

ESTTA Tracking number: **ESTTA76379**

Filing date: **04/14/2006**

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD

Petition for Cancellation

Notice is hereby given that the following party requests to cancel indicated registration.

Petitioner Information

Name	Auto Acuity, LLC		
Entity	Limited Liability Company	Citizenship	New York
Address	9 South Broadway Box 101 Tarrytown, NY 10591 UNITED STATES		

Attorney information	Tsan Abrahamson Cobalt, LLP 819 Bancroft Way Berkeley, CA 94710 UNITED STATES trademarks@campcobalt.com, sophie@campcobalt.com, tsan@campcobalt.com Phone:510-841-9800
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Registration Subject to Cancellation

Registration No	2737029	Registration date	07/15/2003
Registrant	Rodman, Linda 800 Santiago Long Beach, CA 90804 UNITED STATES		
Goods/Services Subject to Cancellation	Class 012. First Use: 2003/01/29 , First Use In Commerce: 2003/01/29 Goods/Services: LAND VEHICLE PARTS, NAMELY WHEELS		

Attachments	Petition to Cancel DUBS .pdf (47 pages)
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Signature	/Sophie Cohen/
Name	Sophie Cohen
Date	04/14/2006

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE TRADEMARK TRIAL AND APPEAL BOARD**

In the matter of Trademark Registration

Reg. No.: 2737029
Registered: 07/15/2003
By: Linda Rodman
For the Trademark: DUBS

Auto Acuity, LLC

Petitioner,

v.

Linda Rodman,

Registrant.

Cancellation No. _____

PETITION TO CANCEL

Petitioner, Auto Acuity, LLC, is a limited liability company organized under the laws of the state of New York, doing business at 9 South Broadway, Box 101 Tarrytown, NY 10591.

To the best of Petitioner's knowledge, the name and address of current owner of the registration ("Registrant") is: Linda Rodman, 800 Santiago, Long Beach, CA 90804.

Petitioner, Auto Acuity, LLC, believes that it will be damaged by the above-identified registration, and hereby petitions to cancel the same.

The grounds for cancellation are as follows:

I. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

1. On February 18, 1999, Registrant filed with the United States Patent and Trademark Office ("PTO") an application for registration of the DUBS mark for "land

vehicles parts, namely wheels” in Class 12. On February 4, 2003, Registrant filed a Statement of Use and submitted the attached specimen (Exhibit C). On July 15, 2003, Registrant obtained a registration (“Registration No. 2,737,029”).

2. Registrant claims to have first used its alleged mark on January 29, 2003.

3. Registrant’s Registration No. 2,737,029 does not contain a disclaimer of exclusive rights in the term “dubs.”

4. Petitioner has a pending application for the mark GET DUBS (Serial No. 78/589728) for “automobile parts and accessories” in Class 12.

II. REGISTRANT’S MARK SHOULD BE CANCELLED BECAUSE IT IS GENERIC, IN THAT IT DESCRIBES THE TOTALITY OF REGISTRANT’S GOODS (15 U.S.C. §1064(3))

5. The word “dub” or “dubs” means “wheels” or “tires.”

6. Attached hereto as Exhibit A are four web pages from on-line dictionaries identifying the word “dubs” to mean wheels.

7. Attached hereto as Exhibit B are numerous examples of generic uses of the word “dubs,” including, but not limited, to automotive web pages, *The New York Times* newspaper, and *Time Magazine* articles. To determine whether a term has become generic, courts consider, among other factors, “the plaintiff’s own use of the marks, competitors’ usage, dictionary definitions, media usage, . . .” *Van Well Nursery, Inc. v. Mony Life Ins. Co.*, VC-04-0425 LRS (ED Wash. March 16, 2006).

8. It is evident that the relevant class of consumers refers to wheels as “dubs.”

9. Registration No. 2,737,029 for the mark DUBS is for “wheels,” which is the totality of Registrant’s goods.

10. The word “dubs” is generic for wheels because it identifies the product (wheels), rather than the product’s source. See *Park N’ Fly v. Dollar Park & Fly, Inc.*,

469 U.S. 189, 194. A name of a thing cannot be a trademark for that thing. 2 J. Thomas McCarthy, McCarthy of Trademarks and Unfair Competition § 12:1 (4th ed. 2003).

11. Registration No. 2,737,029 should therefore be cancelled under 15 U.S.C. §1064(3).

III. REGISTRANT'S MARK SHOULD BE CANCELLED BECAUSE IT WAS OBTAINED BY FRAUDULENT MEANS (15 U.S.C. §1064(3))

12. Petitioner believes, pursuant to 15 U.S.C. §1064(3), that the registration was procured fraudulently, and therefore, should be canceled.

13. Notwithstanding the well-known generic and/or descriptive significance of the word “dubs,” Registrant obtained a Registration No. 2,737,029 for the mark DUBS for “land vehicles parts, namely wheels” without disclosing that the word was generic for wheels.

14. Registrant filed its trademark application for DUBS on February 18, 1999 and claims to have first used its alleged mark on January 29, 2003.

15. The word “dub” or “dubs” is used or have been used descriptively since at least as early as 1999 and, therefore, Registrant has never made substantially exclusive use of the term “dubs” in connection with wheels.

16. The term “dubs” is at best descriptive, and to the relevant class of consumers, is generic, as applied to the products (namely, wheels) sold by Registrant, the term has not acquired secondary meaning, and Defendant fraudulently obtained Registration No. 2,737,029 within the meaning of 15 U.S.C. § 1115. In *Daesang Corp. v. Rhee Bros., Inc.*, Civil No. AMD 03-551 (D. Md., May 13, 2005), registration cancelled because registrant failed to disclose to the PTO that the mark was geographically descriptive of the goods. The *Daesang* court stated:

It is well established that an applicant for a registration of a trademark has a duty of candor in his communications with the PTO. Consequently, there is no presumption of validity attached to a PTO

registration where pertinent information is not presented to the PTO. Fraud arises, therefore . . . where the applicant fails to make full disclosure of all material facts. . .

Daesang Corp. v. Rhee Bros., Inc., Civil No. AMD 03-551 (D. Md., May 13, 2005) (citations omitted). *See also Standard Knitting, Ltd. v. Toyota Jidosha Kabushiki Kaisha*, 77 U.S.P.Q. 2d 1917 (TTAB 2006) (submission of a false affidavit to the PTO by applicant is grounds for cancellation of a trademark registration).

17. Upon information and belief, Registrant knew at the time it obtained Registration No. 2,737,029 that “dubs” referred to wheels or tires.

18. Upon information and belief, Registrant knew that it was not entitled to claim exclusive rights in “dubs” because this term is generic and/or is primarily descriptive within the meaning of 15 U.S.C. §1052(e)(1), and that Registrant should not have claimed exclusive rights in this word in its Registration No. 2,737,029.

19. Upon information and belief, Registrant withheld material information from the PTO concerning the descriptive and/or generic nature of the word “dubs” with an intent to induce the PTO to issue a registration to which Registrant was not entitled and, but for withholding of this material information, the PTO would not have issued registration.

20. Registrant had the opportunity to correct the application and disclose the descriptive and/or generic nature of the word “dubs” to the PTO when it sought five successive requests for extension of time from August 9, 2000 to August 8, 2002 and again when it filed its Statement of Use on February 7, 2003. Registrant thus repeatedly and knowingly made false statements as to a material fact in conjunction with a trademark application.

21. Registration No. 2,737,029 should therefore be cancelled under 15 U.S.C. §1064(3).

/

/

IV. REGISTRANT'S MARK SHOULD BE CANCELLED BECAUSE ITS OWN SPECIMEN FAILS TO SHOW TRADEMARK USE

22. Registrant's specimen, submitted to seek Registration No. 2,737,029, and attached hereto as Exhibit C, is merely a packing label that identifies the goods contained in the box.

23. Like all packing labels, it does not show trademark use, but instead merely lists "description" of the contents of the box, i.e. "dubs." Registrant's specimen, therefore, does not show trademark use in commerce within the meaning of 15 U.S.C. §§ 1127, 1051(d) and 37 C.F.R. §2.56.

24. Registrant submitted an improper specimen and improper affidavit to the PTO so Registration No. 2,737,029 should not have issued and should be cancelled. *See also Standard Knitting, Ltd., supra.*

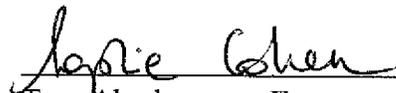
WHEREFORE, Applicant prays that Registration No. 2,737,029 be cancelled.

Respectfully Submitted,

COBALT LLP

Date: April 14, 2006

By:



Tsan Abrahamson, Esq.
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EXHIBIT A


 SlangSite.com

SlangSite.com is a dictionary of slang, webspeak, made up words, and colloquialisms.
Browse our listings, or submit your own words to our site.

[A](#) | [B](#) | [C](#) | [D](#) | [E](#) | [F](#) | [G](#) | [H](#) | [I](#) | [J](#) | [K](#) | [L](#) | [M](#) | [N](#) | [O](#) | [P](#) | [Q](#) | [R](#) | [S](#) | [T](#) | [U](#) | [V](#) | [W](#) | [X](#) | [Y](#) | [Z](#) | [Other](#)

d'oh!: Literally a contraction of Duh... Oh! made famous by Homer Simpson. Used to denote anything from surprise to being caught, to forgetting something, etc.

Example: Homer, did you remember our anniversary? Homer - D'OH!

d'you: The cool way of saying do you.

Example: D'you think I'm cool?

D.F.S. (Dinny fink sae): Dinny fink sae (or 'I don't think so') to disagree or indicate that a person may be 'Talking bollocks for Scotland'.

Example: An example of its use: Macaulay: Yeah, I pulled this really good looking burd at the weekend
Jonny: Dinny fink sae.

D.O.J., D.O.D., etc.: The various U.S. Government cabinet-level departments.
Department of Justice, Department of Defence, etc.

Example: Ashcroft narrowly missed being rejected as D.O.J. head because of his right-wing alliances.

Da Burgh: Ghetto slang for Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Example: Wanna go down to Da Burgh to watch Lemieux and the Penguins?

Da-J.I.C: Just In Case

Example: Q: Why you bringin your gat? A: For da JIC

da-poss-e: Describing a person's followers or special group.

Example: Da-poss-e of Jesus was the Twelve Disciples.

dab: Give your friends a form of a handshake by hitting one fist on top of the other and then alternating.

Example: Give ya girl some dab, phool.

daddy-look: (v.) The act of searching for something in a half hearted manner. A habitual token or cursory glance most often used when looking for articles of a child's clothing.

Example: Daddy says he can't find your shoes? Did he look or did he daddy-look?

Dadnasticate: To procrastinate, but feel kinda bad about doing it.

Example: If only I had started sooner. But, blast it, I've been dadnasticating all week.

Dag: A term of many uses, it can be used for anger, humor, or to say, something is sweet :)

Example: Dag! (s)he's HOT!, Dag yo, thats messed up, Dag!

dag nasty: unbelievably nasty, utterly repulsive

Example: That snail and worm soup was dag nasty.

daggit: A corrupted version of damn it or dang it

Example: Daggit, my computer crashed again.

drop sack: A downpour or snowstorm. Mass amounts of precipitation.

Example: I can't get out tonight. It's dropping sack outside.

drop science: To share knowledge.

Example: I go to school so my teachers can drop science.

drop syndrome: An illness where you drop whatever you're holding for no apparent reason.

Becomes a syndrome when it happens repeatedly.

Example: Travis dropped his Dew again. He's got a bad case of drop syndrome.

Drop The Ball: To let somebody down or to fail in an assignment, project, etc.

Example: Simon really dropped the ball for that customer.

dropcat: a feline used by spelunkers and cavers to determine the depth of a chasm. see:yowler

Example: a dropcat is only accurate till it hits the first outcrop.

dropsee: A disease, malady, character flaw, or habit that prevents various people from keeping their pants on--

that prompts people to drop their pants--and expose themselves.

Example: His ex-wife had a severe case of dropsee.

DRT: Dead Right There--someone or something that has expired, does not work or is simply dead.

Example: Hey, is that brain matter? Yup, he's DRT.

drug: Past tense of drag.

Example: I didn't want to come but she drug me here.

Drunkish: The language of drunkland

first seen in Truth by Terry Pratchett.

Example: Boy, Pete had had a few last night he sure was talking drunkish

Drunkland: Like Brigadoon this mythical country appears sporadically, usually between 2 and 4 am on Saturday night. It's populated by men who scream, hit on anything in a skirt or a kilt, and girls who twirl and twitter. And, suddenly everyone sounds like they have an accent.

Example: Ello dahlin' bet ya can't guess where I'm from?

Mmmm Drunkland?

drupple: The puddle of drool that you wake up with when you fall asleep at school or work.

Example: Hey, you got drupple all over your chin and the teacher's looking right at you.

druz: A feeling of lethargy, sleepiness, and general drabness.

Example: I'm feeling really druz today

dry baulk: A feeling of nausea. An urge to vomit, but checked by a dry gagging or choking of the throat.

Example: The smell was bad enough enough to give you the dry baulk.

Dryad: A dryad is a naiad, or water nymph, with a towel. A naiad is inclined to be wet, whereas, once she has dried off, she becomes a dryad.

Example:

dt: A convenient excuse for typos in an instant message conversation

Example: Did you see the eggs on that chick? Oops, DT, I meant legs.

dub: 20 rim (wheel), usually on a luxury car.

Example: That Lexus GS is rollin' on dubs!

dub-dueces: A set of 22 inch rims on a car.

Example: That boy Mookie was riding in a Escalade seated on dub-dueces.

dubbum; gubbum: My one-year old nephew's name for snack food.

Example: Dubbum is a good snack. Gubbum is a great snack.

dubdavision: A housing development named after flora or fauna that doesn't exist there anymore.

Example: The Redwood Hollow dubdavision was the last place in Florida you'd actually find a big tree.

dubiance: That quality which marks one so absolutely unattractive that the very ideas of attractive and unattractive

become unhinged and lose any specific meaning.

In short, the state where one's powerful, radically destabilizing ugliness creates a fatal rupture in the possible certitude of any value judgment.

Compound of dubious and Jacques Derrida's Differance.

Example: Oh, my God! What was...that?

(Vomiting) Something caught in the undecideable play...of dubiance! (Vomits again)

dubilicious: Weird, wacked out, odd, cool.

Example: Did you hear that song? It was dubilicious.

dubious: Someone who appears to be attractive from a distance but as she approaches you, she turns ugly.

Example: That girl is attractive.

I agree that she seems quite foxy, but we mustn't forget that she might be...dubious.

duck: The extra treat for those who sit through the entire showing of credits at the end of a movie, the first notable example of which followed the movie *Young Doctors In Love* where the duck which had been seen sporadically throughout the movie made its final appearance.

Example: The duck at the end of *A Bug's Life* showing out-takes of the film's making was hilarious.

duck butter: Generic for any thick lubricant, esp. in the semiconductor equipment industry: vacuum grease.

Example: The seal still leaks? Open it up, put a little more duck butter on the O-ring, and try pumping it down again.

Duck Squeezer: An environmentalist. From Neal Town Stephenson's novel *Zodiac*.

Example: Ah, stop being such a duck squeezer and help me pour this sugar in the fuel tank of that bulldozer over there.

Duck-turd: Slang for a cigar.

Example: Hey Jeff, give me a puff of that duck-turd.

duckarse: To wet the end of a cigarette, or joint, with saliva, and thus make it difficult to smoke.

Example: That wanker duckarsed my cigarette!

duckbills: People who duck paying their bills.

Example: We are not the duckbills who left Magoo's without paying our tabs.

Ducketts: Another term for money.

Example: Can you hook me up with some ducketts til I get paid.

dude man: Used when you want to say something serious in the middle of a light conversation.

Example: Dude man, I forgot to tell you I landed that job I wanted.

The White Man's Guide to the Contemporary African American

Feel free to e-mail me with questions, comments, corrections, and additions at ej1007@swt.edu

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

#

187

N. Police code for a homicide.

Common uses: "We got a 187 in Compton."

8-ball

N. A large amount of crack/cocaine.

Common uses: "Lets get an 8-ball, we'll be set for the weekend!"

A

B

Babydaddy

N. The father of a child born out of a relationship or wedlock, but is left to support the baby financially, which rarely actually happens.

Common uses: "damn babydaddy hasn't paid his child support!"

Babymomma

N. The mother of a child born out of a relationship or wedlock, who is left to take care of the baby with little contact with the father.

Common uses: "I got my finger up your babymomma anus."

Baller

N. Descriptive word for a pimp or drug dealer.

Common uses: "Wanna be a baller, shot caller".

Benjamin

N. Synonym for a hundred dollar bill.

Common uses: "Its all about the Benjamins."

Blades

N. See DUBs

Cristal

N. A very expensive brand of champagne, which is said to be very good, and is commonly purchased at clubs and restaurants by rich rappers.
Common uses: "Always gotta have the cristal on ice."

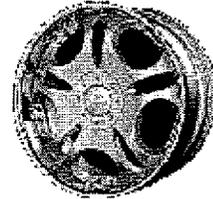
Crunk

Adj. To become intoxicated, to a very extreme extent.
Common uses: "Get a little high, a little drunk, a little Crunk".

D

DUB

N. Slang for a wheel that is 20 inches in diameter.
Common uses: "You can find me in St. Louis rollin' on DUBs."



Dope

N. Short for any type of drugs. Also used by police officers on "COPS".
Common uses: "We got some dope in the trunk."

E

F

Fallin' Like Rain

Adj. To have flip down Screens mounted on the headliner of a vehicle.
Common uses: "Got some Screens fallin like rain"

Five-O

N. Slang terminology for an officer of the law.
Common uses: "Five-O, run!"

Floss

V. To show off, or to flaunt your possessions, mainly vehicles and jewelry. Common uses: "Floss with the big dogs." "My dentist told me to floss 7 days a week." "Floss like a bunch of black millionaires."

Flow

V. To rap on the fly without the use of pre-made material or lyrics
Common uses: "How tight is your flow?"

Fly

Adj. Cool, Desirable.
Common uses: "I got a fly new ride."

Fo Sho

V. True. On Lock.

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Dictionary definition for "dub"

dub *n.* an automobile wheel measuring twenty inches in diameter.

Categories: [English](#) [Automotive](#) [Sports](#) [Slang](#)

Citations: [1999 Hans Marius S. Mastermo [Usenet: alt.auto.mercedes](#) (Dec. 3) "SV: E300D Mysterious Dash Light, etc.": I have Good Year Ultra Grip 400, with dubs, as my winter-wheels. Good tires, but i'm not sure you can get these in the US.] **2000** [Alex (webmaster@austinpaintball.com)] [Usenet: alt.autos.corvette](#) (Sept. 26) "Re: Bigger wheels on a C5": "I was wondering how my c5 would look with 20" wheels on the back and 19" on the front (as appose to 18 in back and 17 in front)" "You're gonna put your vette on dubs, huh? Cool." **2004** Denny Lee [New York Times](#) (Apr. 23) "The Dub Generation: Gearheads Go Hip-Hop": Dub, a niche car magazine,...took its name from street slang for 20—as in a double-dime bag of marijuana—because when it was founded most oversize wheels were 20 inches in diameter... G.M. became the first big carmaker to cross the 20-inch wheel threshold by unveiling its own line of dub-size rims. **2004** Mike Bresnahan [Los Angeles Times](#) (May 29) "The Art of the Wheel": They have no function other than to look hip, their constant-motion appearance helping teens and early 20-somethings achieve status at a time where "dub-deuces" (22-inch wheels) and sparkling, showy rims are part of urban chic.

Posted 14 May 2004 | Edited 1 Jun 2004
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WEB-EXTRA: A TRICKED OUT GLOSSARY OF TERMS

From "Tricked Out" episode DTRK-104

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A Tricked Out Glossary of Terms

12v constant power: 12-volt electricity straight from the battery. Used mainly for accessories that are powered when the vehicle is off, like alarms and courtesy lights, and also for accessories that have "memory" like clocks, radios, and some power seats. (*Tricked Out* episode 105)

12v switched power: 12-volt electricity that is only available when the ignition switch is in on. Most electronic accessories are wired to a switched power source to protect the car's battery when the ignition is off. (*Tricked Out* episode 105)

Adjustable shock absorber: Performance shock absorbers have adjustable dampening, or resistance to free suspension travel. (*Tricked Out* episode 101)

Air-fuel ratio: The amount of fuel mixed with air for combustion. Too much fuel is considered running "rich", while too little fuel creates a "lean" condition. (*Tricked Out* episode 102)

Alloy: Metal product composed of two or more metals mixed to produce desired attributes. Commonly found in wheels and other lightweight, strong components. (*Tricked Out* episode 101)

Axle-back exhaust system: Any exhaust system that replaces the midpipe, muffler, tailpipe, and exhaust tip. (*Tricked Out* episode 102)

Bezel: The rim of an instrument (gauge) that holds the glass or plastic lens in place.

Bump stops: Rubber bumpers found in the suspension that protect against metal-to-metal contact in the event of an over-compressed suspension. (*Tricked Out* episode 101)

Adjustable cam gears: Add-on component that allows independent adjustment of cams for proper timing in a modified engine.

Camber: A term used to describe the angle of the wheels against the ground. Zero degrees camber results in the wheels being perpendicular to the ground. A positive camber setting indicates the wheel is leaning out at the top, while with negative camber the wheels will lean in. (*Tricked Out* episode 101)

Camber kit: An accessory that allows precise adjustment of camber, especially helpful for correcting camber in lowered vehicles. (*Tricked Out* episode 101)

Carbon-fiber reinforced plastics: A composite material composed of carbon fiber suspended in a plastic matrix. Carbon fiber components are both strong and lightweight. (*Tricked Out* episode 104)

Cat-back exhaust system: An performance exhaust system that replaces all factory exhaust components behind the catalytic converter. (*Tricked Out* episode 102)

Chip: Short for a performance upgrade that involves replacing the car's original factory engine management program with a hi-performance version. Usually accomplished by opening the ECU and replacing a plug-in computer chip. (*Tricked Out* episode 102)

Coil-over spring: A shock with an integral spring. Most upgrades feature adjustable spring perches which allow

the ride height of the car to be raised and lowered easily. (*Tricked Out* episode 101)

Cold-air Intake: An intake system that draws cold air from outside the engine compartment. (*Tricked Out* episode 102)

Control arm: A hinged suspension component that connects the wheel hub to the vehicle's frame. (*Tricked Out* episode 101)

Dubs: Slang for wheels with a 20" radius. (*Tricked Out* episode 101)

Dynamometer: A machine that places load against the engine to measure horsepower and torque. (*Tricked Out* episode 102)

ECU: Engine control unit. A computer system devoted to engine management. (*Tricked Out* episode 102)

EVAP OBD canister: A temporary storage unit for evaporated fuel vapors. (*Tricked Out* episode 102)

Fiber Optic Lighting: Accent lighting that contains optic fibers constructed to carry light along the axis of the cable.

Fiberglass Body Kit: The original body kit material, fiberglass is lightweight, inexpensive, and easily repaired. (*Tricked Out* episode 104)

12v Ground: Needed for all electronic accessories, a 12-volt ground wire can usually be connected to bare metal on the car's body or frame. A ground connection completes the electric circuit. (*Tricked Out* episode 105)

Hid light: A lamp that produces light when electricity excites a gas-filled bulb element. Requires a ballast to operate.

Hog ring: A specialized upholstery fastener. Special hog-ring pliers recommended for installation and removal. (*Tricked Out* episode 103)

L.E.D. lighting: Accent lighting kits that use Light Emitting Diodes to produce light. LED's are bright, efficient, and quick to react, making them a perfect choice for a wide range of effects. (*Tricked Out* episode 105)

Listing wires: An upholstery reinforcement wire used to anchor cloth or leather to the seat frame. (*Tricked Out* episode 103)

Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act: A law that provides consumer protection against warranty denial based solely on the use of aftermarket parts. (*Tricked Out* episode 102)

Mass airflow sensor: A sensor in the air intake that measures the amount and density of air entering the engine for fuel and spark management. (*Tricked Out* episode 102)

Nitrous injection: Adding Nitrous Oxide to the air-fuel mixture entering a combustion chamber increases the Oxygen content and, combined with additional fuel, produces a significant power increase.

Piggyback ECU: An add-on engine control unit that adds engine performance and functionality without disrupting factory control of non-performance oriented engine systems. (*Tricked Out* episode 102)

Polyurethane body kit: Constructed of the same materials as factory bumper covers, polyurethane body kits are lightweight and flexible, but cost more than traditional fiberglass kits. (*Tricked Out* episode 104)

Ride-height: Height of the vehicle off the ground. Adjustable with a coil-over strut package. (*Tricked Out* episode 101)

Rims: Wheels (*Tricked Out* episode 101)

S.C.C.A. : Sports Car Club of America. Offers driver training and autocross events across the country. More information is available at www.scca.com. (*Tricked Out* episode 101)

Short-ram intake: An aftermarket intake system that draws air from inside the engine compartment. (*Tricked Out* episode 102)

Spanner wrench: A large hooked wrench used for adjusting coil-over spring perches. As designs differ, most coil-over kits include the proper tool for adjustment. (*Tricked Out* episode 101)

Spring rate: The amount of force needed to compress a spring. Typically measured in pounds/inch, or kilograms/centimeter. (*Tricked Out* episode 101)

Strut tower bar: A chassis stiffening bar attached between upper strut mounts to improve handling. (*Tricked Out* episode 101)

Supercharger: A belt or gear driven air pump that forces more air and fuel into the combustion chamber for more power.

Turbocharger: An exhaust-driven air pump that forces more air and fuel into the combustion chamber for more power.

Unibody: A term used to describe vehicles in which the frame and body structure are connected as one unit. (*Tricked Out* episode 101)

Graphics: Painted or vinyl-adhesive designs applied to a vehicle for styling. (*Tricked Out* episode 105)

VTEC: (Variable Valve Timing and Lift Electronic Control) A system used in some Honda engines to allow the engine to breathe differently at different RPMs for optimum performance.

--Compiled by the *Tricked Out* series producers.



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EXHIBIT B



Advertisement

DRIVING; Las Vegas Auto Couture: A Fashion Show for Cars

By FANA WARNER
Published: November 7, 2003

KAI T. WEISSKOPF, the president of the American arm of Recaro, the German racing-seat maker, is showing off one of his company's newest entries at the Specialty Equipment Market Association's annual convention here. The seat includes tiny speakers in the headrest for surround sound and a suspension system that mellow out the bumps in the road. It is covered with a velvety soft fabric on top of a breathable mesh fiber that wicks away sweat.

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Now if only it were a little bigger.

This race-car-inspired booster seat for children under 8 is one of the coolest items at the convention -- call it a fashion show for cars.

But don't worry about sippy cup accidents. As Mr. Weisskopf quickly demonstrates, the fabric covers of the \$335 seat are fully removable so you can stick them in the washing machine. And despite all the attention to practical details, it's still a race seat. "We took all our race technology and just transferred it to the child seat," Mr. Weisskopf said.

With more Americans customizing and personalizing their cars, the so-called aftermarket for everything from audio equipment to fancy wheels now accounts for about \$27 billion in annual sales, up from \$21.2 billion in 1998. This week, more than 100,000 people gathered to get their first glance at the Next Big Thing at the annual SEMA show, which closes today.

And if there's any sign that the world of car racing and car tuning (think the "Fast and Furious" movies) is going mainstream, it's the Recaro booster seat. The company's racing seats have long been considered a must-have among real racers and street racers alike. Now the company is turning its attention to the mainstream market -- including toddlers -- as more people warm to a racing-inspired look and feel in their cars.

Recaro isn't alone. If there's one thing that defines this sprawling convention, it's the mainstreaming of what might be called the "car as fashion statement," a trend that's spreading quickly across the country.

Strewn across two million square feet of the Las Vegas Convention Center are thousands of ideas for turning cars from plain-vanilla transportation into dream machines.

Here's a look at what is getting some of the attention at the convention, which has everything from new engines that crank out 500 horsepower to real wood strips that can turn any car into a modern version of the old woody wagon.

Tires and wheels are one of the easiest ways to overhaul a car's look. In recent years bigger was considered better, with 20-inch wheels, called "dubs" on the street, becoming the norm among customizers. This year, the look is even larger.

Consider the tires displayed by Kumho, the Korean tiremaker. At 28 inches, they hit most adults about mid thigh. But somehow the Hummer H2 they were mounted on made them seem almost normal. But when you consider that most cars roll along on 15-inch or 16-inch tires, then 28 inches seems like overkill.

But even the smallest of cars were trying out the "big tire" idea. Someone else on the show floor had taken a tiny Mini Cooper and put 20-inch dubs on it. Standard issue for the Mini is 15-inch tires.

"Most of the people who put those kind of tires on their car never go further than the coffee shop to show them off," said Matt Edmonds, the director of marketing for the Tire Rack, a South Bend, Ind., company that sells tires and wheels. "It's all about show."

But if you're not just about show, other companies are creating suspension packages that can take your car from a cushiony street ride to track-worthy in three minutes. Most amateur racers trade their factory suspensions for stiffer springs and shocks to give their cars better handling on the racetrack. And they usually lower their cars a few inches to make them even more aerodynamic.

But try driving a car like that down Main Street, and you will rattle the fillings out of your teeth.

"It's not much fun," said Bill Niaura, the manager of marketing and business development for Bridgestone/Firestone.

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Business

Chrysler's Bling King

After a tough year, Detroit's troubled carmaker is back-- thanks to a maverick designer and a car that is dazzling the hip-hop crowd

By [DAREN FONDA/AUBURN HILLS](#)

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Aug. 16, 2004

Ralph Gilles is showing off his Chrysler 300C, and as he points out details like chrome accents on the door trim, he insists that he has just one complaint: "It doesn't come with dubs." In hip-hop car lingo, dubs are oversize, 20-in. wheels. And Gilles is a big-wheel guy. An amateur racer, he hits the track on weekends with his 10-cylinder Dodge Viper--a nerve-racking hobby for his wife, the mother of his two young kids. As soon as he got his 300C for street use, he supersized it with black dubs. "It looks so good, I still get chills," says Gilles, 34. Of course, you wouldn't expect him to say...

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April 23, 2004

DRIVING; The Dub Generation: Gearheads Go Hip-Hop

By DENNY LEE

ON a forthcoming cover, the actors Owen Wilson, Ben Stiller and Snoop Dogg preen in their "Starsky & Hutch" best, while for a previous issue the basketball player Kobe Bryant posed sitting on the bumper of his canary-yellow Lamborghini Murciélago. Then there's the rapper Lil' Kim, who modeled for her cover in a minidress zipped down to her navel, her Mercedes-Benz G500 peeking through in the background.

The magazine in question isn't Rolling Stone, People or even Maxim. It's Dub, a niche car magazine with a tiny paid circulation that has nevertheless become the bible of the urban automotive subculture devoted to 20-inch-plus spinners -- the outrageously flashy oversize wheels that pop up in nearly every MTV rap video -- and the hip-hop attitude they connote.

"If you're in Dub magazine, you're the man," said Isaac Austin, a former N.B.A. player. "It means that you've got style, you've got personality and, obviously, you've got some dough."

In the four years since Dub began publishing in Los Angeles, what might be called the Dub lifestyle of eye-popping jewelry, ear-splitting hip-hop and, of course, traffic-stopping cars customized to the hilt, has moved from the streets of East Los Angeles to the boardrooms of Hollywood, Madison Avenue and even the Big Three automakers. What Slam is to basketball or Playboy was to a certain type of 1970's man, Dub is to drivers who like their cars loud, flashy and tricked out with clunky chrome wheels.

"Back in the 1990's, if you had chrome rims on your car, you were either a thug or a drug dealer," said Myles Kovacs, 30, Dub's editor. Nowadays, custom wheels are showing up on TV, in General Motors showrooms and at suburban grocery stores. "They have become socially acceptable," he added.

"By creating Dub," Mr. Kovacs said, flashing his ring with a two-carat diamond, "we created a brand for the lifestyle."

For makers of car parts and accessories, that lifestyle also means big money. "Dub magazine has come to symbolize this new youth market," said Christopher J. Kersting, chief executive and president of the Specialty Equipment Market Association, a trade group for auto accessory makers. The group said that sales of custom wheels alone rose to \$3.3 billion last year, a 66 percent gain from 1996. "They're not just black urban kids, but also white suburban kids. It's everybody."

THE magazine was founded in 1999 by Mr. Kovacs; Herman Flores, the magazine's director of publication; and Haythem Haddad, its creative director. It took its name from street slang for 20 -- as in a double-dime bag of marijuana -- because when it was founded most oversize wheels were 20 inches in diameter. The three partners had previously put out a party magazine called Insider, and with the money and connections they'd made, they set out to create what they call "the original automotive lifestyle magazine."

From their offices in the City of Industry, just west of Los Angeles, they tapped into an emerging trend: the hip-hopification of car culture that many first glimpsed on "MTV Cribz." It is a counterculture that took on new currency as a breed of self-made millionaires came on the scene in the mid- to late 1990's. "If your Bentley is customized with 24 rims, you know the guy sitting in the back isn't just Donald Trump," said Avon Bellamy, who owns Real Wheelz, an auto customization shop in Baltimore.

"Otherwise, you're just another C.E.O."

Street credibility is the magazine's subtext. Flip through Dub, and you'll find admiring profiles of celebrities and their richer-than-thou, but down-to-earth lifestyles. The story on Mr. Bryant's cars, for instance, waxed rapturously about how much time he had granted Dub's editors and photographers but made no mention of the charges of sexual assault that are pending against him.

"It's not hard for us to get celebrities; we're a positive magazine," Mr. Kovacs said. Take Lil' Kim, who posed with her Mercedes "hooked up" with 23-inch rims, four televisions and speakers monogrammed with "Queen B" logos. (This was before her recent indictment on charges of lying to a federal grand jury.) "Not only am I a fan, I am the first female to grace the cover," she said. "It has some of the hottest whips on the planet," she added, using the current East Coast slang for car.

Does the magazine glorify the thug life? "It's not so much about selling the gangster lifestyle, it's about showing the reality of their lives," said Mr. Kovacs.

Mixed in with the laudatory celebrity profiles are bite-size reviews of hot cars and the shiniest new wheels and gizmos, from Sony PlayStation 2 systems to DVD surround-sound theaters (yes, for driving). Advertisers include Budweiser and Adidas, but lean heavily toward specialty wheel makers, with names like Giovanna and Blingz.

The formula seems to be working. According to Mr. Kovacs, the monthly magazine has been profitable since its second year and, he said, it made a \$380,000 profit last year on revenue of \$4 million. That despite a print run of only 150,000 magazines and just 23,000 paid subscribers -- mostly young men who can't afford the \$15,000 spinners advertised, not to mention a \$350,000 Bentley. By contrast, Motor Trend, also a monthly, has a paid circulation of 1,263,030, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations.

Carmakers, however, see different numbers. "Motor Trend doesn't set the trend," said B. J. Birtwell, the youth marketing manager for DaimlerChrysler Motors. "Dub defines what's cool. Look at the Escalade. First, it was just a rapper and athlete's car, but then it became mainstream. Now it's the soccer mom who's sick of the minivan. Not only does she want an Escalade, she wants them on 20's or 22's." (Escalades come standard with 17-inch wheels, while most American passenger cars sit on wheels as small as 14 inches.)

Sharon Holt, 60, a homemaker from Yorba Linda, Calif., agreed. "They give the car a little bit more oomph and personality," she said of the 20-inch rims on her white Escalade. "We take it to the shopping mall."

For Chrysler's newly introduced 300C, which looks like a cross of a PT Cruiser and a Bentley, Mr. Birtwell enlisted Dub to generate buzz. The editors, he said, worked their connections and placed the \$33,000 car, customized with bigger wheels, into the rapper 50 Cent's video, "Poppin Them Thangs." For Chrysler, it was a four-minute, subliminal commercial. "Once we build a respect for our car on the streets, that trickles into the mainstream and translates into sales," Mr. Birtwell said.

The magazine is not only influencing auto marketing but is having an impact on manufacturing as well. Last fall, G.M. became the first big carmaker to cross the 20-inch wheel threshold by unveiling its own line of dub-size rims. In a measure of their post-gansta status, the wheels are offered with standard warranty and new-car financing.

And while customization remains a small segment of the auto industry, its cultural influence continues to grow. Vehicular celebrities are also proliferating on TV. "Ride With Funkmaster Flex" on Spike TV features ride-a-longs with the likes of Mariah Carey. "MTV Crips" produces a special car edition called, "Whips, Rides & Dubs." And "Pimp My Ride," also on MTV, transports makeover mania, à la "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy," into the car mechanics' garage.

"Dub has enabled us to do a show like 'Pimp My Ride,' " said Xzibit, the rapper and host of the show, who recently showed off his Mercedes-Benz S500 with the interior done up in Louis Vuitton leather at the International Auto Salon, a Los Angeles car show devoted to the youthful tuner market.

One morning earlier this month, Mr. Kovacs gave a tour of his miniempire. The stockroom at Dub's dorm-like headquarters, in a suburban office park, was filled with the magazine's own line of rims, sold under the Twenty Inches Strong label. On a conference table were Dub City toy S.U.V.'s -- a kind of Barbie car for hip-hop fans -- that are selling briskly at Wal-Mart. On the wall were posters for the Dub Superseries, a six-city tour this summer that will feature celebrity cars and hip-hop acts, including Ice-T and the Black Eyed Peas.

"We want to be the Playboy of licensing," said Mr. Kovacs, who was wearing a Dub baseball cap and several large diamonds. "We're a licensing and marketing company that just happens to publish a magazine."

He has big plans for 2004. A videogame is in the works with Rockstar Games, maker of "Grand Theft Auto." And later this year, Dub plans to bring out a cheaper line of car accessories under the name Dropstars, which will include everything from floor mats to car wax. "Not everyone has a Bentley," Mr. Kovacs said, "but everyone can make their car look like one."

A third item was unveiled at an editorial meeting: a heavy chrome medallion of the type worn by hip-hop artists who want to look like Olympic medalists. A shiny spinner wheel, nearly three inches in diameter, hung from a thick chain. Mr. Kovacs inspected the prototype carefully, then sent it back to be reworked. "It has to be bigger," he said, laughing. "It's not blingy enough."



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ADVICE ARTICLES

Do Add-Ons Add Value?

Consumers now, more than ever, are spending big dollars "customizing" their vehicles with automotive specialty items. In fact, the SEMA Organization (Specialty Equipment Marketing Association) reports that Americans spend over \$26 billion per year on automotive specialty equipment. This figure is growing year by year despite the economy's lackluster performance.

Which add-ons are Americans buying? According to SEMA it's broken up into three key areas:

58% Appearance Accessories & Electronics—such as lights, chrome fixtures, truck bed liners, sunroofs, graphics, stereo systems and in-vehicle entertainment.

24% Handling Equipment—such as brakes, steering, suspension products, custom wheels and performance tires.

18% Performance Products—such as headers, cams, turbos, superchargers and the nitrous oxide used to give a vehicle more power.

A Fast and Furiously Growing Market

Although 75% of the vehicles with add-ons are SUVs and trucks, a growing trend is in smaller "sport compact" vehicles recently recognized as an automotive sub-culture. Recently popularized by the movie *The Fast and the Furious*, this "tuner" trend enables low profile econo-boxes to be transformed into fire-breathing, high-performance street machines. Reminiscent of family sedans turned hot rods in earlier generations, young automotive enthusiasts are providing a profitable market for parts and accessories. Meanwhile, films, popular music and MTV videos reflect this burgeoning culture.

The New Terminology

The "hip-hop culture" has defined an entirely new language built around customization. Just for fun, here are just a few of the terms you might hear on the street and how to decipher them:

Term	Description
bling-bling	anything expensive and shiny - Rolex, diamonds, rims
bumpin'	loud stereo w/ bass playing
creepin'	going slow
dippin'	what a car with a hydraulic suspension does
drop top	convertible
dubs	20" wheels/rims

dub dubs	22" wheels/rims
hittin' switches	using the switches for hydros
hooptie	piece-of-junk car
hydros	hydraulics for low-rider cars
I.C.E.	In Car Entertainment
Jordans	23" wheels/rims
mods	modifications on a vehicle
pancake	hydraulics maneuver where a car goes from all wheels high to all wheels low
rollin'	cruising through the neighborhood
shoes	wheels/rims
slammed	lowered
splnners	wheels/rims that continue to spin after the vehicle stops

Wheels & Rims Are the Biggest Deal

The most popular items you've probably seen around town are large, expensive wheels and rims. Custom rims have become so popular, you can even "rent-a-rim" for the weekend from some custom shops. Christopher J. Kersting, CEO and president of SEMA, believes that specialized wheels and tires are fundamental to any custom car or truck. "Custom wheels and tires are the most obvious defining fashion or function statement vehicle car owners can make," he said.

The latest SEMA show for the aftermarket industry featured an oversized 28" custom rim fitted to custom tires on a Hummer H2 display, making it the "biggest roller" at the show. Another outrageous new product featured at the show was a day-glo colored chalk based spray paint called "Car Fiti" that allows for personal tagging—and washes right off. Manufacturers have also jumped into the "custom" game, such as Scion—Toyota's youth brand where buyers custom-order each vehicle from the ground up via high-tech computers.

Do Add-ons Add Value?

So, will these pricey add-ons add value to your vehicle? The answer lies with finding the right buyer for your vehicle. Remember, being a niche market, the audience you will eventually be selling to becomes much more specialized. Like anything that is "custom," your taste and style play a large role in what you see as valuable.

Kelley Blue Book does not list non-manufacturer aftermarket add-ons on its list of conditions for pricing. Because the amount of products and the quality of installation vary to such a great degree, general values cannot be attributed across all categories. The vast database of kbb.com does, however, add value for all manufacturer "packages" on specialized edition vehicle models.

Buyers May Be Few

When it comes to performance add-ons like exhaust and suspension, be aware that a potential buyer may see these products as an indication that you are driving the vehicle harder than normal. This could become a point of negotiation that could cost you in the long run.

Warning! Warranty and Theft Risks

Something to be aware of before customizing your car or truck is that manufacturers will many times not honor their warranty if the engine is enhanced or certain body parts are added. Be sure to check your manufacturer's warranty policies before

transforming your vehicle with add-ons. Also, tricking-out your "ride" can get the attention of the criminal element. Professional car theft rings are looking for specialized wheels and rims to trade on the black market, so security is a major factor.

Reselling aside, your own enjoyment and use stand as two of the best, most compelling reasons to customize your vehicle. Adding accessories to your car is not necessarily a good investment, but it can be lots of fun.



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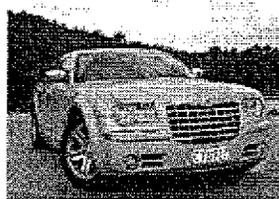
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02/03/2006
David Linklater

Any car that gets cover billing on a PlayStation2 game called Midnight Club 3: Dub Edition surely deserves your respect. And if it's a car that achieves such huge appeal among the burnout set while still competing convincingly in the executive class, it's all the more impressive.

The Chrysler 300C Hemi is a posh family sedan that slips easily into a street-racer role - at least among certain socio-economic sectors of the United States, where V8s are cool and fours are simply annoying. All that's really required for the right look are a set of "dubs" - that's 20-inch wheels to you and I - in place of the standard 18in rims. And from what I've seen since the car's November 2005 launch, plenty of Kiwi owners are addressing that issue already.

It's a tribute to the sheer vastness of the 300C that those factory-fit 18in polished-chrome wheels look a little puny. It's a big car - five metres long and running on a massive 3048mm wheelbase - and even if you reckon those retro lines are a little cheesy, you'd have to admit it's a pretty well-proportioned car. It's only when you see it parked next to other vehicles that you realise it's a super-size sedan. And one running on rims that are really rather big already.

It's hard to pigeonhole the 300C Hemi, but with projected sales of just 300 cars per year in New Zealand, perhaps we don't need to. On paper, it competes naturally with the luxury-oriented Aussie stuff like the Ford Fairmont Ghia and Holden Calais V8 models. But that's selling it short, because it also has the looks, image and performance to biff it out with hero cars like Falcon XR8 and Commodore SS - albeit with a lot of extra cabin equipment to justify its slightly higher price.

The Hemi comes standard with leather trim, California walnut dashboard inserts, power front seats with memory, a Boston Acoustics audio system with 368-watt amplifier and front, side and curtain airbags.

Oh, and a heavy-duty Hemi V8. The name alone will be enough to for many buyers to opt for the 5.7-litre mill over the Mercedes-sourced 3.5-litre V6 or 3.0-litre turbo diesel powerplants. But the Hemi has the numbers to grab your attention, too: 250kW and a rumbling 525Nm of torque at 4000rpm. It's enough to shoot the 1912kg sedan to 100km/h in just 6.8 seconds.

The soundtrack is surprisingly polished: the right suggestion of savage potential, but still sweet under load. It's a great sound that won't grate in the long run.

The Hemi has Chrysler's Multi Displacement System (MDS), which shuts down four of the eight cylinders under light load to save fuel. Make no mistake, if you use all of the Hemi's performance all of the time it will drink, drink and drink some more (the diet is 95 octane, by the way) 20 litres per

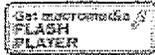


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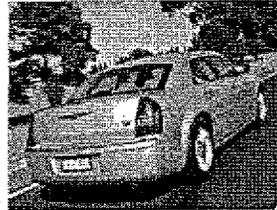
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100km wouldn't be out of the question if you go silly. But on test, with a decent amount of 100km/h motorway driving on the clock, our 300C averaged 12.3 l/100km - a creditable performance for the musclebound smoothie.

The five-speed automatic gearbox is straight from the parts bin of parent company Mercedes-Benz. Nothing wrong with that, especially when it has the excellent left-to-right manual-hold mode (called Autostick in Chrysler-speak) favoured by the Three-Pointed Star.

The 300C is an odd car to drive down a narrow road: because of the huge dish-like steering wheel and shallow glasshouse, you get the impression you're going faster than you really are. But that's probably not a bad in New Zealand circa-2006, especially when the 300C has the engine and chassis mumbo to really press on when required.



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That shouldn't surprise, by the way. The 300C is heavily based on the underpinnings of the previous-generation Mercedes-Benz E-class, and a superseded Benz is still better than most other models in the \$70k class. XtraMSN

It's polished, but push your luck and the 300C simply can't disguise its weight: in rapid changes of direction it lurches from side-to-side, and although it's well-controlled it's still potentially untidy. The seats certainly don't help: the 300C's front chairs are severely lacking in lateral support.

The steering is a curious affair: progressive, well-weighted and obviously tailored towards the keen driver, but also afflicted by a distracting amount of rack-rattle when you turn into bumpy corners.

Actually, it's the passengers who are more likely to be enjoying the ride. The long wheelbase produces a wonderfully cushy ride and refinement is top-notch: road and wind noise are kept to an absolute minimum, resulting in a real luxury-car ambience.

Speaking of which: the best aspect of the 300C must be the cabin. The interior goes a bit overboard on the retro styling, but the quality of materials is astoundingly good and the panel gaps are tight and consistent. Excellent ergonomics too, although the workings of the Mercedes-derived trip computer (which is arranged in a hierarchy of windows) may remain a mystery to some owners for some time.

The 300C has a swish cabin, but there's no doubt that the design has been compromised in the conversion to right-hook. The steering wheel has telescopic adjustment in the US models, but it's disappeared somewhere along the way to the right-hand-drive version. There's also a large intrusion in the left-hand-side of the driver's footwell, meaning that you have to bend your leg at an uncomfortable angle to reach the footrest. Shame, because in an automatic-transmission car that's the leg that supposed to be comfortably, er, resting.



[View larger image](#)

XtraMSN

The remarkable thing about the 300C is that it has achieved international appeal while projecting a uniquely American image. One look and it couldn't be from anywhere except the US of A - but along with the distinctive style there's real substance in the way it drives and the way it feels. And that's not something the rest of the world is used to from stars-and-stripes sedans.

It's clear that Chrysler has been burning the midnight rubber - oops, I mean oil - on this one.

CHRYSLER 300C HEMI

How much? \$69,900

Engine and transmission: 5654cc pushrod 16-valve V8 producing 250kW at 5000rpm and 525Nm at 4000rpm. Five-speed automatic, rear-drive

How fast? 0-100km/h 6.8 seconds

Suspension and brakes: Independent SLA front, five-link independent rear. Ventilated discs front and rear, anti-lock with brake assist and stability control

How big? 4999mm long, 1881mm wide, 1483mm high, 3048mm wheelbase. Kerb weight 1921kg

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Stories and Reviews

Fancy tires require a lot of knowledge, maintenance

By Kathy Van Mullekom, Newport News (Va.) Daily Press

NEWPORT NEWS, Va. — Car owners who swap standard rims for fancy chrome wheels usually choose to go up a size in tires.

The "Fast and Furious" movie crowd driving Maximas, Hondas, Auras, Nissans and Hondas typically trade their 15-inch wheels for 17-inch ones, says Henry Bly, manager at Car Tunes on Jefferson Avenue in Newport News.

"They'll spend \$1,700 to \$2,000," he says.

People driving SUVs such as the Cadillac Escalade prefer 20-inch rims, but you can get wheels as big as 26 inches. A set of those extra large tires and chrome rims can set you back as much as \$12,000, according to Bill Bly at Joe's Tires and Rims in Norfolk, Va.

"Believe it or not, it's the 21- to 50-year-old crowd doing all this," says Bly.

Beware, when you opt to go up a tire size, you sacrifice some of the ride, says "Dickey" Dacosta at Kramer Tires in Yorktown, Va.

"When you go to a larger after-market tire, the front end is not designed for it," he says.

"It wears the front end out quickly. Alignment goes out the door, because you just can't align those wheels to the car's specifications."

Oversized tires are called low-profile tires, meaning more of your car rides on the rim. There's less rubber between you and the road. The ride is stiffer, and you get fewer miles out of your tread.

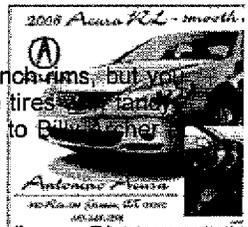
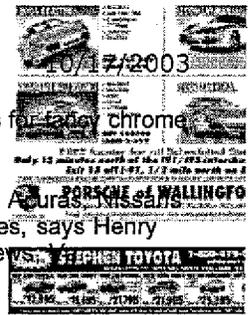
There are after-market springs and shocks that compensate for the larger tires and make the ride smoother, says Dacosta. A set of those cost about \$2,000.

When you shop for fancy wheels, make sure you know what you're buying. Cast aluminum wheels crack easily, says Frank Jordan, who repairs rims at Craft Repair in Hampton, Va. Spun aluminum wheels are the strongest.

Chrome finishes also vary from thick to thin, he says. You know you are getting good spun chrome on a wheel when you look inside the rim and see small lines

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running around the wheel. The process that spins the chrome leaves those lines.

Super shiny chrome is most often a cheaper cast finish, he says.

Jordan repairs 20 to 25 rims a week, taking out dents and fixing cracks. A chrome wheel's worst enemy is salt from the beach or road. Salt damages the mirror-like finish.

Potholes are every tire's nightmare, but cracks and dents from that kind of damage are also fixable.

...

Here are some tips for cleaning rims:

- Jay Thomas of Oyster Point Mobile Detailing in Newport News, Va., cleans Cherokee Edwards' Lexus weekly. He uses only Simoniz concentrated car soap and water to clean the rims.
- Other tire and car professionals recommend using Mothers (www.mothers.com) or Meguiars (www.meguiars.com) tire products. These brands are widely available at stores nationwide especially car-specialty shops.

...

Here are some tidbits about rims and wheels:

- "Rims" is another name for wheels. There are two basic parts to a wheel. There's the "spider" or the center section that bolts to the car's brake drum or rotor. There's also the rim, or outer lip that contacts and contains the tire beads, according to Edmunds, a company that evaluates and prices new and used cars. For more information on how wheels and tires operate, visit Edmunds online at www.edmunds.com/ownership/techcenter/articles
- Alloy wheels are a blend of aluminum and other elements, according to the Muscle Car Club online at www.musclecarclub.com. They usually come in a satin finish, and are pretty much standard wheels on today's cars.
- Chrome is a shiny finish applied over alloy wheels.
- Most cars come with 15- and 16-inch wheels. Trucks typically come with larger ones such as 17- and 18-inch wheels. The 20-inch rim is now the trendy size.
- Hubcaps are removable decorative covers for wheels.
- "Mag wheels" is 1960s slang for magnesium wheels, which are durable but very expensive.

- Spinners on wheels keep spinning when the tire stops.
- "Dubs" is a name for 20-inch wheels and "part of the name of numerous online sites about wheels. Visit www.dubspus.com. Dub magazine is all about cars and the lifestyles that go with them; visit www.dubmagazine.com

...

Many tire stores nationwide sell specialty rims. Some online rim-shopping sites:

www.onlinetires.com

www.wheels-and-rims.com

www.tires.com

www.truckexpressions.com/truckaccessories/customwheels/omegaspin—rwd.htm

www.customwheelsdirect.com

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28 August 2003
By Robert Farago

Imagine you're approaching your favourite corner. There's no traffic, the weather's fine and all the cops are down at the donut shop. Now, imagine you're in an SUV. I know: let's not and say we did. Still, if you had to thrash an SUV, which one would you choose? If you're thinking Porsche Cayenne, you're not wrong. But think again. Because no matter how you look at it, the Infiniti FX45 is the sportiest sports utility vehicle money can buy.



Razor

Saying that, a lot of people don't like looking at the FX45. From the front, it's a Chrysler Pacifica morphed with a robotic fish. From the back, it's a Renault hatchback with J-Lo's butt. From the side, it's got the same tiny rear overhang that makes Mercedes' SLK the Cyrano de Bergerac of sports cars. Yup, the FX45 is yet another Japanese attempt to create a new design language from American and European styling heritage. The result denies your eyeballs a moment's rest, but it is, um, "interesting".



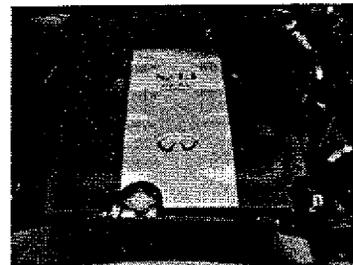
The interior shows proves that Audi hasn't cornered the market on restrained elegance

Aesthetically offended drivers can shelter from the FX's manic futurism inside the cabin. Audi still owns the words "elegantly restrained interiors", but the FX45 shows that the rock garden dudes know a thing or two about Zen minimalism. Their judicious use of brushed aluminum, supple leather and soft touch plastics creates a calm, controlled environment. Sure, the three-spoke steering wheel looks a bit odd. And yes, the information system's tiny control knob practically begs you to snap it off. But the overall design is pure LJC (leather jacket comfortable).

Which is weird, because the moment you fire up the FX45's engine, the damn thing growls. Actually, it's more like an angry purr; the sort of noise the technically minded would expect from a 4.5-litre V8 with a variable intake manifold, 32 titanium valves and molybdenum coated pistons (for friction free fun). The supersmooth powerplant cranks out 315hp and 329 ft. lbs. of torque. That's more than enough grunt for the FX45 waggle its two fat tailpipes at the Porsche Cayenne S, BMW X5 4.6is and Mercedes ML55 AMG.

No really. The FX45 blasts to 60mph in 6.3 seconds. The Cayenne S is almost a second slower. The rest of the flying brick pack? Slower still. The FX45 is also incredibly quick from any speed, to any speed. Tickle the accelerator at 50. The "soft roader" drops down a cog and lunges forward like a puppy dog unleashed. Press the go-pedal harder. The SUV downshifts twice and leaps down the road. The choice is yours: effortless progress, confident overtaking or high-speed handling.

Normally, the words "SUV" and "high speed handling" don't appear in the same universe. Normally, the best way to manoeuvre an SUV around a sharp bend is choose an alternate



The V8 pushes the 4300lbs. FX45 from zero to sixty in 6.5 secs. Banzai!

route, slow down or turn in as early — and gently — as possible. Ask a Ford Explorer Owner; a hard-driven SUV can roll like a maki-making sushi chef.



A view other SUV drivers will immediately recognize

The FX45 is an SUV, but not as we know it. Its G35-derived "Front Midship" platform places most of the mondo-V8's weight behind the front wheels, low down in the chassis. Its dubs (20" wheels) put more rubber on the road than the Rhode Island chapter of the Hells Angels. And the big ute's "sport tuned" front struts and forged aluminum multi-link rear suspension tie the beast down to an inch of its life. (Jag lovers: you have been warned.)

Snick the FX45's gear lever over to manual, rev the engine to 4000rpms and give it some. Infiniti's luxury leviathan will power through the turn like a big-engined Audi — with a big difference. The FX45's steering is better. OK, that's not really saying anything. How about this: the FX45's steering would delight a hardcore Carrera-ista. Anyway, just squeeze the gas, limit your steering and throttle inputs and go for it. Amazing Grace. How sweet the feel.

Of course, there are rules. Avoid roads with nasty mid-corner bumps. The dubs bunny hop sideways while the chassis flexes like pre-Conan Arnle. Remember that no driver's aid can save your bacon if you get a 4299lbs. of vehicle seriously out of shape. And don't take the FX45 off-road. The FX45 has part-time all wheel drive and 7.6" of ground clearance. And that's it. It can hop a curb, escape a soccer field, weather a snow shower and ford a rainy street. But it can't follow any of its rivals into the wilderness.

In case you were wondering how an upmarket Nissan could "steal Porsche's thunder", there's your answer. Infiniti built an SUV that goes like Hell on tarmac and left the rough stuff to its competitors. Infiniti calls it a "Crossover". Fair enough. If any truck can convince a corner-carving sports car owner to cross over to an SUV, it's the Infiniti FX45.

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Author's Rating



Summary:
Best-handling SUV, bar none.

Infiniti FX45

design	Curb Weight: 4299 lbs
★★★★	Engine: 4.5 liter
desire	Engine Type: V8
★★★★	Horsepower: 315
performance	Torque: 329 lbs ft
★★★★	Drive type: AWD
ride	0 to 60: 6.53 seconds
★★★★	60 to 0: 109 ft
overall	Quarter Mile: n/a
★★★★	

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Designer wheels to kill — and to die — for

By Darryl E. Owens
The Orlando Sentinel

ORLANDO, Fla. — Charley Hossairati sells status.

Inside his Orlando, Fla., shop stand rows of monstrous, gleaming chrome wheels that fetch as much as \$20,000 a set from patrons eager for the hottest-selling aftermarket accessory in the automotive world. The name of Hossairati's shop — Eye Candy — is a perfect description for the shiny status symbols.

"It's candy, and everybody wants it," Hossairati says.

Popularized by rap culture, custom wheels have become a multibillion-dollar business, with sales skyrocketing in the past decade. But police say these pricey rims are just as popular with another group: thieves.

Although agencies generally don't track wheel-specific crimes, experts point to the steady rise in stolen cars in the United States since 1999 as an indicator of the lust for designer rims. Orlando police did break down their numbers recently and found 61 rim-related thefts this year through mid-August, up 42 percent over the past two years.

Sometimes such crimes can have deadly results. In April, a Daytona Beach, Fla., man was gunned down during Black College Reunion as four men tried to steal his brother's wheels. Last month, a suspect was shot and killed during an attempted theft of a souped-up car in Orange County, Fla.

Orange County Undersheriff Malone Stewart doesn't think those incidents signal any kind of imminent jump here in wheel-related violence similar to what has plagued cities such as Los Angeles. But he says drivers who flash the fancy wheels need to realize this: To certain people, "rims are valued above life."

A look at the numbers provides some reasons why. Since 1996, custom-wheel sales have risen more than 67 percent, with \$3.2 billion in sales from specialty wheel and chrome spinners in 2004, according to the Specialty Equipment Market Association. That is a sizzling commodity on the black market.

"Certainly outfitting a nice SUV with 22-inch rims ... adds to the chances of a vehicle being stolen not so much for the goal of having that ride yourself, but for all of those expensive 'add-ons' which translate to fast cash on the street," says Frank Scafidi, spokesman for the National Insurance Crime Bureau, based in Chicago. "Absolutely and



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A customized SUV flashes aftermarket wheels at a shop in Orlando, Fla. The popularity and dollar value of custom wheels has led to an increase in their theft.

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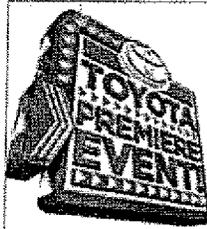
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without question, nice big rims are one of those items that make a vehicle more appealing to a thief."

Indeed, last month, Orange and Seminole, Fla., deputies arrested Philip Fomica, 25, and Ronald Concoby, 26, at a rental unit where they recovered seven sets of rims and tires. Authorities charge that the pair targeted wheels from Volkswagen Jettas and Golfs, and a Nissan 350Z, and sold the stolen rims for \$800 to \$1,200 a set on eBay.

In 2002, when Otis Johnson opened Big Rims in Orlando, he figured that business experience wasn't as critical as the words coming from some very influential lips.

"In all the rap songs that people listen to, all they talk about is big rims," says Johnson, whose clients include Orlando Magic players. "Rappers help promote [specialty rims]."

Morphing cars into flashy showpieces holds the same appeal today as it did for hot rodders and lowriders in the 1950s and 1960s, but with a hip-hop extreme makeover. The confluence of rap culture; TV shows such as MTV's "Pimp My Ride," which tricks out junkers; and video games such as "Gran Turismo," in which players customize race cars, add a fresh twist.

"Tricking out cars for young men has a lot to do with asserting their masculinity," says Carleton Kendrick, a family therapist and author of "Take Out Your Nose Ring, Honey, We're Going to Grandma's."

But the passion has embraced men and women of all ages.

"A couple Saturdays ago, a guy in his late 50s came in looking to put aftermarket wheels on his SUV," recalls Keary Salazar, who works for Hubcap Heaven in Orlando. It's "all ages, from young to old. There's really no certain stereotype."

Says Hossairati: "A lot of people use it as a way to reward themselves for their hard work. Some people use it as a hobby. To some people it's just a fashion statement or a stature thing."

"You'd be surprised how many Isleworth customers I've had come here, multimillionaires who come in and fix up their vehicle as an expression of self. It's [also] your everyday Joe, your hardworking man, looking for a piece of candy."

Rims come in a variety of designs, with chrome creations boasting lug patterns that resemble arrows, crosses and scepters. Then there are "spinners," which give stationary wheels the illusion of movement. Locally, "dubs" (slang for wheels with diameters of 20 inches or more) are popular, wheel dealers say.

Some thieves have been willing to kill for designer rims, as happened with alarming frequency a decade ago in Los Angeles.

Last year, a 17-year-old Hialeah, Fla., boy was charged with murder and carjacking after a driver was killed for his spinners. In April, three men in Oakland, Calif., were charged with gunning down a 21-year-old postal worker in a rim-jacking attempt, while also in April, police think thieves shot and killed a 27-year-old man in St. Paul, Minn., for the

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rims on his Chevrolet Blazer.

The allure of big wheels and the accompanying rewards explains why neither the threat of theft nor worse deters buyers.

Victor Brown stood recently at a counter inside Eye Candy, a credit approval away from Daytons. A set would complete his planned renovations to the weathered 1985 Cadillac Seville he bought last year.

Brown, a mason, doesn't mind going into debt for a set of wheels whose price tag far outstrips the blue-book value of his Seville.

"My car now, I gotta park out in the back [of nightclubs] 'cause the big dudes come with the 24s [24-inch rims] and 22s," says Brown, an aspiring rapper. "My cousin has some 24-inch spinners, and I rolled with him one day. He was at a gas station, and this pretty girl just walked up and said, 'Whose car is this? Whose car is this?' and asked for his number."

That sealed it for Brown.

Though his heart is set on Daytons, if his credit betrays him, Brown's fallback is a visit to a budget street-dream merchant in his neighborhood who sells status at bargain prices.

Brown is asked if these cheapie wheels might be hot, in the illegal way.

"I dunno," he says, turning away with a laugh. "I dunno."

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The Danger of Dubs

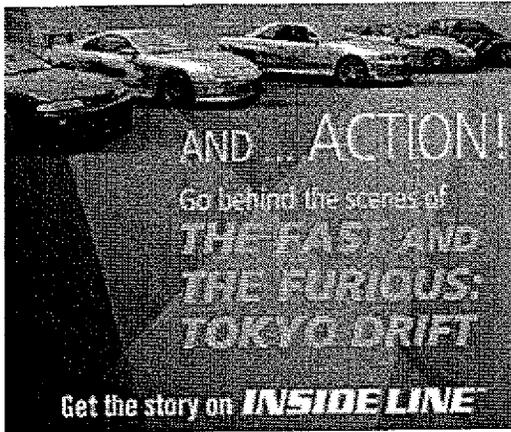
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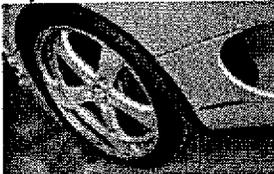
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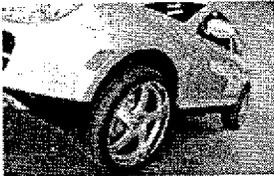
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Giant rims stretching over 20-inches in diameter are a status symbol, especially on high-dollar rides like the Bentley Continental GT and Porsche Cayenne shown here. (Photo by Dan Kahn)



[\(Enlarge photo\)](#)

Ferrari engineers determine the optimal wheel and tire size when designing a car's suspension, and changing the overall diameter can hurt performance. (Photo by Dan Kahn)



[\(Enlarge photo\)](#)

The aftermarket wheels and tires on this Cayenne are much heavier than the stock setup. All that extra weight can prevent the ABS and stability control systems from working properly and hurts the vehicle's overall handling. (Photo by Dan Kahn)



[\(Enlarge photo\)](#)

Choosing new wheels involves a lot more than simply picking out the flashiest rim on the rack. Issues like weight, diameter, load rating and offset need to be considered. Work with an established wheel distributor to prevent expensive and potentially dangerous problems down the road. (Photo by Dan Kahn)

By Dan Kahn [Email](#)

Date posted: 02-01-2005

Dubs. Blades. Twenties. Rims. Unless you've been hiding under a rock for the past five years, you already know those weird words are nicknames for gigantic wheels. What started as an oddity at the occasional car show has evolved into a booming business, and everyone from tire retailers to car manufacturers have jumped on the bandwagon. Big wheels grab lots of attention, but are they safe? We asked a handful of industry experts, and their answers were eye-opening.

Bigger Isn't Always Better

Big-inch wheels started showing up on production cars in the late '90s, and by the end of the decade 18s were commonplace on most sports cars. Nobody expects a Porsche or Ferrari to ride like a marshmallow, so engineers design the platform to work with big wheels and low-profile tires. Unfortunately, the same principal does not apply to big trucks and SUVs.

"Suspension works as a system, and if you compare a Corvette to a truck, the Corvette is designed to work with big wheels and low-aspect-ratio tires," explains Frank Traverma, GM Engineering Group Manager for Vehicle Dynamics.

"The wheels that come on a new car or truck are specifically developed to work on that particular vehicle," Traverma says. "It's a full system approach. Balancing ride and handling is a trade-off, and you can't get a free lunch. When you switch to a low-profile tire, you increase the steering response but degrade ride and isolation. Isolation allows you to hit a pothole and keep rolling without bending a rim or getting bucked out of your seat. Eliminating that safety margin allows the force of a rough road to pass into the chassis. You could flatten a tire, bend a rim or in a worst-case scenario even damage the vehicle's suspension."

Traverma stresses that all new vehicles undergo extensive handling tests before they end up on the showroom floor. "As a matter of course we drive and engineer vehicles to have a margin of safety during those once-in-a-lifetime emergency situations," he says. "If you take a set of aftermarket wheels and tires and slap them on, it's unpredictable how the vehicle will handle in an evasive maneuver. It may feel like your vehicle actually handles better, but unpredictability can be very bad."

Trading Speed for Beauty

Looking good requires sacrifice, and most wheel shoppers are willing to give up a little ride quality for the look of flashy rollers. A rough ride is annoying, but big rims can also significantly degrade performance and safety.

"Anything that adds weight to the wheel and tire assembly affects acceleration and braking, and it hurts handling as well, since shocks aren't valved to control that much weight," says Ben O'Connor, an engineer for brake manufacturer Baer Inc. "It's not uncommon to gain 40 pounds when swapping a 16-inch wheel out for a 20-incher."

That extra mass hanging from the end of the suspension is called unsprung weight, which cannot be controlled by the springs of the car. Unsprung weight is difficult for the suspension to control, so engineers try to minimize it. It's the reason why racecars use lightweight magnesium wheels when the rules allow.

"If you dramatically increase unsprung weight, it will decrease wheel control," Traverma says. "Putting big heavy wheels and tires on a vehicle that wasn't designed for it can result in significant traction loss while you're traveling at speed. We build a lot of extra strength into our trucks and SUVs, so swapping 16s for 18s won't hurt anything, but bolting on a set of 22s can result in extra wear and tear on the suspension."

As you increase rotating mass, it's also harder for the brakes to stop the wheel from spinning. This can decrease brake life and increase braking distance. The same principal applies to acceleration, because a heavier wheel is harder to get rolling and acceleration is decreased. O'Connor claims that adding a set of big wheels can increase 60-0-mph stopping distance by as much as 20 feet. That can mean the difference between stopping short and being killed in an accident.

Several aftermarket brake manufacturers offer brake kits that help offset the added weight of big rollers. A typical rotor upgrade like the Eradispeed

kit from Baer includes 15-inch brake rotors and a caliper relocation bracket, which lends the vehicle enough braking force to offset the added rotating mass. Rotor upgrade kits typically cost around \$1,000, and they can be installed in a matter of minutes with simple hand tools.

Computers Can't Keep Up

Moving to a taller wheel and tire package can affect more than ride, handling and braking. Onboard electronics in new cars and trucks calculate vehicle speed based on the overall diameter of the wheel, the final drive ratio of the axle and how fast the wheel is turning. Changing the height wreaks havoc with these computations, and as a result the speedometer is no longer accurate.

Since safety systems like antilock brakes and stability control rely on speed data to keep the vehicle from getting out of control, their ability to function properly is drastically decreased. Throw in added variables like altered wheel mass and tire grip, and the systems many people pay extra for are no longer effective.

Shop Smart

Adding a set of fancy new wheels doesn't have to be a complicated or dangerous proposition. By shopping smart and selecting a wheel/tire package that was engineered to work with a specific vehicle, you can upgrade the looks and handling of your vehicle without taking any chances. Finding a trustworthy wheel and tire shop is the first step in making a smart purchase.

"The key to going with a plus-size wheel is working with a dealer who understands proper fitment and can get you a product that is appropriate to your vehicle," says Matt Edmonds, VP of Marketing for The Tire Rack. "They need to understand unsprung weight and how it can affect handling and braking."

"We always recommend to our customers that they maintain the stock overall diameter," Edmonds says. "A reputable dealer will also consider load capacity, which is how much weight the wheel can hold. Some aluminum wheels are designed to be lightweight and very strong, so they can support heavy loads without increasing unsprung weight. When looking at load capacity, especially if you own a large SUV, consider the fact that once you add gas, people and possibly a boat or trailer, the vehicle can nearly double in gross weight."

Several major retailers like The Tire Rack have comprehensive Web sites that showcase wheels that have already been proven to work on your vehicle, and you can even check out how your ride will look with the wheels bolted on.

Car companies are also getting into the wheel game, and factory-designed and -tested big-inch rims are available right off the showroom floor at your local GM and Ford dealership. The advantage of a factory-approved wheel is that it was designed and engineered by the same people that built your car. Most major dealerships can even recalibrate your speedometer and safety systems if necessary.

Rollin' Down the Road

Remember, riding on big-inch rims may look cool, but those big-brained engineers who designed your chariot spent a lot of time making it safe and pleasant to drive. If you're willing to sacrifice a ride quality in the name of style, fine, but don't compromise when it comes to safety. Find a shop capable of upgrading your brakes and drive ratio as well as the wheels and tires. Now if you'll excuse us, we have to figure out where to get 20s to fit our '74 Gremlin.

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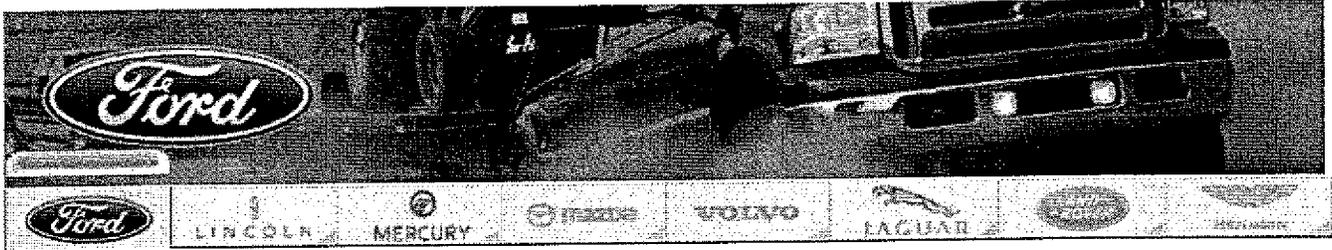
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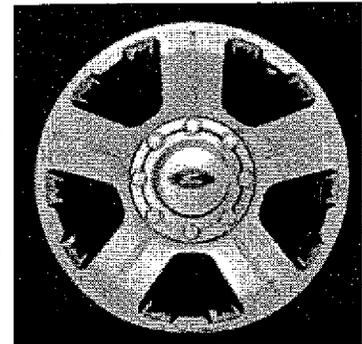
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TOUGH ENOUGH: GENUINE FORD ACCESSORIES NEW LINE OF "DUBS" FOR SUPER DUTY TRUCKS

2004 SEMA Show

- Five styles of forged aluminum 20-inch now available from Genuine Ford Accessories.
- Built from one-piece aluminum billets, the Super Duty "Dubs" are tough-looking, strong and lightweight.
- Engineered to meet Ford's production wheel specifications and durability.
- Covered by Ford's New Vehicle Limited Warranty.



LAS VEGAS, Nev., Nov. 2 – Ford chose the Specialty Equipment Manufacturer's Association (SEMA) show to introduce its new line of 20-inch wheels, referred to as "Super Duty Dubs". The line includes five styles of wheels, including both five and six-spoke designs. Each wheel is hot-forged and fully machined by Alcoa from one-piece of aluminum billet, so not only do they look great and add style to any Super Duty, but they maintain the factory toughness, durability and warranty that only a Genuine Ford Accessory can deliver.

Ford introduced its new line of 20-inch wheels, referred to as "Super Duty Dubs".

"These new wheels represent new thinking in the wheel aftermarket," said Bob Masone, Director of Ford's Vehicle Personalization group. "Not only do they provide differentiation for customers, but they are built to Ford's stringent original equipment specifications to meet all durability and vehicle dynamic standards, so customers will feel confident and safe driving on their new stylish 20-inch wheels."

"These new wheels represent new thinking in the wheel aftermarket," said Bob Masone, Director of Ford's Vehicle Personalization group. "Not only do they provide differentiation for customers, but they are built to Ford's stringent original equipment specifications to meet all durability and vehicle dynamic standards, so customers will feel confident and safe driving on their new stylish 20-inch wheels."

Customers need not worry about maintaining full Super Duty capability of their trucks because these "dubs" are just as tough as the wheels that they will replace. All of the tough truck capabilities, including payload and towing ratings, are met by the new 20-inch wheels. Strong and lightweight, the "Super Duty Dubs" are offered in five styles, from a flared 6-spoke to a wide 5-spoke design, all finished with a high-luster polished look.

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Big wheels: dub nation from a Euro-tuner standpoint

Automotive industries, Dec, 2003 by Bill Wilson

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Looking around the SEMA (Specialty Equipment Market Association) show in Las Vegas this year, it was easy to spot the innumerable amount of wheel vendors that had shown up. With the ever-burgeoning import tuner market alone there are performance alloy wheels aplenty. The larger aesthetic wheels are also booming and have come into their own as well.

Without delving too far in to this market, there are Spinners (that keep rotating even when the vehicle is stopped), wheels with 100 carat cubic zirconium jewels, dollar signs, gold-plated wheels and a whole nation of other aesthetic-before-performance choices in sizes ranging up to 30 in. and in a few cases even bigger. Rappers, boxers, sports stars and various other celebrities have aligned with any one of these litany of companies, presumably to get some free shimmer for their rides. Nicknamed Dubs, these wheels have spun their way all over the globe.

Being a SEMA attendee isn't necessary in order to notice this trend. Driving on any street in America you're likely to find an Escalade or other super-sized SUV strutting on chrome at the stoplight next to you. Aside from financial constraints involved in outfitting a vehicle with such automotive jewelry, one must stop and think what such wheels are actually doing to the intrinsic vehicle dynamics of the ride they find themselves inhabiting. Or do they?

At your looking for an insider's opinion on what's actually going on with the big wheel craze, Tim Strube, executive vice president of CEC Wheels, was more than happy to take some time with us and discuss the state of the Dub nation from a Euro-tuner standpoint rather than the conventional "bling, bling" stance.

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CEC Wheels, founded 13 years ago, focuses on European tuning and styling, European tuning, to CEC, means one brand for the whole car with no mixing and matching. Lorinser, for example (the Mercedes tuner), offers performance parts for every model as well the complete conversion for each model in that brand. They also provide interior customization as well as engine conversions.

"What we focus on offering is a unique style, a nice look and subtle understated European styling," said Strube. "What we do offer from Lorinser, is a strong character front bumper spoiler but it remains, essentially, a Mercedes-Benz, which is what they went out and purchased in the first place. We just want to individualize it, to personalize it to meet the character of each customer," Strube explained.

CEC Wheels imports and distributes 10 individual brands, having started with AC Schnitzer and Lorinser (both tuning brands), a wheel company called Azev and Antera. (Antera, which covers wheels for many types of vehicles, offers wheels from 18 to 23 inches.) CEC offers every German brand, including AC Schnitzer for BMW, Lorinser for Mercedes-Benz, Octavia for Audi/VW, Tech Art for Porsche and J. Nothelfer for Jaguar.

After the short lesson in company history, Strube went on to talk about CEC's views on wheels:

"While most of the time the brakes on these high end cars are quite good, when you go plus 3 or 4 inches over the standard wheel you're looking at a substantial difference in rotational mass. We do recommend when you go 22 inches plus, always go to larger brakes. Brembo is a technological partner of ours. We have worked with them quite extensively, whereby they have looked at every one of our wheels and certified them for clearance, so it works with their brakes. We've gone through

extensive efforts to make that work. That is for all of our wheels in all of our brands."

As he continued to talk about the need for brake upgrades to accompany certain wheel sizes, oversized wheels became the next topic.

"We look at some of the issues out there, like 28 inch wheels—it's just crazy stuff. We're generally quite afraid of the safety issues that go along with that. Because if any of these companies that make 28, 26 or even a 24 inch wheel, it something goes really wrong with that, it will, down the line, reflect badly on us since we are an aftermarket company. We do not sell above 23 inches. 23 inches is fine. You really don't have to go bigger—but I know there are bigger egos out there that demand bigger wheels. But there are so many drawbacks on that stuff that it's really not funny anymore. We know that we're already pushing the envelope. In our opinion at least, 23 inches is the maximum that the Euro-SUVs are handling."

Putting its money where its mouth is, Strube went on to tell AI about how CEC Wheels had basically forsaken some of its possible market share as a result of not staying with the 'more is more' trend.

"We gave up our entire domestic market because we did not follow the trend of going bigger. There are very few domestic trucks still sporting our wheels because of it—we did that consciously. We said enough's enough. If you want a premium brand, this is what we've got for you.

"Every now and then people will thank us for this," said Strube. "Typically these are the same people who will make sure to put the Brembos on as well. There are a lot of dynamic issues that play into this. The education of the client is important to us.

"For instance, we can fit 20 inches onto a lot of Mercedes-Benz or BMW 3 series but the reality is that many of the roads aren't all that good. And we often say to a client, 'Why don't you take a 19 inch? We know it's not what your buddy might have on the car but I promise you that you are not going to bend the wheel as easily."

"We are happy to sell 20 inch wheels or above, for the RIGHT application," said Strube.

The issues with actually stopping wheels of this size and keeping them in proper trim for the road is one set of problems. There is also a hurdle of making sure they actually fit the car as well as making sure there is a tire to properly facilitate the wheel that has been created.

"We pay attention to a lot of details, right down to the offset—making sure the wheel is correctly positioned underneath the fender. Also, all of our wheels are hub centric so wheels aren't held in place by the bolts but rather the hub center," Strube said.

"The recommended tire sizes must match the OE specs," added Strube. "A/C Schnitzer didn't release 20 inch wheels for the 3-series for one year because there was no tire that matched the overall diameter. Similarly, Lorrinser won't put 21 or 22 inches on the Maybach since a proper load bearing tire doesn't exist."

While some companies are simply trying to get their chips down on the table, CEC has a well-developed stance on the industry, not only based on its product line, but rooted in physics. Teaming with a premium brake manufacturer and providing cavats to would-be customers on the dos and don'ts of dubs will differentiate them from the gimmick of the month brands, endlessly.

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Technologue: Dubs Done Right

By Frank Markus
Photography by the author
Motor Trend, November 2004

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I decided to humor the nice GM PR type who invited me to a seminar about big wheels and tires at the General's Milford Proving Ground. It was only a half-day, it was nearby, and GM's caterer bakes fab cookies. So even though I'd learned all I wanted to know about big wheels from Kim Reynolds's definitive piece in our May issue, I went along.

In the hope of siphoning off a bit of the lucre currently gushing into the coffers of 100 aftermarket wheel manufacturers at the rate of about \$3.2 billion annually, GM has launched 10 different 20x8.5-inch wheels tailored to its line of full-size trucks. We were brought in to learn what that "tailoring" involves.

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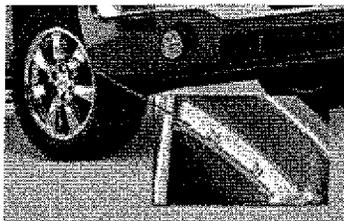
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Truck Trend

The pickup & SUV authority

The first part of the briefing recapped our story, as the engineers elaborated the many deleterious effects that super-sizing one's rolling stock can have on a vehicle's ride, handling, acceleration, braking, fuel economy, chassis durability, and safety. I daydreamed a bit, teetering as I was on the brink of a carbo-coma, but tuned in to vehicle dynamics manager Frank Taverna's comment that "it's possible, with ultralarge wheels, to fit a tire that's incapable of supporting the mass of the vehicle itself." Yikes! The essence of the lecture boiled down to this: wheels by those 100 "other guys" * * * bad--GM wheels * * * good.



Wheels cast with this emblem or one reading "SAE J2530" have surpassed the highest internationally agreed wheel safety and durability standards.

To drive this message home, we were then herded into shuttles to sample the ride and handling differences between similar Chevy Silverado pickups rolling on standard 16-inch wheels and 265/70R16 General tires, the new GM Dubs shod with 275/55R20 Goodyear Eagle LS tires (\$2750-\$3995 depending on truck model and wheel finish), and off-brand 20s on Falken Zlex S/T 201s in the same size (priced at \$2700).

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MASTER P (f/ LiL Romeo) LYRICS

I Need Dubs

[Intro: Master P]

When I'm alone my car...
 I'm thinking about Miss Lorenzo...
 My girl amy...
 Sprewells,Giovanni,Daytons,Mo-Mos,Diablow
 and my girl Ashanti.....

[Chorus: Master P 2x]

I need dubs when I ride to the club
 Cruisin with my girl,even rollin with
 thugs,
 I need dubs 22's, 24's shinin in the
 hood,
 I'm the king of the car shows...

[Verse 1: Master P]

I see it I buy it, u need it I got it, I could
 transform a car til' a hally berry body man
 Regular wheels I banned um, don't stand um
 I'm the first one to put spreweells on a phantom
 Girls see me and scream!!!
 I'm repin Orleans
 I got toys baby flex aint never seen
 Xzibit in the game but he can't pimp
 my ride,
 I got everything flip from the in to the outside
 Them lambo doors 50' talkin bout
 I had um on a cutless befo' I brought me house
 I put ice on my grill just to hurt them haters
 27 diped in crome for the escalator
 Put candy on the body so it glow in the dark
 Put light on my rims for at night when they walk
 Can't roll like no scrub, man on no hubs
 Ghetto bill up in here...
 Y'all know whats up!

[Chorus 2x]

[Verse 2: Master P]

From the streets to the pin
 You know the soldiers gon' win
 When they see me on t.v. they say
 he did it again,!
 From his shoes to his clothes
 hes ballin outta of contol,

From the bentley to the beamer to the
 hummer with 6 doors...
 But wody dont stunt, make them 6
 fours jump,
 Like reebox pumps,
 P miller amps in the truck louis vettan
 Ferrari, 360 is so clean.....
 Ashanti rims, that really bing bing
 And girls trip when they get in the ride
 I got C-L 5, steering wheel on the other
 side,
 And I'm gangsta man, whatcha thinkin man?....
 Shawty wanna roll cause I'm on them Twinkies man

[Chorus 2x]

[Verse 3: Lil Romeo]

Now I'm know I'm kinda young but I keep my dubs clean...
 Nick name my rims deime (d-e-i-m-e) cause they older then me
 At the age of 15 man, doin big thinkgs man,
 Don't hate dog! (why) cause you aint me man
 Some say I'm ballin cause my crome stay crawlin
 Took the phantom for a ride, now they stay I'm night crawlin
 Never get hungry cause I keep them deep dish'es
 The people you saw, then they take pictures
 My hummer sit clean on the shaq's minus 8
 White, gold and purple, just like them old days (man...)
 Now its kinda crazy cause Mercedes getting jeolous (what?)
 Range won't asanti's but they can't have it
 All for less its my baby, my boo, if I ever need help!
 I just scream whoodi whoo!,
 P miller speakers match my p.miller sneakers
 The ones on my feet and the ones on my beamer!

[Chorus 2x]

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NEW FEATURE

Tuning: Joining the Dub Club



Tuning: Joining the Dub Club

Dub Magazine's car show is a good place to start. So is twenty inches.

by JCC Team (2004-10-04)

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Tuning: Getting the GTO's Goat (9/6/2004)

One-up GM's factory settings and your GTO will rule, dude.

by Conor Twomey

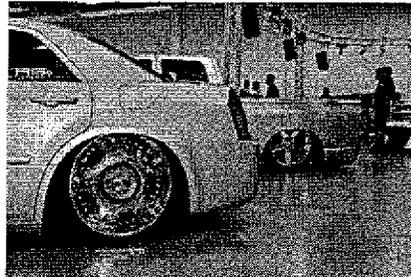
I know it sounds crazy, but there is something you should know about this car show: It actually has very little to do with cars.

The "Dub Magazine Superseries Celebrity Car Show and Concert" is a showcase for some of the finest "pimped out" vehicles on the planet, including a host of celebrity cars as well as custom vehicles from the companies that transform ordinary cars into one-of-a-kind rides. For those of you unfamiliar with Dub Magazine, it started out less than two years ago as a publication comprised of interviews with celebrities who want to generate a little publicity by showing off their blingmobiles. Since then it has rapidly evolved into the cornerstone of this whole new genre of car customization, to the point where Dub now even has its own line of accessories, sound systems, model vehicles and, of course, car shows and concerts.

Unlike the majority of tuner cars, the modifications made to the vehicles in Dub Magazine are generally not performance related. Usually the original car is a top-of-the-line model with a V-8 or V-12 engine and is therefore not really in need of more propulsive power.

Keepin' it wheel

Instead, the emphasis is on the looks and in particular the wheels, which must be "Dubs" if you want to be taken seriously. "Dubs" is the street name for any wheels with a diameter of 20" or more and anything sub-Dub just doesn't cut the mustard, I'm afraid. There's even one wheel manufacturer called "TIS" which stands for "Twenty Inches Strong" and their USP is that they write the size of the wheel in the center cap so there's no doubts about your size.



Dubs generally tend to be chrome-plated with a clean mirror finish, so as to garnish more attention as they glisten in the Hollywood sunlight, and the designs vary from simple five and six-spoke wheels to bizarre asymmetrical patterns. If that's not enough spangle for you then you can always opt for some spinners - usually six-spoke wheels with a second set of spokes that keep spinning after the car has stopped. They were made popular by NBA basketball player Latrell Sprewell after his brother (a custom-shop owner) put one of the first sets on his car, and they're occasionally referred to as "Sprewells" as a result. The newest Spinners to hit the streets feature a simple spoke design on a black background plate (there are no holes in the wheel) that make the car look like a giant "Hot Wheels"

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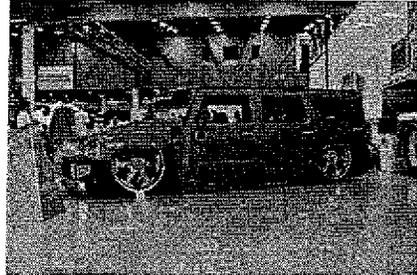
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toy when it's stationary. When it's moving, the weighted plate doesn't move, creating the illusion that the wheels are stopped as the car glides by. It's very dramatic and amusing to observe - a bit like automotive moonwalking, if you like.

The exterior finish is usually very clean, with a rich custom paint-job and some nice finishing touches like dark window tints, chrome mirrors and a hand-made "Struts" grille. Inside, the emphasis completely on luxury so expect multiple LCD screens and DVD players, video game consoles, massive bass-heavy sound systems, sumptuous fabrics and leathers (ostrich skin is the trim *du jour*) and perhaps some personalization in the form of monogrammed seats or embroidered floor mats. Okay, a lot of it isn't exactly in the best taste, but you still have to admire the workmanship and skill that goes into its creation.

Outdoing other Dubbers

Naturally, everyone on the Dub scene is trying to outdo each other, so wheels are getting bigger and more outlandish. It's now reached the point where someone has managed to cram 20" rims under a MINI, 24" wheels underneath an S-Class and monstrous 28" alloys into the wheel-wells of a HUMMER H2. Combined with super-slim tires, achieving such an extreme look can get very expensive. The wheels and tyres alone can cost as much as \$20,000, before you even consider the work that has to be done to make them fit.



Fortunately for the pungently wealthy owners of most of these vehicles, "twenty Gs" is pocket change so you'll often find a unique hydraulic suspension installed to make their ride driveable. Not that most of these cars get driven much. Terry Holly, proud owner of a magnificently finished pearlescent white Chevy Avalanche, rarely takes his truck out onto the highway. Instead, his vehicle (and the equally eye-popping Chevy Silverado and Ford Sport Trac of his two brothers Ricky and Desmond) sit in a garage under a cover between shows. This might seem like a frightful waste of \$50,000, especially when you consider the bothers aren't a wealthy rap trio. But to Terry, who's actually an accountant, it's money well spent. When I tell him he must look like a gangster driving around in it - a comment meant that literally and not entirely approvingly - he's pretty pleased. "I really appreciate that, man," he says, grinning. Apparently, that's what Dubbing is all about.

When you drive a Dubbed vehicle, you're telling the world that you enjoy the finer things in life - at least this is what the ladies at the show that I spoke to told me. A man driving such a machine has usually got a few bucks to spare, as well as an appreciation for the finer things in life. He enjoys the attention and respect of his peers and fellow motorists and he likes to look good. Mind you, many of these girls were every bit as, er, high-maintenance as the cars they're drawn to, so at least they won't look out of place in the passenger seat.



As I wander around the hall, the thump of Twista performing live in the background, I suddenly notice that most of the cars here are American-made machines. The trucks are obvious - no European or Japanese carmaker (with the exception of Porsche) builds an SUV that dares to compete with the wild ostentation of the Cadillac Escalade, Lincoln Navigator, or HUMMER H2. But why is the Chrysler 300 so popular? Why so many Dodge Magnams? Could it be that only an American car can look right Dubbed out? Did the 300's designer, Ralph Gilles, deliberately target the hip-hop generation? (It's surely no coincidence his own 300C rides on body-coloured Dubs.) Whatever the reason, fashionable celebrities have taken the handsome 300 to their bosoms, with P. Diddy, Shaquille O'Neal, Loon and Snoop Dogg amongst the list of proud owners. All the advertising in the world can't buy that

kind of street cred.

Once Nina Sky have finished their gyrating set and the parade of giggling cellulite known as the "Bikini Jam" is over, the crowd begins to dissipate and head home. They've been entertained, they've had a glimpse of the "playa" lifestyle and they've taken away ideas to adapt for their own rides. The Dub Celebrity Car Show and Concert is not just a car show, it's also a fascinating insight into the lavish world of hip-hop, basketball and celebrity in America. The vehicles here are custom-made bling with wheels, meant to convey a message rather than passengers.

Like I said, this show really has almost nothing to do with the cars.

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