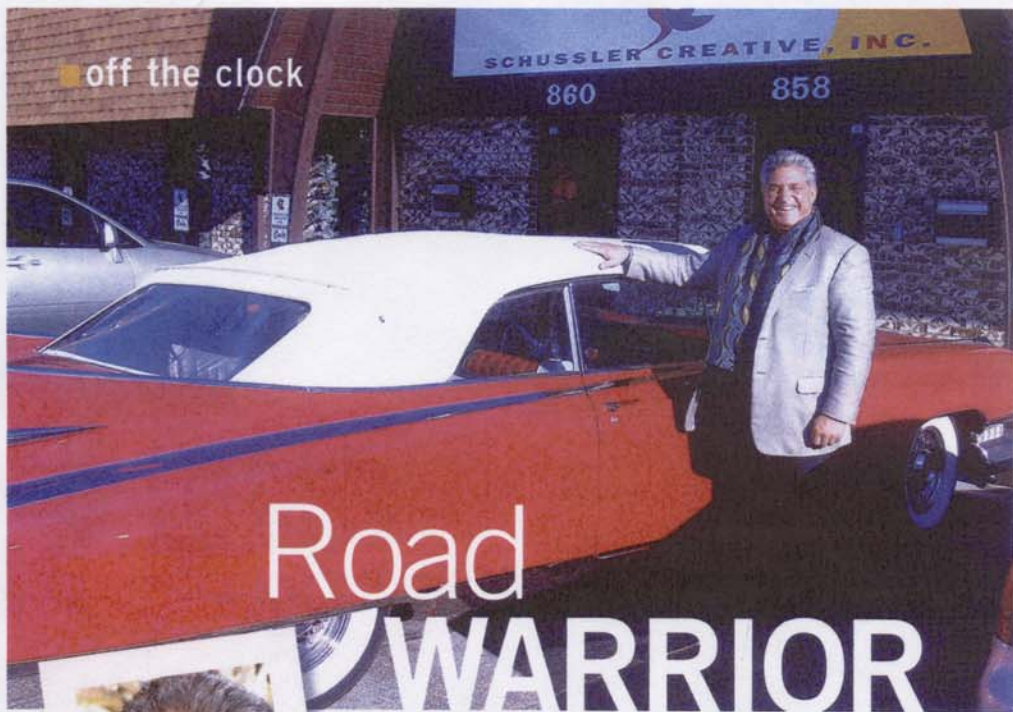


off the clock

SCHUSSLER CREATIVE, INC.

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Road WARRIOR



Steven Schussler enjoys his collection of cars and motorcycles at work and play. **By Maya Norris**

Steven Schussler is not the kind of collector content with just admiring his collection from afar. The chairman, president and CEO of Schussler Creative likes to put his collection of cars and motorcycles to good use. He not only regularly drives them through the streets of Golden Valley, Minn., but they have inspired him to create restaurant concepts that play up the vehicles' beauty and nostalgia.

Over the last 30 years, Schussler has amassed a mix of classic and modern cars and motorcycles worth about \$500,000. He owns a 1957 Chevy convertible, a 1959 Cadillac Berlitz convertible, a 1959 Corvette convertible, a 1952 MGTD convertible, a 1997 Ferrari convertible, 1997 Bentley and a 2005 Grand Cherokee Overland. His motorcycle collection is equally impressive: a 1916 Pope, 1927 Indian with a sidecar, 1929 Harley Davidson D-Twin 45, 1938 194 Harley Davidson military motorcycle, 1947 Indian Chief Roadmaster, 1949 Harley Davidson WL45, 1952 Harley Davidson RS, 2000 Harley Davidson Fat Boy, 2005 BMW 1200 and a custom-made 2007 Sinner-G chopper.

Schussler's interest in cars and motorcycles goes back to his childhood in New York. When he was 11 years old, he got a job pumping gas after he lied to the owner and said he was 15. There he learned about cars and earned \$500 to buy his first: a 1958

MGA. "I used to drive around the back of the parking lot, worked on it with the mechanics and played the big shot even though I was only 11 years old," he says.

Schussler took up the hobby seriously in the 1970s. In 1979, he purchased a red 1957 Chevy convertible, which remains his favorite. "Everybody gives you the thumbs up when you go down the street in it," he says. "It's unmistakably the finest-looking, most recognizable antique car on the road."

Hitting the Road

That car also prompted him to create Juke-Box Saturday Night, a chain of nightclubs with memorabilia from the '50s and '60s, in 1979. Schussler incorporated two 1957 Chevys into the decor of each unit. He cut them in half, using the fronts as a canopy and a DJ booth and the backs as booths.

Schussler has since gone on to create such notable concepts as T-Rex and Rainforest Cafe. But his next concept centers on his passion for vintage cars and motorcycles. In 2008, he plans to open America's Roadhouse, a motorcycle- and car-themed restaurant that serves comfort food, in Reno, Nev. The prototype houses his '59 Corvette, '59 Caddy Berlitz and all of his vintage motorcycles. It will also feature his custom-made 2007 Sinner-G, which Schussler calls "motorcycle art. That's something you can have in your living room. That's something that should be in the Smithsonian Institution."

Enjoying the Ride

When he isn't using his vehicles as inspiration for his concepts, Schussler enjoys driving them. He often drives three different cars a day. For example, most recently Schussler drove his jeep to work in the morning, drove the Bentley in the afternoon, and took his Ferrari out for the evening. "I love the opportunity to drive something from one point to another that's classy, unique, inspiring and gives me the ability to be creative at the same time," he says. ■

Steven Schussler's favorite car is his red 1957 Chevy convertible. "It reminds me of Disney, mom and dad, apple pie, vanilla ice cream," he says. "The car smiles at you."

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