

Auto wizard from Budd Lake on Camaro make-over team

By PHIL GARBBER
MANAGING EDITOR

MOUNT OLIVE TWP – A Budd Lake automotive child prodigy has joined with a former musician and artist to create one of the jazziest and fastest cars around.

The trio and a handful of other auto experts at Netcong Auto Restoration in Netcong were commissioned by Popular Mechanics magazine last year to totally revamp a 2010 Chevrolet Camaro SS.

The sleek, black makeover can turn 165 mph and is complete with a computer, printer, Playstation and Wifi. It will be shown in the magazine's seventh annual car makeover feature, running in its May and June issues.

The car is being showcased at auto shows and other venues. Next month, it will be featured at the Pocono 500, held at Pocono Raceway and then at the Route 66 Car Show in San Bernardino, Calif., and the 2010 SEMA Show in Las Vegas, Nev., the premier

'Popular Mechanics wanted a Camaro on steroids.'

DANA BRAZER

Auto Restoration Shop
Owner

automotive accessories trade show in the world. The car will ultimately be auctioned off for sale.

The nucleus of the team that won the commission to remodel the car includes the owners of Netcong Auto Restoration, Paul Brazer, 47, and his wife, Dana, 46, of Hillsboro and "Popular Mechanics wanted a Camaro on steroids," said Mrs. Brazer.

Last year, the Brazers were solicited by Popular Mechanics to submit a proposal for the magazine's annual auto makeover competition. The Brazers were picked and were paid for their

work although Mr. Brazer did not want to say how much.

Haley said the team met frequently to brainstorm ideas for the proposal and they were ultimately picked from hundreds of auto restoration shops around the nation.

The goal was to build a super high-performance Camaro, with custom designed exterior body and creative paintwork, and a wide range of advanced electronic/computer technologies, Mr. Brazer said.

Popular Mechanics selected the Camaro in part to boost auto sales. The once-popular competitor to the Ford Mustang ended production in 2002 and was revived last year.

The magazine bought the Camaro from Gearhart Chevrolet in Denville and it was then transported to Netcong for the makeover last Sept. 11. The work was completed on March 12.

"There is no one person who can take credit," Haley said. "We all worked on it."

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Members of the award-winning team that rebuilt and remodeled a 2010 Camaro include, from left, Eric Erd, Mick Brockett, Phil and Dana Brazer and Hal Haley.

AUTO: Car had to be completed by March

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Others on the team included Mick Brockett of Mount Pocono, Pa., David Wagner of Hackettstown, and Eric Erd and Ray Dziadul, both of Stanhope.

Special tools were needed and electronic systems had to be completely refashioned to bypass existing relays and fuses. The challenge was made even more daunting because Popular Mechanics wanted the car completed by March.

"The most difficult thing was pulling it off in the time frame," Mr. Brazer said.

The result was worth the many hours of sweat, hard work and frequent frustration.

"We wanted to blow every-

body away," Haley said. "The car is better than what we anticipated."

The result is not just automotive eye candy but also a production marvel. It was driven by a professional race car driver at the Cooper Tire race track in Pearsall, Texas, where it topped off at 167 mph.

The car doesn't rumble, it growsl, and with a six-speed manual transmission it's not for the inexperienced drive.

"It can't be driven like a normal car because it's so powerful," Haley said.

The exterior is highlighted by a checkers pattern in graduating sizes. It has triple tail lights, a custom rear spoiler, custom headlights and grill and a cus-

tom hood scoop for supercharging induction. The car also has a night vision system, rear view camera, WiFi, Netbook computer with printer, and custom radar detector. Mr. Brazer then went on to complete an Andrew Mellan Fellowship in music composition at Princeton University and Mrs. Brazer earned a master's in photography from Rochester (N.Y.) Institute of Technology.

Mr. Brazer worked for 17 years in corporate America, in public relations, advertising and information technology with such firms as IBM and Merkt.

But he said his real love was always cars and he began to buy and sell vehicles from muscle

cars to European sports cars. After the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the Brazers decided it was time to reevaluate their lives and the couple decided to pursue their dream of working with exotic cars.

The result was that they invested their life savings to buy Netcong Auto Restoration on Allen Street where Mrs. Brazer uses her artistic design skills and Mr. Brazer adds his creative and automotive skills to repair and customize everything from Lamborghinis and Rolls Royces to Ford Mustangs.

Because of contractual terms, Mr. Brazer said he can't publicly show the Camaro until after the magazine's May and June issues are on the newsstands.