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HOW TO AVOID IT, AND WHAT CAN YOU DO IF IT HAPPENS TO YOU?

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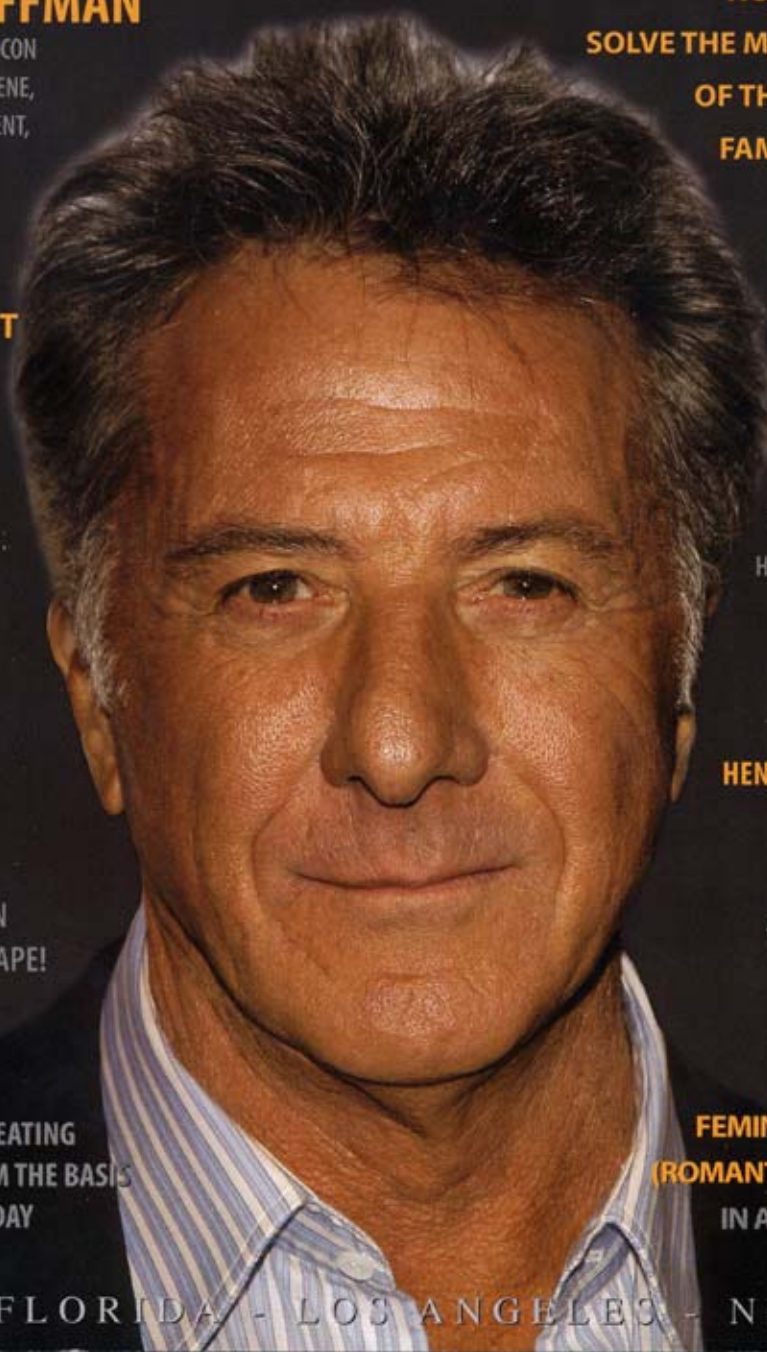
YOUTHFUL PASSIONS FUEL THE FIRES OF AN AGELESS MARRIAGE

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IN A STRAPLESS DRESS

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Jason & Kim Wenig

Owners of "Creative Workshop"

It probably wasn't the smartest business decision. There are certainly easier ways to make money. But after living in New York City and doing the corporate hustle for a decade, it became clear to Jason and Kim Wenig, that office life was not for them.

Selling everything they owned and leaving all of their friends and family behind, they moved to Florida and purchased a dwindling classic car restoration business located in a run-down 75-year-old barn, in a small city called Dania Beach.

They ended up there through a maze of circumstances that all started when Jason was a five-year-old mechanical mad scientist, walking around with pocketfuls of nuts and bolts. Anything he could find was unceremoniously disassembled and turned into something else.

"This love of mechanics and design stayed with me from childhood into adolescence and onward," said Jason. "I always had a project going...a car, a motorcycle or pretty much anything that required gasoline...anything that I could work on, fix, redesign or modify in some way."

Knowing what was in his blood, the next component to this story would have to be...when after years of corporate advertising (he had earned a Master's degree in marketing and advertising in the city) Jason left the stifling corporate world for an internet start up, which would give him both his first taste of entrepreneurship and a run at working on something related to cars. He joined a group of friends he had raced with in the America's Cup 12-metre Vintage sailing league. Their business was based on the procurement of car parts to the home-and-professional-mechanic via the internet.

His new job, in part, revolved around race car sponsorships – in this case, Top Fuel Dragsters in the NHRA. During an event in the middle of nowhere, Kim turned to him and said, "what if we did something with cars, something we could craft and design ourselves." The seeds were sown... that's how it all started.

"I left the internet company and began the long process of crafting an idea of what we could do that would reflect our sense of style, what would be personal, and most importantly, what we could call our own. After six months of writing a plan, calling business contacts, traveling and meetings, the idea formalized. Next we would have to find the opportunity."

After looking across two states, about 15 companies and more than 1500 miles traveled, they found the shop that was perfect. "It was interesting and unique. The business we found was operating in a 75-year-old barn that used to be a granary a lifetime ago. About 20 years ago, it was converted into a classic car restoration shop. Some time later it fell into a state of disrepair and identity loss. But it had a vibe...a most incredible feel that its potential was not nearly met and that we belonged there."

The next year was what Jason called: "The Survival Year." Their adjustment to living out of the City, hiring staff, fixing and renovating the building, purchasing equipment, developing the company's image and ultimately, bringing customers in.

They survived the first year and the subsequent years turned into the "stabilization years" and then the "growth years" as he has come to call them. And grow they did! They started off with three projects left over from the previous owner, and two employees. Today, they have recruited 12 employees from around the country, have 27 projects in the shop and are fortunate enough to have a backlog of about six months.

An automobile, at least the way it is built at their shop, becomes far

more than a classic car. They are mechanical pieces of artwork. Steel and aluminum, leather and vinyl, chrome and stainless all combine to create a moving art-form. "The designers of old created these cars before accountants, law firms and insurance companies took control. They were designed and built, in many instances, on impulse, to explore a design idea or fulfill a visionary's dream. Rarely can you look at a modern car and be moved in the same way as that rare and glorious moment when you see an Italian sports car, a British roadster or an American muscle machine thundering down the street," says Jason.

"Building these cars is not inexpensive, but then again, purchasing art for a wall isn't either...but where wall art leaves off, these machines pick up – in spades. The sights, sounds, smell...the total visceral experience of driving in a classic automobile, restored as it should be, is something that shouldn't be missed. The best part of the whole deal is the relationship between the car, the customer and the shop. Rarely is a classic car just a car. There is almost always a story behind it. The relationship with the shop is an important part of the equation. Our personalities are prevalent in everything – from the feel of the shop to the style of the cars to the types of employees that are with us. Customers visit us regularly, having conversations with the guys – learning about their car, about the process, about the whole experience. Inherent in the growth of the shop is the owners' understanding of how special these cars are and how much fun rebuilding one can be."

"Through this convergence of energy – true craftsmanship inspired by great design and history merges with the motivation and enthusiasm of the customer who is deeply involved in the process – our cars emit a vibe that is truly unique."

Since taking over the shop, they have completed a wide range of styles – from muscle cars to big-finned cruisers to small roadsters and one-of-a-kind race cars – one of which just took a blue ribbon at the Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance.

What will come in next? "We'll have to wait for the phone to ring to see the next amazing story unfold," they say. They really don't miss the corporate world too much...**P**

