

**BMW Car Club of America,  
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by Dan Rose**

**Vader... (Cont'd from p.  
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Jason Wenig, would be back soon. I looked around. A large room served as a reception area where Veronica had her desk, the walls were covered with bookshelves of old automotive manuals. It was like actually living inside some historic encyclopedia of how to fix cars. The focus in the room, though was a shot of pure pleasure. A rather small car like the BMW Dixi sat to her right. It was a small, yellow Citroen Cloverleaf of about 1925 with the steel wheels painted the matching yellow. A slightly cramped, two passenger light car which was one of Europe's many answers to Henry Ford's Models T and A, an early people's car.

Jason is a car guy, quick, responsive and eclectic in the best way. His shop held wonders and he generously showed me around. His work desk was on an open balcony that looked out over the workshop. Down and to the immediate left a gigantic engine rested on the makings of a frame. I had to ask and he said that they were building a racecar for a customer around the Aston-Martin V12. Okay, I was hooked and he gave me the tour.

Men were working around the

One of the ground-up restorations caught my eye. I could see the influence of the Ghia designers and Jason explained that it was a one-off Abarth built by Ghia for the New York Auto Show of 1954. Abarth had named it the "Wildcat" with a promise of production for the American market.

It had disappeared for years and reappeared with pieces missing that the craftsmen would have to fabricate to bring the car back to what it once was.

The biggest surprise was actually a small car, rarer than a Ferrari, Jason explained. The metal beaters and others were fitting the aluminum skin on a four cylinder Stanguellini that had belonged to the famous gentleman racecar owner and driver, Briggs Cunningham. I stood and stared at it, as if trying to memorize it. Jason and I talked some business and I learned a few things. The types of shops like this one seem to me to be primarily East Coast; they take old European cars and do ground-up restorations and they will build to suit. On the West Coast by contrast, at least I suspect, the shops are more about Japanese tuners and rods and customs; restorations are performed more on American cars. Just a geographical thought for what it's worth.

The sweet spot economically for the larger workshops like this

cars and instead of replicating the excitement and delight of what was in his shop, I'll have to summarize. His craftsmen were building bespoke (custom) cars to customers' designs and they were also making ground up restorations of historically valuable cars. At the far end his own rat rod pickup with a long snout and a Chevy six stovebolt was taking shape. Very cool. He said, "My wife doesn't like it." I said that I definitely did like it! He was animated in talking about his love of the craft and the mechanical savvy that went into the development of the 20th century auto mostly prior to 1960.

one apparently falls into the \$300,000 to million dollar range. If you want mods come up with a fairly complex project at a significant scale and these numbers will interest the shop owners. A current moneymaker now is to maintain and service historic racecars. It was definitely a high to visit with Jason and observe the highly skilled members of the staff work their magic on notable autos.

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