New Restoration Products
Preserving, Protecting and Improving Classic Cars

From Model Ts to musclecars and beyond, the restoration of classic automobiles has been a thriving segment of the automotive specialty-equipment industry for decades. Dozens of new restoration products were introduced to warehouse distributors, jobbers and retailers at the 2011 SEMA Show, and the following pages contain a brief look at all of them, complete with contact information and, where applicable, part numbers.

We’ve also gathered comments about trends within the marketplace from some of the top-flight businesses that help restoration enthusiasts create their rolling works of art. They provide insights about where the segment has been and where it is headed, touching on everything from 100-point purity to the still-flourishing restomod movement. The products and commentaries make for a thought-provoking review of this vibrant part of the industry.

Del City
AT-Series Connector Kit
800-654-4757
www.delcity.net
PN: 14114020
Harsh-environment connectors. Del City proudly announces its AT-series kit, which includes an assortment of receptacles, plugs, wedges and terminals.

The Right Stuff Detailing
Signature-Series Big Brake Kit
800-406-2000
www.getdiscbrakes.com
PN: AFXWK31CS
Bold looks and big performance define the signature line of brake kits. The front wheel kit, as seen, retails for $745. Four-wheel conversions from $1,345 retail.

Newark Auto Products
Custom Protector Mat
800-275-4695
www.newark-auto.com
PN: FP100247
Custom Protector Mat is manufactured to fit specific vehicles using a variety of carpets, with non-skid back coating and an embossed vinyl heel pad (150–2,000 pieces).

Old Air Products Inc.
Pro6TEN Compressor Kits
817-531-2665
www.oldairproducts.com
Pro6TEN compressor kit includes Pro6TEN compressor (new lightweight direct bolt-in replacement, the original GM A6), receiver/drier, POA update, expansion valve, O-rings and refrigerant oil.

Custom Autosound Manufacturing Inc.
Secretaudio RMS
800-888-8637
www.custom-autosound.com
PN: SECRETAUDIO RMS
A new wireless (RF) remote hideaway audio system. Includes iPod interface, a USB flash drive player, a satellite radio interface and a CD changer control. All functions controlled and visible on the remote LCD screen.

Legendary Auto Interiors Ltd.
Firebird Door Panels
800-363-8804
www.legendaryautointeriors.com
PN: DO78GFD0010
Authentic reproduction door panels for ’78–’81 Firebirds and Trans Ams.
There is a trend toward “bolt-on” restoration components. For instance, restorers are opting for preassembled complete seats and door panels as opposed to just new upholstery. These types of parts are more expensive but require much less work.

Many manufacturers have incorporated computer-aided manufacturing and modern machinery to both decrease costs and increase quality. Manufacturers once had no choice but to use the same technologies that were used to make the original parts. Now they often have multiple parts for the same application—parts that fit and work well for the restorer on a budget, but also include a more expensive option for the professional restorer who demands exacting originality.

Still, the most significant hurdle we need to address is the graying of our industry. The Automotive Restoration Market Organization [(ARMO) council] has taken the lead with its “Take a Kid to a Car Show” program to help get youth involved in our hobby. Many young people are entering and getting started with G-body cars due to their price and availability, and I see this as very encouraging for the future of our industry.

—Alex Tainsh
Executive Vice President
Parts Unlimited Inc. (PUI)
Eastwood Co.
Evolution HVLP Paint Gun
800-345-1178
www.eastwood.com
PN: 12776
The Eastwood Evolution paint gun is designed to be a uniquely versatile gun that performs and feels like no other. Its high-tech composite ergonomic body is comfortable and lightweight, allowing the user to paint for long periods without fatigue.

Eastwood Co.
Electronic Torque Angle Wrench
800-345-1178
www.eastwood.com
PN: 13622
Eastwood says that its highly accurate ⅜- and ½-in.-drive digital electronic torque angle wrenches are built tough enough to continue functioning accurately even after being dropped. Accurately measures torque up to 150 lb.-ft. Features visual and audible indicators and five preset memory settings.

Eastwood Co.
Aerosol-Injected Cleaner
800-345-1178
www.eastwood.com
PN: 12846Z
Eastwood’s aerosol-injected cleaner directs a focused blast of cleaner that penetrates deep into hard-to-reach places. Designed to be ideal for cleaning paint guns, brake lines, transmission lines, fuel lines, fuel rails, air intake systems, carburetors and much more.

Old Air Products Inc.
Drier Tube Kit
817-531-2665
www.oldairproducts.com
PN: 49-0212
Custom pre-formed jumper tube and mounting bracket. Mounts 2½-in.-diameter receiver drier with O-ring fittings on Old Air Products SuperKool-series condenser.

Old Air Products Inc.
A/C Hose Set for ’71–’72 Oldsmobile Cutlasses
817-531-2665
www.oldairproducts.com
PN: 50-0415
An A/C hose set for ’71–’72 Oldsmobile Cutlasses. Set includes suction, discharge and liquid lines.

Old Air Products Inc.
Electric Fan and Shroud for ’67–’68 Mustangs With 20-in. Radiators
817-531-2665
www.oldairproducts.com
PN: 50-5068A
A custom fan assembly for ’67–’68 Mustangs with 20-in. radiators. Features a 16-in. (2,070 cfm) electric fan and brushed-aluminum shroud with high-speed ram air bypass flaps that open at highway speeds to allow excess air flow to pass through, and close at lower speeds to maximize overall cooling efficiency.

The industry is growing, with more people becoming involved. That is partially due to the growing interest in musclecars and the increased availability of replacement parts and upgrade products, such as smoothly operating electronic controls and A/C systems for classic cars. The ability to produce precise 3-D drawings, which can be used for manufacturing perfect-fitting products, is one of the most significant developments in that trend.

Maintaining quality and supply of imported parts are the greatest hurdles as U.S. companies compete on price, but I have heard of several companies that are bringing their manufacturing back to the States for these reasons. The greatest opportunities lay in cross-selling related products that enhance your product line, especially if they can be drop-shipped by a reliable vendor.

We have tracked monthly sales since 1989 and have seen a decline in sales percentages four of the past five election years. We allow for a 10% decrease for the four-month period between November and February, though, December has tended to hold okay. Rally your employees from the front door all the way through shipping to go the extra mile. This will bring repeat customers and referrals from the rest of the industry.

—Darrow Cowart
President
Old Air Products
Old Air Products Inc.
Electric Fan and Shroud for ‘48–’54 Chevrolet Trucks
817-531-2665
www.oldairproducts.com
PN: 50-20501850A-16SHP
Custom fan assembly for ‘48–’54 Chevrolet trucks. Features 16-in. (2,070-cfm) electric fan and brushed-aluminum shroud with high-speed ram air bypass flaps that open at highway speeds to allow excess air flow to pass through and close at lower speeds to maximize overall cooling efficiency.

Badger Air-Brush Co.
KROME
847-678-3104
www.badgerairbrush.com
PN: RK-1
Badger says that its Krome Gravity airbrush outshines other detail airbrushes. Features a glide-coat finished trigger and rocker lever for friction-free triggering and professional ultra-fine results.

Real Deal Steel LLC
‘56–’57 Chevy Four-Door Hardtop Center Floor Brace
407-585-1957
www.realdealsteel.com
PN: HT4B-67
Steel reproduction under-floor center support brace. This item is unique to the ’56–’57 Chevy four-door hardtop body style. Necessary for proper support of the B-pillars.

Legendary Auto Interiors Ltd.
GM ‘64–’72 A-Body Levant Grain Vinyl Top
800-363-8804
www.legendaryautointeriors.com
PN: VTC30GHK
A ’64–’72 GM A-body Levant grain vinyl top.

The cost of manufacturing is continually increasing, even for overseas manufacturers, making it more difficult for many collectors to restore their cars. Also, legislation and zoning laws are making it more difficult for individuals to restore and/or own their classic cars or hot rods.

Products for later models (‘80s through ‘90s) have come into play. These parts are more difficult to make, because many require two or three different compounds and cores, including extrusions with metal cores, partially plastic coating and rubber sealing edges. The more complex the piece, the more it will cost.

Retailers should add value for consumers and manufacturers. Otherwise, manufacturers will be encouraged to sell direct and trim their sales to retailers. I’ve seen many retailers commoditize restoration parts to the point where there is barely any margin for anyone in the distribution system.

Many consumers lack the knowledge to repair their cars, so parts have to be easy to install and include clear directions. Today’s buyers are also unfamiliar with the terminology for auto parts, so education has become one of our biggest value-added offerings.

—Matt Agosta
President
Steele Rubber Products
The re-emergence of mid-'60s musclecars and cars from the '60s and '70s in general seems to be the biggest new trend in the restoration industry. These are the cars that the Baby Boomers remember and are now restoring or using to create restomods. This has become a huge part of the automotive restoration business and has caused many manufacturers to step up production and create new product for more profit.

The most significant new-product development that I have seen is the recreation of factory-correct, steel-body musclecars. Mustangs, Camaros and more have been created, making it possible to build an entire car from new parts. Exact duplicate sheetmetal parts for all makes and models are also being manufactured, making it easier for the restorer to easily restore a vehicle with new parts rather than rusted-out pieces. Tooling and automation processes have helped to speed up parts development and duplicate just about any part needed.

As the economy recovers, retailers will see more products become available. With more manufacturers making the same products, pricing will become more competitive, but retailers must also be aware of quality, requiring more research on the retailers’ part to ensure that they are purchasing quality products.

—Harry Weimann
Director of Education, Wyotech

Mustang Project
‘64.5–‘66 Mustang LED Turn-Signal Mirrors
512-828-6417
www.mustangproject.com
PN: MP-8001-RED
Classic cars and early Mustangs have a lower profile than most modern cars. Make sure your customer’s car is noticed when it changes lanes with these new LED turn-signal indicating mirrors. They look like original Ford stock deluxe remote mirrors until the turn signals are activated. Simple one-wire hookup.

American Autowire
‘61–‘66 Ford Truck Classic Update Wiring Kit
512-828-6417
www.americanautowire.com
PN: 510260
This new kit is designed specifically for modified/upgraded ‘61–‘66 Ford F-100 and F-350 trucks. It will handle an increased number of upgrades, such as electric fans, aftermarket A/C, gauges, updated powertrain combinations, etc.

Real Deal Steel LLC
‘55–‘57 Chevy Convertible Windshield Frame
407-585-1957
www.realdealsteel.com
PN: CVWF-1
Reproduction of the original convertible windshield frame allows conversion of any original cowl assembly of any body style to convertible. Also fits other GM models.

American Autowire
‘70 Mustang Wiring Kit
856-933-0801
www.americanautowire.com
This new kit is designed specifically for modified- and Pro-Touring-styled ‘70 Mustangs. It will handle upgrades such as electric fans, aftermarket A/C, gauges, powertrain combinations, etc.

Classic Industries/OER
‘78–‘81 Camaro Z28 Taillamps Lens Set
714-847-6887
www.classicindustries.com
PN: 5930259/5930260
Reproduction black-accented taillamp lens set for ‘78–‘81 Camaro Z28 models. Manufactured to exact OE specifications with authentic markings and in correct original colors.

American Autowire
‘70–‘74 Cuda/Challenger Classic Update Wiring Kit
856-933-0801
www.americanautowire.com
PN: 510289
This new kit is designed specifically for modified- and Pro-Touring-styled ‘70–‘74 Cudas and Challengers. It will handle upgrades such as electric fans, aftermarket A/C, gauges, powertrain combinations, etc.

American Autowire
‘69 Camaro Factory-Fit Dash Harness
856-933-0801
www.americanautowire.com
OEM-replacement dash harness for console-gauge-equipped auto trans applications. All factory-fit harnesses are the restoration standard. Original GM tooling and parts are utilized throughout. Correct fuse boxes, bulkheads, lamp sockets, connectors, terminals, clips and clamps are incorporated into each harness for a true plug-and-play installation.

American Autowire
‘70–‘74 Cuda/Challenger Classic Update Wiring Kit
856-933-0801
www.americanautowire.com
PN: 510289
This new kit is designed specifically for modified- and Pro-Touring-styled ‘70–‘74 Cudas and Challengers. It will handle upgrades such as electric fans, aftermarket A/C, gauges, powertrain combinations, etc.

American Autowire
‘69 Camaro Factory-Fit Dash Harness
856-933-0801
www.americanautowire.com
This new kit is designed specifically for modified- and Pro-Touring-styled ‘70–‘74 Cudas and Challengers. It will handle upgrades such as electric fans, aftermarket A/C, gauges, powertrain combinations, etc.

American Autowire
‘70 Mustang Wiring Kit
856-933-0801
www.americanautowire.com
This new kit is designed specifically for modified- and Pro-Touring-styled ‘70 Mustangs. It will handle upgrades such as electric fans, aftermarket A/C, gauges, powertrain combinations, etc.

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‘78–‘81 Camaro Z28 Taillamps Lens Set
714-847-6887
www.classicindustries.com
PN: 5930259/5930260
Reproduction black-accented taillamp lens set for ‘78–‘81 Camaro Z28 models. Manufactured to exact OE specifications with authentic markings and in correct original colors.
Proforged Chassis Parts
CamberTech ‘67–’69 Camaro
Tubular Control Arms
973-404-0086
www.proforged.com
PN: GEN1UPPERS

Proforged says that the top of the tire leans inward around a turn in modern performance cars to ensure maximum contact with the road. Classic muscle-cars are the opposite—the top of the tire actually leans outward, yielding a small tire contact patch. CamberTech arms use a 0.90-in.-taller upper ball joint to correct this problem and deliver incredible handling. Adjustable caster slugs and Delrin bushings finish out the optimal performance solution.

ECS Automotive Concepts
RPM-Rust Prevention Magic
855-532-7846
www.ecsautomotive.com
PN: RPM8

Rust Prevention Magic is a patented, revolutionary, moisture-resistant compound that is designed to protect bare metal components against corrosion, rust and damaging oxidation.

The current trend is back to driving the car you restore. Faithful, 100% correct restorations still happen, but more enthusiasts are building top-notch cars to drive and not trailer, so more attention is being paid to reliability, fuel economy, safety and handling. The manufacture of new chassis and body parts means significant improvements and the ability to repair that once-forgotten hulk or replace it entirely with a new body.

Modern design and manufacturing techniques have made possible what was impossible just a few short years ago. Easy access to water-jet machines, computer-controlled plasma and laser cutting has allowed the restoration and hot-rod guy to expand his creativity, and waterborne paints have the potential of opening up a whole new world of home restoration.

We must keep a close eye on the trends that young rodders are developing to see what catches on. Just 10 years ago, the whole industry seemed to be trying to invent the next billet widget. Who would have imagined that billet would now be nearly dead and retro would take over? Many forgotten cars are becoming or will soon become sought after, and unique parts for those vehicles will need to be manufactured and sold as well.

—Joe Whitaker
Managing Partner
Real Deal Steel LLC
People are holding off on high-dollar builds, at least in my business. Instead, people are buying cars that were done previously but aren’t necessarily perfect and are doing the brakes and suspension, keeping the project price down. There are a lot of 20- and 30-year-old restorations out there that were done right to begin with but need to be freshened.

Fuel injection is getting tweaked a lot more for easily installed applications, and some of the more sensible brake upgrades are also significant. I like the trend where brake companies are coming out with direct replacements—both conversions and disc upgrades—that will actually fit under a 15- or a 17-in. rim.

The other thing I like seeing is the retrofit harnesses that upgrade the fuse box to make it easier for us to wire cars and feed in some of the options or leave a standing point for us to build off at a later date—kind of a drive-and-build-as-you-go program. There are harnesses now that have fuel-injection circuits, extra lighting circuits, extra stereo power circuits and so on. That has been a great addition.

— Lenny Schaeffer
President
Chop-Shop Customs Inc.
Parts Unlimited Inc. (PUI)
A ‘68 Chevelle Platinum Edition
Pre-Assembled Door Panel
502-425-3766
www.pui.cc
PN: 68AD10-P
PUI's new Platinum Edition door panels use new and updated processes developed specifically for this line, combined with new tools built from scratch, working directly from painstaking measurements from original GM panels, PUI brings users the most original part at the fairest price.

Auto Custom Carpets Inc.
Custom-Cut Floor Mat Set With Exclusive Signature-Series Backing
800-633-2358
www.accmats.com
This set is shown with one of Auto Custom Carpet’s licensed embroidered logos. The backing is odorless, easy to clean, lightweight and costs 40% less than the company’s traditional nibbed-backed mats.

Drake Automotive Group
‘66–‘72 Ford Bronco Taillamp Housing Kit
800-999-0289
www.drakeautomotivegroup.com
PN: C7UZ-13435-KIT
Another Scott Drake exclusive, these Bronco taillamp housings are a hard-to-find replacement part. The taillamp housings are zinc-plated and are said to be the perfect alternative to the original part.

Eastwood Co.
Aerosol-Injected Lubricator
800-345-1178
www.eastwood.com
PN: 13445 Z
Eastwood’s aerosol-injected lubricator directs a focused blast of lubrication that penetrates deep into hard-to-reach places. It is said to be ideal for lubricating air tools, fogging engines, lubricating lock and hinge mechanisms and more.

Legendary Auto Interiors Ltd.
Firebird T/A Floor Mats
800-363-8804
www.legendaryautointeriors.com
PN: FMTA0003004
A ‘76–‘78 Trans Am SE Bandit floor mat.

Legendary Auto Interiors Ltd.
‘69–70 B-Body Dash Pads
800-363-8804
www.legendaryautointeriors.com
Authentic reproduction Chrysler dash pads for ‘69–’70 B-body cars.

Legendary Auto Interiors Ltd.
Oldsmobile Package Tray
800-363-8804
www.legendaryautointeriors.com
PN: PT68GU442
A ‘68–’72 Oldsmobile Cutlass and 442 package tray.

Legendary Auto Interiors Ltd.
‘69–’70 B-Body Dash Pads
800-363-8804
www.legendaryautointeriors.com
Authentic reproduction Chrysler dash pads for ‘69–’70 B-body cars.

Classic Instruments
‘66–’67 Ford Bronco Taillamp Housing Kit
800-999-0289
www.drakeautomotivegroup.com
PN: C7UZ-13435-KIT
Another Scott Drake exclusive, these Bronco taillamp housings are a hard-to-find replacement part. The taillamp housings are zinc-plated and are said to be the perfect alternative to the original part.

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800-345-1178
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Authentic reproduction Chrysler dash pads for ‘69–’70 B-body cars.

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PN: PT68GU442
A ‘68–’72 Oldsmobile Cutlass and 442 package tray.

Legendary Auto Interiors Ltd.
‘69–’70 B-Body Dash Pads
800-363-8804
www.legendaryautointeriors.com
Authentic reproduction Chrysler dash pads for ‘69–’70 B-body cars.
Without a doubt, the greatest opportunities for manufacturers are in the ‘60s and ‘70s musclecar and truck markets. There is a huge supply of vehicles still on the road. New technologies in motor, suspension and electrical system upgrades are necessary to bring these vehicles up to today’s standards.

The most significant development for American Autowire is our Classic Update Series wiring kits for ‘60s and ‘70s American musclecars. These wiring kits are designed for updated vehicle electrical capabilities combined with flexibility in wire routing. We included component parts that are absolutely necessary but were not available unless the customer purchased original OEM replacement harnesses, including original connectors, light sockets and associated grommets and retention clips.

Customers are demanding complete kits of components to finish their projects, including complete installation instructions. We have seen a real value in color-coded instructions, and YouTube and web-based video instructions are coming of age. The underlying benefit has been a reduction in technical service time.

Technology has changed the playing field. It is no longer acceptable for a manufacturer to put out a product that is guesswork or just acceptable. This forces us to research popular products and develop strategies to integrate these products into our base electrical systems.

—Michael P. Manning
President, American Autowire

— SEMA NEW PRODUCTS —

Drake Automotive Group
‘65–’67 Ford Mustang
Billet Antenna
800-999-0289
www.drakeautomotivegroup.com
PN: CSZZ-18813-BL

Scott Drake designed a modern ‘64–73 Mustang 8-in. antenna. This antenna is clear anodized and machined from 6061-T6 billet aluminum. Includes base, mount, original-type coaxial cable and easy-to-follow instructions.

TMI Products Inc.
Concourse Mach 1 Door Panels
951-272-1996
www.tmiproducts.com
PN: 10-70100-3722


Metro Moulded Parts Inc.
RR 2009-B
800-878-2237
www.metrommp.com

Metro Moulded Parts manufactures replacement rear Targa top seals for C5 Chevy Corvette (‘97–’04) coupes. U.S.A.-made and backed by a 30-year warranty.

Eastwood Co.
Pneumatic Fender Finisher
800-345-1178
www.eastwood.com
PN: 12124

Eastwood says that its pneumatic fender former was developed to provide additional front fender-to-tire clearance on lowered vehicles or vehicles with larger wheel sizes. The main feature of the tool is that it can perform fender rolling without the need to jack the vehicle and remove the wheel.

Old Air Products Inc.
Hurricane A/C and Heater System
for ‘68–’69 Chevelles
817-531-2665
www.oldairproducts.com

In-dash air conditioning, heating and defrost combo that mounts to the firewall. Choose from an electronic slide control or integrated switching using original factory control for an original appearance. Unique modular design provides tri-level cold or warm air flow.

TMI Products Inc.
‘64–’93 Mustang Pony Seat Upholstery and Foam
951-272-1996
www.tmiproducts.com

TMI ‘84–’93 Mustang pony seat upholstery and foam. Vintage-style Mustang Running Pony performance upholstery and foam. Utilizes ‘84–’93 Fox-body Mustang frames with TMI sport-bolstered foam and upholstery in classic musclecar pony styling. MSRP from $399.95.
The upholstery segment is manufacturing a much more sophisticated product than originally offered in the vehicles of the ’60s and ’70s. Products such as seat upholstery and seat foam are now designed and manufactured as a system. Most of the manufacturers offer seat foam that is denser, much like what comes in modern vehicles, and the vinyl used in restoration upholstery today is superior in fit, feel and ease of installation.

Product information and images are investments that businesses should make. Many companies downsized or nearly eliminated personnel who created printed catalogs in favor of their websites, leaving few images, short descriptions and confusion in general, which generate customer phone calls for technical expertise. When customers are left out in this way, they will seek retailers with more images and printed or online information.

Developing technical resources is also essential. While websites have their place, if customers are calling you, they want to talk with someone who knows how to solve their problem and can relate to them. The companies that have done this well have weathered the storm and continue to grow.

—Dennis K. Roberts
National Sales Manager
Distinctive Industries

Drake Automotive Group
’08–Up Dodge Challenger Fuel Door (All Black)
800-999-0289
www.drakeautomotivegroup.com
PN: MO-210001-BLACK
Drake Muscle Cars exclusively crafted this Challenger fuel door assembly. Made from billet aluminum and die-cast with stainless faux fasteners that feature a plunger for positive opening and closing. Accentuated by a printed carbon-fiber emblem embossed with fuel.

Drake Automotive Group
’11 Ford Mustang Strut Covers
800-999-0289
www.drakeautomotivegroup.com
PN: BR3Z-7W13296-BL
Drake Muscle Cars strut tower caps are machined from 6061-T6 billet aluminum and clear anodized for a great look. The set includes 10 caps to dress up both sides of the engine compartment.

Drake Automotive Group
’67 Ford Mustang 390 Air Cleaner
800-999-0289
www.drakeautomotivegroup.com
PN: C7ZZ-9600-E
An extremely rare ’67 390 GT high-performance air cleaner is now available through Scott Drake Enterprises. This air cleaner is a concours reproduction that includes a blue base and chrome lid.

TMI Products Inc.
1967 Chevelle Sport Seats
951-272-1996
www.t miproducts.com
TMI ’64–’72 Chevelle sport seats. Classic Chevelle style with modern sport seat performance. Utilizes original ’64–’72 Chevelle seat frame with TMI sport-bolstered foam and upholstery for classic musclecar style. A ’67 is shown here. MSRP from $399.95
Customers want products that are finished and easy to install. A few years ago, we started to offer black-powdercoated columns, and the demand for that finish has grown steadily. The days of adapting a used part obtained from a junkyard to your vehicle are fading away. The customer wants it to fit right out of the box, with a minimum of work on his or her part. The level of sophistication in today’s aftermarket world has grown by leaps and bounds, driven by the OEMs and customers. We’re now offering keyless ignition systems, and I would never have dreamt we’d be in that market 10 years ago.

Musclecars continue to be where we see the most growth, and price is a factor. Not everyone can drop $50K or more to build a nice '32 Ford three-window, but they can afford half of that and have a nice car from the '60s or '70s.

We all have to keep an open mind. People will restore pretty much anything, and parts can be an issue if it’s not an old Ford. Not long ago, nobody would have thought seriously about hot rodding or restoring a station wagon. Who knows what will be next?

—Marty Waterstraut
Sales Manager
ididit Inc.
With the Internet providing information at the consumers’ fingertips, retailers need to recognize that customers are really doing their homework and trying to get the best bang for their buck. In turn, we are trying to increase the number of complete kits that we have so that customers get everything they need to complete a project from start to finish.

Most customers today are looking to get a package deal that they can do themselves, and they want to be more involved in the custom aspect of their vehicles. The majority of the people doing restorations want their cars to handle better. Whether it’s a ’60s or ’70s vehicle that they want to handle like a ’12 or they want to give the car a better stance at a show, the biggest thing we’ve seen take off is the air-ride suspension market.

In our industry, there are the traditional older guys who are restoring cars and the new-age guys who are building hot-rod musclecars from what Detroit is offering now. The greatest opportunity is to be flexible and keep up with changing times. People are always going to be building those ’69 Camaros and ’70 Chevelles, but we also need to offer products for the new-age hot rodding in the form of cars like the ’13 Chargers and Mustangs.

—Ron Perkins
Senior Sales and Marketing Manager
The Hoffman Group LLC
People are redesigning existing products to make them better, lighter, stronger. We do that with brake systems. Through CAD/CAM software, we’re able to design and change the properties of products, either converting drum systems to disc or, in some cases, putting eight-piston calipers inside 15-in. wheels. By putting a lightweight aluminum caliper under there, you are reducing the weight and keeping the stock characteristics of the vehicle without changing a lot of geometry.

The Internet allows people to shop for the right item, but they have to understand that the right look is not the only consideration. They have to understand the technology involved and how a part is going to alter the ride quality or performance of the vehicle. They need to use the Internet to do their homework.

Manufacturers must also be able to educate retailers so that the salesman knows as much or more than the customer and can deliver the right product. People are tired of seeing “Made in China,” but you have to be sure that you build quality. People expect a lot more than they have in years past, and the expectation is that parts will be delivered in a reasonable amount time, look good and perform well.

—Michael Jonas
President
Stainless Steel Brakes Corp. (SSBC)
Real Deal Steel LLC
‘57 Chevy Modified Underhood Cross Brace
407-585-1957
www.realdealsteel.com
PN: HCB-7
Steel underhood brace that is modified to allow use of a center-outlet radiator mounted in front of the core support. Needed for long water pump and big-block installations.

Real Deal Steel LLC
‘55–’57 Chevy Station Wagon and Nomad Tailgate Hinge Trim
407-585-1957
www.realdealsteel.com
PN: TGT-567
Exact steel reproduction of the often missing or rusty tailgate hinge trim used on all ’55–’57 Chevy stationwagons and Nomads. Also fits other GM wagons.

Workshop Hero
(A Division of Armor Protective Packaging)
Dry Coat Rust Preventative
800-365-1117
www.metalrescue.com
DCRP32
Dry Coat Rust Preventative is a water-based product that contains rust inhibitors. It dries quickly and is non-toxic, non-sticky and does not attract dirt/dust. Apply via spray or dip. Dries within 30 minutes and leaves rust protection that’s not sticky or tacky.

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Reproductions are more and more like the original equipment. There have been significant leaps in the assortment of restoration parts now available as opposed to five years or less ago, but there may be too many new manufacturers making the same parts already offered.

Retailers must concentrate on quality. Don’t settle for substandard, inferior products. Price points are not always going to be low, but the average guy will pay more for something that he knows will fit and work.

The greatest opportunities exist in the younger markets. We old guys are going to continue with the cars, but it is going to be up to the manufacturers and retailers to interest a new, younger marketplace.

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