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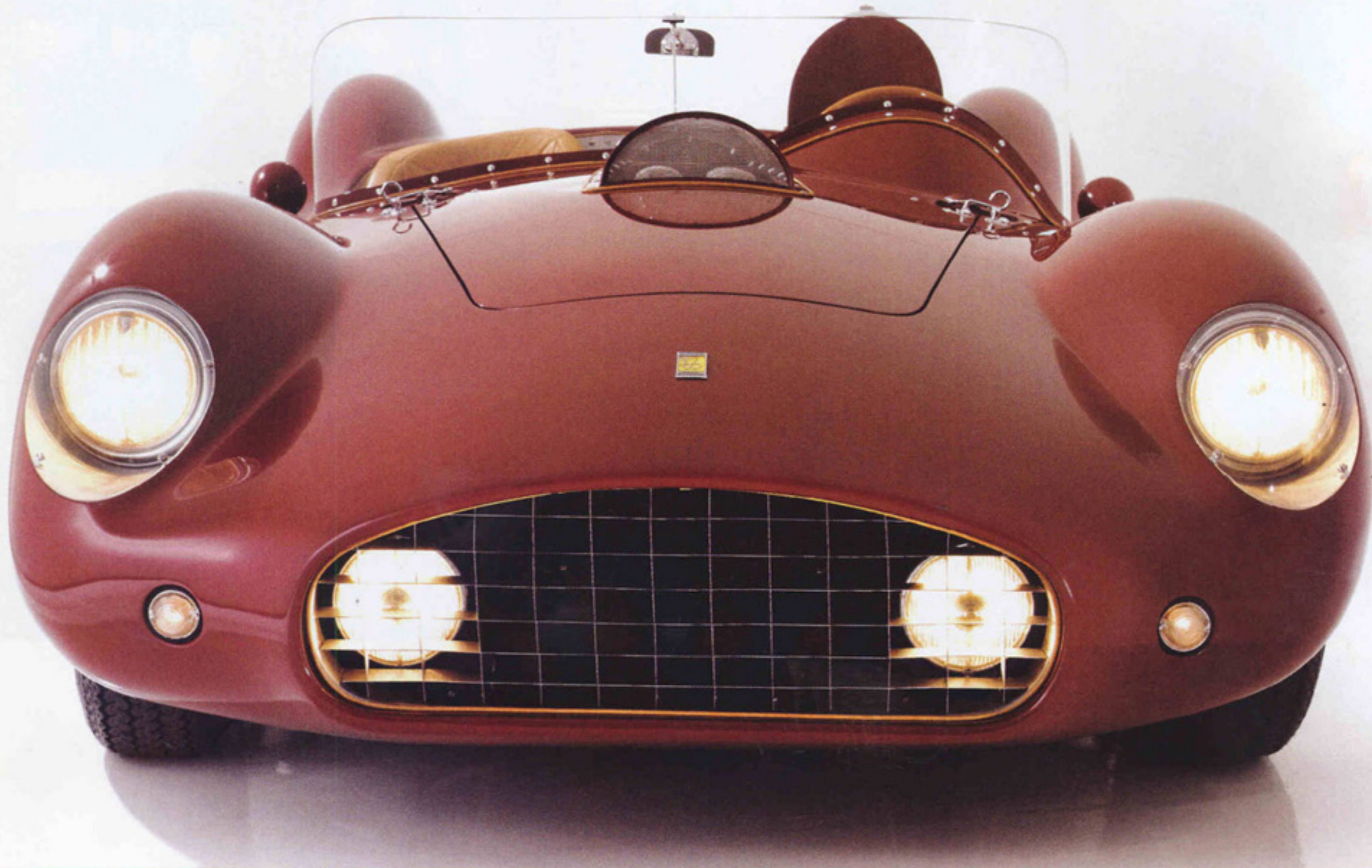
HERE'S THE STORY OF A DEVIL IN A RED DRESS &
HOW SHE CAME TO BE IN SCOTTSDALE, AZ

THIS MIGHT APPEAR TO BE AN ARTICLE ABOUT A CAR. It isn't. Yes, when you see my name, there is usually talk of cars. Yes, if you scan ahead, you'll encounter letters that create auditory sensations like *suspension*, and *V12*, and *pontoon*, which, when processed through the superior temporal gyrus, you will associate with cars. Yes, these words happen to be bracketed by pictures of a very red car that may or may not have a suspension, a V12, and a pontoon. And yes, in this paragraph every sentence so far has had the word *car* in it.

But you gotta trust me on this: this isn't an article about a car.

This is an article about design, about creation, about encountering something and deciding that you will do what it takes to make that something perfect. It could be an original idea, or some nearly perfect *objet* that lacks a *soupcou* of finishing finesse—but whatever it is, you will not rest until you have seen it formed flawlessly. The pictured car is merely a symbol of that—nothing more. It is also, certainly, nothing less.





As with most ideas, Scottsdale resident Barry Smith's was simple: "I wanted a car I could drive." But devils, along with sweat, time, and lost fortunes reside in the refinements that make every simple idea complex enough to enjoy for more than a few minutes. See, Smith didn't want *a car*. After watching the show *Victory by Design*, Smith wanted the Le Mans-winning 1960 Ferrari 250 Testa Rossa. The conundrum: in addition to being rarer than an endangered species and searingly expensive, they aren't exactly cars you can just drive.

What Smith actually needed was a car that looked like a postwar gentleman's racer, drove and handled as well as a post-millennial plutocrat's Aston, and he "didn't want five techs living in my home just to get it started." Oh, and it couldn't require a loan from the World Bank to build and bring home. This encapsulates the problem: these are the caveats that send creators to their graves with stillborn plans and the dying question, "My idea was so simple—what happened?"

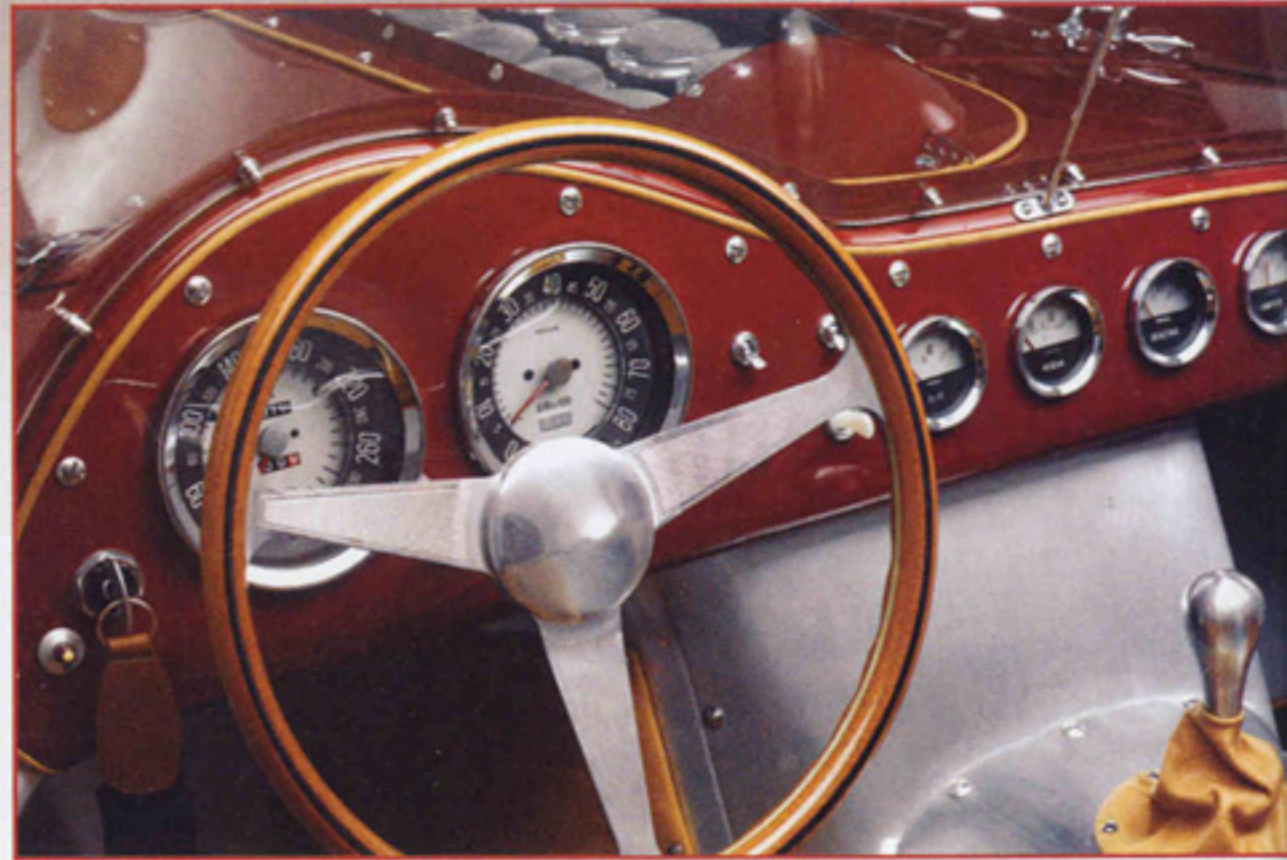
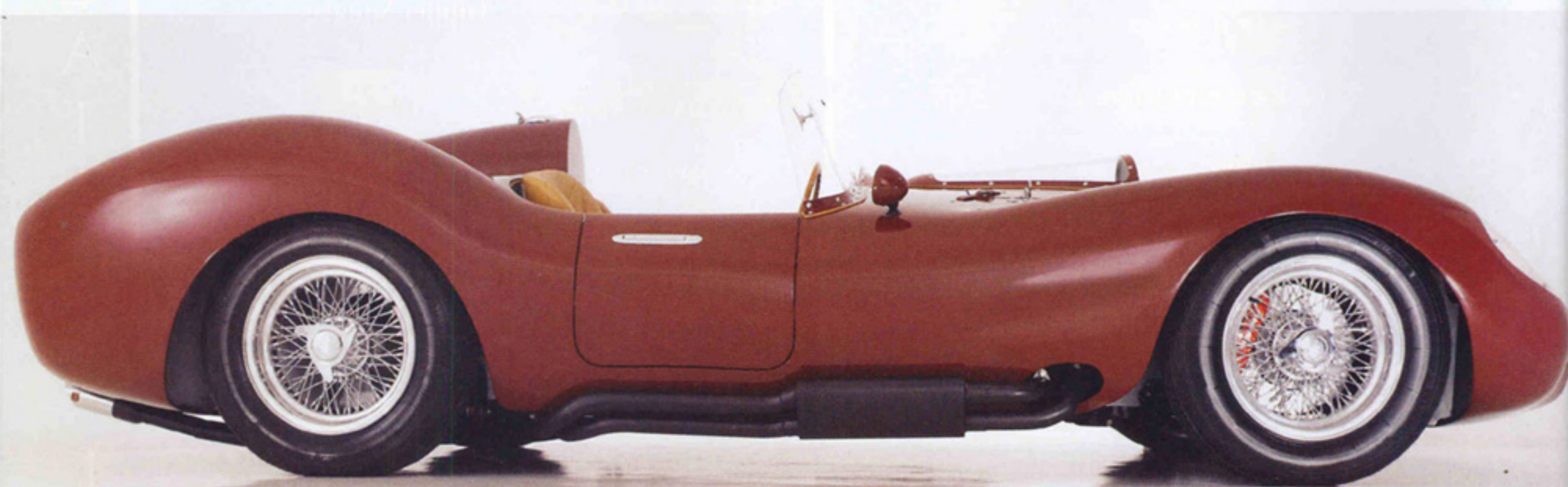
That is, unless you manage to find craftsmen like those lead by Jason Wenig at Creative Workshop. The 6-year-old restoration firm, housed in an immense former granary barn in

Dania Beach, Florida, renews vintage exotics and racers and can also update them with modern mechanicals. And, it can design and build almost anything you have an idea and the liquidity for. When Smith told Wenig what we wanted, Wenig said, "I can build anything."

But Wenig also said "I didn't want the car to be a copy of the Ferrari." That would have been easy. Remember, he didn't want to mirror what already exists, but to materialize one's own unique desires. What Wenig designed for and with Smith took its primary inspiration from that Ferrari, and added influences from the Jaguars, Astons, and Maseratis of the day, culminating in the Creative Workshop Sport Speciale.

The 1958 Pininfarina-designed Ferrari 250 Testa Rossa had front fenders that appeared to be elements independent of the body—think *Speed Racer's* Mach 5—which earned the moniker "pontoons." Stylistically intriguing, they added a fair bit of curve to Ferrari's racer, and its successor was even more sinuous: from the side, it looks like layered procession of waves from front to back.

That comely expanse of crimson undulations is what the



Sport Speciale is all about, with modern accoutrements. Its foundations are a hand-formed aluminum tubular frame wrapped in a hand-formed and beaten aluminum body. More slope has been added to the fenders than those in its inspiration, which give the car a further dose of dynamic beauty and purpose. The sight of them from the driver's seat, Smith says, is his favorite thing about the car.

The engine is a high-revving F1-inspired BMW V12 from the mid-eighties that's been fettled and tuned to 450 horsepower at 8,000 RPM. The sound is, according to Wenig, "like you were at the Nurburgring in 1957." The beast and its motor are supported by unequal-length tubular A-arms up front and a Jaguar-inspired sub assembly in the rear, with heavy-duty coil-over shocks all around for firm-yet-forgiving going. The Speciale gets to 60 in less than four and on to a mathematically calculated top speed of 250 mph, which are fine figures, but of equal import was the

around-town drive-ability the setup afforded when one tired of playing Phil Hill. Speaking of racing, neither Smith nor Jason has had the car past half throttle—said the builder, "it feels like you're going to get ripped from the car."

Inside the open cockpit is exactly what you'd expect from a coachbuilding shop: rich, hand-stitched leather, burnished wood, and gleaming metalwork with immaculate joins.

The car begs the question, how far would you go to make the perfect thing? Barry Smith had to go to Florida to find Jason Wenig, who went to Beirut, Holland, and New Zealand for period-specific parts to build the car. And then Smith devoted more than a half million dollars and 19 months to get what he wanted. But the effort to make one's vision a reality is something only barely measured by time and money. Rather, it is embodied in the now physical, and timeless, body of the Sport Speciale. ■