

SHERMAN Tank

Inspired by German style and sound, Brian Sherman arms his MB Quart Audi A4 demo vehicle with an arsenal of sound and fury.

BY BRETT SOLOMON

PHOTOS BY ROB HEPNER

>> EMBRACE YOUR BRAND

THE BASICS OF ESTABLISHING BRAND IDENTITY

Nike is cool, Red Bull is fun and hip, and Harley-Davidson speaks to the rebellious soul.

While each is unique, their commonality is strong brand identity. There may be shoes, energy drinks and motorcycles that perform (or taste) better, yet each of the brands has found a way to make an emotional connection with its target market. **Has yours?**

Regardless of what you're selling, effective branding creates a demand that goes beyond the products themselves. Establishing a brand identity requires corporate soul-searching to determine the following:

> **What your company values about itself — does your corporate culture value innovation? Shaking up the status quo? Setting trends? Putting quality first?** Get a line on your company's "stance," and build off of it.

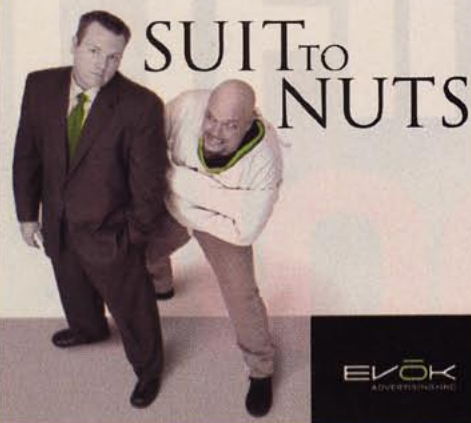
> **What is the "story" of your brand?** The Banana Republic clothing store chain began with a single store and a catalog that attracted customers by providing a description linking each garment with an exotic locale. Making a purchase gave customers a vicarious bit of adventure in addition to enhancing their wardrobe.

> **How you see your company's role in fulfilling your customers' emotional needs?** — after all, a motorcycle is just a mode of transportation - try telling that to a Harley owner.

> **What basic message do you want your brand to convey?** Nike's "Just do it" directly addresses an active lifestyle. One sentence - focused message.

Once you've determined what your brand is about, stay consistent. Building a brand requires time. Embrace your brand and consumers will embrace you.

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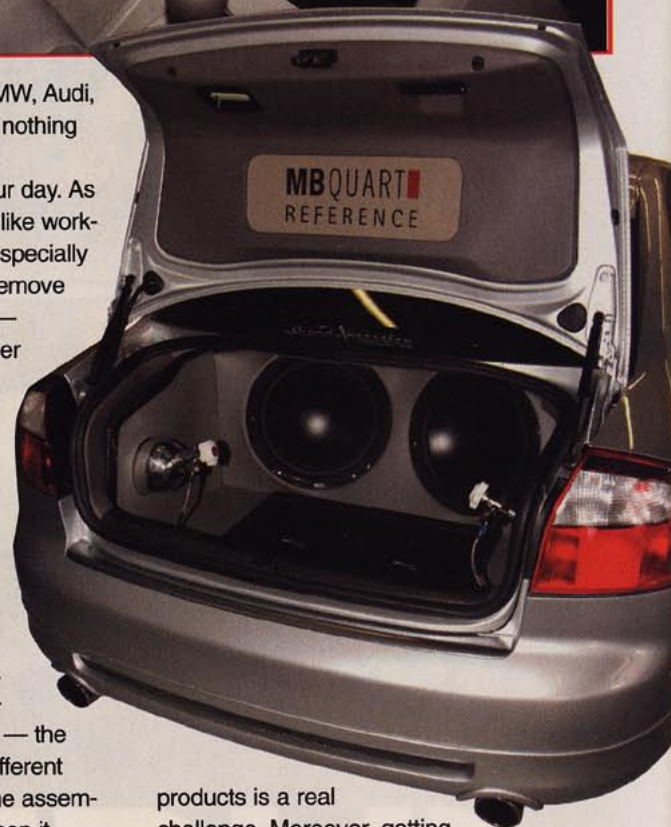
SHERMAN Tank



Porsche, Mercedes, BMW, Audi, MB Quart — there's nothing like a little Teutonic

Engineering to spice up your day. As an installer, there's nothing like working on a German vehicle (especially trying to figure out how to remove elaborate door panel clips — sometimes it would be easier if everything were put together like GM snap-it-together Lego). Cursing from door panel labor aside, German Engineering has always been among the highest with regards to statistical quality control, that's why MB Quart has been such a respected automobile loud-speaker for so many years — the sonic differences among different speakers taken off the same assembly line are minimal. So, when it came time for the guys at MB Quart to show off their latest loudspeakers, amplifiers, and head units (YES-Quart is finally marketing radios!) with respectable price points, they decided the only logical German vehicle is the Audi A4. After all, it fits the bill as a sport compact, but its German engineering and kick-ass Audi rally reputation makes it the ideal place to enjoy the Quart sound.

The goal of getting audiophile sound using middle-price-point level



products is a real challenge. Moreover, getting the car to look tough without becoming too obtrusive is a bigger one.

"When you look at this Audi, you really don't get the sense that it's overdone or that anything is out of place," states Brian Sherman, Brand Marketing Manager, MB Quart. "It might sound crazy, but it was tougher to accomplish a clean and simple look than one that's all 'blinged' out. Using our mid-level Reference Series products allowed us to show people that you really can have it all

SHERMAN Tank

on a budget. The gear in this car retails for about \$3500. That may sound like a lot but put in perspective, people spend that much money on a typical video system for their car. That video system doesn't sound better or play louder. I think that everyone thinks 'BIG DOLLARS' when we talk about MB Quart. This system shows the value side of our brand. World-class sound quality, great output, and bulletproof German engineered products backed by a three-year warranty."

Sherman entrusted the installation to David Clark and Jeff Hempleman at Sound Xpression in Phoenix, AZ. He wanted to dispel the notion that although MB Quart makes phenomenal midrange and high frequency drivers, they don't do large-bore subwoofers. In fact, MB Quart makes the RWE352 15-inch subwoofer that can stand up to the best of em'.

"Jeff and Dave tackled this project head-on," notes Sherman. "The toughest part for them was staying true to the look of the car. Nowadays, everyone builds a giant fiberglass sculpture of a box and paints it. In my opinion, that's not original anymore. Building the system to look like they did it at Audi's factory in Ingolstadt, Germany was the goal on this project. The SEMA buzz word for this is 'OEM PLUS.' The key OEM element that was carried through the entire

MUCH THANKS...

- Brian Sherman would like to thank the following people:
- Dan Hunter at MB QUART for his help in planning the system.
- Mark Bruno at Lightning Audio for wire and caps.
- Tom O'Mara with Omnifi for 10,000 songs at my fingertips.
- Chris Kane at Audio Control for making great sound even better.
- Jeff and Dave at Sound Xpression for giving Bruno such a hard time.
- Shawn Baumgartner at Unorthodox Racing for finding horsepower where no one else can.
- Dan Gardner at Landspeed USA for the hookup on the Landspeed/Caractere body kit.
- Vincent Wong at I-Forged for an unbelievable set of wheels.
- Jack Cummings with Dunlop for the stickiest tires I've ever owned.
- Bryan at ECS Tuning for the whiplash I got from my new brakes.
- Kelli Willimore for the mellow sounds brought to you by B&B TriFlo.
- Bryan Monjazebe at B&G Suspension for a tight ride.
- Dave Dyson at Custom Performance Products for helping make the A4 turn better.
- Brian Fox at Fox Marketing for being such a pain in the ass.
- Tony Ricci at PES Tuning for an extra 120 horsepower.
- Brian Havins at Nitrous Express for "the juice."
- My wife Karen and son Brody, because if I didn't mention them you know what would happen!
- And last, but not least, the entire staff at Evolution Motorsports for putting it all together!



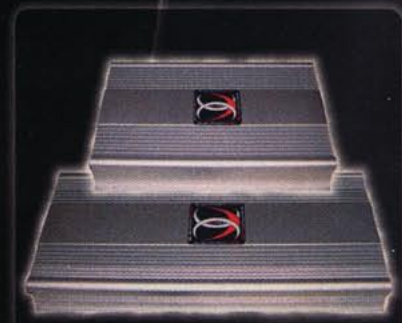
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installation was the factory gunmetal trim used on the dash and doors. Jeff and Dave shaped wood to match the contours of these parts. Then they were painted to match and used in the trunk to separate the dark and light vinyl just like they do on the interior. On top of that, the radio mount was custom fabricated to achieve the same look. The AutoMeter gauges we chose use the same satin finish that the stock gauges use. Jeff and Dave reverse-mounted the gauges in order to achieve the same look as stock. Lastly, they took a piece of the factory radio trim and built it into their radio mount to ensure that everything matched that factory look."

The stock head unit was swapped out with a piece from MB Quart's marine line. The NRA450, according to Sherman, "was the perfect complement to the styling of the Audi dash."

Although the unit was designed for the marine market, we hope the only water-resistance challenge the head unit will

get would be from a Slurpee that gets sling-shotted to the dashboard with the help of an insane ECS Tuning Stage 4 Porsche Cayenne front brake kit, complete with six-piston caliper and 14-inch rotors, ECS Tuning rear stainless brake line kit, and ECS Tuning slotted and

cross-drilled rear rotors.

A neat piece connected to the head unit is the DMP1 MP3 system with 20 GB hard drive that can suck up songs stored in your computer wirelessly. After the signal leaves the head unit, it travels to a pair of MB Quart amplifiers, an RAA1000



INSTALLATION TEAM

David Clark and Jeff Hempleman of Sound Xpression, 3702 E Roeser Road #8, Phoenix, AZ 85040. Tel:602-438-0352. E-mail: info@soundxpression.com. Web: www.soundxpression.com

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SHERMAN Tank

monoblock doling out 1000 watts to the 15-inch subs and a RAA4100 4 x 100-watt stereo amplifier bi-amped to front speakers. Rather than go with elaborate speaker locations throughout the car, the team thought simpler would be better. So, just a lone pair of RCE216 6.5-inch changeable speaker systems are mounted as separates in the OEM locations in the front doors. Tuning these speakers to make sure every nuance of the music is captured is an AudioControl DQS 1/3-octave stereo equalizer. The digital dashboard controller linked to the DQS makes tuning a snap.

"Jeff and Dave worked on the install for about two weeks," explains Sherman. "The good news is that there's only about three hours worth of tuning into the car and it sounds great. That's what MB Quart is all about!"

Linking the system together is a slew of Lighting Audio wiring and a Lighting Audio SCC40 40 Farad carbon capacitor with integrated distribution block.

Since the trunk in this vehicle was so small, a large box was out of the question, but everyone involved wanted to use 15-inch woofers. The installers came up with 2.4 available cubic feet.

"The enclosure is well below the recommended volume and is a very tight fit," explains Sherman. "Putting 15's in

expect from MB Quart."

Setting off the exterior of the Audi are incredible body-tuning components from Landspeed/Caractere. A new front bumper, front grille, side skirts, spoiler, and rear valance were painted and fitted to the car for a euro-smooth look. The car looks real tough riding on I-Forged Retro brushed finished rims riding shod in Dunlop SP Sport 9000s.

Looking the part is one thing, but this Audi is also designed to haul ass. A PES Tuning T28 turbo upgrade is the centerpiece of the hard-working 1.8. An Evolution Motorsports front-mount chiller gets extra-frosty courtesy of a Nitrous Express Ntercooler kit. Unorthodox Racing was summoned to take care of finding some extra power with an Ultra S street crank pulley and hooking that power to the wheels using an Ultra L/G aluminum flywheel and bronze clutch combo. A B&B TriFlo turbo back stainless exhaust system sounds great and allows the engine to exhale easier.

The Audi was definitely a successful project car that shows what you can offer to some of your customers without going into the big dollar stratosphere.

"The Audi will continue to tour the country promoting MB Quart," states



WHAT'S INSIDE

Head Unit: MB QUART NRA450 AM/FM/CD/MP3 player, Omnifi DMP1 MP3 system with 20 GB hard drive

Speakers: MB QUART RCE216 6.5-inch changeable speaker system

Subwoofers: MB QUART RWE352 (2) 15-inch sub-woofer

Subwoofer Amplifier: MB QUART RAA1000 1000-watt mono

Front Stage Amplifier: MB QUART RAA4100 4 x 100 watt stereo amplifier

EQ: Audio Control DQS third octave stereo equalizer

Capacitor: Lightning Audio SCC40 40-Farad carbon capacitor with integrated distribution

Power And Signal Wire: Lightning Audio

Exterior Styling

Landspeed/Caractere CAR0005 front bumper, CAR0009 rear spoiler, CAR0008 front grill, CAR0012 side skirts, CAR0011 sedan roof spoiler, CAR0021 rear valance; Kamei headlight eyebrows

Interior Styling

Autometer Carbon Series gauges

Wheels And Tires

19 x 8 front I-Forged Retro, brushed finish, 19 x 10 rear I-Forged Retro, brushed finish; 235x35x19 Dunlop SP Sport 9000, 245x35x19 Dunlop SP Sport 9000

Brakes

ECS Tuning Stage 4 Porsche Cayenne front brake it with six piston caliper and 14-inch rotors; ECS Tuning rear stainless brake line kit; ECS Tuning slotted and cross-drilled rear rotors (match to front rotors)

Suspension

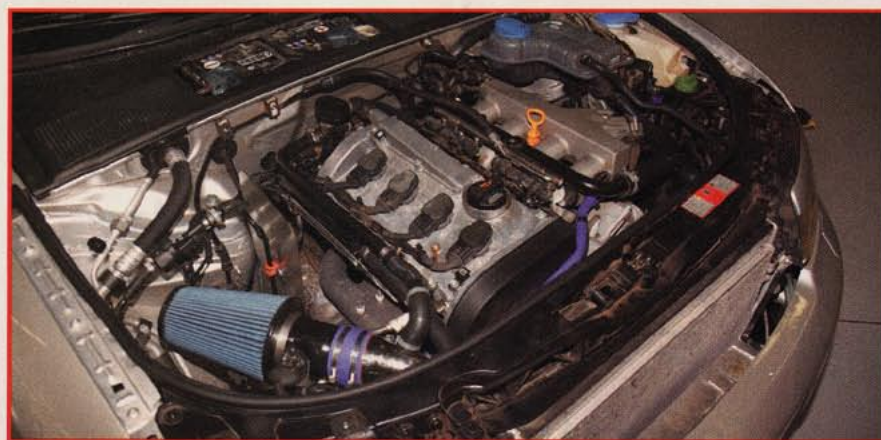
B&G Suspension full coilover kit; Custom Performance Products front upper control arms, rear toe links

Exhaust

B&B TriFlo turbo back stainless exhaust

Engine Performance

PES Tuning T28 Turbo System; Evolution Motorsports #EBDV18 billet diverter valve, #ICOA418FM02 front mount intercooler; Unorthodox Racing #0214106 Ultra S street crank pulley, #161400612 Ultra L/G aluminum flywheel bronze clutch; GIAC ECU Tuning by Evolution Motorsports; Nitrous Express Ntercooler intercooler spray system with dual polished tanks.



anything seems to be a great deal of work, but at the same time, is well worth the effort. One listen and you'll appreciate the benefits of a larger woofer. Yet again, [using these size subs] this is something that someone would not

Sherman. "Check it out at some of the Formula D drift competitions. We'll also be driving out to NOPI in September. The car will be in the MB QUART booth at the show. Then we'll be at the SEMA show in Las Vegas in November."