

# Revving up imports is latest auto trend

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only way to do it. If you want the flashy ride without getting your hands too dirty, Markham's Concepts on Wheels has everything you need or could imagine.

"We try to encourage our clients to come up with things," said Terry Cyr, Concept's VP of operations. "We want to be creative, artistic."

By combining restoration, machine and fabrication, trim, 12-volt, collision and paint shops and a warehouse full of textiles and auto parts under one roof, Concepts has become a one-stop shop for custom rides and restorations.

Clients are encouraged to bring in their cars so the company's experts can get a feel for them.

*'Most of the clients we have are extremely educated. They know what they want and how much it's going to cost. They've done the research.'*

Then the team sits down with their ideas and the client and creates a plan for the vehicle.

The size of the investment in a custom car is up to the individual, but it can be large, Mr. Cyr said.

Concepts staff has put more than 1,500 hours of labour into a 1973 Corvette in the shop and another 1,000 hours into a 1965 Impala. That much work, plus parts, can run into the \$50,000-plus range.

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Concepts does a lot of classic custom and restoration work, but a big part of its business these days is the tuners — heavily modified imports, mostly newer Honda and Hyundai models.

"The tuner market is popular because it's easy to get into. There's a minimal investment for entry," Mr. Cyr said.

The typical tuner owner is less than 30 and spends a lot of his cash on the "bling".

That includes custom engines and interiors, stereos, DVD players and anything else you can imagine.

They have newer, flashier cars with all the extras you can dream up, but are they really all that different from the Thornhill Cruisers?

"They're all just car enthusiasts," Mr. Cyr said. "This is just the next generation. But it is evolving."

The love for modified imports is really just a love of cars, he said.

Concepts has a 21-year-old customer with a 1969 Cadillac Fleetwood and a 23-year-old who brought in a 1963 Impala.

"Some people may disagree, but I can see the younger generation is getting into the cars of the 1960s and '70s," Mr. Cyr said. "They love cars. Period."

Mr. Salter agrees tuner owners are probably kindred spirits, although he doesn't think they respect the history of the classic cars and fears we may have lost a generation to the imports.

"They're really not doing anything I didn't do 40 years ago," he admitted.

Richmond Hill's Gord Maxey, 65, another Thornhill Cruiser, agreed.

"I guess we're not really all that different," he said. "These are the cars of our generation and those ones are theirs."

Mr. Cyr has always been partial to muscle cars, himself, but he understands the tuner generation.

"You can bet these same guys will be sitting around 20 years from now talking about how kids don't appreciate the classic cars and they weren't around when it all started," he laughed.



Gary Oldman (left), Michael Cane, Christian Bale, Morgan Freeman and Liam Neeson are among the stars in the Batman Begins prequel. The movie also features Katie Holmes.

# Cast perfect for Batman film

From page 32.

Gotham is a *Blade Runner* metropolis, crime is rampant and mobsters have infiltrated all levels of government.

Ms Holmes plays Bruce Wayne's childhood friend and romantic interest and he lets her in on his secrets, dreams and ambitions to thwart evil in Gotham.

Who better to play faithful manservant Alfred than Mr. Caine?

No one. Most of the movie was filmed in an airplane hangar in England and British

*This is the real thing. And there is plenty of room for sequels, judging by the ending.*

actors play most of the roles, including Cillian Murphy of *28 Days Later* and a host of character actors, many of whom appear in the wonderful crime caper *Layer Cake*.

Then there's the weight story.

Bale lost 60 pounds to play *The Machinist* two years ago, gaining it back and buffing and

bulking for *Batman Begins*.

That's commitment. But he is best, not as a muscle-bound fighting machine, but as a lonely wanderer, looking for redemption in the Chinese mountains.

That gives the film a gravity, spiritual aspect and humanity rarely seen in a superhero outing.

The other Batman films were cartoons; fun roller-coaster rides with bright colours and exaggerated drama.

This is the real thing. And there is plenty of room for sequels, judging by the ending.

That's great news.

## COMMUNITY DIGEST

### Yorkminster church organist featured at Markham recital

An organ recital takes place Friday at 12:30 p.m. at St. Andrew's United Church, 32 Main St. North in Markham.

The recital features William Maddox, organist and director of music at Yorkminster Park Baptist Church in Toronto.

Admission is free. For more information, call 905-294-0351.

### Games, prizes at carnival

Unionville Alliance Church holds its family carnival June 26 from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Activities include games, prizes, Nemo bouncer, slides, snow cones, food and more.

The church is at 4898 16th Ave. in Unionville. A \$7 wristband gives children access to all venues.

For more information, call 905-477-1104, ext. 214.

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