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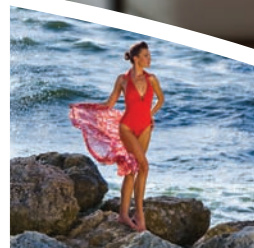
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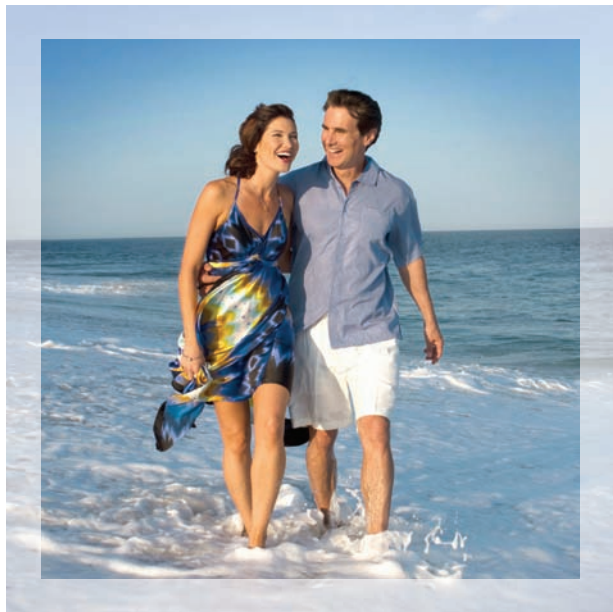
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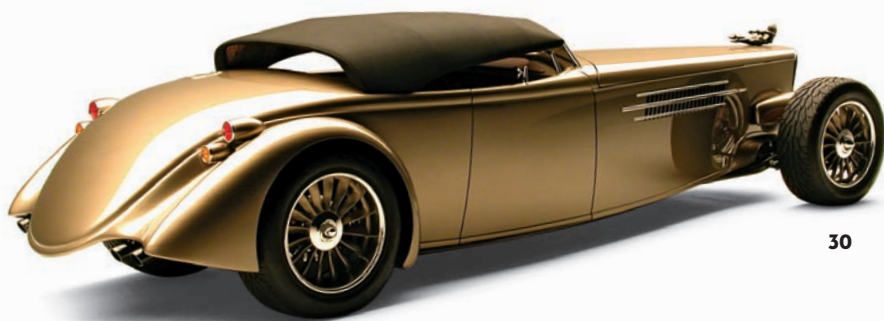
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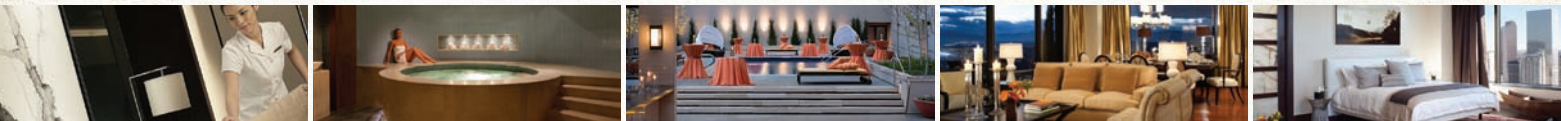
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## EDITOR'S LETTER

**A**CCORDING TO MANY historians, the Volstead Act of 1919—the legislation that led to the establishment of the 18th Amendment and the enforcement of Prohibition across the United States—set many things in motion. Most notably, it led to an aggressive spike in organized crime, as gangsters such as Tom Dennison and Al Capone took matters into their own hands to provide the public with alcohol. As Capone once said, “I make my money by supplying a public demand. If I break the law, my customers, who number hundreds of the best people in Chicago, are as guilty as I am. The only difference between us is that I sell and they buy. Everybody calls me a racketeer. I call myself a businessman. When I sell liquor, it’s bootlegging. When my patrons serve it on a silver tray on Lake Shore Drive, it’s hospitality.”

What the Volstead Act (and to a large degree, the 18th Amendment) failed to do was the very thing for which it was created—to eliminate the consumption of alcohol. In some metropolitan areas, like Atlantic City, corruption ruled all levels of government and allowed alcohol to flow openly and as profusely as it always had. Atlantic City was a rare exception to the rule, however. In most cities, speakeasies thwarted the law by providing thirsty patrons with a secretive spot to enjoy their favorite libations. Regardless of the source, Americans continued to drink, and by the end of 1933, 36 states had ratified the 21st Amendment, which repealed the 18th Amendment and rendered the Volstead Act unconstitutional.

Despite almost eight decades of uninterrupted alcohol consumption, speakeasies continue to serve a deprived segment of the population. But today, that clientele—and its commodity of choice—have changed. Speakeasies of the 1920s were establishments shrouded in secrecy, stocked with the spirits needed to make a drink. Twenty-first-century speakeasies, on the other hand, are publicly celebrated cigar clubs, built to accommodate smoke and to receive cigar enthusiasts no longer welcome at the bars and restaurants where, at one time, a cigar could be enjoyed. But as many members have discovered, leading clubs—a handful of which are featured this month in “Where There’s Smoke” (page 62)—offer more than just a smoke-friendly environment. “It’s almost a gloss-over of all the formality that’s outside the establishment and the informality that’s inside,” says Michael Hachikian, an avid cigar smoker from New York. “You feel like you’re crossing a barrier and you’re going into a place that welcomes you. It’s exactly like the greatest speakeasy that you could go to.”

The struggle for acceptance is not limited to cigar smokers, however. According to Bruce Meyer, a street rod and classic car collector, hot-rodders of the late 1940s and early 1950s



were ostracized just as cigar smokers are today. “Hot-rodding was the genesis of all things automotive,” he says. “And it was kind of a forbidden fruit, in a way.” Some of the hobby’s most successful builders today continue to uphold the tradition by building classic roadsters and custom street rods. But as you’ll learn in this month’s “Reinventing the Wheel” (page 30), they also are advancing the craft with creative designs that echo nostalgic ideals.

Like all passion-driven pursuits, what speaks to one enthusiast won’t always resonate with the next. As such, a sense of community develops among like-minded partisans where passions are shared and relationships are formed over a common bond. For some during the 1920s, such an environment was an enigmatic affair, but today, that level of secrecy is no longer necessary. Instead, enthusiasts seize the moment to boldly declare an allegiance to the pursuits that inspire them; and rest assured . . . whatever your passion, there’s a community of your peers eager to welcome you to the club.

**Shaun Tolson, Editor**  
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**CORRECTION:** In the February feature story on outstanding garages, “Remodeled & Redefined,” the web site for Garage Mahals was misspelled. The correct spelling is [www.garagemahals.com](http://www.garagemahals.com).



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When Barrett-Jackson held its annual Scottsdale, Ariz., auction in January it made headlines with numerous multi-million-dollar sales, including a 1948 Tucker Torpedo—one of only 51 manufactured—which set a world-record price when it sold for \$2.91 million. However, over the course of the six-day event, other noteworthy cars crossed the block, including a **2009 Spyker C8 Laviolette Coupe**, which sold for \$247,500.

Dutch entrepreneur Victor Muller had people talking more than a decade ago when he launched the Spyker automobile company. The name paid tribute

to a Netherlands-based company that built automobiles and aviation engines from 1898 to 1925. Muller's corporate logo dated back to 1914 and included a Latin phrase that translated to "For the tenacious, no road is impassable." Muller embodied that motto when he unveiled his supercar, the Spyker C8 Spyder, at the Birmingham Motor Show in 2000. The following year, he one-upped himself by launching a more powerful coupe, the C8 Laviolette, which stood out thanks to a unique, hardened-glass canopy.

The mid-engine supercar benefited from a racing-style, aluminum space frame and a 4.2-liter, 32-valve V-8

engine supplied by Audi (the same power source found in the Audi R8 and A8). Inside the cabin, the Spyker coupe draws references to classic fighter planes, with aviation-style instruments and switchgear. Since 2005, all Spykers are street legal in the United States and relatively easy to maintain, given that the engine and driveline can be serviced by an Audi dealer. The 2009 model sold in January represented one of only two models finished in azure blue and it was equipped with an ivory, quilted leather interior. The 2009 model year also is notable because it was the first year that the C8s included an audio system, which linked to an iPod or iPhone.



2009 Spyker C8 Laviolette Coupe

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In 1913, Fred Duesenberg established his namesake company, and by the 1920s, while working alongside his brothers, he had taken that company to great heights. Not only did the company's cars break land speed records, they also won numerous races in the United States and in Europe, including the 1921 French Grand Prix—the first-ever American victory in a Grand Prix. Inexplicably, though the Duesenberg brothers were exceptional engineers and prominent in racing circles, their production models proved difficult to sell and left the company financially destitute.

That all changed when Errett Lobban Cord purchased the company out of bankruptcy in 1926 and set out to restore the brand. His first order of business required Frank Duesenberg to design a grand touring chassis that could serve as the American alternative to Rolls-Royce, Mercedes-Benz, and other European grand tourers. When it debuted in 1928, that Duesenberg grand tourer, the Model J, was the fastest and most powerful American passenger car. It also was the most expensive—the chassis alone sold for \$8,500 (about \$107,000 today).

A typical Model J began its life as a standard-length chassis fitted with Fred Duesenberg's 420-cubic-inch, straight-eight engine before heading off to one of

a handful of coachbuilders for final construction. Such was the case for a **1930 Duesenberg Model J Disappearing-Top Convertible Coupe**, which sold for \$2.64 million at Gooding & Co.'s January sale in Scottsdale, Ariz. First belonging to J.W.Y. Martin, a prominent East Coast racehorse owner, the car boasts coachwork by the Walter M. Murphy Co. in California. The automobile remained untouched during the years surrounding World War II—a fate few Duesenbergs can claim. It has retained its original chassis, body, and engine and underwent a comprehensive restoration in the early 1970s, which included the installation of a supercharger, reportedly sourced from another Model J. In 2007, the car made its first appearance at the Pebble

Beach Concours d'Elegance and, unlike many Duesenbergs, it has been regularly exercised and drives exceptionally well.

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The commercial and innovative successes of E.L. Cord—and many other ambitious entrepreneurs of the early 20th century—were stunted thanks to the Great Depression. Despite his control of Duesenberg, it was Cord's ownership and rejuvenation of Auburn Automobile Co., which he acquired in 1924, that served as the foundation of his industrial empire. By the end of the 1920s, Cord had enhanced Auburn's presence by building an automobile with a sporting appearance and great performance for its price. He named the



1930 Duesenberg Model J Disappearing-Top Convertible Coupe



1937 Cord 812 SC Convertible Coupe

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car the Cord Front Drive, and as the 1920s drew to a close, he had dreams of establishing an automotive empire that could rival the Big Three—Ford, General Motors, and Chrysler. Unfortunately, the stock market crash of 1929 forced him to abandon his next project, the “baby Duesenberg,” though the vehicle’s styling served as the basis for his next front-wheel-drive car, the Cord 810.

Powered by a Lycoming-built V-8 engine, the 810 caused a stir when it debuted at the New York Auto Show in November 1935—to the point that Cord could not produce cars fast enough to meet the demand the following year. By 1937, the 810 had become the 812, though few aesthetics of the car had changed. What *had* changed was discernible when you looked under the hood (or stepped on the gas). Performance options now included a supercharged engine, which increased the V-8’s capacity to between 185 and 195 hp, though the Cord factory was more conservative in its designation, stating that the car produced 170 hp. Regardless, a Cord driven by Ab Jenkins at the Bonneville Salt Flats set 35 American stock car speed records in September 1937.

Only 195 of these convertible coupes were built during the model’s two-year life span, and according to Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile Museum records, only 64 of those were supercharged. One such example, a **1937 Cord 812 SC Convertible Coupe**, sold for \$385,000 at RM Auctions’ Arizona sale in January. About 25 years ago, the car underwent a 6,000-to-7,000-hour restoration, even though it already was in very good condition and required little metal work. More recently, RM Auto Restoration performed a general inspection and sorting of the car, which prepared it for its appearance at the 2010 Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance.

### \$3.55 MILLION

Surveying furniture maker John Townsend’s entire body of work reveals the craftsman’s preference for fully developed forms, precise execution, and

a methodical and meticulous approach predicated on labor-intensive methods of construction. Born in Newport, R.I., in 1733, Townsend was the son of Christopher Townsend, a cofounder of the Quaker family dynasty of cabinetmakers. Renowned for a woodworking career that spanned 50 years, the younger Townsend also was intensely patriotic, and as a result he was briefly imprisoned in 1777 along with 61 Newport residents for refusing to sign a pledge of allegiance to the king.

While Townsend’s work always commands serious attention among collectors, a particularly intriguing example of his early work recently crossed the block. That piece, a **shell-carved and figured mahogany high chest of drawers**, sold for \$3.55 million at a Sotheby’s sale

in January. Dated 1756, it is one of only five pieces bearing Townsend’s signature in graphite and represents his earliest version of the classic form, which he finished shortly after completing an apprenticeship with his father. Typifying Townsend’s early work, the chest stands on tall cabriole legs accented by feet defined by talons grasping fully articulated compressed balls. As Sotheby’s noted, the talons are “open,” or undercut, which is a refinement in American furniture that is unique to Newport, and this case is the earliest known example. Only one other high chest bearing Townsend’s signature is known to exist, and it resides in a private collection at Yale University.

The chest was built for Lieutenant Colonel Oliver Arnold of East Green-



Mahogany high chest of drawers crafted by John Townsend



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wich, R.I., who commissioned the piece to celebrate his marriage. It had remained in the family's possession for 255 years and was passed down through six generations. In addition to a strong and easily traceable lineage, the chest has retained its original surface and all its original parts. "I have never seen anything quite like this high chest," says Leslie Keno, Sotheby's director of American furniture and decorative arts. "It carries a direct history of descent through successive generations of the same family. Before my colleague Erik Gronning and I discovered it hidden on the upper floor of an early house in New England, almost no one outside of the family had laid eyes on it."

#### \$76,160

When the Cleveland Motorcycle Manufacturing Co. began producing machines in 1915, it found initial success with bikes powered by small, two-stroke engines. Capable of reaching speeds of 40 miles per hour, the bikes were heralded for their performance; but with fuel economy that reached as much as "75 miles for the gallon"—as the company's advertisements proclaimed—they were equally successful for being economical.

Those two-stroke Clevelands powered the company forward for the next

decade, but during the mid-1920s, Cleveland looked to diversify its product line. To accomplish that, company management hired F.E. Fowler to supply it with a four-stroke, T-head, four-cylinder engine. That engine was influenced by the Pierce Four, but where the Pierce relied on a two-speed transmission, Fowler's was equipped with three speeds and a better clutch. The result was the Cleveland Fowler, a bike that showed considerable promise, but one that saw limited production. Shortly after launching the Fowler Four, Cleveland felt considerable pressure from the Henderson company, which was marketing a 750 cc inline four-powered motorcycle capable of speeds close to 100 mph. To compete, the company ramped up production of a 750 cc bike of its own, limiting production of the Cleveland Fowler to only 100 examples.

One of those, a **1926 Cleveland Fowler Four**—the only complete example thought to exist today—sold for \$76,160 in January at an Auctions America sale in Las Vegas.

#### \$73,400

William Grant was in his late 40s when he quit his job at the Mortlach Distillery and committed his entire life savings to building his own distillery—Glen-

Glenfiddich Janet Sheed Roberts Reserve—1955

fiddich—in Dufftown, Scotland. In many respects, his future and his livelihood were floating in that first barrel of whisky. A successful first batch laid the groundwork for the independent, family-run distillery—a distinction that Glenfiddich continues to boast today and one that bears dividends in the type of product that it can produce. "When you're not held to quarterly projections and shareholders, you get to do a lot of things that other companies can't do," says Lindsay Prociw, the company's senior brand manager. "You can invest in your whisky. You can take a long-term approach and it's why Glenfiddich has a rare collection of great whiskies."

One such rare whisky, the **Glenfiddich Janet Sheed Roberts Reserve—1955**, recently sold for £46,850 (about \$73,400) at a Bonhams auction in Edinburgh, Scotland. The batch pays homage to Janet Sheed Roberts, Scotland's oldest living person (she's 110), who, incidentally, is the last surviving granddaughter of William Grant. This particular cask was barreled on December 31, 1955, and bottled in November 2011. After such a long barrel life, much of the whisky had evaporated, which meant that only 15 bottles could be filled. Of those 15, only 11 will be made available to the public; and the bottle sold at the Bonhams sale, which set a world record for the price of a single bottle of whisky, was the first of those 11 to be made available. ☐



1926 Cleveland Fowler Four

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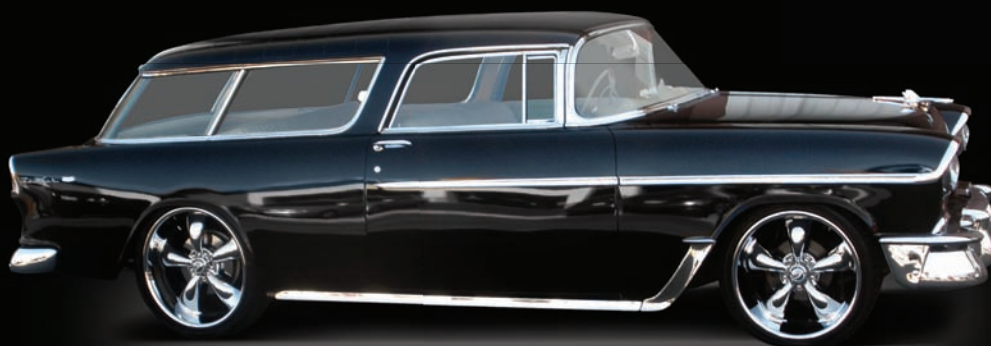
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# PURSUIITS

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and a fashionable  
nod to the Wild West.



## SHADES BY DESIGN

The smell of wet clay is the first thing to greet a visitor when the freight elevator opens on the sixth floor of the nondescript building in Brooklyn, N.Y. Passing through a large, open studio scattered with pottery wheels and half-finished pots, a visitor still must meander past a painter's work space before arriving at the design studio for **Activist Eyewear** ([www.activisteyewear.com](http://www.activisteyewear.com)). It's here, in this 200-square-foot workroom, that Mark Craig, cofounder of the brand, designs the sunglasses that

he and business partner Anthony Codispoti believe will shake up the eyewear industry.

Prior to their meeting in 2009, Craig and Codispoti both had ambitions to launch a sunglasses company. While Craig had experience as an industrial designer, he had no experience running a company. Codispoti, by contrast, was a serial entrepreneur but lacked any exposure to the sunglasses market. They quickly realized that by pooling their efforts they could turn that common dream into a reality. "Our first

conversation was one of those love-at-first-sight kind of things," says Codispoti. "There was this instant connection."

Their goal was to create a line of sunglasses that melded style with performance in innovative ways. As Craig explains, "In today's world there are so many brands out there, and there's a tendency to just take a well-known name . . . slap a logo on a product and call it design. That's not design. What we're trying to do is move the conversation forward and create an alternative."

After graduating from Pratt Institute in 2001, Craig, now 35 years old, took a job at Marchon, one of the world's largest eyewear companies. It was there that he realized how much he enjoyed creating something to be worn on the face, which he says requires exceptional attention to detail. "If you're off by a millimeter or even a tenth of a millimeter it can make or break a design," he says. "I haven't found anything else like it."

Activist's first three models, launched in 2010, were influenced by popular eyeglass styles of the early 20th century. Since then, the company has launched two more styles and has plans to unveil a third series this spring, which will include styles for women. Though the glasses are designed in Brooklyn, all



Designed in Brooklyn, N.Y., and manufactured in Japan, every pair of Activist Eyewear sunglasses is equipped with a split-temple design (top) and comes with a microfiber handkerchief (above).

are produced by small, family-owned manufacturing companies in Japan. Additionally, each series is limited to 718 examples (in homage to Brooklyn's area code), which assures customers a certain sense of exclusivity.

All models cost \$450 and feature a split-temple design that spreads the area of contact between the head and the glasses, ensuring a more secure fit. In addition, Craig etched his own fingerprint into the rubber nose pads, which adds texture and prevents the glasses from sliding. On an aesthetic front, each pair of glasses comes with a color-matched microfiber handkerchief—not a traditional lens cloth—which can be used to accessorize an outfit or clean a lens.

According to Craig, wearing Activist Eyewear glasses is a way of expressing a demand for more creative and honest design. "There definitely is an aspect of our story that's about small guys fighting against the powers that be," he says. Wearing those glasses, he says, is just a way to do it in style. —E.J.

### A STEADY HAND

From the moment that James Ingles took up the game of golf at the age of 13, he fell in love with its finesse and precision, as well as the engineering and design of the game's equipment. As a teenager with dreams of joining the tour, Ingles would spend hours testing a bevy of putters in golf shops in his native England. Business school took him to St. Andrews, Scotland—the ideal destination for someone with a desire to work within the golf industry—but it

was a trip back home to London that provided him with the inspiration and the idea for his business.

When Ingles was 10 years old, his father bought the rights to Charles Hellis & Sons, a London-based shotgun company that was founded in 1894 but stopped producing firearms in the 1960s. It was the elder Ingles' intention to return the brand to its rightful place among the best sporting gun manufacturers of London, and so it was that as James grew up he developed a commitment to handmade processes. When Ingles showed his father a new limited-edition putter that he had purchased in December of 2009, his father was not impressed. In response, Ingles challenged his father's company to make a better one. "I was almost trying to call his bluff," Ingles says. "If you're going to dismiss my art, then let's see what your guy can come up with."



Above and below: Putters crafted by James Ingles are forged from steel and can include as much or as little scrollwork and gold inlay as the customer would like.

Ingles provided the lead gun maker with a blade-style putter from the mid-20th century and a few days later he was presented with a hand-chiseled and -filed duplicate. "Having challenged him to make it and having him make it, that was the eureka moment," Ingles says. Six months later, after Ingles had formed partnerships with forging houses around the United Kingdom, he officially launched his golf putter company, **James Ingles Putters** ([www.jamesinglesputters.com](http://www.jamesinglesputters.com)).

Currently, Ingles offers two standard putter shapes—a classic blade style and a heel-toe weighted design (costing about \$355 to \$435, respectively)—that can be customized with engraving and gold inlay. But for golfers looking for something more personalized, Ingles can create completely bespoke designs. "They may have an old putter that they loved that they want to re-create," he says of customers who are drawn to his bespoke program, "or they may have design features from three or four putters that they love that they'd like to combine into one."

A bespoke design starts at around \$800, but depending on the level of engraving and inlay work requested, the final price can increase to as much as \$6,300. Because Ingles employs shotgun engravers, the scrollwork found on his putters mirrors that found on some of the best engraved sporting guns. And



Bold, yet curiously flirtatious

Shown, the Johanna in Chocolate rough-out leather trimmed with Robins Egg.



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while he says that close to 50 percent of his bespoke customers are collectors looking for a beautiful trophy piece, Ingles says that his putters are designed for what they can do in the hands of a player on the course. “I’m uneasy about making something that isn’t going to see the light of day and hit a golf ball,” he says. “After all, the whole business premise is to make the best putters that we can.” —S.T.

### COWBOY COUTURE

Clint Orms approaches all of his custom-engraved belt buckle commissions with the same enthusiasm and passion, whether the project is a simple design that costs \$600 or an elaborate infusion of multicolored gold, silver, and platinum that costs more than \$50,000. “I love the whole process of starting with a raw material and creating something that someone will appreciate,” he says. “I love working with people as much as working with the product itself. I love to hear the story that people want to tell with the piece.”

That dedication to the craft is the reason Orms’ business, **Clint Orms Engravers and Silversmiths** ([www.clintorms.com](http://www.clintorms.com)), has flourished for two decades. Although Orms acknowledges that the




Clint Orms’ silversmith work ranges from traditional, trophy-style belt buckles (above) to elaborate, though more subtle, buckle sets (below).

cost of a finished product can fluctuate greatly, he explains that it’s only a reflection of the amount of time spent to perfect the design. “The same team that made the \$55,000 buckle might turn around and make the \$600 buckle next,” he says. “You’re getting the same craftsmen and the same level of quality; it’s just not going to take as long.”

To date, the most complex buckle that Orms has finished required 250 hours of hammering, soldering, and engraving, whereas a modest design likely can be finished in one business day. Regardless of the time required to complete them, Orms says that every one of his

buckles and buckle sets conjures up the spirit of the Wild West, which is what draws customers to them. However, that doesn’t mean that his clientele is limited to the regions of the country where the cowboy culture originated. “We have a lot of clients who are in New York and they’re definitely wearing these as accessories for their outfits,” Orms explains. “They want to set themselves apart the way a great set of cuff links or a tie would accessorize an outfit.”

No two Orms projects are the same. Some customers have a specific vision from the beginning, while others may request a buckle that reflects a particular sentiment or theme and entrust Orms to do the rest. They’re two distinct circumstances, but as Orms explains, each one is equally appealing. “I like it when people just cut me loose and give me a budget to spend so I can go after it,” he says. “But I get just as much enjoyment trying to create the customer’s vision. Both are very rewarding.”

David Light, a 46-year-old Englishman, is one of those customers who leave the specifics up to Orms. It’s a strategy that he’s employed since he commissioned Orms with his first buckle more than a decade ago. “I just give him the basics and he nails it every time,” Light says. “His buckles have a very unique, artistic flair that’s almost his signature. It’s not just an inanimate object; he has the ability to create something that has a lot more life to it.” —S.T. 



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# TOP SHOPS

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### Tip of the Hat

When Ben Goorin stepped into the role of president and CEO of **Goorin Bros.** ([www.goorin.com](http://www.goorin.com)), a family-owned, San Francisco hatmaking firm, he refocused the company's approach and perception by opening a shop in the city's North Beach district in 2005. Prior to that time, the company was strictly a wholesaler. "We want to be the hat shop that used to exist in every neighborhood," he says. "We want a relationship with customers that know us well."

Since then, Goorin has launched 20 additional hat stores around the country, and more are on the way. As Goorin explains, summer and winter each bring about 300 new styles, but every Goorin store includes a variety of styles unique to that region of the country. For example, the 1,100-square-foot shop in New Orleans, which opened in an early-19th-century French Quarter townhouse last summer, offers a more diverse selection of wide-brimmed, Panama-style hats than other stores around the country. Inventories may be unique from location to location, but the company's old-fashioned philosophy imbues every store, as evidenced by the New Orleans shop's service bar. "We want customers to settle in for a minute and see what they come around to," says Kevin Doyle, the store's manager. "It's a consultation, really. You're getting them to conjure up an image of them in the hat during their day-to-day lives."

That laid-back approach not only reflects the company's desire to match a customer with just the right hat; it also echoes the type of customer service that once was present in most specialty boutiques and that Goorin and his team aim to bring back. "We're hearkening back to a different era when you could go in and they custom-made your hat," Doyle says. "We're creating an atmosphere where it feels like you're stepping back in time a little bit."



### COVER TO COVER

First-time patrons of **Bauman Rare Books** ([www.baumanrarebooks.com](http://www.baumanrarebooks.com)) in New York City will discover the mystique of vintage folios long before a leather-bound first edition is placed in their hands. With towering mahogany bookcases and display cases showcasing as many as 5,000 rare books spanning all subject matters, the store can feel more like a historic European library than a retail shop. But from the retailer's perspective, store manager Erik DuRon has learned over the course of more than a decade that collectible books often can be intimidating to those who are new to the trade. That's why he makes sure that new customers immediately have access to the books that interest them. "The experience of rare books is a tactile one; it's about handmade paper and handcrafted bindings," he says. "We try to get books into people's hands quickly in the course of a discussion, so they know what it's like to feel and hold a great landmark in literary history."

The Madison Avenue location is the company's flagship store (another showroom recently opened in the Shoppes at the Palazzo in Las Vegas), and between its staff of seven booksellers and a team of archivists and researchers at the company's headquarters in Philadelphia, the store can provide all the tools necessary for customers looking to begin or grow a collection. "We're a resource besides just a bookseller for you," says DuRon. "We stay with you for the duration of your time as a collector. It's like we're your private curator or consultant."



#### NOTE

Tell us about a great store, boutique, or gallery that you've visited and you may see it on this page in a future issue. E-mail the editor at [shaunt@robbreport.com](mailto:shaunt@robbreport.com) or comment on Facebook/Robb Report Collection.

## TRENDSETTERS

When Chicago's **Shrine** haberdashery ([www.shrinestyle.com](http://www.shrinestyle.com)) opened its doors on Oak Street in November 2010, it introduced a boutique environment specializing in men's accessories, predicated on relatively unknown, fashion-forward brands. "It's finding that cross between the quality of American goods with the flair that only European designers can offer," says Timothy Grindle, the store's manager. "We're looking for designers who are using interesting color choices or patterns and are adding a flair to a craft that's been around for a long time."

Up until now, the store has focused only on accessories—neckties, cuff links, and pocket squares, to name a few—but beginning this spring, the 1,400-square-foot boutique will introduce articles of clothing, as well. Despite the store's diversifying inventory, Grindle insists that the feel and focus of the shop will not change. "It's high-quality and up-and-coming designers," he says, "and that's grown only as fashion has changed."

As Grindle explains, the store's ideal customer is what he calls a "rake"—a well-dressed person with a penchant for edgy styles. While that would suggest that the shop's clientele consists largely of young professionals, Grindle says that many distinguished gentlemen regularly frequent the store in search of hats, suspenders, and double-thick ties—nostalgic accoutrements that most other retailers have cast aside. Yet as much as Shrine succeeds on the strength



of its inventory, it's the boutique's commitment to personal relationships with its customers that brings many patrons back. From handwritten thank-you notes to phone calls relaying inventory updates, Shrine tailors its approach to regular correspondence. "Because the staff knows what we have and knows the stories of our brands, we can connect with our customers to give them what they're after," Grindle says. "We try to be as knowledgeable about them and what they want as much as what we have to sell."

## Topping the Charts

With a modest two-paned window display framed by a dark blue facade, the **Map House** ([www.themaphouse.com](http://www.themaphouse.com)) in the Knightsbridge section of London seems like an unassuming cartographer's gallery when viewed

from the street. Once inside, however, a customer quickly discovers the magnitude of the shop. Filling six galleries that stretch out over four buildings, the Map House is home to an inventory of 10,000 maps that span the globe and

date as far back as the late 15th century.

From the earliest maps depicting Christopher Columbus' discovery of the New World to maps chronicling explorer Ernest Shackleton's route to the South Pole in the early 1900s, the store has something for any armchair traveler's taste. As Philip Curtis—one of the store's directors—explains, the Map House does more than just cover the spectrum of map categories. It also provides numerous styles and examples that can accommodate any budget. "We like to think that for almost anything that customers ask of us, we can show them 20 different variants on that theme. It's one of the great joys that come from having the largest inventory of fine maps in the world," he says. "If somebody wants one map for their home or office, they want one particular memento. They won't want to just take what they can get. We pride ourselves on giving them a wide choice so they can pick the one that they want." □



TOP: TIMOTHY GRINDLE

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# REINVENTING THE WHEEL





CONTEMPORARY MASTERS  
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REDEFINING THE STREET ROD.

BY KEN GROSS

ONCE CONSIDERED a working-class, quasi-outlaw pastime, hot-rodding has achieved a level of respectability today beyond anything that its dry lakes–racing, drag strip–streaking pioneers likely could have imagined. A few years ago, the coveted Ridler trophy winner for “best in show” at the Detroit Autorama went to a 1936 Ford coupe that reportedly cost more than \$2 million to build; while every two years, a highly select group of historic hot rods parades over the hallowed lawn at the Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance and other respected classic-car events. ➔



Rick Dore's 1936  
Auburn "Slow Burn"



Although guys were stripping down and souping up old cars before World War II, hot-rodding and its more benign cousin, customizing, took off in earnest after the war. Thrill-seeking vets returned from the battlefield with newly honed mechanical skills and—thanks to saved-up combat pay—money to spend. After nearly three years of pent-up demand (cars weren't produced from February 1942 until early 1946), new models were in short supply. By way of a resolution, guys began buying older cars and modifying them to run faster and look better.

When it came to what hot-rodders valued most, two things prevailed—power and performance. To meet demand, an entire industry sprang up to sell speed equipment and “doll-up” parts. Customizers lowered cars for a sleeker silhouette, shaved unnecessary trim, leaded in the holes (hence the name “lead sleds”), reshaped fenders, and chopped tops, transforming lowly Fords and Mercurys into pseudo-Cadillacs.

Hot-rodding boomed through the '50s but slumped in the mid-'60s, when factory muscle cars, like the Pontiac GTO



and Dodge Charger, invaded dealership showrooms and offered high performance at an affordable price. Predictably, street rods were mothballed, but they began to reemerge after George Lucas' *American Graffiti* reminded enthusiasts of how much they had lost.

Whether you have a restored or custom vehicle ready for show at a concours, a historic drag race, or simply a Sunday drive, you can relive your misspent youth or enjoy the youth you never had in a hot rod. As Bruce Meyer, a Beverly Hills-based collector and the owner of the former Pierson Brothers '34 Ford coupe and the ex-Doane Spencer '32 Ford roadster, likes to say, "It's never too late to have a happy childhood."

Getting there, of course, requires the car. Some enthusiasts have the skills to build a hot rod themselves, but many others turn to experts to create or restore the vehicle of their dreams. From coast to coast, exceptional shops abound, ready to produce the car you've always wanted or one that you've never seen. The only thing they require from you is the vision.



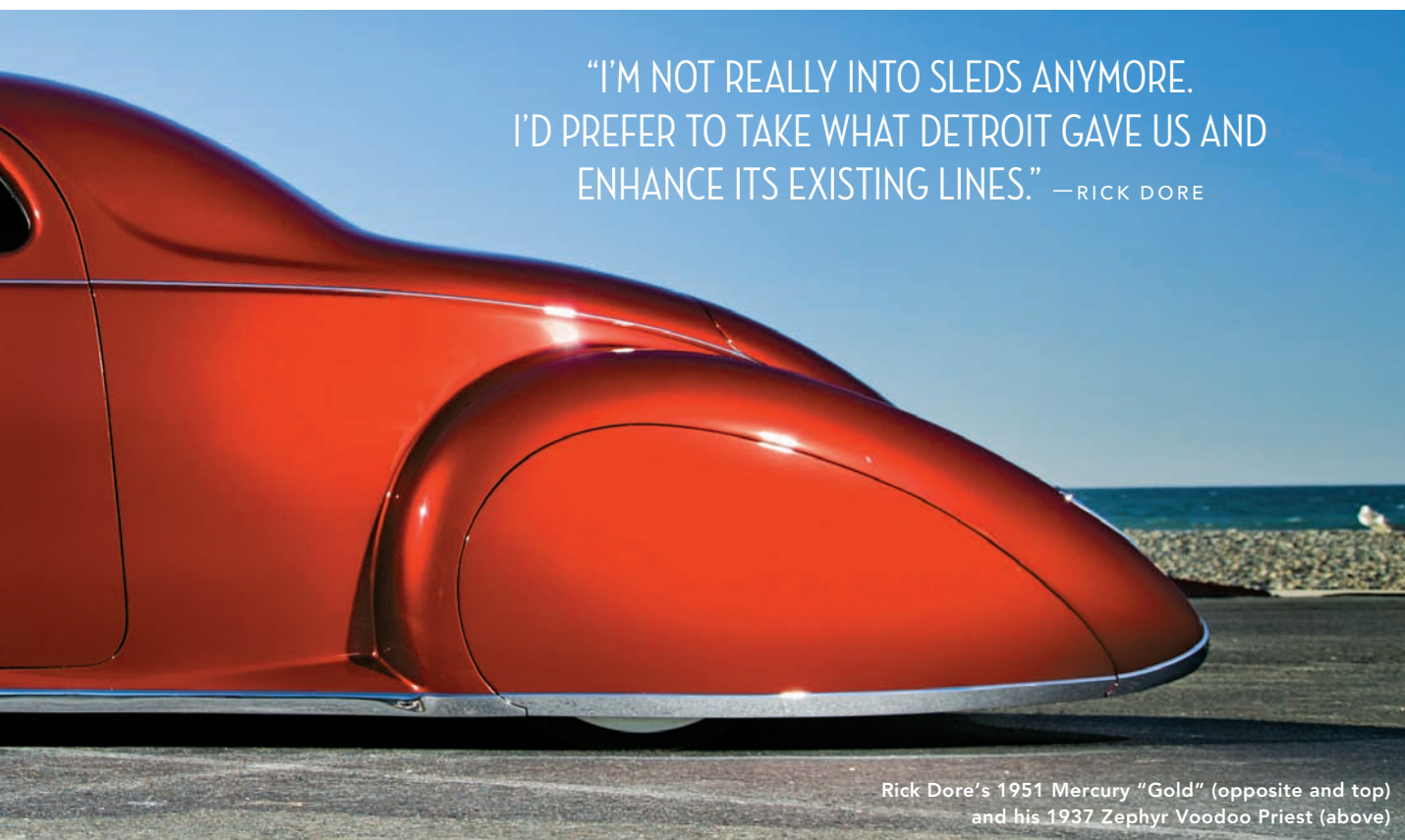
## REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST

Rick Dore is blessed with a vivid imagination, and one of the things he does best is reach into the past, find a classic everyone knows, and integrate those old themes into a fresh approach with countless subtle updates. The result is at once familiar and like nothing ever seen before. The sleek '37 Lincoln-Zephyr coupe that Dore built for James Hetfield is a perfect example. But then, so are the sleek Auburn Speedster and Buick Riviera customs that Hetfield commissioned. As the 48-year-old car

enthusiast and Metallica front man declares, "Rick Dore is in a league of his own."

The cars that bear a **Rick Dore Kustoms** ([www.rickdore.com](http://www.rickdore.com)) insignia haven't been hacked up and decorated with trim from other makes. Instead, Dore accentuates their best features, severely lowers the chassis for a better silhouette, and simplifies the lines. When they're ready, he coats them with a gleaming iridescent finish, an artistic aspect that has become his signature. Notably, Dore chooses to work his magic on

"I'M NOT REALLY INTO SLEDS ANYMORE.  
I'D PREFER TO TAKE WHAT DETROIT GAVE US AND  
ENHANCE ITS EXISTING LINES." —RICK DORE



Rick Dore's 1951 Mercury "Gold" (opposite and top) and his 1937 Zephyr Voodoo Priest (above)

cars that most customizers don't often fancy, like a Lincoln four-door convertible from the early '60s, a Mercury-like Hudson coupe from the early '50s, even a custom '34 Ford roadster, accented by the swoopy skirted rear fenders from a '36 Ford. "It opened up people's minds," Dore says of that car. "Nobody expected it."

As one Seattle-based hot rod writer declares, "Rick Dore has a restless and inventive spirit. He reaches out and goes where nobody has ever gone before."

Talk to Dore's customers and they'll all agree: he sees the inherent beauty in many cars, strips away the excess trim, and reveals the purity of the original designer's intentions. He respectfully pays homage to a long-lost model many people revere, and in the end he'll make it better. Dore himself will tell you that he once was influenced by classic custom cars like the legendary Nick Matranga '40 Mercury and Matranga's trendsetting '51 Mercury that was hard-topped by the Barris shop. Dore has been there and done them, but he's moving on.

"I've done some traditional '50s-style customs, but I'm not really into sleds anymore," he says from his main shop in Phoenix. "I'd prefer to take what Detroit gave us and enhance its existing lines. Both Cadillac roadsters I built resemble concept cars, or maybe they're long-lost show cars, just discovered, that Detroit designers put away in storage. They borrow from the best of the past. I still like 'em slammed on the ground, though."

Dore's iridescent finishes may be his trademark, but his imaginative use of color is what attracts the eye. Dore's work with pastels, pearls, and candies is both unique and unmistakable. "I'm fortunate that some of the best painters in the



business, like Art Himsel, let me fool around in their shops," he says. "I'll come up with a shade, something I'll mix myself, and they'll figure out how to make a hundred times as much."

"My inspiration comes from everywhere," he adds, explaining that a walk through an Italian flea market south of Rome led to his discovery of some African stones, where almost instantly he found a shade of green that he would later use on a 1934 Ford "Flashback." "To me, color is 99 percent," he says. "It has to draw you to the car. *Then* you look at the details."

### SWEET HOME ALABAMA

Northeast of Birmingham, Ala., in the city of Gadsden, Alan Johnson maneuvers through a busy shop, creating rods and customs that build upon the inherently great lines of early Fords or Chevrolets. After surveying **Johnson's Hot Rod Shop**



Top and above: A 1932, 3-window Ford coupe, courtesy of Johnson's Hot Rod Shop

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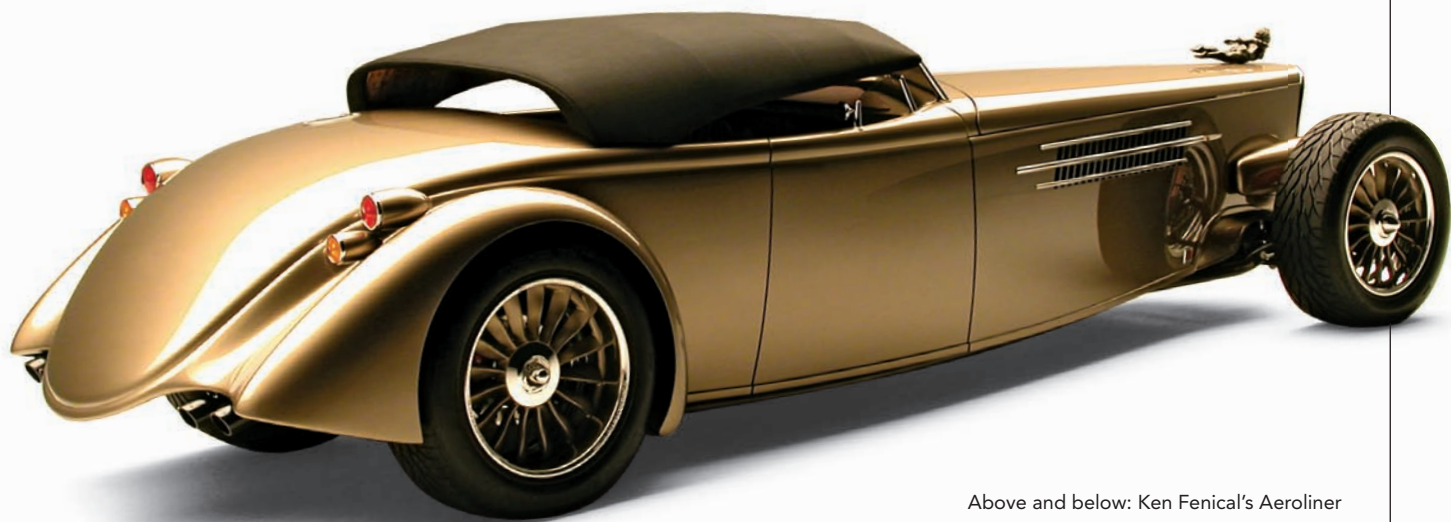
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Above and below: Ken Fenical's Aeroliner

([www.johnsonshotrodshop.com](http://www.johnsonshotrodshop.com)) and its stable of completed projects, it's clear that there's not much Johnson and his talented crew haven't tried, and even less that they can't do. From traditional hot rods to modernized muscle cars, a phantom woody, a super rod-style pickup, even a record-setting Bonneville racer, nothing scares them. "My interests vary, like my customers," Johnson says. "If a project excites me and my guys, we'll go at it 110 percent. It's just got to turn me on."

"I really don't like doing the same thing over and over," he adds. "While I like the traditional look, with most of my customers I'm able to make some changes and add modern improvements." Johnson's efforts on Doug Cooper's subtly reportioned '32 Ford B-400 and on his own modern classic Deuce roadster illustrate that skill. The critics rewarded him for it, too, as the B-400 won the coveted Don Ridler Award at the Detroit Autorama in 2009.

To best describe the car, it's what might have happened

had Henry Ford hired one of the leading coachbuilders of the time to build an automobile. They started with a decent Ford Victoria body and carefully massaged it into a fabric-topped B-400. "I wanted to keep what Henry had with the original B-400," Johnson explains, "but more like the feeling of a classic Duesenberg with a Murphy or Dietrich custom body. This really is a coachbuilt hot rod."

The hood was lengthened a few inches, so that it now runs all the way to the windshield—a long-forgotten styling trick that a handful of enterprising coachbuilders executed during the 1930s. Besides dramatically reportioning the car, Johnson says that the modification eliminates the inherent stubbiness of a '32 Ford, allowing it to approach the majesty of a major classic. "I wanted something elegant," he continues. "This is a gentleman's hot rod that would look right pulling onto the field at Pebble Beach. There are a lot of custom billet pieces, but they've been extensively modified, then hand-finished so they resemble original factory castings."

Cooper agrees. "This car is very understated," he says. "That's Alan's style. He likes to push a car outside, stand back a ways, and look at it. He lets the design speak for itself." As a car enthusiast who always has taken a hands-on approach, Cooper had a lot of involvement with the project. "I tried to get to Alabama half a dozen times a year," he says. "I'd stay three or four days, even a week. Other times, Alan sent me photographs or I looked at sketches. I was very interested and I wanted to contribute."

### A DIFFERENT DRUMMER

A childhood spent working in his family's flower shop earned Ken Fenical the nickname of Posies, but within the hot rod community he's better known for the Super Slide springs that he manufactures. "Years ago," he says, "when Jim Ewing was



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fabricating dropped axles, most springs were custom-made. I gave Jim the measurements and said, 'if you can make your axles to these dimensions, I'll give you perfectly consistent springs.'" A suspension expert, Fenical now offers a wide range of street rod springs, including Bugatti-like quarter-elliptics, through his central Pennsylvania-based business, aptly called Posies ([www.posiesrodsandcustoms.com](http://www.posiesrodsandcustoms.com)).

But Posies offers much more than suspension components; it also creates complete custom vehicles. In that regard, Fenical marches to the beat of his own drum, which can result in some unique cars, like his Extremeliner, a woody-like, Art Deco station wagon—a car that some people believe was the inspiration behind the PT Cruiser—or his Aeroliner, a long, skinny roadster that took a 1935 Ford to heights Henry never imagined. Inspired by the French Art Deco speedsters of the 1930s, the Aeroliner's chassis was stretched to a 139-inch wheelbase and narrowed by six inches, while the body was massaged until it took on a more graceful shape.

"I like to build statements," Fenical explains. By that he means head-turning rods and customs that often don't resemble any portion of the cars on which they were based. "With the Extremeliner," Fenical says proudly, "we made everything on that car except the engine, the driveline, and the tires." The car shook up the scene at the Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA) show in Las Vegas a few years back, and if you happen to meet people who were present at that event, you'll likely discover that they're still talking about it.

Currently, Fenical is putting the final touches on a '55 Ford two-door station wagon, equipping it with a 600 bhp, Jack Roush-built Ford Coyote V-8. Mildly customized, with a



totally contemporary driveline, the wagon will tour the car show circuit for an entire year flying the Roush banner. Fenical also recently completed a Kaiser pickup truck, one of just three examples originally built in 1950, though it now boasts a unique, dechromed, discreetly trimmed shape. Instead of the anemic 6-cylinder flathead that Henry J. Kaiser had installed under its hood, the vehicle—finished in a distinctive metallic green—now gets its power from a hot Chevy V-8.

"It's one of just three Kaiser pickups built for Earl 'Madman' Muntz," Fenical explains. Known as the king of California television sales in the '50s, Muntz also invented the four-track tape recorder, a forerunner to the eight-track. According to Fenical, back in the day these rare pickups were used by Kaiser dealers as promotional vehicles. This is the sole survivor, he says, and you can bet some purists are upset that it's been extensively modified. But if Fenical is worried about retribution from the Kaiser Frazer Owners Club, he



Top and above: Ken Fenical's Extremeliner



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Bottom and above:  
A 1934, 3-window Ford coupe,  
courtesy of East Coast Custom

doesn't show it. Not as he cheerfully sells T-shirts in his shop that read, "*Anybody* can restore a car; it takes a real man to cut one up!"

Gary Maisel of Annapolis, Md., is the proud owner of the custom "Kaiser Kamino" and points to Fenical's portfolio of work as the selling point. "I wanted a very different car," he says. "My wife and I came with some of our ideas, and Posies added his input. Now that it's almost done, we can't wait to show it off."

### BUILDING ON TRADITION

From his shop in north central Massachusetts, Dave Simard builds traditional-style hot rods, specializing in 1932 to 1934 Fords. However, the talented fabricator and owner of **East Coast Custom** will assure you that he can do *anything*, even 100-point restorations. As proof, he'll point to his award-winning restoration of the ex-Jim Khougaz dry lakes roadster, which appeared at Pebble Beach in 2007.

Simard's credo is simple: he does everything as well as it can be done, with great respect for originality. "You've got to restore a car before you can make a hot rod out of it," he says. "If you don't, you'll never get it to look right." Guided by that philosophy, Simard will spend as long as it takes to find original parts, and he'll scrutinize every aspect of his metal-finished cars, making sure each panel is razor-straight. If you think old Fords never were assembled this well in the factory you'd be right. "Standards are higher today," says Simard. "Everybody wants the best."

Surrounded by authentic old parts and customers' cars in various states of completion, Simard will work continuously

on a car or do as little as a week's worth of work per month, whatever budgets permit. With a staff of only four technicians working out of his approximately 2,000-square-foot shop, Simard does a lot of the work himself, and he likes it that way. There's a waiting list for those seeking an East Coast Custom roadster, but past customers will tell you that it's worth the wait. As they explain, Simard's ability to combine the very old with the latest technology and gift wrap it in a beautifully restored original body is what separates Simard's shop from most others.

Currently, Simard's attention is focused on a '32 Ford roadster commissioned by Jim Farley, Ford Motor Co.'s vice president of marketing and communications. Equipped with an original steel body and frame, the car boasts a modern 4.6-liter, 4-valve Ford V-8 that Simard has reworked to closely



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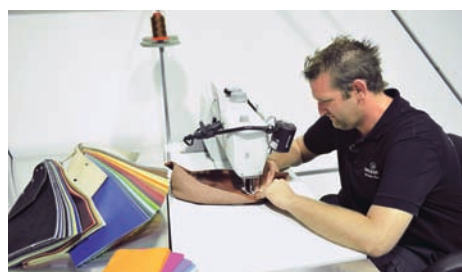
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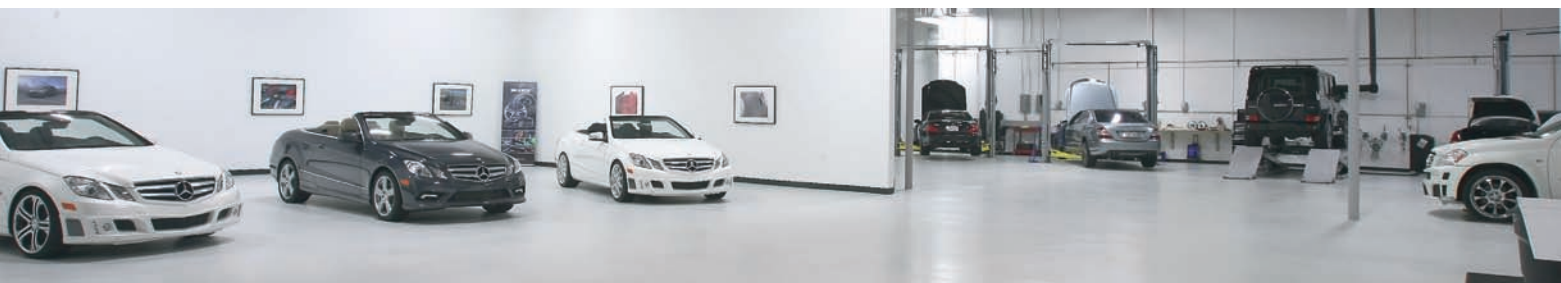
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resemble a one-off experimental engine that once graced magazine covers in 1955. Because Farley admires Indy cars from the '50s, this roadster is intended to resemble the type of car that an Indy crew chief might have built in his spare time, if he had any. The car won't be ready until the 2013 Grand National Roadster Show, but when it's finished, the car—painted a dark maroon reminiscent of 1930s racecars—will wow enthusiasts with oversize vintage Stewart Warner instruments, a torsion bar suspension, plenty of handmade parts, and that bespoke engine.

"Dave's a special guy, a true artisan," Farley says of Simard. "He really does define the ideals of hot-rodding. He is *very* innovative, despite using materials from back in the day, and he never takes the easy way through his craft. He makes it better, faster, and safer with his own intuition. That's rarer and rarer [to find] these days."

### HOT RODS BY THE BAY

Roy Brizio didn't grow up in the '50s, but you'd never know that from the cars he builds. Take the little '32 Ford three-window coupe that his shop produced for his longtime friend and client, John Mumford, who has a secret hideaway atop Brizio's shop in South San Francisco. The car is a total time warp, with a stout Oldsmobile V-8 under the 25-louver hood, immaculate wide-whites, '53 Olds Fiesta spinner hubcaps, twin-tone tuck-and-roll Naugahyde, and a wet aqua finish that looks as though it came right off an Esther Williams bathing suit.

With Brizio, the devil's always in the details, and Mumford's coupe is a perfect example of what a guy with skill, taste, and money would have crafted half a century ago. Notable features include an Art Deco '40 Ford steering wheel, Guide

682-C headlights, Pontiac taillights, and a painted script on the decklid that reads "Stagger Lee."

Brizio's shop, **Roy Brizio Street Rods** ([www.roybriziostreetrods.com](http://www.roybriziostreetrods.com)), is packed cheek by jowl with beautifully preserved early Ford V-8s, historic custom cars, and rare flathead speed equipment, along with several other magazine-cover-quality Brizio builds. He may fabricate cars for a Rolodex of successful rock stars and professional athletes, but he also accepts commissions from other, less-notable hot rod enthusiasts. Such builds include a chopped and dropped '36 Ford that first appeared on the cover of *Hot Rod* magazine in 1949 and more recently won its class at Pebble Beach when the Concours celebrated prewar custom cars; and a little lakes roadster modified with a narrowed Model T body and an Alfa Romeo twin-cam four.

Brizio is famous for rods that run, and run, and run. Brizio's crew built Dave Schaub's '32 roadster, a car that Schaub used to circumnavigate the country in 2010, driving through 49 states in eight days. Last year, Schaub accomplished the feat for the second time, only he did so in one day less. "Roy and his guys don't miss a detail," Schaub says. "I had a lot of faith in them. When I picked up my car to drive cross-country, it was ready to go. And they do that for everybody."

It's a service that many other customers have come to discover and appreciate. "Although Roy probably builds more street rods than anybody, he's really distinguished by cars that are built to drive and are very reliable," says Mumford, who commissioned the first of many cars from Brizio 20 years ago. "He internalizes what his customers want and builds the cars that way. I've taken my cars cross-country, up to Canada, and I never worry. I just get in 'em and drive."



A 1934 Ford Victoria,  
courtesy of Roy Brizio Street Rods

Above and inset: the Norman Timbs Special, which is slated to show at the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance in August



## THE POWER OF PERSISTENCE

How a passionate community of enthusiasts shook up the world of classic automobiles.

**DURING THE LATE 1940s**, the hobby of hot-rodding was attracting automotive enthusiasts who valued one-off styling and performance over period-correct, classic restoration. By 1950, hot-rodding had gained significant momentum. That year also saw the inception of the **Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance** ([www.pebblebeachconcours.net](http://www.pebblebeachconcours.net)), a classic car event celebrating historic, authentically restored automobiles with classes dedicated to elegant marques such as Duesenberg, Rolls-Royce, Ferrari, and other prewar classics.

For decades there was no place on Pebble Beach's lawn for a street rod, but street rod-specific events were launched over time and provided hot-rodders with a forum and a stage to showcase their most treasured vehicles. "There's no one more enthusiastic than the hot-rodders, and I don't think anyone has more fun with their cars than hot-rodders," says Bruce Meyer, a California collector of both classic automobiles and street rods.

You need only look at national shows held by **Goodguys Rod & Custom Association** ([www.good-guys.com](http://www.good-guys.com)) to see that. Past category titles, such as Righteous Roadster, Coolest '50s, Best Bitchin', and Bad to the Bone, convey the importance of fun, but they also lack the prestige and the recognition that comes with a "Best in Class" or a "Best in Show" award from concours events like Pebble Beach. By the late 1980s, Meyer decided that needed to change and began campaigning on behalf of the hot-rodding community. Unfortunately, his efforts came at the worst possible time.

Like most pursuits with a strong component of artistic expression, hot-rodding has ebbed and flowed, creating eras that have had long-standing influence over the craft, while at times producing others that have left many enthusiasts scratching their heads. The 1980s was an era in hot-rodding that, as Meyer explains, missed the point. "Guys

were overdesigning simply because they felt compelled to just keep designing," he says. "The hobby started out with traditional, good-looking roadsters, but in the 80s it became something that [today] you'd be embarrassed to pull out of your garage."

Outlandish vehicles were at the forefront of the genre as Meyer started campaigning for the street rod's admittance into the Pebble Beach Concours, and not surprisingly, his request fell on deaf ears. It would take another decade of persistence before Meyer and the rest of the hot-rodding community finally arrived on the lawn at Pebble Beach. Even then, Meyer recalls being placed "at the farthest end of the lawn you could get, without being in the bay."

But a funny thing happened during the street rod's debut at the Pebble Beach Concours in 1997. According to Meyer, the event revealed the hot-rodding genes in everyone. In some cases, it even converted the nonbelievers. "I

had friends that thought hot-rodding was beneath them," Meyer says. "They all have hot rods now."

Pebble Beach chairman Sandra Button looks back on that 1997 concours and sees it as a statement, the moment in time when the event broadened its view and acknowledged the evolution of the hobby. It was important for Button that her event embraced that evolution and provided a larger stage for more collectors and enthusiasts to celebrate the parts of the hobby that they love. "I think of the Pebble Beach Concours as a symphony," Button says. "There are a bunch of instruments and they're very different, but they come together to celebrate the automobile. And these hot rods are a very authentic reflection of the passion for the automobile in their era.

"Cars are like any other collectible," she continues. "They have no life or spirit without the people who love them." —Shaun Tolson □



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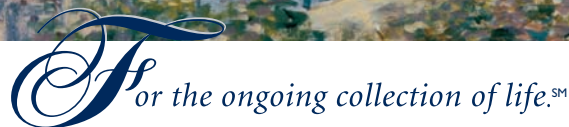
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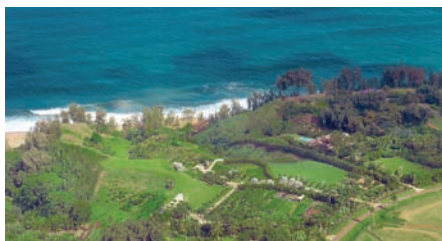
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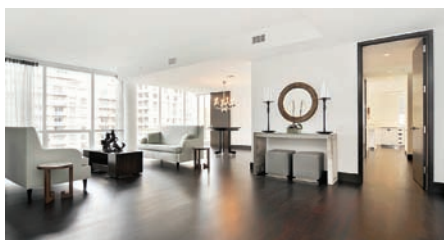
## NEW YORK, NY

120 East 70th St. Superb neo-federal townhouse w/ 10,000 ± sf, 16 rooms, living room, 11' ceilings, 9 BR, 8 fireplaces, 3 terraces, elevator, and garden. WEB: 0016387. **\$27,750,000**. Louise Beit. **Sotheby's International Realty East Side Manhattan Brokerage** 212.606.7703 | [sothebyshomes.com/nyc](http://sothebyshomes.com/nyc)



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740 Park Avenue. Newly and beautifully renovated 15 room duplex. Four large BR's with ensuite baths. WEB: 0016023. **\$23,000,000**. Serena Boardman and Meredyth Hull Smith. **Sotheby's International Realty East Side Manhattan Brokerage** 212.606.7611/7683 | [sothebyshomes.com/nyc](http://sothebyshomes.com/nyc)



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## QUOGUE, NY

Two-lot property on Quogue's desirable Dune Road comprises 2+ oceanfront acres with deeded beach access, and separate 1.6 acre preserve with dock on Quantuck Bay. WEB: 0055529. **\$10,995,000**. Harald Grant. **Sotheby's International Realty Southampton Brokerage** 631.227.4913 | [sothebyshomes.com/hamptons](http://sothebyshomes.com/hamptons)



## SOUTHAMPTON, NY

Luxurious Longview, gated 2.5 acre estate with 300' on Lake Agawam. Indoor pool, immediate proximity to ocean beaches, 9 BR, 9 baths, water views from every lakeside room. WEB: 0053192. **\$28,000,000**. Harald Grant. **Sotheby's International Realty Southampton Brokerage** 631.227.4913 | [sothebyshomes.com/hamptons](http://sothebyshomes.com/hamptons)



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Two acre property in coveted location with private beach access, offers 5 BR, 6.5 bath residence with gardens, pond, pool, tennis and 2-car garage. WEB: 0055507. **\$8,995,000**. Harald Grant.

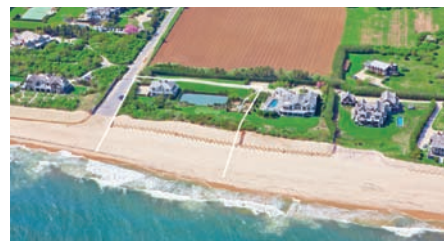
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## SOUTHAMPTON, NY

On Shinnecock Bay this 4 ± acre property offers peninsula-like setting with endless water views. Features an open floor plan, 6 BR, 3.5 baths. Heated gunite pool facing bay and tennis. WEB: 0055533. **\$7,500,000**. Lawrence Ingolia, Harald Grant.

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## WAINSCOTT, NY

Set on 3.25 ± acres with 250' of ocean frontage, this outstanding property awaits its future owner. Impeccable details throughout. Meticulous gardens, putting green and tennis court complete this offering. WEB: 0055559. **\$16,250,000**. John McHugh.

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# CHARIOTS *for the* COURSE

The Garia golf car (opposite) includes numerous amenities not found on typical vehicles, such as more storage room, dashboard monitors, and a refrigerator (below).



## Your swing might still need work, but a new wave of golf cars promises a consistently great drive.

BY SHAUN TOLSON

**W**HEN IT COMES to the golf industry, today's greatest new pieces of technology will feel obsolete in only a few short seasons. Take that \$500 driver that you just purchased. Two years from now, a newer, lighter, stronger alternative will appear, equipped with more technology to straighten your hook, minimize your slice, and improve your shot's overall trajectory even more. It's the nature of the modern game, and golfers have grown conditioned to it. Occasionally you may meet someone who's held onto a club for five, six, seven years. They'll talk up the club's comfort and the level of confidence that they have when they swing it; but by the golf industry's standards, that club isn't an asset, it's a relic.

Ask a golfer to trade in his Pro V1s and play with a single-piece ball from the 1960s and you'll be lucky if he says two more words to you the rest of the day. You might as well ask him to tee it up with a feathery. Take away his brand-new, graphite-shafted, 460 cc titanium-headed driver and hand him a 50-year-old persimmon driver instead, and he'll react as though you just gave him a hickory-shafted club straight out of the bag of Old Tom Morris.

The point is, when it comes to the pieces of equipment that golfers used 50 years ago, they look and perform nothing like what we have today. Save for one—the golf car. For almost 50 years the vehicle has seen little in the way of advancement, until now.

It was 2005 before Anders Lynge, a young Danish industrial designer, fully recognized the fact that the golf car was the sport's only outdated piece of equipment, and

even then, it took him four and a half years with a team of almost 50 engineers before he unveiled a vehicle that brought the golf car into the 21st century.

Lyngé doesn't even play golf, but if you ask him, that's the factor that allowed him to see the golf car for what it was and what it had failed to become. "If you're used to the way that it is, you tend to accept things for what they are," he says. "Most of the other cars are based on products that have been around for a long time, and there's a lot of trouble throwing away your own architecture. Starting from scratch gave us a lot of possibility to do this unique vehicle, and I've been very passionate about building the best possible car."

The company that Lyngé founded is called **Garia** ([www.garia.com](http://www.garia.com)), and the golf cars that it produces include a street-legal vehicle equipped for regular use on the golf course (\$18,000), a 2+2 model (\$18,000), and a Mansory edition equipped with carbon fiber body panels and other supercar-inspired modifications (prices vary, based on the level of customization). Each Garia vehicle is manufactured by Valmet Automotive, an independent Finnish automobile manufacturer that recently rolled out a series of Porsche Boxsters and Caymans and will soon begin production on the new Fisker Karma.

Lyngé acknowledges that his work to revolutionize the golf car was not rocket science; it simply required a thorough analysis and observation of how people were interacting with the vehicles that previously existed. A Garia golf car succeeds based on the sum of all the individual amenities and details that it possesses—from refrigeration systems to installed trash receptacles and 12-volt AC adapters for smartphone charging. Of course, these new additions seem obvious now, but it took decades before anyone thought to implement them. Perhaps the most obvious refinement is the way golf bags fit into the back of a Garia vehicle at an angle, which provides golfers with better access to their clubs. "Nobody thought that was a problem," Lyngé says of the previous, vertical positioning for golf bags, "until we showed them the solution."

Even when observing the golf industry in Denmark (where most golfers walk the course), Lyngé knew there was a market for a better golf car. However, it wasn't until he visited some of the top private golf communities in the United States that he fully grasped just how impactful his new vehicle could be. Lyngé watched as residents would drive to their golf course communities in luxury automobiles, but were then relegated to driving around the neighborhood in what he



Left and above: Garia's Mansory edition includes carbon fiber body panels and other supercar-inspired modifications.



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describes as “\$3,000 plastic boats.” Even if people only rode in their golf cars for a four- or five-hour round of golf each day, Lyngé believed it still was too long a period of time for them to be seen in a product that failed to reflect the quality of their other possessions.

When the weather is agreeable, Lyngé chooses to drive to work not in his traditional automobile but in a street-legal Garia, which peaks at 25 mph and has a battery life strong enough to last for up to 40 miles of driving. The commute, he says, is always a blast. “Even though the ride takes 10 minutes longer, I take it anyway because I really love the trip, getting some fresh air, and the level of attention and smiles that you get driving such a car,” he says. “I’m really happy that we succeeded in building a car that the outside world can’t help but respond to.”

#### SCALED-DOWN STYLE

Not everyone will feel that they need a luxury golf car that emphasizes functionality and performance, like the Garia. Some enthusiasts prefer a custom golf car that turns heads not for its engineering but for its styling and aesthetics. If the thought of cruising around a golf course or a private residence club in a miniature electric vehicle with the look of a



Rolls-Royce, Bentley, or Ferrari appeals to you, you’ll want to contact John Pennington at Pennwick ([www.pennwick.com](http://www.pennwick.com)).

The Utah-based custom golf car company is entering its fifth year of operation, though Pennington has worked in the industry for almost a decade. Over the past five years, the 34-year-old owner/designer has watched as demand for his various models has operated in an almost cyclical fashion. At the beginning of 2007, Pennington surveyed the classic automobile market and, after seeing the increased demand for American muscle cars and street rods, he designed and launched the Smoothster and the ’56—golf cars that hearkened back to the days of American motoring in the mid-20th century.



Pennwick’s Italian sports car–inspired F5 (top) and Smoothster (above)



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*"It had long since come to my attention  
that people of accomplishment rarely sat  
back and let things happen to them. They  
went out and happened to things."*

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However, that type of automobile only has a strong market in the United States, and by the time Pennington had those two cars ready for production, the American economy was in decline. Fortunately, international interest picked up, but that audience wanted cars that reflected classic European luxury vehicles and Italian sports cars. Once again, Pennington had to go back to the drawing board. When he was done, Pennwick had the Brooklyn, Shadow, and F5—cars that emulated the look of Bentleys, Rolls-Royces, and Ferraris. After a few years of steady sales on the international market, Pennington now is seeing a renewed interest on home soil. And in a fortuitous turn of events, the vehicles with the highest demand are the Smoothster and the '56.

Ranging in price from \$15,000 to \$24,000, depending on the level of customization, each Pennwick production vehicle requires about a month to complete. However, Pen-



nington embraces any opportunity to design from the ground up, and he says such requests come in frequently. "A month doesn't go by when I don't have someone request a vehicle that we don't make at all," he says. "And the answer is always yes; we can make anything. It won't be named after a specific brand, but I can always draw something out and say, 'this is what it is and this is what it will be called.'"

The likelihood that Pennington will commit to a bespoke design is dependent upon its overall marketability. The cost to build the first example of any new vehicle hovers around \$60,000. Pennington knows he can't charge a customer that much for a golf car, but if he anticipates that others also may want one, he can split the cost of the research and development and guarantee the customer the first one made. He says that's exactly how the F5, the company's Italian sports car-inspired vehicle, came to be.



Top and above: Pennwick's Brooklyn, a golf car inspired by European luxury automobiles.

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According to Pennington, most people believed the F5 would fail; they didn't think he could find a way to lower the body or re-create the proportions of the car on a smaller scale. But by altering the wheelbase and chassis length, Pennington and his team found a way. It's a perfect example of how and why Pennington's work provides him with so much satisfaction. "I love that every car is unique and a different project," he says. "We cater to every customer's wishes, and they're all unique. There's nothing redundant about this job at all."

### IN THE HOT SEAT

Like Garia, the genesis of **Ultimate Golf Seating** ([www.ultimategolfseating.com](http://www.ultimategolfseating.com)) grew out of a discovery that a major segment of the golf and golf car industry was lacking any representation. However, while Garia's founder had no experience playing the game, Dave Vahala frequently wrote his name down on a scorecard. When Vahala teamed up with his brother, Dan, to launch their high-end golf-seat company in 2008, he had played the game for more than two decades. In fact, it was after a round of golf with his brother that he conceived the idea.

As the Vahala brothers finished up on the 18th green, Dave's back ached and he found himself longing to sit in something more comfortable than a golf car. At the time, the Vahalas managed Vahala Foam, an Indiana company that produced high-quality seating material installed in many RVs, boats, and custom vans. As Dave finished up his round that day he had an epiphany. Golf cars didn't include comfortable, custom seats not because it couldn't be done but only because no one had committed the time or energy to do it.

In their first year, the Vahalas invested in focus groups and made routine visits to golf car dealers around the country. The feedback was mostly positive. "What we discovered in our first year is that we really had something here," says Dave, the company's president and CEO. "The only objection was price." And as the manager of the Vahalas' marketing department explained to them, if price is the only concern, the company is bound to succeed.

Vahala acknowledges that his line of high-quality seating is expensive—the company's latest models, the Supreme and Supreme Sport, retail for almost \$1,600—but he also says that the seats are priced that high because they cost that much to make. The brothers focus on four aspects when they design

and build their seats—comfort, style, ergonomics, and quality. The end result is a golf car seat of a caliber similar to the seating found in luxury automobiles, and which offers many of the same features: adjustable sliders, forward and back tilt options, fold-down armrests, adjustable headrests, lumbar support, and high-quality foam cushioning.

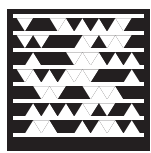
Customization is available to a certain degree; customers cannot alter the construction of each seat, but they can personalize its appearance based on the materials and colors. Such customization usually costs \$150 to \$200 more per order.

Naturally, some customers are bound to be skeptical that such an upgrade in seating is necessary. To that audience, Vahala points out that a typical round of golf lasts four hours, and in some cases, golf car owners use their vehicles for much more than just transport around a golf course. "If you were planning to watch a four-hour movie, would you choose to sit on a folding chair?" he asks. "Our seats offer a great alternative to standard seating in two important ways: how they feel on your back and how they look on your cart." ☐



A golf car equipped with custom-made seats, courtesy of Ultimate Golf Seating

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# OCEAN PARK

## *Kiawah Island's Splendid New Enclave*

TRUE TO THEIR COMMITMENT OF CREATING A SINGULAR residential resort destination while preserving its natural beauty, the developers of Kiawah Island have taken an unhurried and thoughtful approach over the past 25 years to planning the future of the 10,000-acre barrier island community along the South Carolina coast.

With Ocean Park, a collection of home sites that will be released starting in April, Kiawah Island may well have saved one of its best real estate offerings for last. The 250-acre enclave, located on the east end of the island, takes its name from its proximity to the famed Pete Dye-designed Ocean Course, which will host this year's PGA Championship. With more seaside holes than any other North American course, it is one of only four courses to have hosted all of the PGA's major tournaments.

Home sites at Ocean Park will offer views of the course and of the iconic salt marshes that define the South Carolina Low Country.

"If you look at Ocean Park from above, it's almost like an island unto itself," says Chris Drury, president of Kiawah Island Real Estate. "It will be like living at the edge of the world."

According to Drury, there will be approximately 175 home sites in Ocean Park. They will be released in small phases over the next several years, with prices for the initial release of nine marsh-view home sites starting at about \$1 million. In addition to its expansive

views, Ocean Park boasts ancient live oaks and other native hardwoods, giving it a truly timeless appeal.

"We are preserving about 50 to 70 acres as open space so that it retains its natural, parklike feel," says Drury. "While they call this the Low Country, Ocean Park has real topography to it, with rises in the land that offer great vistas. Because of its inherent natural beauty, we see Ocean Park as a place that will hold great appeal even to prospective homeowners who might not play golf."

While Charleston is just 21 miles away, Kiawah Island is rich with its own amenities— seven golf courses, thirty miles of hiking and biking trails, more than a hundred acres of parks, highly ranked tennis facilities and, of course, miles and miles of pristine beaches. Kiawah currently has about 4,000 homes, with a planned cap of 5,000 or fewer established to preserve natural habitats.

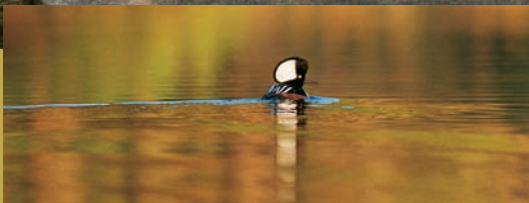
Owners at Ocean Park have the opportunity to join the Kiawah Island Club, which provides members the epitome of island lifestyle in five distinct venues: Tom Fazio's River Course, Cassique by Tom Watson, The Beach Club, Sasanqua Spa and the 9,000-square-foot Sports Pavilion. The Sports Pavilion features state-of-the-art

weight rooms (with personal trainers on hand), plasma TVs, squash courts, a multipurpose room for group classes, tennis courts, a swimming pool, whirlpool and gazebo bar. ♦



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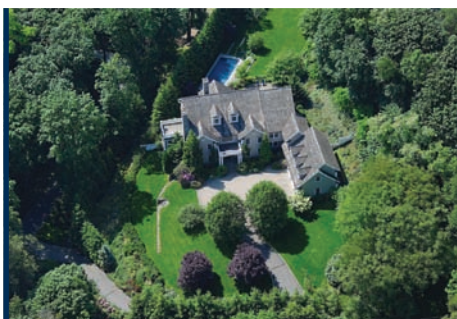
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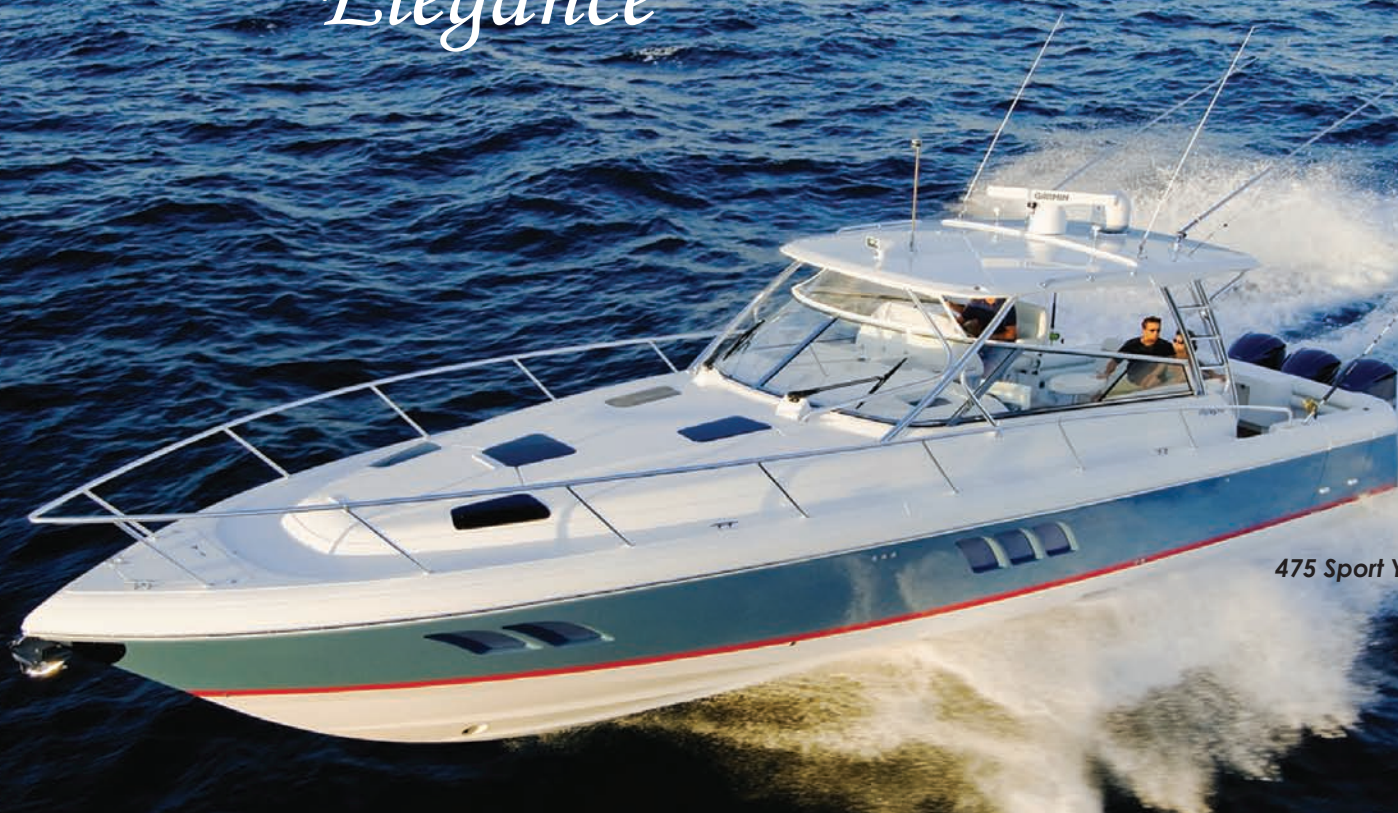


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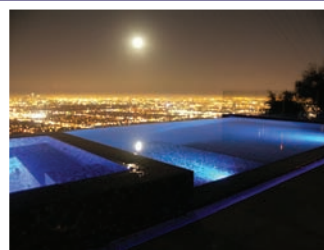
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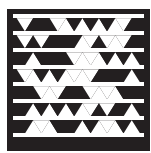
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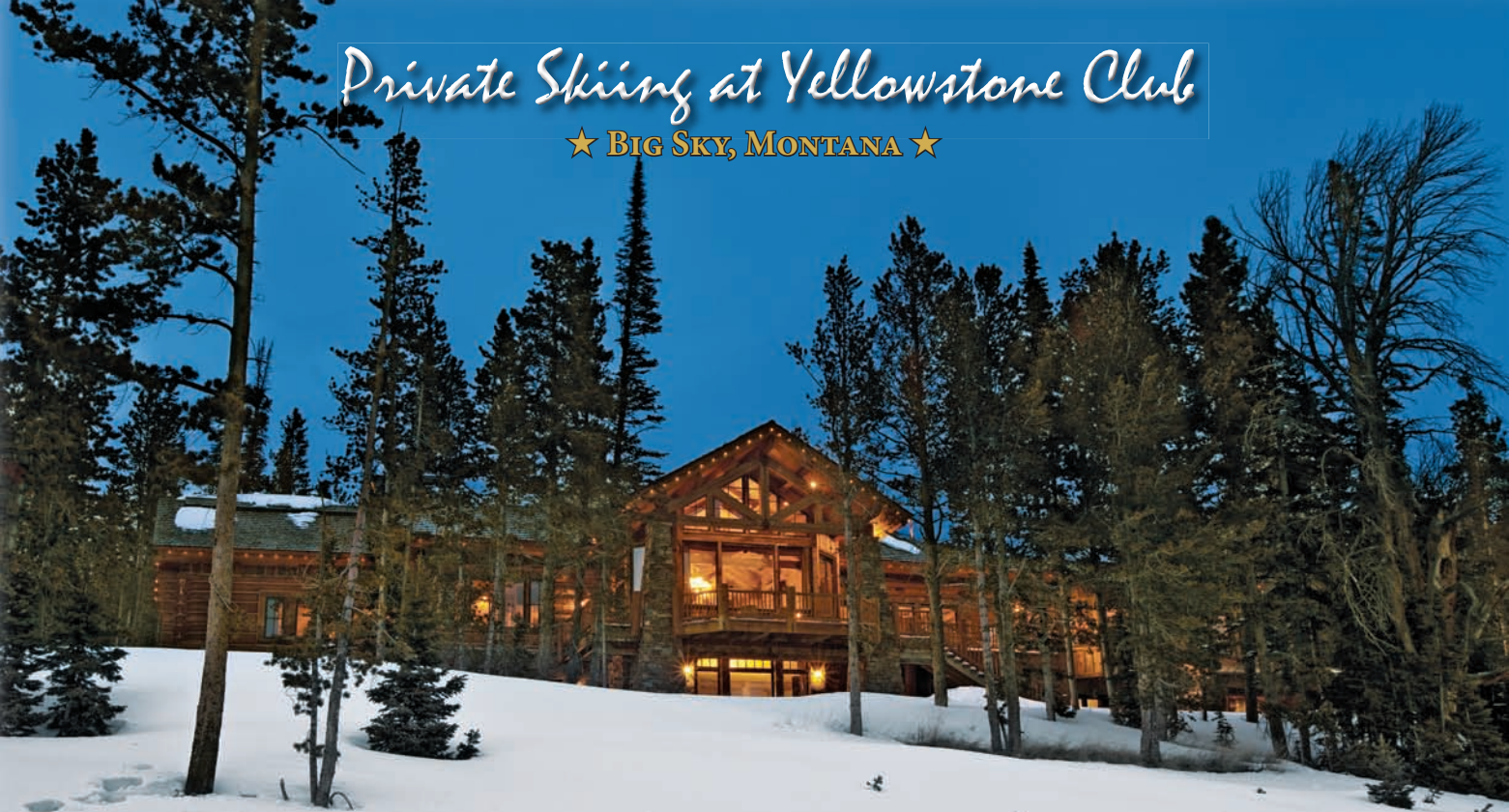
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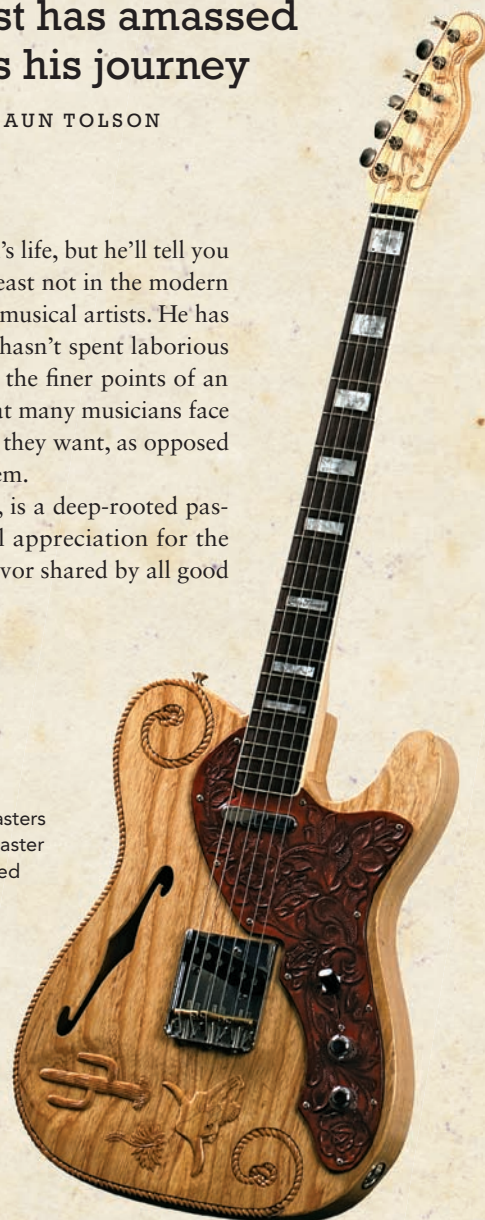
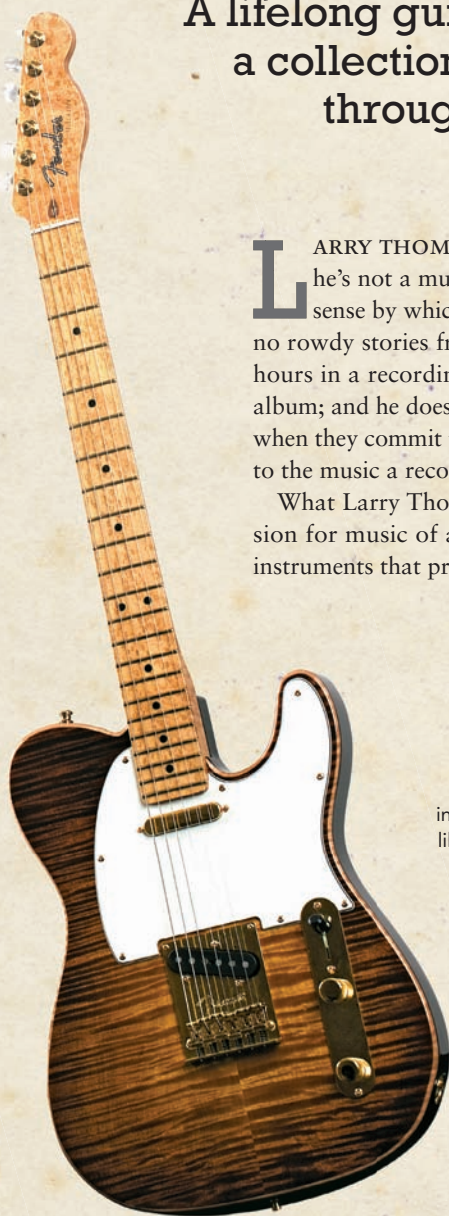
# STRIKING A CHORD

A lifelong guitar enthusiast has amassed a collection that reflects his journey through music. BY SHAUN TOLSON

LARRY THOMAS HAS lived a musician's life, but he'll tell you he's not a musician. And he's not, at least not in the modern sense by which we have come to view musical artists. He has no rowdy stories from months on tour; he hasn't spent laborious hours in a recording studio obsessing over the finer points of an album; and he doesn't know the struggle that many musicians face when they commit to playing the music that they want, as opposed to the music a record label expects from them.

What Larry Thomas does have, however, is a deep-rooted passion for music of all types and a powerful appreciation for the instruments that produce it. It's the same fervor shared by all good

Larry Thomas' collection includes unique Fender Telecasters like a custom shop Cowboy Caster (right) and a prototype called American Select (left).



musicians, and it's been the driving force behind Thomas' professional life, as well as his life as a collector. When it comes to his guitar collection, the 62-year-old doesn't yearn for much, save for one thing—more time. That doesn't mean that Thomas wants more time to collect; instead, he longs for more time to improve his abilities playing each guitar and mastering the styles of music for which each one was made. "I could spend a lifetime trying to learn how to be a classical guitar player, and a lifetime trying to be a great jazz guitar player, and a lifetime as a pedal steel guitar player," he says. "But I only have one lifetime."

As the current CEO of Fender Musical Instruments and the former chairman and CEO of Guitar Center, Thomas has spent his career surrounded by stringed instruments of all varieties. When Thomas joined the Guitar Center ranks in 1971, the company operated out of a single location in Hollywood, Calif. As the store grew and evolved, so did Thomas' appreciation and interest in new genres of music. However, his love affair with the guitar began much the way it did for countless other teenagers of his generation—through television.



Collector Larry Thomas (above) is most passionate about his collection of classical, nylon-string guitars (right).



ROBERT KNIGHT



Thomas also collects vintage acoustic guitars, including rare Martins and Gibsons.



“I don’t think you can really be an acoustic guitar enthusiast without loving the smell and look and feel of the wood. That’s one of the reasons people seek the old guitars—the lightness and resonance of the wood; how they feel and how they sound.” —LARRY THOMAS

**THOMAS CAN RECALL** in vivid detail the black-and-white TV programs of his youth that showcased young rock-and-roll musicians like Ricky Nelson, who would strum guitars and—in Nelson’s case—sing about “pretty señoritas” and “sweet talkin’ gals.” That was Thomas’ introduction to the guitar and, predictably, it led to the formation of his own garage band. He continued to play in bands during his high school days in the early 1960s, though by that time Thomas had graduated from the rockabilly of the previous decade and was immersed in folk. Singing and strumming in various folk bands paved the way to his introduction to Chicago blues, which captivated him for a time. However, when disco dominated the airwaves during the early to mid-1970s, Thomas looked to new avenues for his growing guitar obsession and promptly applied for a job at Guitar Center.

The store opened up a whole new world of guitars to the

young aficionado, and it was through his interactions with vendors and customers that Thomas learned about pedal steel guitars and bluegrass instruments, like resonators and Dobros. He also came to discover the merits of skillfully crafted acoustic models. “As I grew in the company and as it got bigger and bigger, I started designing rooms to display guitars,” he recalls. “I started attending vintage shows and developed a passion for vintage instruments.”

Like most collectors (of virtually anything), Thomas already was off to a good start by the time he decided to commit himself to developing the best collection that he could. At the time of that decision, Thomas was in his 40s and owned between 15 and 20 guitars. Those instruments spanned numerous genres and, in some respects, told the story of his life in music. This distinguishes Thomas’ collection from those of many other enthusiasts, where one type of guitar becomes the sole focus for the entire assemblage. But Thomas’ collection

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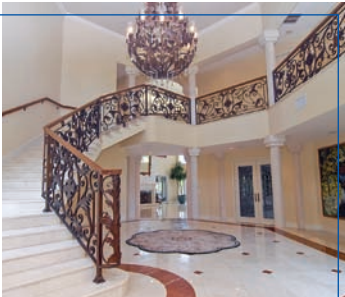
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does more than tell his own coming-of-age story as a musician; it also showcases the evolution of the guitar. And while his fascination with the instrument's history provides him with great enjoyment, as a zealot who always yearns to play at the highest level, Thomas can't help but survey his collection and curse his passion for every facet of guitar playing. "This was my dilemma growing up," he explains. "I liked so many styles that I never got good at anything. It's a blessing because my broad interest in styles of guitars made me a great merchant at Guitar Center; but as a player it really hindered me because people who were great stayed with one style their whole life."

"Overall, I'm at peace with myself that I'll never be a great guitar player at this point," he continues. "But I'm also thankful that I can appreciate the instruments that were

designed for those different styles of music. That's why the collection is the way that it is."

THE FIRST exceptional guitar that Thomas recalls purchasing was a 1960s Gibson Stereo, though he acknowledges that he was in his early 20s when he bought it and not yet a serious collector. The guitar previously belonged to B.B. King, which was the selling point for Thomas. More recently, he acquired a 1957 Fender Stratocaster Sunburst Hardtail—a guitar that he bought for about \$30,000, though he remembers far too vividly his younger days working at Guitar Center, where Fenders of the late 1950s and 1960s were bought and sold for anywhere from \$150 to \$300.



As the CEO of Fender, Thomas is proud to own a variety of Telecasters and Stratocasters, both new and old.

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From left to right: Fender Stratocasters from 1957, '61, '62, '64, and '65.

**“I liked so many styles that I never got good at anything. Overall, I’m at peace with myself that I’ll never be a great guitar player. But I’m also thankful that I can appreciate the instruments that were designed for those different styles of music.”** –LARRY THOMAS

Thomas stepped into his current role as CEO of Fender in August 2010, and since then he’s enhanced his collection with the addition of various vintage Fender electrics, as well as modern-day Fender prototypes—guitars that he says will be the catalysts to the “re-innovation” of the brand. As a guitar company executive, Thomas remains passionate about the vintage Stratocasters and Telecasters that established his corporate brand, as well as the contemporary examples that he believes will redefine it. But as a guitar collector, Thomas is most passionate about classical nylon-string guitars from the 19th and early 20th centuries. “I run a guitar company that predominantly builds electric guitars, and I love it,” he says. “But on the personal side of me, the acoustic guitars have the most magic. It’s the subtle nuances of the properties

of an acoustic guitar, and when those nuances are placed in the hands of a master player you understand the real artistry of the instrument. The instrument comes alive.”

Thomas’ guitar collection exceeds 100 instruments (most are historically significant), of which about 35 percent are vintage, nylon-string pieces. Within that classical subcategory, Thomas owns a 1937 Hermann Hauser I—the sister guitar to the concert instrument played by Andrés Segovia, one of the most influential classical guitarists of the 20th century. The mate of Thomas’ guitar (the one played by Segovia for 25 years, beginning in 1937) is permanently on display at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art. Other classical guitars in Thomas’ collection include a series of mid- to late-19th-century instruments crafted by Antonio de Torres, a luthier

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Thomas owns an extensive collection of cowboy guitars from the 1940s and '50s—instruments made to celebrate the singing cowboys from various radio and television programs.

who many consider to be the father of the classical guitar, and individual pieces made by all the major guitar makers from that era. “I have a deep appreciation for the woods and how craftsmen put those woods together to build great guitars,” he says. “I don’t think you can really be an acoustic guitar enthusiast without loving the smell and look and feel of the wood. That’s one of the reasons people seek the old guitars—the lightness and resonance of the wood; how they feel and how they sound.

“It’s the sound and the projection and the sweetness,” Thomas continues, “and as you develop more of a taste for it, you develop a more sophisticated sense of tone.” That appreciation of tone, he explains, will lead to a greater knowledge of the projection of an instrument, its bass response, and the balance of its strings. “Most people these days think about great Fender or Gibson guitars and we get into pickups and other electronic things like pedals, but with the nylon-string guitar you have to take all of that away. You’re thinking

about just this sound box and how that all projects. It’s an acquired taste, but I think guys who are deep into the guitar know exactly what I’m talking about.”

Thomas’ introduction to classical guitars came a little over a decade ago. As passionate as he is on the subject, he wishes he had made the discovery years earlier; but like a wine connoisseur whose palate gradually matures and leads to Burgundy, Thomas’ journey through the various guitar and music genres was essential to his appreciation of those classical pieces. “I was mystified by the beauty and the tone and the simplicity of these instruments,” he says of the moment when he discovered them. “That collecting [focus] began more as a historical look. I began seeking out older and historical pieces when I could find them.”

According to Thomas, when it comes to the classical guitars, a serious collector inevitably will end up focused on the vintage instruments, both for the quality of their sound and for their rarity. “They’re more seasoned, they have better resonance, and



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“There’s a spirit that runs amongst everything that people love. There’s a certain amount of expression that you get from having those things.... when you sit and play a guitar, it transforms you. It takes you somewhere else.”

—LARRY THOMAS

Thomas with a rare Gibson Style O harp guitar from the 1920s



the workmanship and quality are pretty incredible,” he says of the antiquated instruments. “They were made by incredibly talented luthiers and they were made in such small batches.”

Through his research, Thomas has learned that the best luthiers during the 19th century may have produced only 12 guitars over the course of a year and perhaps no more than 100 in their lifetime. As a collector, Thomas has never acquired instruments based on monetary value, but rather on sound quality (or, in the case of his cowboy guitar collection, because of strong memories from his childhood). But if he had to predict which guitars have the greatest potential for value appreciation, he’d put his money on the vintage nylon-strings. Even in vintage guitar circles, he says, 99 percent of the attention falls on traditional acoustic and electric guitars. But classical instruments are the most limited in their supply. “They’re the segment with the greatest potential,” he says, “because they’re still relatively unknown.”

WITH THE EXCEPTION of Fender’s latest prototypes, which the company’s CEO says always entice him, Thomas is content with the size and scope of his collection. Rather than continue to expand that multimillion-dollar collection, Thomas actually is ready to streamline it. “We collect because it’s the boy inside of us that aspires to everything,” he says. “It’s the boy inside of me that closes his eyes and sees me playing all of these things; but I’m 62 and I’m probably not going to play in a rock band as I did when I was a kid.

“Collecting is a disease,” he continues candidly. “You see something and you say, ‘I have to have that,’ and then you get home and you look at what you have and you say, ‘why do I have all of this?’” Thomas acknowledges that his rational side surveys his collection and sees numerous instruments that he never plays. There may be a guitar or two within his collection that Thomas purposely doesn’t play, like a Gibson Style O harp guitar from the 1920s, for example, but beyond those rare exceptions, he’s purchased all of his guitars with the intention of playing them on a regular basis.

Letting go of some of his guitars won’t be easy, and Thomas knows that. But he has never approached his collection believing that he would be the sole possessor of it. “You never really own it,” he says. “You just have it for a while. You don’t take anything with you. You’re like a custodian for a while and then you give it back and it ends up in someone else’s hands to hopefully continue that.”

Ultimately, Thomas is happiest when he can sit down with a guitar in his hands and reconnect with the timber, the strings, and the craftsmanship that transformed those raw materials into a vessel capable of profound, personal expression. “There’s a spirit that runs amongst everything that people love,” he says. “There’s a certain amount of expression that you get from having those things. When you’re holding a fly rod, your mind is out on a river somewhere. To get into those old Jaguars and Austin Healeys, you’re living in another time. And when you sit and play a guitar, it transforms you. It takes you somewhere else.” ☐



*Cigar smokers seeking a reprieve from public scrutiny can find it—and more—inside many of the country's leading cigar clubs.* BY SHAUN TOLSON



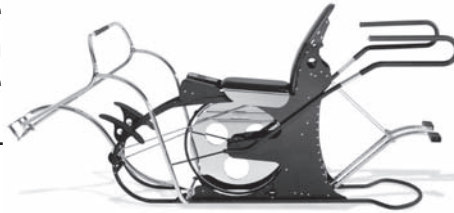
MAURICIO CÓRDOBA fidgets in his seat at a corner table of his cigar club. Ice cubes in his glass of ginger ale clink softly as he returns it to the white linen tablecloth, and for a moment he lets his gaze divert from the guests at his table. Scanning the room, the 54-year-old general manager takes note of patrons reclining on various leather couches or seated at a dozen or so candlelit tables—tables that recast the main gathering space of Manhattan's **Club Macanudo** ([www.clubmacanudo.com](http://www.clubmacanudo.com)) into an upscale dining room as much as the leather couches transform it into a relaxed cocktail lounge.

Billows of cigar smoke slowly waft upward from a group of businessmen seated at a couch in the room's center and also from a jovial dinner party laughing around a large circular table positioned near the far wall. Córdoba shifts in his seat again. He's been uninvolved for too long. There's an energy stirring in the club—conversations are beginning, introductions are being made, and Córdoba yearns to be surrounded by them. But for the charismatic Spaniard, it's not a matter of wanting



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# WHERE THERE'S SMOKE

*Cigar smokers seeking a reprieve from public scrutiny can find it—and more—inside many of the country's leading cigar clubs.* BY SHAUN TOLSON

MAURICIO CÓRDOBA fidgets in his seat at a corner table of his cigar club. Ice cubes in his glass of ginger ale clink softly as he returns it to the white linen tablecloth, and for a moment he lets his gaze divert from the guests at his table. Scanning the room, the 54-year-old general manager takes note of patrons reclining on various leather couches or seated at a dozen or so candlelit tables—tables that recast the main gathering space of Manhattan's Club Macanudo ([www.clubmacanudo.com](http://www.clubmacanudo.com)) into an upscale dining room as much as the leather couches transform it into a relaxed cocktail lounge.

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Top and above: Club Macanudo in New York City

to be a *part* of the action. Instead, Córdoba wants only to welcome it.

Love and passion. They are, as Córdoba will tell you, the two elements by which he runs the club. “This is my life; this is my passion,” he says of the club, gesturing to the groups of cigar smokers and diners socializing throughout its various rooms. “This is what I want it to be.

“This is who I am,” he adds, flashing a charming smile and pulling open the unbuttoned lapels of his jacket. Relaxed and casual—it’s the message he wants to convey—but the pressed dress shirt, vest, and tie convey another. They allude to Córdoba’s commitment to elevate the club’s level of service, and that’s the factor that the club’s regular patrons and private members appreciate more than anything else. “He makes you feel that you’re part of the family,” says Michael Cuadra, a patron of the club since 1999 and a humidor holder since 2006. “It’s like visiting family but with all these wonderful assets on top of it.”

Club Macanudo opened its doors near the corner of Madison Avenue and East 63rd Street in April 1996, and it immediately reaped the rewards of a cigar craze sweeping over New York and the rest of the country. The club is open to the public, although a membership program (\$850 per year, \$1,400 for two years) provides access to private humidors, preferential seating, and invitations to a handful of members-only events with cigar and spirits manufacturers over the course of the year. Owned and operated by General Cigar Co., the club welcomes a broad range of patrons. That diversity is something regular guests enthusiastically support and that the club continues to encourage. “We have clients who are captains of industry, and of equal measure we have people who are more blue collar in nature, whether they’re policemen or firefighters,” says Victoria McKee of General Cigar. “When they’re at the club, there’s really no difference between them. Cigars are a great equalizer.”

New York City began enforcing a smoking ban in all bars and restaurants in 2003, but because Club Macanudo had a long-standing history, it was granted an exception. That exception makes it the city’s only cigar club with a full liquor license and dinner menu that also is open to the public. But where some newer Manhattan clubs lack that full package of services, they make up for it in other areas—most notably, exclusivity.

### BEYOND THE VELVET ROPES

Since strict smoking bans took effect around the country in the early 2000s—and with some cities like New York recently launching outdoor smoking bans in parks and on beaches and pedestrian plazas—tobacco retailers have been forced to dedicate shop space to the creation of relaxed and comfortable environments for the consumption of their products. Nat Sherman ([www.natsherman.com](http://www.natsherman.com)) pioneered such a philosophy—long before it seemed a necessity—so early, in fact, that

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The Johnson Club Room at Nat Sherman in New York City

many other retailers dismissed its importance. “It was forward thinking by the Shermans to see that the retail experience extended to the consumption experience; that the concept of the brand included the product *and* the experience,” says Michael Herklots, the company’s executive director of retail and brand development.

In 2007 the company took that approach further when it moved into a new townhouse near the corner of Fifth Avenue and East 42nd Street. Completely gutting the building—formerly a Chinese takeout restaurant—the Sherman family dedicated the lowest level to the **Johnson Club Room**, a 1,700-square-foot, members-only lounge, complete with a walk-in, climate-controlled humidor partitioned into private lockers. Backlit by a neon orange “Cigars” sign over a four-person bar (which can operate when the club holds private, catered events), the club room offers members leather armchairs and couches and a glimpse into the history of the brand, thanks to the many pieces of nostalgic Nat Sherman memorabilia on display.

Membership costs \$3,000 per year, and that payment serves as credit for anything for sale in the store. While membership in the club provides a level of exclusivity, access to a private conference room, humidor lockers, and first access to limited-edition cigars and accessories, Herklots says the club really shines by being an extension of the retail experience that the townhouse provides. “Our team has incredible knowledge about the many different cigars we offer in order to make the most appropriate recommendations to our guests,” he says. “That moment of advice and guidance about our products is what ensures that the experience in the club will be positive. It doesn’t matter how nice your club is if the cigar you’re smoking isn’t the experience you’d hoped for.”

As the executive director of retail and brand development, Herklots spends much of his time refining the Nat Sherman product and working to create new cigar blends. However, as he explains, the club’s greatest benefit isn’t something that can be purchased. “Luxury describes an experience, not things,” he says. “Having the chance to take 20 minutes out of your

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day to smoke a cigar is the luxury. The cigar itself isn't a luxury, whether it costs \$10 or \$100. The moment of enjoyment is the luxury."

### A SMOKER'S SAFE HAVEN

Upscale cigar clubs with varying atmospheres, demographics, and membership rates exist all across the country (See "Hot Spots" in this month's issue of *Robb Report* to learn more). However, regardless of location, ambience, or structure, every club shares one feature—they bring divergent people together through a common love of cigars. "When you're in a cigar club sharing a cigar, there are no titles or financial strata," says Mark Dycio of Fairfax, Va. "You're just a couple guys enjoying a cigar."

In many respects, that was the vision that Stanley Shuster adhered to when he opened the **Grand Havana Room** ([www.grandhavanaroom.com](http://www.grandhavanaroom.com)) in Beverly Hills, Calif., in 1995. He wanted to create a space where friends and associates could gather and enjoy a cigar, a place that cigar aficionados would love to build into their home. "In my opinion, a good cigar is a good cigar, no matter if you're smoking it on a park bench, a patio, or in your bedroom," he says. "But I wanted to create a paradise, a place where I could kick my legs up and smoke a cigar."

For many members, like Peter Weller, the 10,000-square-foot club is just that. "In a city like New York or Paris or London, a guy who likes a cigar can find many places to stroll and smoke," he says. "L.A. is not a city of strolling, so

this [club] is a godsend for us who want to wind down at the end of the day, sit out on the terrace, and enjoy some good food and a cigar."

The club offers plenty of comfortable places to sit, upscale Italian fare courtesy of the Drago family's restaurant Via Alloro, private humidors, and a selection of the best cigars and spirits, but according to Weller, the club's greatest attribute is the serenity, tranquillity, and privacy that it creates. "The thing that really enforces that is that Stan is here maintaining the dignity and the cachet and the elegance of the place. But it's not a scene," he says, explaining that the club isn't viewed as a venue to mingle. "People who are looking for a scene... they're not going to get it."

With a long waiting list already in place, those seeking membership—which costs \$5,000 and an additional \$275 each month—will have to be patient. Weller considers it well worth the wait, both for the safe haven that you can retreat to and for the people you will meet—people who might share many of your same passions. For Weller, such a person is Mark Hime, the proprietor of a local antiquarian bookshop. "[The belief that] in L.A. you can't find culture can sometimes be true," says Weller, who joined a week after the club opened. "But the opportunity to come here and smoke a cigar with Mark and talk about the origin of Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers* or Botticelli paintings is a godsend for me. I can cut loose with him and discuss cultural values of the world."



The Grand Havana Room in Beverly Hills, Calif.

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### PRESERVING A LIFESTYLE

While the Grand Havana Room is one of the oldest members-only cigar clubs in the country, **CXIII Rex** (pronounced one-thirteen rex; [www.cxiiiirex.com](http://www.cxiiiirex.com)) in historic Old Town Alexandria, Va., is one of the newest. Though they operate on opposite coasts, the two members-only establishments share more similarities than can be discerned at first glance. Set within a historic building in one of the oldest seaports in the country and characterized by exposed brick, wooden beams made from 200-year-old American walnut, and the visible remnants of an old iron lift that—poetically—used to haul bags of tobacco up from the ground floor, CXIII Rex never could be mistaken for Shuster's California paradise; and club owner Noe Landini will be the first to admit that. "Nothing here looks like Grand Havana Room," he says. "But operationally, it [Grand Havana] contributed to how we operate here—the service, how you can order a cigar and a drink, and how you can sit down and have a good meal."

Landini, along with his father, also owns Landini Brothers, an Italian restaurant next door. The concept for CXIII Rex took form when the Landinis learned that Virginia would pass its own smoking ban in December 2009. Prior to that, a specific dining room in their restaurant allowed cigar smoking, but the younger Landini recognized that the room offered much more than an opportunity to smoke a cigar. It represented a lifestyle, and he wasn't about to let that disappear. "We were sitting on a golden opportunity to do something really great," he says. "We've never done anything half-assed before and we weren't about to start."

That set in motion an 18-month process to create the club, which cost almost \$2 million when all was said and done. Membership costs \$10,000 and new members require referrals from at least one of the 260 existing members, though Landini himself can refer prospective members, once he gets to know them. Electronic membership cards open the door out front, activate the members-only elevator, and allow members to open their private humidors-lockers, but Landini has incorporated many important service details as well. Complimentary iPads, Skype phones, and purse stands are the norm, while special requests for off-

menu dishes or personalized cocktails are fulfilled frequently. "We try to bring in all of those little things, even the things that don't cost anything," Landini says. "It's a better experience for the member, but it also says a lot to the member's guest. It's an opportunity for the member to show off, and it allows the member's guest to be impressed."

Some members have joined the club specifically for that "wow" factor when they want to entertain. "I know a lot of businessmen who are sometimes cigar smokers who say that they've joined the club because their clients like coming here, even if they're not cigar smokers," says Tony Makris, one of the original members of the club. "It's that kind of an environment."

For James Moore, the club has "texture" and an intimate ambience despite being almost 6,000 square feet in size. Beyond that, there's a camaraderie that develops among club members, which leads to a desire to share new discoveries. "There are a lot of new things that are passed along," he says.

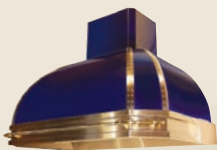


CXIII Rex in Washington, D.C.

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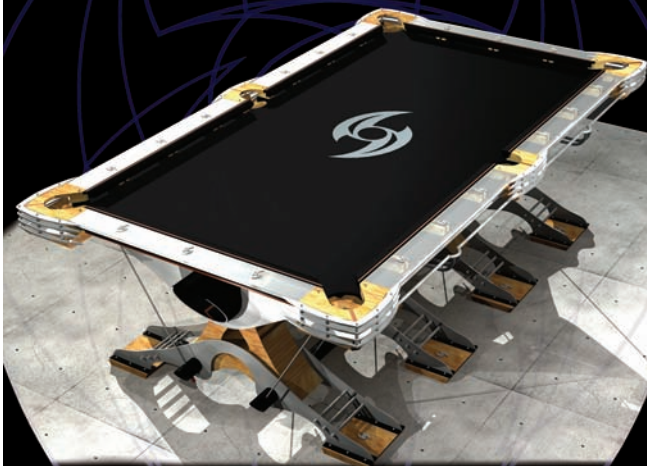
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"A Cuban may show up on a doorstep here and there. You have around-the-world tastes [with the variety of members], and that truly is part of the beauty of it."

### SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY

At the **Smith House** ([www.smithhousenashville.com](http://www.smithhousenashville.com)) in Nashville, Tenn., Joshua Smith dedicates himself to fostering a sense of community as well, and he's done so by creating a specific cigar society within the club. Open to 50 people and costing an additional \$50 per event, the society meets once a month and introduces passionate cigar smokers to one another, as well as to various cigar makers who visit the club.

Spread out over three floors of the city's last historic townhouse, the Smith House feels more like a speakeasy than a typical cigar club. Membership costs \$3,300 per year and requires referral from two existing members. More than that, it requires a specific attitude and philosophy. "It's a private club for ladies and gentlemen who appreciate fine wines, fine food, and fine cigars and who are dedicated to the advancement of Nashville and their fellow members," says Smith. "It's not about how much money you have. There are plenty of people that can spend \$3,300 that aren't a good fit and

don't adhere to that mission statement." And yes, Smith has revoked memberships when he deemed certain members were a detriment to the spirit of the establishment.

While Smith is serious about the character of members who join the club, he's just as serious about creating an atmosphere that is relaxed and fun, even quirky. Take the wall by the bar covered in signatures. To earn the right to sign the wall, a member or guest first must take a shot of a North Korean grain alcohol. But there's a catch: the bottle of alcohol contains the body of a dead adder, one of the world's most venomous snakes. The ritual began as a \$300 bet between two members, but it quickly evolved to the current wall of fame. The alcohol isn't hazardous to your health, but the challenge isn't easy. Those who have signed the wall will tell you the liquor is the most foul-tasting that you'll ever find.

Other quirks within the club include a trapdoor on the first floor and a secret poker room accessed by a hidden door in the third-floor office. "You should see the grown men turn into 12-year-old boys when they open the door and see it," Smith says of the secret room. "They just go nuts. You can see the wheels turning; they're thinking, 'I need to get me one of these!'"



The Smith House in Nashville, Tenn.

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### A CULTURAL JOURNEY

For the past 15 years, Rocky Patel has dedicated himself to the craft of cigar-making, always striving to perfect complex blends of tobaccos from various regions of the world. In many respects, Patel's flagship cigar lounge, **Burn** ([www.burnbyrockypatel.com](http://www.burnbyrockypatel.com)), in Naples, Fla., mirrors the individual cigars upon which his reputation is built. "People have a vision of cigar clubs as a bunch of old men sitting around smoking a cigar and drinking a Cognac or a single malt and that it's very stuffy," he says. "When you're at Burn, we say that you're transcended on a journey. It's much more fun."

To create a cigar lounge and club that rejected conventional cigar-club elements, Patel looked to his travels around the globe. Moroccan and Turkish chandeliers hang throughout the 3,500-square-foot lounge; a candlelit wall inset with gold from Indian palaces accents the VIP area; and Jerusalem-excavated stones adorn the floors. The finished product is an eclectic, vibrant cigar lounge that offers patrons a relaxed environment in which to smoke during the day, but creates a dynamic and energized nightclub environment in the evening. "Rocky has made cigar lounges hip by opening Burn," says Mark Dycio, a regular patron at the club. "It doesn't do anything better than other clubs, but it brings in a completely different element of people."



Much like Club Macanudo in New York, private memberships, which range from \$2,500 to \$5,000 per year based on the size of the humidor requested, provide members with preferential treatment and seating. But unlike the Manhattan club, Burn offers a scene infused with more action. "If my wife comes to Burn, she can dance and I can enjoy a cigar," Dycio says. "I can do all the things that I would ordinarily do with her, but I can also enjoy a cigar." ☐



Top and above: Burn by Rocky Patel in Naples, Fla.

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BY SHAUN TOLSON

# INNOVATION ON DISPLAY

A COLLECTION OF EARLY AMERICAN TELEPHONES



IT ALL BEGAN with a television show.

In 1985 Pete D'Acosta launched an independent television station in Wichita Falls, Texas, that aired only syndicated material. As a young businessman with a penchant for success, D'Acosta invested all of his time and energy into the station, but he also received some good advice along the way. To remain emotionally balanced, he was told, you need a hobby—something to help you keep things in perspective. “You get too obsessed and caught up with what you’re doing professionally and you lose sight of the important things in life,” D'Acosta says.

It made sense, but D'Acosta knew that wanting a hobby and having one were two different things. Like any passion-filled project, discovering a hobby requires a spark of inspiration, so D'Acosta kept the idea in the back of his mind and waited for lightning to strike. Months later, while his station was airing an Andy Griffith episode—D'Acosta's favorite television show—he watched a scene where Andy sat behind his desk and talked on one of those vintage, upright telephones. At that moment, D'Acosta found his inspiration. The search for an antique telephone of his own seemed as good a hobby as any, so he set out on a quest, passively stopping into various antique stores from time to time in hopes of finding one.

It didn't take long for D'Acosta to realize that such a search would prove to be far more difficult than he initially thought. However, his search did much more than provide him with a vintage, upright telephone; it also led him to discover a chapter in the story of American ingenuity that

Pete D'Acosta's collection of candlestick telephones (below) includes rare pieces like a No. 9 automatic intercommunicating portable desk set made by Wilhelm Telephone Manufacturing Co. (opposite).



he was sure few people had heard. It was a story ripe with ambition and greed, and it chronicled the efforts of thousands of small businesses who fought valiantly to compete with one of the most powerful monopolies in American history.

**THE TELEPHONE PATENT** issued to Alexander Graham Bell on March 7, 1876, granted him 17 years of protection. At that time, consumer telephones were hulking, wooden, hand-cranked apparatuses mounted to the wall. That all changed in 1892 when Bell introduced the first upright desktop model, better known as a “desk stand” or “candlestick” telephone. Over the previous 16 years, Bell had had to legally fight off more than a thousand telephone companies that organized and operated while his patent was still in effect. By the early 1890s he understood that innovation was critical to future success, since his patent was set to expire in a few years, and he was sure that even more companies would rise up to challenge him. His candlestick telephone was a preemptive response to that ensuing competition.

Bell's prediction proved to be accurate, as more than 6,000 independent competitive telephone companies emerged in the decade that followed the dissolution of his patent. Dozens of manufacturing companies were designing and producing distinctive candlestick telephones to meet the demand of the independent telephone companies offering service across the country. Those companies relied on the beauty of their telephones, with designs accented by fluted and nickel-plated rope shafts, potbellies, and other features, to compete against Bell's company, American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T). While the independent companies had an advantage with more aesthetically pleasing phones, Bell countered with a more developed infra-



Pete D'Acosta (left) designed an in-home showroom for his collection (above), but already his collection has outgrown the space he allocated for it.

structure of telephone lines—a feature greatly enhanced by the acquisition of Western Union's American Speaking Telephone Co. in 1879, which included 250,000 miles of existing telegraph wire already erected throughout the country.

With consumers reluctant to purchase non-Bell equipment for fear of being disconnected from areas where AT&T operated (only Bell-manufactured telephones would work on the AT&T system), it was only a matter of time before most of the independent companies went out of business. As those companies disappeared, so did the diversity of candlestick telephone designs. The death blow came in 1926, when Bell introduced the first desktop cradle telephone. Consumers were eager to move on to the next big thing, and just like that, as quickly as it had come, the candlestick telephone era faded away.



**TODAY, D'ACOSTA'S COLLECTION** of those rare, independently produced candlestick telephones is 250 pieces strong, but he didn't get to that point without learning a few important collecting lessons along the way. It was a few years into his search before D'Acosta finally found a candlestick telephone at a South Texas antique store. The discovery energized him to find more, though it was another couple of years before D'Acosta stumbled upon a second one. This pattern of collecting continued up until the mid-1990s, when the Internet blossomed and brought with it new acquisition opportunities. When eBay came along in September 1997, D'Acosta was on the scene, buying similar candlestick telephones as often as he could find them. Looking back on those times, however, the

56-year-old collector can only chuckle at his ignorance. "You think that it's all going to look good and be important, and that it will all be rare," he says. "I was a fool. I bought stuff that [today] I would just as soon give away than sell again."

As is the case with most collecting genres, the Internet proved to be a double-edged sword for candlestick telephones. For a rookie collector like D'Acosta, the World Wide Web provided him with an opportunity to acquire about 100 telephones that, in retrospect, he realizes are fairly commonplace, but it also introduced him to two antique telephone collector clubs, and it was those web sites that gradually educated him on the less-common models that were produced for a brief period of time. "Most collectors were drawn to Western Electric-made Bell telephones," he says. "Every now and then,



“I realized that, through these telephones, I was uncovering a chapter in history that I had never heard or seen before. The more I dug into it, the better the story got.”

—PETE D’ACOSTA



When designing his showroom, D’Acosta paid special attention to the architecture and lighting.


and the lighting system, but he did not install glass cabinets. “I grew to hate that,” he says of the showroom in his previous home, where all his phones were displayed behind panes of glass. “A telephone needs to be touched and looked at.”

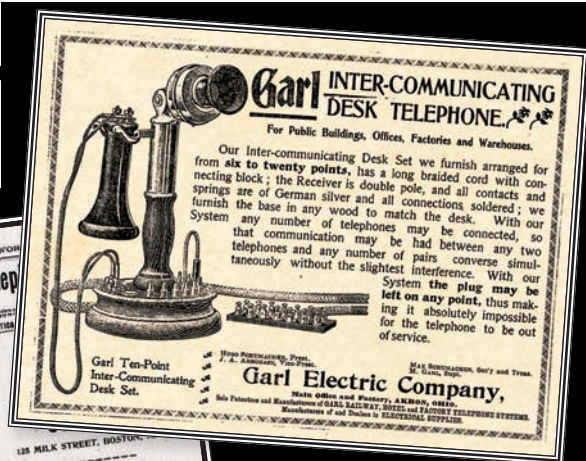
Despite the improvements that he made to his showroom this time around, D’Acosta still made one tactical error in his new home—his collection already has outgrown the space that he allocated to it. “I’m already wishing that I had added more shelves,” he says. “I have about 50 or so phones that I can’t fit in there right now.”

While collecting an item with no perceived market can make determinations of value difficult, it does lead to a constant state of discovery, and in that respect, nothing has changed since D’Acosta first began his collection 20 years ago. “Every single article and historical document that I uncover

gives me greater confidence that this is such a special thing within our history,” he says. “You have something that’s representative of the single greatest patent and monopoly in history. I would be shocked if this doesn’t have enormous significance to someone else.”

Even if D’Acosta happens to be alone in his assessment, it would not change his perception of his collection. “Whether there’s a market or not, if there’s a limited supply of a significant historical antique, there ought to not be a downward spiral for the value of that collection,” he says. “I’m not focused on the end result, but at the same time, it just seems safe to me.”

Ultimately, he marvels over each phone’s appearance and focuses on the craftsmanship, ingenuity, and persistence that each one represents. For D’Acosta, that’s the selling point. “It’s my art collection,” he says. “I love being around it.” 



increasing) rental fee from AT&T. Instead, Columbia's phones could be purchased outright and had the capability to handle 30 extensions in a small-to-medium-sized business.

Occasionally, D'Acosta will uncover a phone with mismatched components, but he says that's not necessarily a detriment. As he explains, repairmen in the late 1800s and early 1900s often would switch pieces from one phone to the next to keep them working. Instead, it's an antique phone with a brilliant luster that most concerns D'Acosta. There was a six-to-eight-year window during the 1980s, he says, when collectors were committed to restoring the nickel coating on all of their telephones. While he doesn't believe that such cosmetic upgrades hurt the perceived value of a phone,

it *can* cover up evidence that unoriginal parts were used to reproduce it. Therein lies the danger. "For me, I want them to be completely original," D'Acosta says. "The Western Electric swirl base is absolutely authentic from top to bottom and I don't know how you can get any better than that. That's absolutely what you're striving to acquire."

Though D'Acosta's collection is 250 telephones strong, there still are phones out there that he's after—at least a dozen that he knows exist and would purchase in a heartbeat if he had the chance. Beyond discovering them in basements or attics, the real challenge rests in determining the purchasing price. For almost 20 years, D'Acosta assembled his collection relying on faith that these vintage telephones were bound to



3 1894 National Telephone desk set



4 1900 Garl 6 point intercommunicating desk set



5 1894 Stromberg-Carlson Coffee Grinder

be worth a lot, based on their limited supply and historical significance. About two years ago, however, he hoped to ascertain some confirmation. He hired an auction company to survey his collection, but after hours of analysis, D'Acosta was no closer to an answer. "There were no collections of candlestick telephones that came through the auction house in the past 30 years," he says. "There was nothing that they could look at to help me evaluate the value and interest. But the historical significance is without question."

In the end, when it comes to future acquisitions, D'Acosta is left with the only resource that he's had all along—his intuition. Most of his acquisitions occur within a network of passionate collectors, though he says few are as focused as he is on this particular era in American history. Regardless, when he feels that a seller is asking more for the phone than it's worth, D'Acosta must evaluate just how that individual phone will impact his collection. If the phone adds significant value to his overall assemblage, D'Acosta isn't afraid to spend more than he believes the individual phone is worth.

However, that still requires D'Acosta to reach a negotiating stage with a fellow enthusiast, and such progression requires patience. Some of D'Acosta's most valuable telephones, like the 1894 Columbia mentioned earlier and an 1894 model manufactured by the National Telephone Manufacturing Co., were purchased from a Florida collector, but D'Acosta explains that the dialogue leading to those sales took many years to develop. "I flew into Florida to meet the gentleman in person to show him that I was the real deal and a genuine collector," he says. Even then, D'Acosta didn't fly home with those phones on his first trip.

**WHILE D'ACOSTA** may long to know just what kind of value the rest of the world places on his phones, he has no intention of parting with them any time soon. As proof, when he built a new home in North Texas about four years ago, the first room that he designed was a showroom to house his collection. He paid special attention to the room's architecture



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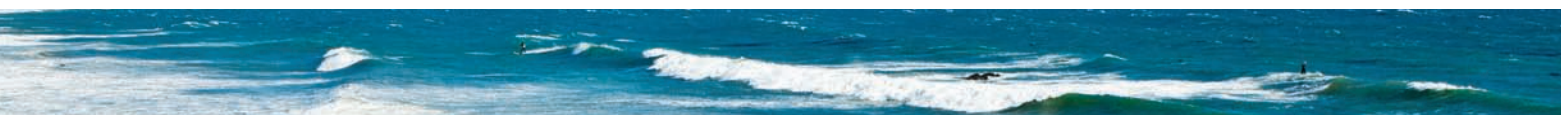
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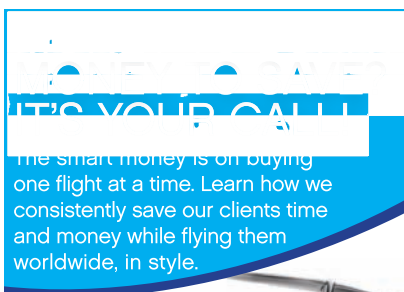


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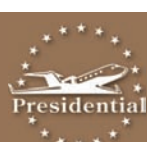


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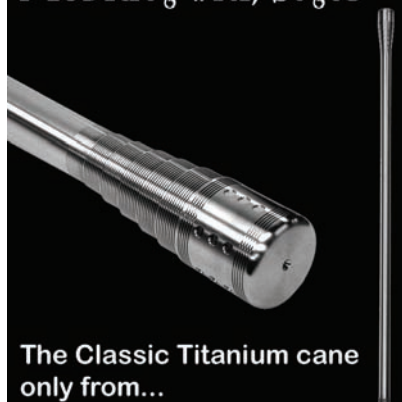
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# LASTING IMPRESSIONS

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## Tracking Down Great Garden Fare

SOME OF NICK FERRARO'S most profound culinary experiences last summer materialized while he was traveling through Europe. But it wasn't the rich, indulgent food of Paris that stole his heart. Rather, it was the local flavor of Barcelona. In particular, it was the vegetable lasagna at **Cerveceria Catalana**, a famous, though unassuming, tapas restaurant that redefined his view of vegetarian food. Constructed of bell peppers, zucchini, eggplant, local mushrooms, and asparagus, and topped with melted mozzarella, cracked sea salt, and a tomato confit, the dish would do well in Italy, according to Ferraro. "It stood out to me for the whimsy that it took to make and the overall flavors that were involved," he says. "It was fresh and light and I didn't feel weighed down at all. It was simple and elegant in the way that it was done."

When Nathaniel Slavin chooses to eat out in his native Chicago, he often seeks restaurants that prepare food in ways that he cannot re-create himself. "I want something that's unexpected," he says, "something that's going to surprise me." On evenings when Slavin yearns for a vegetarian experience, he makes a trek to the **Green Zebra** ([www.greenzebrachicago.com](http://www.greenzebrachicago.com)) in Wicker Park, where he says chef/owner Shawn McClain creates meals that showcase the vegetable as a vegetable.

According to Slavin, too many times vegetarian dishes are shackled by a philosophy that soy-based products must be included to mimic the appearance or

texture of meat. You won't get that at McClain's establishment, where Slavin once enjoyed a cauliflower risotto transformed by a traditional red curry. "It took cauliflower and turned it into something unexpected," he says. "The creamy cauliflower puree with the risotto blends perfectly with the bright flavors of the curry, and their sauce has all the flavors of a curry, but it doesn't mask or overpower what it's being served with."

Across the Chicago River and a couple of miles north, Karyn Calabrese has created a devout following of wellness enthusiasts, thanks to her detoxification classes based on herbal supplements and natural foods. Kellee Johnson is one such believer who participates in a monthlong cleanse each year. "You cannot believe the energy or the clarity that comes to you when you eat this way," she says. "It calms you."

But Johnson acknowledges that you need not commit to a month of raw meals to experience the lifestyle, and she points to Calabrese's gourmet restaurant, **Karyn's Raw Café** ([www.karynraw.com](http://www.karynraw.com)), as a perfect introduction. The restaurant serves up familiar fare such as spinach pizzas, basil-scented raviolis, and empanadas, but patrons eager to twirl their forks into a steaming plate of pad Thai (a dish that Johnson highly recommends for newcomers) may be somewhat disappointed. Functional food, as Calabrese's is called, is not cooked above 118 degrees, since hotter temperatures kill the nutrient-rich



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enzymes. That means any dish ordered off the raw menu is just that. "It's room temperature," Johnson says, "but it can seem cold because you're used to having hot food served in front of you."

When Johnson is on the East Coast, she goes out of her way to make a reservation at **Pure Food and Wine** ([www.oneluckyduck.com](http://www.oneluckyduck.com)) in Manhattan, a restaurant that serves organic wine and high-end vegetarian cuisine presented in a gourmet fashion. She'll often order a sweet corn and cashew tamale with chili-spiced portabella mushrooms or a zucchini and local heirloom tomato lasagna accented by a basil pistachio pesto, sundried tomato marinara, and macadamia pumpkin seed ricotta.

According to 42-year-old David Bruns of San Francisco, the most successful restaurants are those that force him to reevaluate how food can be prepared. From well-balanced wild mushroom-based starches to citrusy courses complemented by perfume applications on the wrist, **Coi** ([www.coirestaurant.com](http://www.coirestaurant.com)), an intimate venue tucked away in San Francisco's North Beach neighborhood, delivers on all fronts. The restaurant offers traditional and vegetarian tasting menus, but Bruns often picks the vegetarian option, even though he's a regular meat-eater. "It's easy to make a meat dish fulfilling," he says, "but you need to be more creative to make a vegetarian dish satisfying." ☐