details of the restoration of the 1951 Connaught L3/SR are a delight to observe and the vintage racecar won its class at the Amelia Island Concours.





Jason describes the design of special one off cars as being "organic" and "being created on the fly". Each project starts with a designer's renderings or even pictures of cars or other objects of the client's desires and then takes on a life of its own as the designs are translated from the original sketches. The "Durango Concept" was conceived by the client who continues to develop sketches as the design is transformed from lines on paper into the reality of steel and aluminum.



As a new car is being created, the engine is repeatedly fitted to insure that each component is properly aligned. Here Doug lowers a 572 -600+HP custom built aluminum Hemi into the "Durango Concept" car being built for a Miami client.

with aluminum coachwork over ash framing, and initial production cars were mated to a Lea-Francis Sports Chassis with a race-tuned four cylinder engine.

The L3/SR was conceived to have a modified Lea-Francis chassis with cycle style fenders and a Lea-Francis 1,700cc four cylinder engine. Ultimately only three would be built and one came to America where it won its Class at the Watkins Glen Grand Prix in 1951 and at the 1952 12 Hours of Sebring. The car then disappeared into the unknown where it became a "back yard special" and ultimately a playground toy. The car became a historical jig-saw puzzle as the crew at the Creative Workshop started a complete restoration, which in reality became a reincarnation. With the restoration complete the car was exhibited at Amelia Island, where it was awarded an Amelia Class Award.

The Durango Concept

Currently under construction in the shop is a "one-off" fantasy car being built for a noted Miami designer from Miami's South Beach. Each project starts with a designer's renderings, and then takes on a life of its own as the designs are translated from the original sketches. The design and building of this car is a fluid process and Jason keeps a "design board" on the shop floor where the design detail and images are posted as the car evolves into reality of steel and aluminum. Jason notes that the "functionality" of the Durango Concept has changed as the owner becomes inspired and brings in new ideas while the car evolves and takes shape. 

Fine Motorcar
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