

Builder's Profile

COMPANY INFO

COMPANY: JELLYBEAN AUTOCRAFTERS
MANAGER: EWALD PENNER
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WHAT THEY DO: PURVEYORS OF FINE AUTOMOBILES
FOR GENTLEMEN AND GENTRY.



THE COMPANY LINE

Background: Ewald and Kurt have been at the helm at Jellybean since its beginnings six years ago as a family-run hot rod shop. The company survived the recession by staying true to its vision of building high-quality automobiles, and is now aiming its sights into the stratosphere to become one of the great car builders in North America. Examples of their work have finished on the podium at events such as the Peking-to-Paris Rally, Grand National Roadster Show and Pebble Beach. This year, Jellybean's goal is to be well represented in all the top events, be it vintage motorsport, Hot Rod shows, Custom shows or Concours events. 2010 will also be the fifth year of the company's Canada Day Show and Cruise event held at the shop. We sat down with Ewald to get the latest from Jellybean.

PP: So, Ewald, it's been a year since we've spoken with you; what's the latest at Jellybean?

EP: One of our big changes is going from calling ourselves Jellybean Hot Rods to Jellybean AutoCrafters.

PP: So why the name change?

EP: Well, we don't just do hot rods and customs, we also do a lot of concours cars and vintage European vehicles. The guy with the hot rod will continue to bring his car here with AutoCrafters in the name. However, some of the concours clients expressed hesitation about bringing their vehicle to a hot rod shop, so we've changed it to "AutoCrafters" which includes both groups. It also better describes what we do because our craftsmen don't just install a fender, they fabricate one if it is not available.

PP: Jellybean has been known for some time for building high quality cars, but it sounds like you are now really going after the cream of the crop. How are you going about doing this?

EP: You know, it comes down to our staff. We've been building it and building it for quite a few years now, bringing in what we feel are the best people available in the industry. We've even gone as far as England and New Zealand to find the best talent. All are full hardcore car guys, and we even have a car girl.

PP: With bringing in the top level talent, how has that improved the shop?

EP: We can build anything and I mean anything! An engineer on staff gives us unique abilities when designing a component or an entire vehicle. Old fashioned metal bashers make

efficient work of shaping body panels, whether it's a patch panel, a hood or an entire body. Two premier painters make any part created by our talented crew shine while technicians add the performance and reliability. We've combined these skills with a mill, lathe, a variety of English wheels, a few planishing hammers and all the coach building tools you need to fabricate a complete vehicle in-house. Then there is the metal sprayer which gives us a distinct advantage in the industry.

PP: A metal sprayer? What type of work do you do with a metal sprayer?

EP: You know, the metal sprayer has been such an incredible tool. We can take parts that are either pitted or broken, spray the metal on them, grind it smooth & paint it or send it to the chromer. One area where it's become extremely useful is for restoring what once was an unrestorable part such as a vintage emblem or radiator shell for a Duesenberg, for example, or building new parts. We can create our own badging, trim pieces or just about anything we need by simply building a mold and creating the piece. We've also used it to stop electrolysis between aluminum and metal. So thanks to this, our other tools and our skilled workers behind them, we can build anything, and we mean every single little piece on the car.

PP: Would that be a project you'd ever think of putting together, building an entire vehicle from scratch?

EP: Absolutely, our shop truck and a few others have been largely hand built, but we look forward to designing, engineering, and fabricating a scratch-built ride. We intend to be at Pebble Beach or go for the Ridler or America's Most Beautiful Roadster award with a heavily European- and domestic-influenced vehicle that has been scratch-built in our shop. The only ingredient missing is a client with deep enough pockets.

PP: So, there has been a lot happening at Jellybean; you're obviously going after some high-end clientele?

EP: Don't get me wrong, we still cater to the small jobs, the guys that come in for an electrical problem or need a touch-up of some sort. The company's vision has always been to build world-class vehicles yet retain the ability to perform other work. We have morphed a little bit by getting involved in the vintage rally stuff. These cars are high-end restorations, some have a little bit of performance thrown in, but they are not just show cars. These guys go out and drag these very expensive cars through absolutely everything. I'm talking about guys driving a '30s-era Bentley through the rain and refusing to put the top up because that's not what they would have done back in the day. So for us, function is huge; it's got to do well at the shows, look good and also drive well while holding up to the punishment.

PP: Are you currently working on any of these types of cars?

EP: Yeah, we're deep into a build on a 1938 BMW 327 Cabriolet. The entire vehicle has been pulled apart and is in the process of getting rebuilt. There's no body panel that didn't get attention. We've actually fabricated over one-third of the body and massaged the rest. Many mechanical details, right down to the bushings, are built in our machine shop. It is mostly restoration work, but this car will be competing in vintage rally competitions, so particular attention is being given to the way it drives.

Jellybean AutoCrafters wishes to invite all car enthusiasts to its annual open house which includes the Canada Day Car Show & Cruise on July 1. Last year there were upwards of 300 cars and 400 people in attendance. **PP**

THE SHOP

