

Vol 2 : Issue 1 Dec '16/Jan '17

THE *American*

★★★ **TRI-FIVE**

the Publication for the American Tri-Five Association

2016 TRI-FIVE OF THE YEAR



**SPECIAL CPP
PULL OUT
CALENDAR**

**HOW IS IT MADE
MUSCLECAR GT - DRIVEN BY PASSION**

HOW IS IT MADE

MUSCLECAR GT - DRIVEN BY PASSION

WORDS & PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER SONDLER

Passion is a funny thing. It drives people in ways that other motivating factors cannot. Consider motivators like security, love and wealth; all of these take other people's interests in mind while also being motivating factors in a person's life. To be motivated by passion alone can be dangerous. Passion is a powerful motivating factor and when it takes over a person's mind not many forces in nature can overcome it.

Those involved in the car hobby fully understand being driven by passion. We all know that our love of a car is not easily explained to anyone who is not afflicted by the same internal motivator. Unlike many things in our life that motivate us to do or not to do something, passion is something that can rarely be explained to others because it is so individual and often times it is unexplainable.

I am writing this article about a man that is very passionate about something that is unexplainable, possibly unconceivable and undoubtedly unbelievable. Actually, I am writing this while flying 35,000 feet above the Pacific Ocean while traveling at over 500mph on a scratch pad of paper. Normally I write from my office desk or while at home, but I wanted to be sure to write down the experience I recently had while visiting Taiwan with Danchuk's general manager Steve Brown and Golden Star's owner Paul Hsieh. The three of us were visiting Musclicar GT, and its owner Mr. GT Lo.

Mr. GT, as he is called, is a man whose picture should be beside the word passion in the dictionary. But, it is not a passion for cars, nor a passion for the past. His passion lies in the creation of tooling. Tooling that recreates the past and allows all of us to enjoy our cars.

GT has been a pioneer of quality reproduction parts since 1985. Starting in a small



Mr. GT Lo, Owner of Musclicar GT

tooling and stamping shop, Musclicar GT now has over 300 employees and operates out of 8 different factories and 2 different warehouses.

GT and his crew make tooling and produce parts for cars stretching from the 1930's-1980's. Naturally our focus in on the classic Chevys; GT told me that for 55-



Over 1,000 pieces of tooling have been produced to make new Tri-Five parts



8 Different Muscicar GT plants produce tooling and parts for Tri-Fives

57 Chevys alone he has produced over 1,000 different pieces of tooling. That is a staggering number of tools dedicated to cars that have not been produced by the OE manufacture for over 60 years.

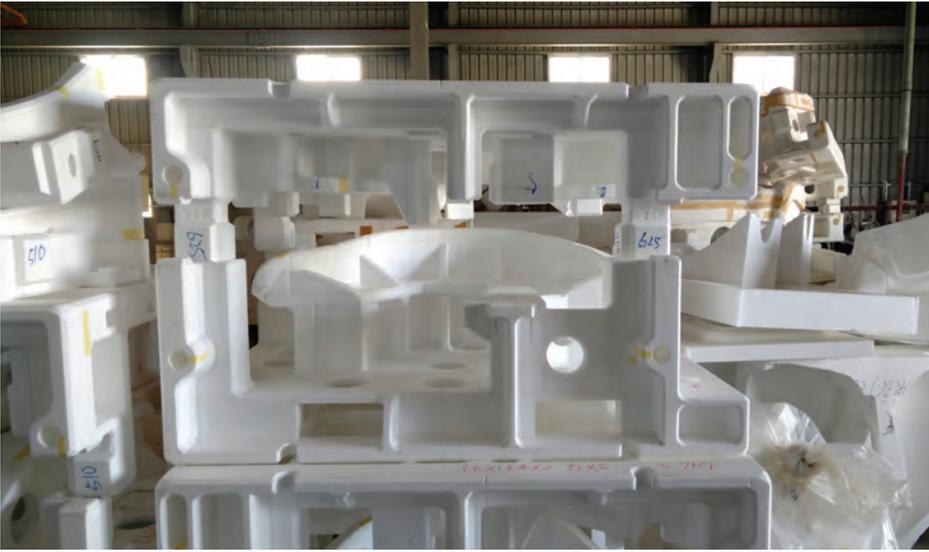
All of the tooling that GT uses to produce his products has been reverse engineered from the original parts. The process begins with a good original part or body as the case is with the new bodies like the ones we assemble at Woody's Hot Rodz. Once a good part or body has been acquired and shipped overseas it is studied, measured and then if any issues with the fit are found, the next step is to repair the sample back to its OE spec. One thing that is hard about recreating bodies is finding perfect pieces to start with. Often times the years have taken their toll and GT's team have to repair

the sample. In the case of the forthcoming 1956 bodies and replacement panels, Golden Star purchased a hardtop, convertible, and sedan and then sent them to Woody's to be repaired before shipping them overseas.

While Woody's had the cars they also fabricated a birdless '56 hood and a recessed firewall for GT to use as templates for new parts. This is how the smoothie 1955 hood came about, as did the custom 1957 one piece fin moldings and the radiused gasser wheel openings for the 1955's. All were first customized at Woody's then sent to GT to be produced.



LEFT 1956 convertible parts are coming soon. Here is a very nice original that will be the pattern. TOP 1957 front bumpers freshly stamped



Styrofoam is hand carved to produce final tooling

Once the sample is pristine, the next step is to do a 3D image of the part. With the full cars, they first have to be completely disassembled, piece by piece. Once the part is made into a 3D file, a plaster mold is made of the part. The hand crafted mold is very important as it allows the production engineers to see the part as it will be stamped. Styrofoam is then sculpted to match the reverse of the plaster mold.

Sedan door structures await their new skins



allows for slow speed, low volume production in order to keep parts consistent throughout a production run. In many cases parts will go through a variety of processes or hits before the finished part is produced. (5 series)

Technology and materials have improved dramatically since the 50's. Muscicar GT implements the most current technology in their mold manufacturing process for efficiency and higher quality. It is a labor of love that shows in each part that they produce. From sheet metal parts to chrome bumpers to latches to headliner bows GT's goal is to reproduce the entire vehicle, not just the high volume items that make money. His philosophy is simple; if only the popular parts are remanufactured the hobby suffers. While on this trip I saw new parts being developed not only for the 56's but also for four door sedans, and hardtops, wagons and even Nomads.

To GT classic cars are not different from vintage artwork. They require lots of skills and passion. Muscicar GT is a group of people passionate about classic car culture and mold manufacturing. I realize that for some, the



Most parts require multiple processes and toolings to make the final part



Recreating what GM did is not a simple process



Rough piece of fresh tooling gets machined



'57 bumper ends stamped, awaiting welding process



This is the tooling for the 1955 Sedan Quarters.



Each bumper end is hand welded



Large items like the quarters and floor pans are stamped by very large stamping machines like this one.



Welds are ground in to "Series 1" reproductions, prior to being polished and chromed

fact that parts for these great American cars being made overseas is hard to swallow. I understand, but trust me when I tell you this.

This industry and our hobby owe a tremendous amount to GT. His vision, skill and passion for parts has revolutionized how we restore the cars we love.



GT has his own large collection of American cars including this nice '57 Bel Air. Standing with Paul Hsieh



Standing behind an all NEW 55-57 Nomad door is Chris Sondles, Mr. GT, Steve Brown and Paul Hsieh. Partnering in Progress.



GT is committed to making parts for all models of Tri-Five Chevs as can be seen here.

Golden Star
CLASSIC AUTO PARTS

Proudly Warehouses over 70,000 sq ft of restoration parts.