



Tip Top Shop

2019 AAT/ACM/RPM Master Craftsman Award Winner

by Lyn St. James

Jason Wenig is the owner of The Creative Workshop in Dania Beach, FL. He's a devoted RPM Foundation supporter and the recipient of the 2019 Master Craftsman Award presented at America's Automotive Trust's (AAT) annual Wheels & Heels Gala at LeMay-America's Car Museum on September 7. Wenig, who claims to have been a gearhead forever, founded The Creative Workshop in the early 2000s. He's a restoration expert, coachbuilder and creator of completely re-bodied cars. The company is dedicated to historic, antique, vintage, post-war and classic European and American vehicles. The Master Craftsman designation is given out annually to recognize an award-winning master restorer, a front-runner of the automotive restoration community that has gone above and beyond in terms of passing hands-on skills and abilities to the next generation through mentorships and other learning opportunities.

When I quizzed Jason about what it meant to him to receive this award, his heartfelt response was, "I was totally surprised. This is a tough business, and my dad, whom I lost when I was 18, always told me, 'Earn it, don't expect to be given anything'. To be recognized by AAT/ACM/RPM was like my Dad's words coming back to me. It was like the experts in the

industry were saying, 'We see what you're doing and we want to recognize you for it'. It means the world to me!"

One story he shared with me was about the restoration of a 1953 Stanguellini Bialbero, which a customer brought to him in boxes. The amount of time needed to do the research about this chassis (one of three brought to the United States in 1954), was immense and intriguing, which is often the case when restoring such a significant and unique vehicle. Jason calculated there's probably five hours of research for every one hour of work. He completed the comprehensive, forensic restoration in August, 2007, and the Stanguellini was unveiled at the 2007 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance, earning a class trophy. You can follow the story of this restoration on his website, www.thecreativeworkshop.com, or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TheCreativeWorkshop/.

Jason told the story in such detail and with such passion I couldn't resist asking him what is it that makes people like him go to such lengths to research every detail, as every top-notch restoration shop has to do. He replied, "Exercising the mind isn't enough. You have to fundamentally believe you can be challenged tactilely as much as mentally to achieve perfection. And your quest for perfection demands heart and soul, the love of history and to have the required skillset to complete a project that can be viewed and shared by others."

He has incredible passion for what he does at The Creative Workshop and I believe he must instill that in everyone who

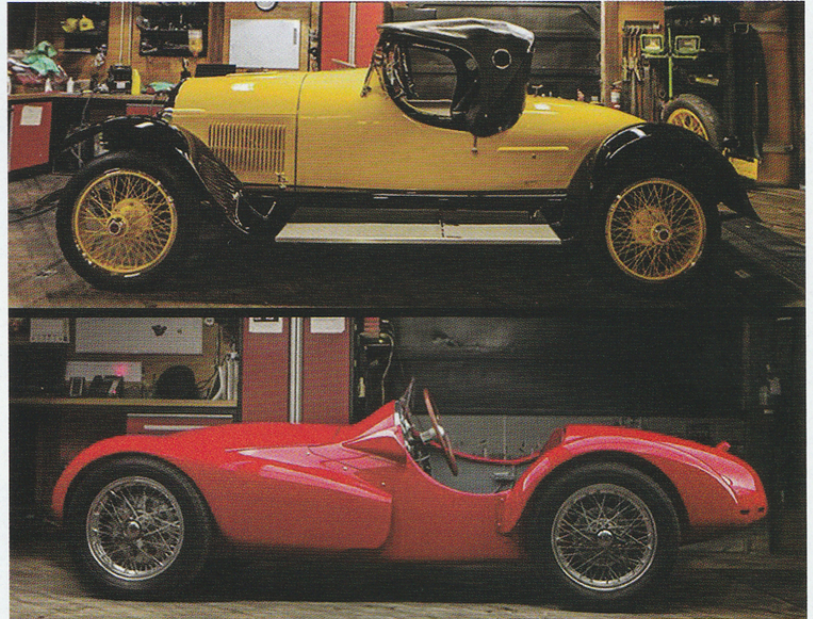
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works with him. My final question was, “What one ingredient defines your success?”

Jason’s answer was, “You have to believe and care about what you’re doing—not just the business side, but the people and their stories—and you have to have a desire to share that with others, including the next generation. That’s why I’m incredibly supportive of the RPM Foundation and proud that we have a RPM scholar and Pennsylvania College of Technology graduate, Michael Krukowski, working for us. We look forward to continuing to support RPM Foundation.”

Besides having Mike working there, Jason has opened his shop for tours to students and educators, hosted several Cars & Coffees to benefit the RPM Foundation and hosted the launch of the AAT 2018 The Drive Home III.

For more information visit: americasautomotivetrust.org, americascarmuseum.org, www.rpm.foundation. Q



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