


**BEN
SCHAFER**

Dream Merchant

The Real JDM is a monthly column written by Ben Schaffer of Bespoke Ventures. Bespoke Ventures operates a number of JDM related businesses including: Bulletproof Automotive, Top Secret III, Ings+1 USA, VARIS USA, HyperRev USA, and Bespoke VIP. Visit www.bespokeventures.com for more information.

I have a tendency to daydream about car projects that never come to fruition. Since I was an early teenager I would write down spec lists and details of project cars that I rightfully knew I'd never be able to complete. Yet even despite my clear acknowledgement that I wouldn't realize any of my projects, it was exciting to just dream and plot them out. Today I still day dream and plan out fictitious project vehicles. The main difference is that now occasionally I have the ability to complete a dream or two. I consider myself extremely lucky to have customers that allow me to be an influence in their projects and to have a business that allows me to create my own projects from time to time; it's a great perk of my job.

Over the years I've had a few project car ideas that keep haunting me, begging me to do them. I had kept those ideas secret in hopes to one

day create them and put them into the pages of *Modified* for you all to see. This past month however I've purchased two new vehicles which I'm very proud of. One is Top Secret's D1 Champion S15, a car that I've always been in love with and now very happy to own. The second is a new project vehicle to help me launch www.bespokevip.com which made its debut at SEMA. The car is a Fuga 450GT, known in the US as an Infiniti M45 Sport. The 450GT will be my first VIP vehicle and I'm very pleased with how it has turned out, thanks mainly to its contributors Kenstyle, Work and Advan. As both of these projects were quick to happen and relatively unexpected, I've depleted all of the money I had been saving to do my other dream projects.

As they say, one man's loss is another's gain. This month I'm pitching to you my unfulfilled dreams. I hope that within these concepts you can gain some inspiration and ideas to implement with your own projects. If anyone actually completes these projects or has done something similar, please contact me, I'd love to see them.

This month I'm pitching you my unfulfilled dreams.



PROJECT #1

CONCEPT: a VIP car with Bosozoku styling built for drifting and high speed driving, all street legal.

PLATFORM: JZS140 Aristo (early model Lexus GS300)

DETAILS: The JZS140 Aristo has many benefits which can be exploited. The core foundation of the concept is related to the years the car was sold as a North American model. Because the Aristo was sold during the same time as the twin turbo Supra, it is possible to do a legal engine swap with the Supra's 2JZGTE engine. The 2J engine is virtually a direct bolt in for the Aristo and can be done with minimal labor costs. From there aftermarket support for both the Aristo and the Supra engine are plentiful, allowing a full range of bolt on engine parts, chassis reinforcement bars, roll cages, suspension, brakes, rims, and aero. My concept has the 2J engine reliably tuned for 600hp, car weight reduced to approximately 3,400 lbs and suspension set up for drifting. Using this setup on a black car, combined with a Garson Exclusive aero kit, low offset black spoke Garson Deep Racing Ryuji rims and stretched tires, widened OEM fenders, massive

upward angled oval exhaust tips, and full VIP interior including Garson curtains, it's possible to have gangster VIP/Bosozoku looks with full drift capability to compete in D1 or Formula D, all street legal.

PROJECT #2

CONCEPT: An unlikely wangan and circuit attacker

PLATFORM: Infiniti FX35

DETAILS: In an earlier column I discussed some of the interchangeability of Nissan's FM chassis platform. It was discussed that amongst the variety of cars that share a variation of the FM chassis that engines and other parts can often be interchanged. Two of the cars within the FM chassis are the FX35 and the 350Z. As a number of tuners in Japan have showed us, it's quite possible to install a RB26DETT (GT-R engine) into the 350Z. Therefore with the same process the same engine can be installed into the FX35 platform. The FX platform from the factory is not much heavier than a Supra to begin with, and after a proper weight reduction it can be set at a respectable weight for racing. Although the FX is not offered in Japan, its brother, the Murano is. Murano tuning parts have been hitting the market for the past year, and currently there are suspension parts and chassis tuning parts that can be installed on the FX35 as well. With the parts currently available it's quite possible to build a 3,600 lb 800hp Infiniti FX, that's lowered on race suspension and set up with some aggressive rim and tire fitments. Set up in either 4WD or RWD platforms, it'd be easy to embarrass unsuspecting Porsches on the race track and it'd be a blast to drive on the freeway. The main downsides to this project are that the RB engine is not legal for use in some parts of America and that the engine swap would be costly.

PROJECT #3

CONCEPT: A full carbon Super GT car for the street with a power to weight ratio exceeding the race car.

PLATFORM: Toyota ZZW30 MR-S (MR2 Spyder)

DETAILS: My two biggest attractions to the MR-S are its extremely light weight and the fact that all of its body panels are removable. This means that installing a widebody on the MR-S is a completely bolt-on affair. Varis offers a full carbon widebody which replaces every body panel with full carbon pieces that exceed the width of the Super GT MR-S vehicles. Driving a full carbon widebody car on the street is sexy to begin with, but it wouldn't be complete without dropping in the old MR2's engine, the 3SGTE. The 3SGTE engine is also found on the MR-S Super GT car and is a very reliable platform for high horsepower applications. Although the install is far from basic, if pulled off the MR-S project would have more than enough power at hand to exceed the power to weight ratio of the Super GT car, while the widened carbon body would allow for massive rims and tires to put the power down to the ground. The MR-S platform in Japan has tremendous tuning support, so finding all of the appropriate tuning parts to build it into a serious competition vehicle is easy.



PROJECT #4

CONCEPT: A JDM meets Germany in the form of a D1 car

PLATFORM: E30 M3

DETAILS: The E30 M3 has often been regarded as BMW's purest sports car. In Europe it's one of the most popular drift cars to begin with, offering light weight and telepathic steering response. But what happens when that traditional platform is molested by JDM tuning styles? My thought is to drop an SR20DET engine into the rear of the engine bay, allowing a lot of room up front for a massive flat horizontal intercooler setup. Then relocate the radiator into the trunk and create ducting in the body to channel air into the custom vented trunk. The E30 M3's boxy style has fenders that are essentially a stock widebody to begin with. Enhancing that look by keeping the stock lines but widening the fenders further, creating a large reverse hood vent that goes flush with the intercooler, adding a carbon 3D GT wing and building custom front and rear bumpers would give it the aerodynamic efficiencies that a race car needs while creating a look ready for D1. Top it off with some Takata Green Volk CE28Ns, some burnt titanium dual DTM exhaust tips and titanium heat shields above them and it's ready for some serious ass kicking. //



A wide-body conversion can be a simple bolt-on affair for MR-S owners.

Send your feedback to: TheRealJDM@modified.com

