



Fantastico!
**FERRARI
330 GTC**

Legendary Engines
**GURNEY-WESLAKE
V12 SCREAMER**



Vintage Motorsport

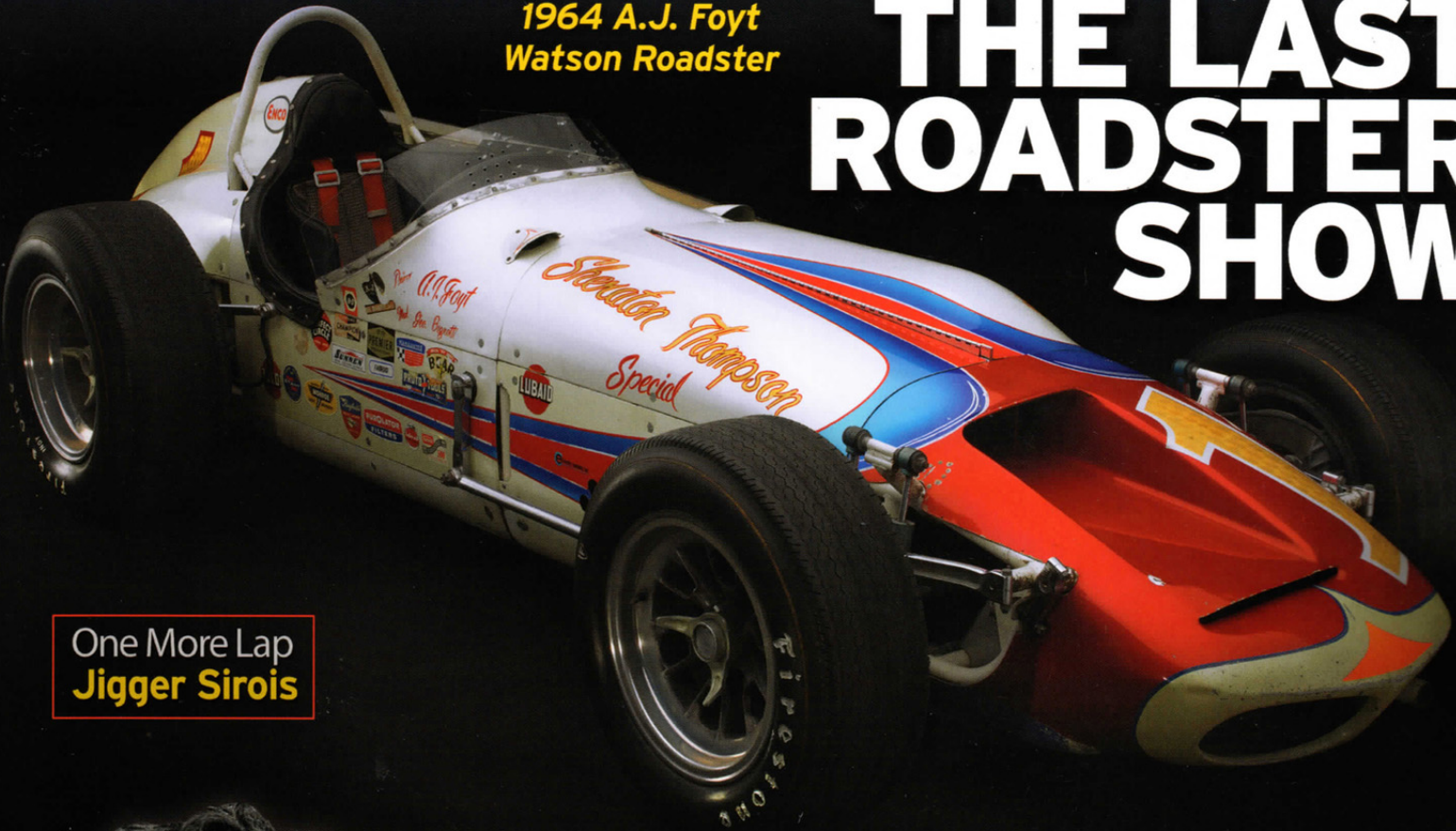
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2018 3
MAY/JUN

THE JOURNAL OF MOTOR RACING HISTORY

1964 A.J. Foyt
Watson Roadster

THE LAST ROADSTER SHOW



One More Lap
Jigger Sirois



Porsche's Brick Wall
at the Brickyard

'82 Indy 500: Mears
vs Johncock Thriller

My Favorite Race:
RON GRABLE
1970 F5000 CONTINENTAL
CHAMPIONSHIP AT LAGUNA SECA

ALL THE ACTION FROM:

- Porsche Effect at the Petersen
- CSRG Sonoma
- Amelia Island Concours
- HMSA Laguna Seca
- Phillip Island Classic Festival
- NHRA March Meet

MAY/JUN 2018 \$8.95 US \$10.95 CAN





This award-winning shop
is up for almost any
restoration challenge.

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY
BY JIM McCRAW

The Creative Workshop

A Mercedes-Benz 280 SE 3.5 convertible is undergoing a complete powertrain restoration and cleanup after an 18-month search.



A one-of-a-kind Ferrari 330 GT was rebodied by Creative to pay homage to Ferrari race cars of the '50s.



This is the very first Shelby GT 500KR convertible ever built.



It wasn't supposed to turn out this way. Jason Wenig was supposed to grow up to be a Madison Avenue advertising executive, but something happened.

Wenig, 47, a New Yorker, went to Syracuse University, got his bachelor's and master's degrees, and went to work at one of the largest advertising agencies in the business, Bates, as an account man. For a while, he prospered, but then his spirit whispered to him that there was something else that would be a lot more fun than lunch with clients: America's Cup yacht racing.

He crewed out of the New York Yacht Club, raced in Newport and in Europe, and won the world championship with Ernest Jacquet's boat, Freedom US 30. Then he left the Mad Men behind and put together ExpressAutoParts.com, which in turn led to some drag racing sponsorships and a new plan to build cars in Florida.

Wenig's facility, The Creative Workshop, is housed in a wonderful old early 20th Century all-wood 10,000 sq-ft building that started out as a granary in Dania Beach, near the Ft. Lauderdale airport.

He and his wife, Kim, a former rag trade executive in Manhattan, bought the building, which had devolved into a giant storage barn, and spent several months emptying it out, eliminating the entrenched vermin, and getting it up to code, including a couple of rather large skylights over the main work bay to let in more of that Florida sunshine.

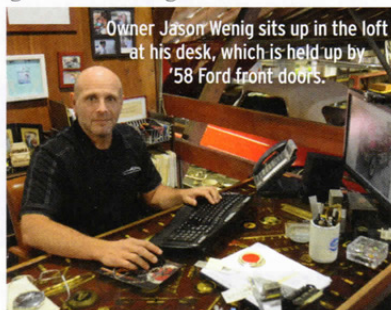
He says, "When we bought this place, it made Sanford & Son look

like the Ritz-Carlton." It had gone from a granary to a scrap metal place to an overstuffed parts warehouse to a rat's nest to a restoration shop.

That was more than 16 years ago, and since they swung those big old doors open for business, The Creative Workshop has handled every kind of body, paint, upholstery, design, fabrication, mechanical, tuning and restoration work imaginable.

"I left corporate America because I didn't fit in. I want to be a pirate. I want adventure. I want intrigue. I want a little chaos. I want every day to be exciting and new, and that's why we don't specialize."

Wenig says, "There's a remarkable, cosmic flow to what comes into this place. In 16 years, I have yet to see a correlation between what goes on 'out there,' and what goes on in here. We tend to go in a weird flow. We had a Porsche period in here, with 356s and 911s, a point where we had three white Porsches at the same time. We have the very first Shelby



Owner Jason Wenig sits up in the loft at his desk, which is held up by '58 Ford front doors.



This red Maserati 3500 was raced and then rebodied by someone, somewhere, but Creative's detectives are still on the case.



Raced by both Briggs Cunningham and Carl Kiekhaefer, this Stanguellini prompted an international engine search.

Mustang GT500KR convertible ever made in here. We have a plain-Jane Mustang for a client in South Africa that will be restored for his son when he's 16."

He says he and his crew love the big challenge, but sometimes the challenge can be overwhelming. The worst project he's ever had was a 1953 Stanguellini 750cc twincam.

"It was an ex-Briggs Cunningham race car that was later owned by Carl Kiekhaefer, raced with a Mercury outboard 2-stroke engine in it. It broke a speed record on the sand at Ormond Beach. Then the car was lost. The chassis showed up with a Devin body on it, and the Stanguellini body was discovered under a barn in Wisconsin. A client bought all the pieces, and the hunt went on for an engine. Stanguellini only built six or seven of these 750cc engines, and we found one in a wine cellar in France, one serial number away from the number on the chassis."

He counts himself and his staff as "forensic historians," carefully and correctly putting back together cars like the Stanguellini. In that case, he flew to Italy to meet with the founder's son, Francesco Stanguellini, just to make sure the car would be correct when it was shown at Pebble Beach, right down to the switches, welds and rivets.

There's another mystery car currently parked under the loft, a one-off 1964 Maserati 3500 coupe that was rebodied in about 1966, a beautiful coupe, but no one knows who, when or where it was rebodied. "A gentleman racer had it rebodied and raced it all throughout South Africa, but after a couple of years of



Not too many shops are willing and capable when it comes to leather upholstery, but Creative Workshop dotes on tough ones.



From above, you can see just how many different kinds of client machinery this shop takes on.



The Creative Workshop logo was dreamed up by former ad guy Jason Wenig.

researching this car, we have yet to find out who actually did the coachwork. We contacted both Pininfarina and Zagato, but they don't know the car. If we could find that one sheet of paper, we could add another zero to its value. The hunt continues."

Another recent project was building a complete 1915 touring car body and upholstery on an original REO Speedwagon truck chassis.

The lobby of the building and Wenig's office upstairs in the loft are crammed with rows and rows of reference materials and manuals for all kinds of production cars, as well as historical material for those rare birds like the Stanguellini.

Wenig's level of detail has garnered several dozen awards for his customers' cars at Pebble Beach, Amelia Island, Greenwich, St. John's, Hilton Head, and Cavallino. His reach extends to customers in Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Europe and South Africa.

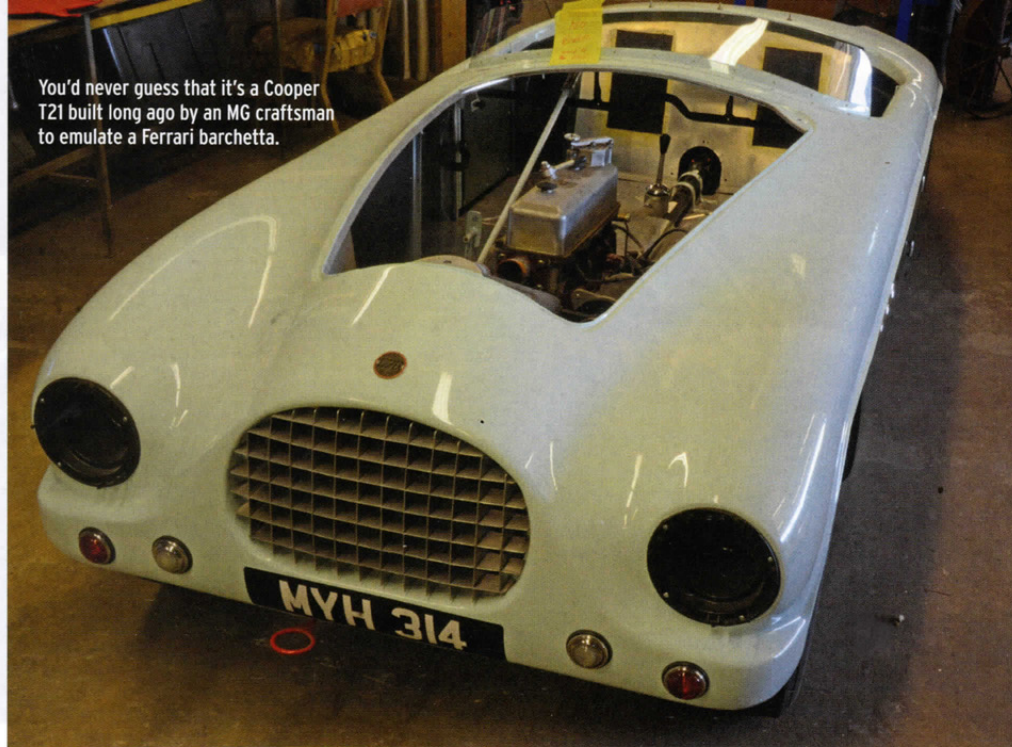
Wenig and his staff of 10 are the core of the business, but he says he's always looking for qualified people, through his association with the RPM Foundation, an organization founded by Hagerty, the Le May Museum, and America's Automotive Trust. He says, "One of the things I look for when we are bringing someone on is heart. Passion."

Something that Wenig is passionate about personally is horsepower, and that's why this restoration shop in a very old building has a chassis dynamometer built into the floor. Nearby is the Tower Of Power, where cars and drivers are measured for the top spot, where Pull Position is currently held by a 711hp Dodge Viper. Wenig's own 1960 Renault Alpine is at the bottom of the tower with 65 horsepower.

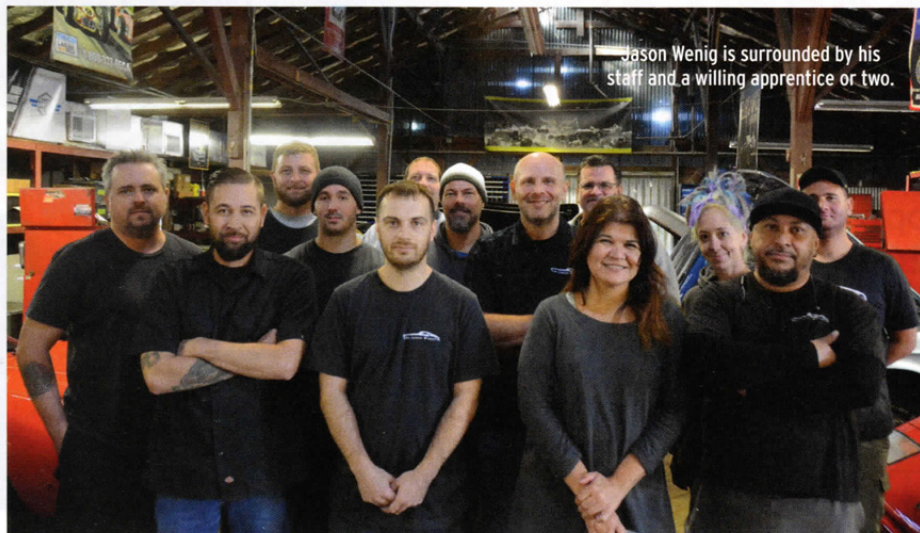
He explains the huge variety of cars in his shop very simply: "I will work with great people who want great work."

THE CREATIVE WORKSHOP

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 954-920-3303
 thecreativeworkshop.com



You'd never guess that it's a Cooper T21 built long ago by an MG craftsman to emulate a Ferrari barchetta.



Jason Wenig is surrounded by his staff and a willing apprentice or two.



The Creative Workshop loft is a comfy place to pore over the reference library on the right.