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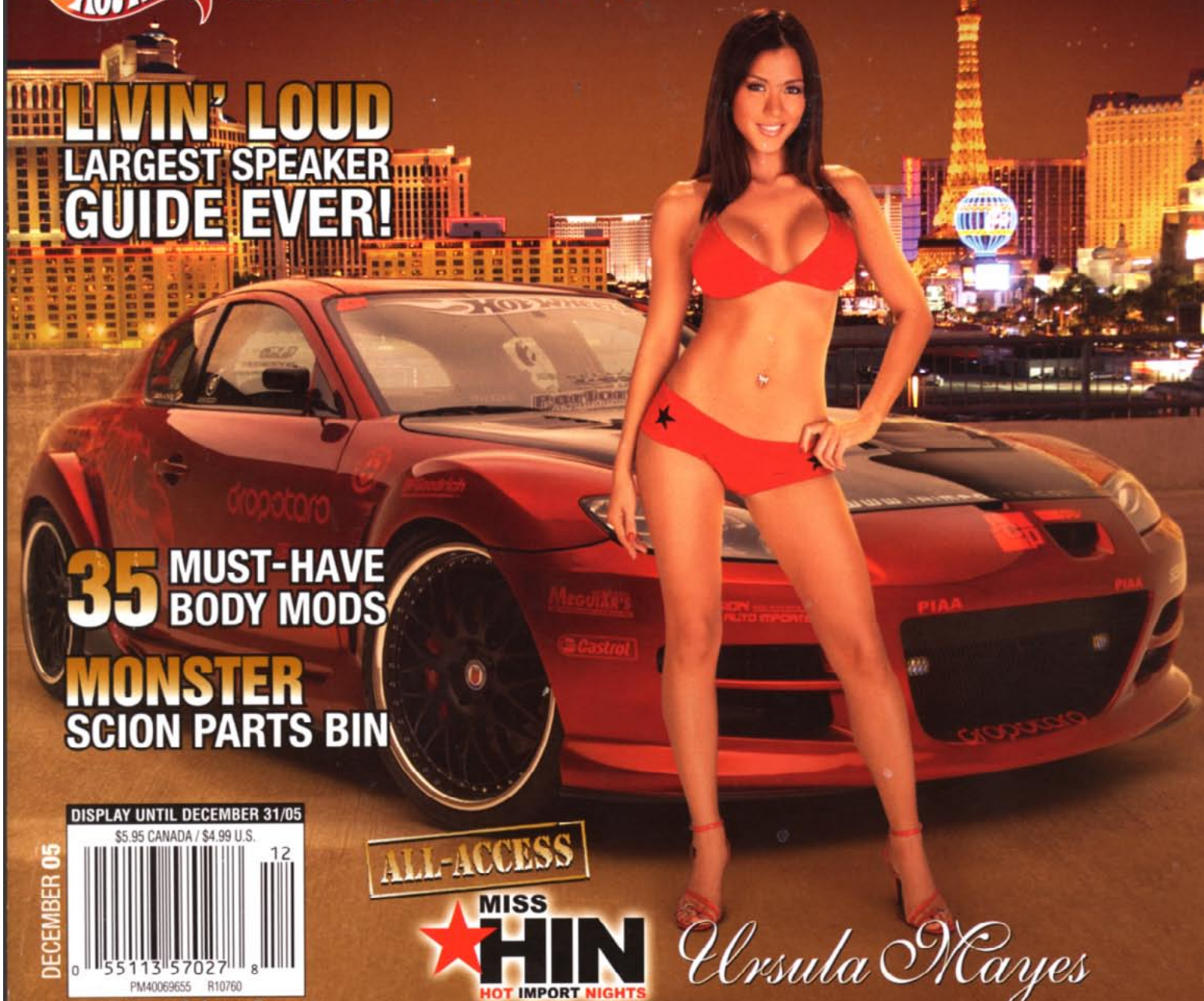


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HOT IMPORT NIGHTS

Ursula Hayes

IRON Giant

Text by Paul Rachwal // Photos by RCH Designs

When everybody is attempting to out-bling one another, it's refreshing to see a vehicle that really goes against the grain. Brian Sherman, Director of Marketing for Illusion Audio, is certainly no rookie when it comes to the mobile audio scene and creating vehicles that stand out from the crowd.

Although Illusion Audio is a relative newcomer to the mobile entertainment scene, Sherman's 2004 Nissan Titan LE clearly proves they mean business. The Titan acts primarily as a demonstration platform for Illusion products, but also doubles as daily transportation and a hauler for his five-year-old son, his kart and the family dog.

Sherman picked the tough-looking Titan because he feels it offers more style than other full-size trucks. But to offset his truck's styling from others like it – it is after all, a production truck – he drove it over to Drew Brothers Customs (DBC) in nearby Chandler, AZ. There, Rob Drew did his magic and de-chromed the Titan's body. Thanks to the lack of any outrageous body pieces, the truck certainly looks like it came from the dealer and largely goes unnoticed to the untrained eye, but those in the know can't help but stare at the Titan's new face. The grille inserts were replaced with finer mesh pieces from GrillCraft, rounding off changes to the body.

Apart from getting rid of the chrome, Sherman

had huge Foose Speedster 6 rollers fitted onto his ride. How big are they, you ask? A full 24 inches in diameter, coupled with a 10-inch width, to put down a seriously generous footprint. That footprint is the unusual mark left behind by the BFGoodrich g-Force T/A rubber, and this particular set carries a 305/35-24 dimension. Ride quality obviously wasn't a big issue considering the smooth Arizona roads, so Sherman dropped the Titan with the help of Street Beat Customs – another Arizona-based shop – and their Titan drop kit that replaces all the factory-issue springs. Urethane bushings from Energy Suspension replace the soft standard ones, giving the big pick-up a stiffer, sportier ride.





Braking was upgraded modestly, with the standard 13-inch discs getting replaced with cross-drilled and slotted units of the same size. Standard calipers put the squeeze on, and Goodridge braided lines are filled with Valvoline Synpower synthetic brake fluid to battle brake fade. Under the hood, Sherman restrained himself, leaving the upgrades to ones that won't compromise Nissan's legendary reliability and leave Sherman and his family stranded in the hot Arizona desert.

DBC was also entrusted to help out in this department, fitting JBA ceramic-coated headers, a Random Technologies catalytic converter and Bassani cat-back exhaust, all capped off by a 3.5-inch Bassani tip. Sherman's goal was to have an exhaust that performed well without the noise. "This combination isn't much louder than stock. It has a nice rumble and lets you know when you've got your foot in it," he says. An Airaid intake completes the breathing upgrades.

Despite his reservations, a dual stage Nitrous Express nitrous system did find its way under the hood to boost the 5.6-litre engine's standard 305hp output.

But the real changes, as you may have guessed, are found in the cab.

Sherman took the truck to Sound Xpression in Phoenix, AZ and only gave the install team one

mandate: retain daily comfort and usability of the interior and as much as possible of the factory look. Then he gave them 12 speakers and enough amps to make 2,800W of power.

Xpression's Dave Clark and Jeff Hempleman took the request seriously and spent two weeks to get it ready in time for last year's SEMA show. They certainly had their work cut out for them, however, considering there isn't a strand of stock wiring anywhere in the truck. Starting up front, a Kenwood DDX7015 head unit controls the action.

From there, the signal travels to the digital purgatory in the form of the Audio Control DQS digital equalizer, before hitting its next stop at three heavy-duty MB Quart amplifiers mounted on the back wall of the cab, behind the seat. There is an RAA1000, flanked by a pair of RAA4200s. These blocky powerhouses look as solid as bunkers, and their claustrophobic location can't make them overheat thanks to their overbuilt cooling fans.

These bricks power a range of skinny drivers, picked to eat up as little space as possible in the cab. The two Illusion Audio Nd 12i woofers are 12s mounted in a 2-cubic foot sealed enclosure that resides under the seat. This arrangement was made possible as the drivers feature an unbelievably shallow 3.25-inch mounting depth and still belt out 400WRMS.

For a kicking front stage, each front door holds Illusion's Carbon Series midbass Nd 8i, rated at 100WRMS and sporting an 8-inch cone, while the dash speaker location is now home to a pair of Carbon Series Nd 1t tweeters. With each driver getting its own channel, this thing pounds.

For rear fill that is rarely needed with that monster front stage, the Xpression crew worked an Nd 6.1i component set into the rear doors.

For an uninterrupted current flow, Sherman used Lightning Audio's huge SCC40 40-farad capacitor. Hardware includes a Lightning LSFHANL2 fuse holder and the main power wire is the thickest they come, PWC1-0.

For video and keeping his young son entertained, Sherman had a couple of Rockford Fosgate screens installed into the headrests to display the output of the Sony PlayStation2 mounted elsewhere in the truck.

As you can see, the work on this truck was subtle yet evokes a sense of power, solidity and uniformity. This Titan is unlike any other you see on the roads, and especially different from the examples sitting on dealer lots. Sherman would like to thank everyone who helped in the build-up of the truck, and hopes his wife reads this far to get the hint as the truck can tow a trailer once he gets his own kart, to see if he can keep up to his son. **PAS**

