



Anne Brodie

On Movies

## Batman prequel a literate surprise

### BATMAN BEGINS

Starring Christian Bale, Katie Holmes,  
Michael Caine, Gary Oldman, Morgan Freeman  
and Liam Neeson.

Directed by Christopher Nolan

According to published reports, Warner Brothers spent \$100 million marketing this Batman outing. They might have saved their cash.

The film is a splendid surprise, a brilliant merging of talents from the literate and economical script to the mostly English cast. People would have come; build a Batmobile and they'll get in.

One niggling detail: the Batmobile looks like razor blades that fell out of a case and on to a magnet. It's weird in a bad way. While shooting scenes with the mobile in Chicago, a drunk driver crashed into it, telling police he thought it was an alien invader.

However, the rest is solid gold. Mr. Bale brings his out-there sensibilities to the part, giving us a new Batman, a human with a past, an intrigue and welcome freshness.

The film begins in a brutal Chinese prison high in the mountains where Gotham rich kid Bruce Wayne is an inmate.

He's sojourning all over the world looking for meaning in life. On his release, he follows orders from Neeson's character to climb a mountain with a mysterious blue flower.

Once at the top, he learns ju-jitsu, kung fu, blade throwing and other martial arts, developing his "super" senses under the tutelage of masters of those traditions.

He is asked what scares him most of all? Bats.

Once home in Gotham, he plans to use his skills to fight evil, as his parents used their money and influence before they were murdered in front of youthful, helpless eyes while leaving an opera.

He asks Wayne Enterprises inventor Freeman to create weaponry and armour for him, conjuring up a crime-fighting persona called Batman.

The script is a joy, bringing a new literary level to the world of super heroes.

It is the primary element that separates *Batman Begins* from previous Batman films.

See *CAST*, page 33.



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Nate Salter shows off the one-of-a-kind Sedan Delivery he custom built from a 1954 Plymouth in his Thornhill driveway. Customizing and restoring classic cars is not a cheap hobby. Mr. Salter has put together vehicles worth up to \$70,000 and that's with his own labour.

# CLASSICS MADE NEW

'PIMPING OUT RIDES' LONGSTANDING TRADITION FOR ANTIQUE COLLECTORS, RESTORERS

BY MARTIN DERBYSHIRE  
Staff Writer

**P**imp My Ride is the name of a TV show where cars destined for the wreckers are transformed into custom dreams.

It may also be the latest slang you use when asking a local auto shop to add an after-market spoiler, rims or the latest in DVD and LCD technology to your vehicle.

But pimpin' out rides is really nothing new.

Collectors and car enthusiasts have been restoring and customizing their wheels for decades.

From the garage of his Thornhill home, which looks more professional than most professional garages, Nate Salter has built a total of 28 custom cars with his bare hands.

The president of the Thornhill Cruisers, a group of custom and classic car owners who meet weekly to show off their rides, Mr. Salter simply loves cars.

And, oh yeah, people too. "It's a passion. I enjoy it. But it's not all about cars, it's about

people," he explained. "It's a social thing."

The cruisers started out with about 30 cars parked at Thornhill Square mall 11 years ago. Now their famous Mondays attract almost 350 custom cars and restorations every week to their new home at Bayview Glen Church at Steeles and Bayview avenues.

"And these cars are built to drive, they're not just toys," Mr. Salter said.

Despite the rain, Richmond Hill's Ken Greenbury, 63, showed up this past Monday.

## SHOW HIGHLIGHTS VINTAGE MOTORCYCLES

If two wheels are more your thing, check out the Fall Classic Motorcycle Show Sept. 18 in Richmond Hill.

The 13th annual show will be in the main building at Richmond Green on Elgin Mills Road at Leslie Street.

A special Vincent motorcycle display will feature a legendary 1951 Series C Black Shadow.

Club members will also be showing some of the finest vintage and classic

"We've been car buffs all our lives," he said. "And it's true, you do meet the nicest people. It's a lot of fun."

Friends, family and casual observers are always welcome at the Monday night cruise.

There's never an admission fee, although the cruisers are often collecting for their latest charitable or community cause.

Through 50/50 draws and other initiatives, they've collected cash for Hospice Thornhill, Participation House York Region and the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada, among others.

motorcycles in Canada.

The Thornhill Cruisers meet every Monday night at Bayview Glen Church, which was kind enough to provide a location after the expansion of Thornhill Square left the club homeless.

They are online at [www.thornhillcruisers.com](http://www.thornhillcruisers.com)

Concepts on Wheels is online at [www.conceptsonwheels.com](http://www.conceptsonwheels.com)

But it's really all about a bunch of guys standing over an engine, right?

Barbara Stanners, who brought her dad's old 1955 Cadillac, doesn't think so.

She has no trouble fitting into this old boys network.

"We don't just come along for the ride," she said of female cruisers. "We're into cars just as much. Always have been."

Customizing and restoring classic cars is not a cheap hobby.

Mr. Salter has put together vehicles worth up to \$70,000 and that's with his own labour.

It used to mean difficult searches through wrecking yards and flea markets for those rare and unique parts you need.

But the Internet has had an amazing impact on the pastime, making the toughest-to-find items just a click and a credit card away.

"eBay is fantastic," Mr. Salter said. "It's the best thing that ever happened to this hobby."

But doing it yourself isn't the

See *REVIVING*, page 33.

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