



Women in Custom

Part 2

WE BRING YOU THE SECOND PART OF OWEN'S FEATURE ON SOME OF THE GREAT WOMEN IN THE CUSTOM CAR SCENE AND HEAR ALL ABOUT THEIR STORIES, THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS AND, OF COURSE, SEE THE QUALITY OF THEIR WORK.

Trudy Camilleri, Cool Custom Restorations

Trudy is a qualified autobody repairer who will soon add spray-painting to her armoury. She specialises in restorations, custom builds and custom metal fabrication work, which she has been doing for over 15 years.

Trudy explains that she was "born into the industry". "It has been my lifestyle since I was born - being around cars, working in the shed, building them with Dad. Once I finished Year 10, I headed off to become an apprentice autobody repair technician at Campbelltown TAFE while working in my dad's business, Cool Custom Restorations. I never saw it as getting into it, as I never saw my life without cars or working on them; I just chose to make it a career choice."

Trudy just loves custom work, metal fabrication and restorations and

being able to build something for herself or for a customer and seeing and feeling the pure joy it can bring into someone's life. She loves the sound of an engine, the stance, the different personalities of builders and owners that come out in their builds, the craftsmanship, dedication, work - and the complexity of the industry itself. Most of all, she loves the fact it is a passion she can enjoy with her dad.

When asked about the future, Trudy is somewhat circumspect. "I will let that one run its course as I choose to be open minded these days, but hopefully it will be a happy one, around my cars, my teaching, my industry and my dad making good memories and some sick, kick-ass builds."

She also reflects on the future of the industry and believes it can go a couple of ways. "I feel the restorations and custom car scene will continuously grow, with more and



Trudy Camilleri.

more students interested in that field. Regarding the collision repair side, I see it becoming more specialised, being broken up into specific categories." Trudy even believes there will be more and more shops specialising in certain models and brands rather than working on whatever comes in the door. "Either way, in both smash and restorations, I can just see it growing. It is becoming more technical, more complex builds - it is very exciting."

Trudy is an autobody repair technician teacher at TAFE NSW, although she works for herself or with her dad between TAFE terms. Her message to all the enthusiasts out there is: "If you like cars and you want to undertake a trade in anything automotive, just do it! I see too many people shy away just by the thought of what someone else may say or think. Stand up and have a go. Only you will know if it's for you or if it's not. Just be happy doing what you do and give it all you got."



Trudy's fully restored '59 Cadillac..

Michelle Davies, Davies Racing

Although born in New Zealand, Michelle grew up on a five-acre property in southwest Sydney. She was “a bit of a tomboy”, riding dirt bikes with her brother and his mate, Gareth, who is now her husband. Michelle learned to drive on the farm.

Michelle always liked fast cars, being in control of course, not the passenger. There were many nights when she wondered how she ever made it home and never lost her licence. “Over the years, Gareth built many streetcars, which was – and still is – a huge part of our life. In 2005, I became ill and Gareth decided I needed a distraction and the rest, as they say, is history. We’ve gone faster and faster from car to car ever since.” Davies Racing is a Pro Slammer team with Michelle at the wheel of a pink 1967 Mustang. She is currently the fastest female Pro Slammer driver in Australian

history. Michelle is also still the world’s fastest female on a 10.5” tyre.

For Michelle, it’s a family affair that keeps them focused and together, although she admits there have been some really difficult times in the sport. They always seem to be able to brush it off and get back to where they were and start again. “It’s nice when we have a smooth-running day, come home without any damage and have learned something new. It’s awesome being competitive and now even better knowing we aren’t that far away from playing with the big boys at the other end of the spectrum – hopefully winning a meeting or even a championship – who knows?”

Looking ahead, Michelle is sure there’ll always be cars involved, whether drag cars or nice streetcars, she’s not quite sure. She just loves spending time away with her best mate and husband Gareth, and looks

forward to some nice holidays as they grow old together. Michelle tells us that her boys both have cool streetcars. One has a naturally aspirated 383 Chev-driven car, and the other has a twin-turbo LS set up, while Gareth is currently building a nice streetcar.

Michelle’s “day job” is in the aged care sector, where she visits the elderly in their homes and assists them with their personal care, domestic tasks, shopping, providing respite for their family members. “I absolutely love it, although it’s a constant reminder that we’re all going to clock off at some stage of our lives. I just hope whenever my time comes, I’ll have my family supporting me.”

Finally, Michelle cannot speak highly enough of Gareth and says he is the best husband and father to their two boys, Jake and Brody. “Gareth is so passionate in everything he does – close enough is not good enough. He is loyal, trustworthy and just a downright great man.”



Michelle Davies with sons Brody and Jake and husband Gareth.



Michelle doing what she does best.

Jasmine Green, Maskell's Customs and Classics

Interestingly, Jasmine says she has always been creative but was never really a car person. That was until she

went looking for her first car. Her partner, Michael, had a lowered Toyota Hilux that she thought was pretty cool, so she decided this was for her too. “I wanted to customise it after

being influenced by the minitruck movement; I wanted to have a go at doing things myself.”

Jasmine had spent 10 years making coffees at the local cafe and learning



Jasmine Green.



How low can you go.



how to build her car in her spare time. There was a lot of trial and error, and the truck was built about three times until she got it right. "I have since built the chassis, shaped and welded the custom sheet metal, installed and wired up the LS1 engine, worked on the bodywork, and even 3D designed and printed parts and painted the truck."

In 2020, Jasmine won the Laurie Starling scholarship and the opportunity pushed her to pursue her dream of learning how to trim car interiors. She had previously tried to get into the trade and failed as it was very difficult to find work locally. At the awards night for the

scholarship, she met Greg Maskell, and he offered her the opportunity to commence an apprenticeship in trimming through his shop.

Shortly after she resigned from her cafe job, she joined the team at Maskell's Customs and Classics in Shepparton as an apprentice auto trimmer. "I am now in the second year of the apprenticeship and have since completed the interior in the truck in time for its first show at Summernats 34. I take pride in having built the truck myself, even though it's not perfect." One look at Khaos 1 and you would never know it - what a great build!

Jasmine is very happy working at Maskells as she is not only doing the trim work but also doing custom sheet metal work, which she really enjoys. One day, she just might do some custom work at home.

She sees the car industry incorporating more technology as it moves into the future, with more 3D design and prototyping, especially in the custom car scene. "I have begun using a 3D printer at home and at work to make both end-use and prototype components. In trimming specifically, it's proving very convenient to print something to be trimmed for consistency, accuracy and efficiency."

Britney Kilby, Hi-octane Hammertime

From her earliest years, Britney has loved anything automotive: drag racing, supercars and car shows of all descriptions. But there was something about attending her first burnout show at Kandos that really hit the spot. "The whole atmosphere, the vibe - it was so unreal. Brad and I have attended each year religiously, and we became regulars at Summernats - when we were old enough to experience the slushies!"

One day in late 2015, while browsing a Facebook buy, swap and sell page, they saw a Daihatsu Feroza with a Holden 304 come up for sale. "That very afternoon, we became the proud owners of our very first 'skid car'. A few modifications and a new paint job (satin black enamel with a dose of 'we don't know what we're doing') and it was ready to hit the pad."

At Kandos 2016, Britney was all revved up and ready to become one of those awesome people they had watched for many years. However, after giving the

walls a few touch-ups, the day didn't quite go to plan. "I was ready to quit and stay on the other side of the fence and leave Brad to have all the fun." However, they returned to Kandos in 2017, and Britney gave it another shot. "This time, I snapped an axle, but I got a tyre off, which was enough to convince me to reconsider. That was when Brad and I decided we needed something bigger and better."

Hammertime 2.0 build commenced. They ended up with an LS1-powered monster truck and travelled to almost every burnout comp they could and had the time of their lives. "Soon enough though, the tired old LS1 wasn't cutting it, so we reached out to North Vic Engines in Cobram for a fresh LS LQ9 403 'hot off the press' for Summernats 2019, our ultimate goal comp. But we just kept moving the bar and set another goal, to both make it into the Burnout Masters in 2022, which we did - what a blast!"

Britney has worked at the Supercheap Auto in Bathurst for 10 years, which has made a definite impact on her love for all things

automotive. "Being able to source parts and products at my fingertips and sharing advice and passion with customers makes for an awesome work environment. Ironically, if I could go back and change one thing, I'd have started sooner. We call it the 'Burnout family' for good reason - the people we've met and the memories we've made while doing what we love has made this an unforgettable journey."

Britney thinks that the future of the sport is only going to get bigger. "We see more and more kids attending - and loving it! They are the future. Our own two kids live for it! It was only recently my little girl said, 'Mum, it's in my blood'. That alone was enough for us to keep the passion alive in our family."



Owen is a leading figure within the auto re-styling and vehicle modification industry and a Lifetime Achievement Award inductee. He is Technical and Training Manager at Concept Paints.



Burnout Brit.



Brit and Brad on Hammertime.