

Tempe TOWN News

Serving the Tempe Community



TEMPE TOWN NEWS

By JoBeth Jamison

“Auto ‘passion’ leads to new profession”

You would have thought a program on a music television station featuring a rap star and a bunch of hyperactive Southern California 18-to-24-year-olds driving cars that should by rights be in the junk yard would appeal only to a very narrow audience.

Not so.

It turns out that MTV’s hit show, “Pimp My Ride,” consistently wins its time slot in the 20-to-34 demographic against basic cable competition. Last year, more than 1.1 million viewers tuned in for every episode of “Pimp My Ride” to watch electronics experts transform junky jalopies to roadway jewels, according to Nielsen Media Research. It also has engendered a passion in that same demographic for “pimping out” their own cars, but to a lesser degree financially, a passion not unfamiliar to American men in the post-World War II era.

For those who want to seek out a professional to assisting with their own “pimping,” but don’t want to have to drive to California, a solution may be closer at hand.

Gadget tinkerers are finding their place in the cutting-edge world of electronics at Mobile Dynamics car audio training institution right here in Tempe. Built exclusively for consumer electronics installation training and education, the 11,000-square-foot facility, located at 415 S. 48th St., trains people with a passion for pumping up the volume to “turn their obsession into their profession.”

“Most if not all of our students are the local kid that all the neighbors come to see repair everything from the toaster to their car stereo,” says Tom Gazda, a Mobile Dynamics cofounder and owner of the Tempe facility.

Such students include 18-year-old Steven Trumbauer, a Tempe native who recently completed the training course and received an award for outstanding achievement. Trumbauer leaves the school with a “mobile resume,” a system that he himself built and installed, a perk that comes with the \$5,800 tuition. The MECP (Mobile Electronics Certified Professional) also leaves the perk of employment at the retail electronic chain Best Buy and the drive to continue his education in the multi-million dollar industry.

“People claim this is just a ‘phase’, but for those of us who have been in the business for decades see it differently,” said Gazda. “When I was just a kid with a passion for car audio there wasn’t a Mobile Dynamics to attend and learn about the secrets of quality customization. Mobile Dynamics started because I was passionate about sharing my knowledge and providing other enthusiasts a means by which they could get a proper start in our industry.”

Six years ago, individuals customizing their new cars typically spent around \$900 dollars. Today, car buffs are spending between \$1,500 and \$3,000 dollars on vehicle accessories, according to the Specialty Equipment Market Association.

“Customizing cars takes practice, lots of practice,” Gazda points out. “The recent Barrett Jackson auction in Scottsdale showcased automobiles personalized to perfection by highly skilled and trained individuals rather than weekend hobbyists.”

Mobile Dynamics offers two levels of certification and training, a 4-week and an 8-week, both of which teach the anatomy of a vehicle, basic electronics, safety, assembly and tool use. From the classroom, students then test and apply their knowledge in the shop where they build and install everything from circuits to subwoofers to entire systems. To meet the changing car consumer climate, students also are learning about video, DVD satellite and security systems.

First established in Toronto, Canada, in 1990, Mobile Dynamics set up shop in Tempe in 1995 and has since become one of the largest of its kind and one of the most recognized in the business, having introduced more than 4,000 new installation professionals to the field of consumer electronics. Best Buy recently chose the trade school to develop its internal employee-training program.

For more information, call 480-557-0675 or visit www.mobiledynamics.com.