



Precision Work

There's no job too big or too small when it comes to restoring old cars and classics.

BY CATHIE BECK

WHAT CHRIS NASH, owner of Precision Rod & Customs in Sevierville, Tenn., (about 40 miles northeast of Knoxville), most loves about his automotive restoration business is the history and personal stories that often lie behind his work.

“For example, a few years back I restored a 1969 Camaro for a client whose father had bought brand-new,” says Nash. “The father eventually gave it

to his son, who was my customer. The car was completely disabled and disassembled and it had been like that for over 20 years. The son brought it to me to be restored so he could give it back to his father.”

It's the type of meaningful restoration—the Camaro project took eight months—that drives Precision Rod & Customs.

“We do any and all restoration and general work,” says Nash, “anything from disc-brake conversions to full restorations. There's no job too big or small when it comes to what we can do for old cars and classics.”

An Assist from Dad

Nash started Precision Rod & Customs in 2006.

“Or, at least that's when I began working for the public,” he says. “I did work on my own cars and on my father's cars for years, but it wasn't until 2006 that I actually turned all of that into a business.”

“The truth is that I've always done this,” he adds. “My Dad always had cars around and, at about 5 years old, I took a liking to it. I'm 37 now, so that's over 30 years of doing this. But I never thought it would be my profession. I guess I probably hoped that it might be, but I never thought it could be a business.”

Yet, that's pretty much what happened. Nash started doing work for himself when



he was young, and others liked what they saw. The next steps came naturally, prompted by his admirers asking if he could do a project for them.

“It took off from there and I’ve not looked back since.”

Not only did Nash’s father teach him about what’s under the hood, the elder Nash helped take Precision from being a cubbyhole space to a much larger and more professional facility.

“My father owns a building and I rent it from him,” says Nash. “Originally, we had the one room. I started in a 50-by-50-square-foot space, but now we’re in a much larger place that gives us almost 24,000 square feet” including retail, body shop and assembly space, and about 8,500 square feet that serves as a shared fabrication shop.

“We’ve been at this location since the beginning,” says Nash, “but we’ve added on repeatedly. In fact, we just keep adding on and adding on. It’s been a growth process. Those 24,000 square feet didn’t happen overnight.”

The level of high-tech applications and products Precision Rod & Customs offers didn’t happen overnight either. Many of the shop’s projects are about elevating cars to perform above and beyond their original capabilities.

“We love the new technology,” says Nash. “Today’s technology is simply a whole lot better. I’m putting fuel-injected motors in 40-year-old cars, so drivers can get the mileage of a brand-new car.

“There’s always something new and exciting every month,” he adds. “Every time I open up a book, it’s like, ‘Hey, look at this.’ There are new tools and part-related products brought to market every month. Even the paint is vastly improved. There’s new paint technology that includes new water-based paint. Even though water-based paint has been around for years, it’s only been recently that it’s come to market.”



Precision Rod & Customs in Sevierville, Tenn., offers any and all hot rod restoration and general maintenance work.



From disc-brake conversions to full restorations, there’s no job too big or too small when it comes to reviving old cars and classics.



The business occupies nearly 24,000 square feet of retail, body shop and assembly space, and about 8,500 square feet that serve as a shared fabrication shop.



Many of the shop's projects are about elevating cars to perform above and beyond their original capabilities.



Staying on Top

Expertise is elevated at Precision as well. Nash prides himself not only on staying ahead of the curve on new products, tools and services, but also on the quality of his restorations and performance enhancements, and is quick to share the credit with his colleagues.

"We stay on top and keep all of our guys certified," he says. "For example, all my guys are certified through PPG, our paint manufacturer.

"We have six employees," he continues, "and some of them excel in paint and body work, while others excel in the mechanical field. To some extent you have to be a jack-of-all-trades, but expertise is critical. Our administrator is extraordinary. She does all of our thinking for us. We're happy to report that most everyone's been here a very long time."

Because Precision Rod & Customs (www.precisionrod.com) has performed exemplary work for a very long time in the same place, the company has little problem securing returning clientele.

"We are known for our reputation," says Nash. "The reason we're well-known is because we do quality work in a timely manner. And it's pretty much all word-of-mouth. We don't do any real advertising; we just do a few car shows. We could do more, but we're already seeing our out-of-state work increasing. I think that we're getting more of a footprint (thanks to the) work we've been doing. Customers are now coming from North Carolina and Kentucky, for example."

Because most projects are unique, Precision stocks a limited, nimble inventory.

"The thing is, we keep a minimal inventory, which works well for us," says



Owner Chris Nash prides himself not only on staying ahead of the curve on new products, tools and services, but also on the quality of his restorations and performance enhancements, and is quick to share the credit with his colleagues.



Word of mouth has built the shop's client base, including more projects from surrounding states.



Nash. "Of course, we keep the day-to-day products and hard-to-find things; things you can't get at Advance or at a parts store. It's hard to stock parts for cars. We've discovered this funny thing about inventory is if you've got a blue one on the wall, the guy coming through the door is going to want a red one."

"The good news is that I have good suppliers that take care of us," he adds. "Our distributors have been very good. There might be a few things that take a little extra time, but all-in-all we get everything in a timely manner."

Like Them All

But it's not really about parts inventory or blue versus red parts. The success of Precision Rod & Customs lies in its owner's love of the cars the shop restores.

"It's hard to pick a favorite project that's come through here," says Nash. "There have been several. I like cars with a family history. I did a '55 Ford with the same history as the Camaro. It's got the same (family ties)."

"I like cars with history," he adds. "People appreciate them more when they have a sentimental value."

And that sentiment applies to Nash's own, personal projects.

"I have a '73 Camaro," he says. "It's sort of a shop car. If a new part comes out, we'll put it on my car and drive it and see how it works and that way I've got experience with a part. I can tell my customers how it works. We've got a '57 Chevrolet that's my Dad's car. We'll put different parts on it and get a seat-of-the-pants feel. It's hard to sell something that you don't know anything about."

To build a business like Precision Rod & Customs takes integrity.

"You have to be honest in this business," Nash says. "I've heard horror stories from customers who've gone somewhere else first and they can't get good work or even get answers. I try to be honest and try to be up-front."

"Oh," he adds, "and Kobe, our shop dog, is helpful. He keeps everybody straight."

Just like the projects that roll out of Precision's bay doors.

IF YOU'RE NOT SELLING ENGINE PRO PRODUCTS, YOU'RE MISSING OUT ON PROFITS



Discover the profit-building power of Engine Pro brand engine parts. Available only from engine professionals, Engine Pro products meet or exceed competitors' features. And they're priced so you make a profit—and your customer gets more for the money.

Featured Product ~ Roller Rocker Arms

- Integral push rod seat
- Design allows clearance for most high performance valve springs
- Extra large trunions for better load distribution and wear
- Maximum open spring pressure 800 lbs.



Available in Chrome-Moly Steel or Aluminum



Download a free fact sheet at

www.goenginepro.com

ENGINE PRO BRAND ENGINE PRODUCTS

Use INFO # 26



www.CantonRacingProducts.com
Call: 203.481.9460

MADE IN U.S.A.



Grand Touring Garage Trans-Cammer



LET'S TALK BUSINESS!

We manufacture American-made parts that your customers are looking for. We have 30 years of experience that has helped us create our Legendary Line of High Performance parts and accessories. No need for steep discounts, our products sell themselves. And with our liberal, risk free return policy, you can stock our products without worries!




Use INFO # 2

low shipping rates
no drop-ship fees
140+ brands from one source
no minimum purchase
competitive pricing
same day shipping
we don't compete against you



better than direct!
motovicity distribution



888.speed.16 www.motovicity.com

Use INFO # 19