

Father-son duo make cars their way of life

By Emmanuel Lopez/Reporter Intern
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For Mike and Dustin Petrillo, the owners of Petrillo's Tires at 131 Elmira Rd. in Vacaville, a car isn't just a means of travel - it's a way of life.

Now, through their newly formed company, American Muscle Machines, Inc., they plan to put on a car show Aug. 20 and 21 at the Travis Credit Union Park in Vacaville.

They hope the show will "evolve into Vacaville's signature event" and become a major stop for fellow enthusiasts in Northern California.

The father-son duo, who describe themselves as car enthusiasts, have been around cars for as long as they can remember.

Mike said he got his first taste for fast cars when his older sister's boyfriend would take him to local drag races.

Mike said he became captivated by the cars as they screamed down the track.

"It's exciting to be around such fast and powerful cars," Mike said.

One car in particular, a 1965 Chevrolet Nova, impressed Mike.

In an article in the April 2005 edition of Nova Times, Mike writes about watching the car outrun a 1968 Dodge Dart.

Since then Mike has amassed a collection of classic cars and hotrods throughout the years, including several Novas.

Dustin recalls a fond memory from when he was very young.

"My earliest experience with cars is sitting in the rumble seat of a

'31 Plymouth three-window coupe with my grandpa when I was about 4 or 5," he said. "I also used to collect Hot Wheels."

When he was 16, Dustin was given a 1963 Chevrolet Nova SS, which would later earn third-place in the first car show he entered.

"My dad never forced me to go with him - I just wanted to," Dustin said, adding that it has been a positive influence in his life. "It's kept me out of trouble."

Mike said car shows are popular places for car enthusiasts to take their sons.

The idea for the car show came after the Petrillos had put on a car show in August and had gotten a lot of positive feedback, Mike said.

Pleased with the turnout, Dustin said he thought it could be possible to put on a bigger show the next time around.

To sell everyone on the idea, Dustin had custom T-shirts with "American Muscle Machines, Inc." made.

"I thought it made it sound cool," Dustin said.

The two men created the company for the sole purpose of getting the car show off the ground.

"It's going to be a family event put on by a family," Mike said.

There will be more than 1,000 hotrods, custom and classic muscle cars. The show will include vendors selling anything from car parts to motorized bar stools, and an apple pie-eating contest.

A portion of the proceeds from the show will go to Mission Solano, a local center for the homeless, to fund its Bridge to Life Center, Mike said.

Muscle cars always will hold a special place in America's history, Mike said, and he hopes the show can capture the essence of times gone by.

Dustin agreed, and said muscle cars have a timeless appeal.

"These cars represented a revolution in ingenuity," he said. "America loves things that go fast, whether you're talking about cars or planes or whatever."

Dustin also said he and his father have been lucky that their line of work is so similar to what they love to do.

"It's cool that me and my dad get to do this business endeavor and it's something we really care about," he said.
