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# Meet Jason Wenig of The Creative Workshop in Greater Fort Lauderdale – Dania Beach

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LOCAL STORIES



Today we'd like to introduce you to Jason Wenig.

**Jason, let's start with your story. We'd love to hear how you got started and how the journey has been so far.**

I'm an ex-NYC advertising executive... born, raised, undergrad and graduate school in NY. Went into the corporate world... but was always a gearhead my entire life. Grew up, realized the corporate world wasn't for me and left it all behind to pursue my real passion – cars.

Left NY, came to Florida with my wife (we met in NYC, got engaged, married and we both left our careers and moved here together specifically to start this company. This all happened within 2 years – from 2000 – 2002), found and bought this remarkable, nearly 100 year old barn and went for it.

Spent the first year gutting and renovating the barn (which was in a completely dilapidated, neglected state), hiring staff and starting to build a client base.

Our focus was to build the finest cars in the world.

Our reputation grew as our work started to get out there and awards started coming in. Now, 16 years later, we have clients from all over the world and our cars have been in countless shows, magazines, TV shows, etc. Many awards and accolades later, it is a great source of pride in how hard we have worked and how far we have come. It has not been an easy ride (no pun intended!), but, what a journey!

We now specialize in Concours restoration and custom car coachbuilding.

**Great, so let's dig a little deeper into the story – has it been an easy path overall and if not, what were the challenges you've had to overcome?**

It has been a difficult road.

- The unique building has presented countless difficulties
- Finding great talent is a constant challenge (we recruit from across the country).
- Finding the right, discriminating clientele can be difficult. Simply because there are a great many “charlatans” out there that present themselves as “accomplished” or “craftsmen” – but they really are not. So, we have to always be out there and proving ourselves over the “noise” of “all the others”. In 16 years, there has not been a time where we have not had at least 2 cars in the shop that were sent to us from another shop that failed at the project. Right now, we have 5!
- The market dynamics are complicated. Car values, auctions, parts availability, project predictability (every car is completely different, every project is different, every problem is different) – there is very little if any “economies of scale” to anything we do. This is a boutique business – you can only find “correlations” at a very high level – on the day-to-day work – every moment is different!

But, that said – this is what separates the mice from the men! We get better at what we do every day, and we consistently deliver at the highest levels. In our field, the top of the heap is The Pebble Beach Concours and the Amelia Island Concours – sort of like the car worlds Oscars. We have been to and won awards at both, many times over the years. It makes all of the hard work worth it.

## Please tell us about The Creative Workshop.

We are a Concours classic car restoration shop and a custom coachbuilding business.

Concours restoration work is the “forensic” reconstruction of vintage cars. We specialize in rare and exotic vehicles. Many of the cars we work on, you can count how many were ever made on one hand.

Coachbuilding is a long lost art of building cars from scratch. yes, we build custom cars and modify classics, but coachbuilding is the highest echelon of this kind of work. It is for clients that are looking to separate themselves from everyone else – akin to designing and building a custom yacht. They are incredible projects with incredible results.

Our work – both restorations and coachbuilding – have appeared at the top events in the world and been covered by countless media outlets. In fact, right now – with about three months to go – we have a very rare car we are restoring for Pebble Beach Concours and a coachbuilt Ferrari specials we are bringing to the Quail motorsports gathering (part of the Pebble Beach car week). Both cars will be unveiled at their respective events...and both are getting some significant media coverage.

## Do you look back particularly fondly on any memories from childhood?

Well, since this is about cars... I can reference working with my father on our families 1967 Jaguar 420. The car never ran well... and my father was a really big guy... so he couldn't get his hands into places to fix things. I was like 4 years old and he would literally put me inside the engine bay, on top of the engine, so I could snake my hands into the nooks and crannies to get at things. Who would have thought that from such simple beginnings I would end up here!

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