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VIVID RACING- Pepsi Mazda RX-8

Part 3 - The Final Chapter

Story **Dan Mermelstein** Photos **Jason Siu**

I guess it is pretty surreal when you are driving to Las Vegas towing the project car you just built for the industry's biggest show. Looking in the rear view mirror wondering, "Will it be a hit, will sponsors like it, and what did I do wrong?" Loading the car on the trailer was the first sign of completion for us at Vivid Racing in debuting the Pepsi Mazda RX-8, but it certainly is not the end of the road.

Project cars don't just get built, get driven, and then get sold. You have to put down some serious marketing behind the car to make your sponsors happy and more importantly, feel like you have succeeded in your task at hand. Our goal from day one was to build a radical Mazda RX-8 that represented the Pepsi brand, Vivid Racing style, and gain the attention of today's automotive enthusiast.

When the car first landed at the Vivid

Headquarters, we were definitely intimidated by the project that lay ahead of us. This was to be a big project for Vivid Racing and would prove our talents and capabilities. Through the initial artist drawings by John Crimmins, we strived to make this as realistic as possible. By creating an early rendering, we were able to give sponsors a taste of the reality to come. Like all Vivid Racing cars, we wanted to have a great handling car. Working with JIC

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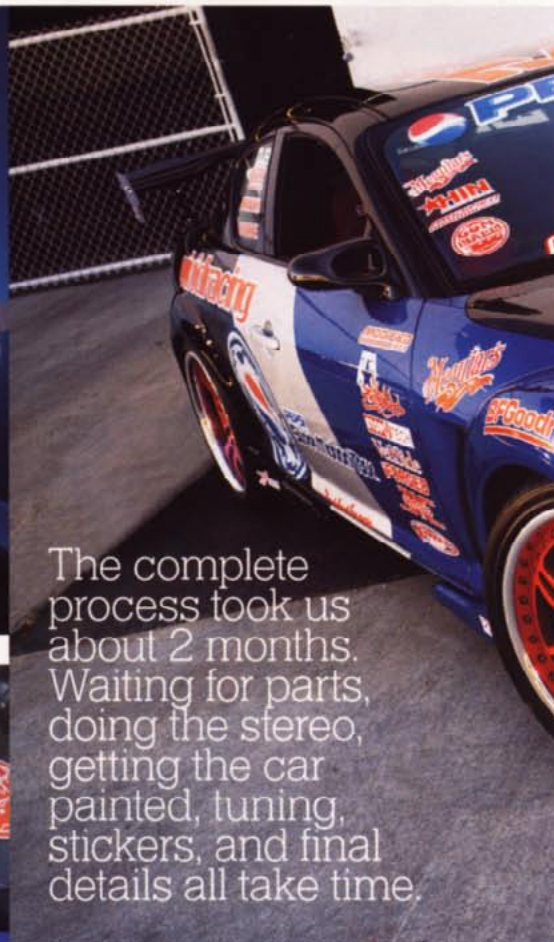
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TECH



The complete process took us about 2 months. Waiting for parts, doing the stereo, getting the car painted, tuning, stickers, and final details all take time.

and Agency Power, we were able to dial the car in with a great setup. We wanted more horsepower for our RX-8, and by forcing air in the RX-8's motor with a GReddy Turbo Kit, we got it. We wanted race style, and with a full Autopower roll cage, StopTech big brakes, Bride racing seats, and IForged 19-inch wheels, we got it. We wanted fashion and aerodynamics, and by adding our VeilSide D1GT body kit, Seibon Carbon Hood, and APR Carbon Wing, we found it. Lastly we wanted to rip around the track with some serious beats, and by dropping in Rockford Fosgate products installed by Sound Xpression here in Arizona; we made sure it could break windows.

As we continued towing the RX-8 to Vegas behind our big diesel Ford F350 truck, the

anxiety was building up to know what would happen from here. We reached the Las Vegas Convention Centre and unloaded the car to the crew at DUB where the car would be displayed with their Magnums, Hummers, Ferraris, and more. The first response from the team that would be trucking and displaying the car around the country for HIN was shock and awe. They had only seen pictures but in person they were impressed. After handing over the keys, we loaded back up into the F350 and drove back five hours to Phoenix. Yes we were in Vegas for less than 30 minutes! We waited to hear word of how the car was doing at SEMA until we went back up to the show. Everyday we received phone calls and emails from people that saw the car at the show and were simply, how do you say, STOKED!

As we built the car, we wanted to show the public what building a project car was like. We documented each day's work with pictures and a write up on our website at www.vividracing.com. In addition to the coverage here in Modified, promotional material from Hot Import Nights, and the features on Pepsi.com, we were able to create hype on this build. The complete process took us about two months. Waiting for parts, doing the stereo,

PEPSI RX-8



getting the car painted, tuning, stickers, and final details all took time. We did miss two HIN shows for 2005, but 2006 is the year Vivid Racing will break dreams and crush hearts.

Once any car or work is complete, you always look back and think about what you would change. A lot of guys said the bodykit, some said the wheels, and other said the paint. To those guys... thanks for the opinions! With time permitting, there would be a couple of serious changes we would have done. First,



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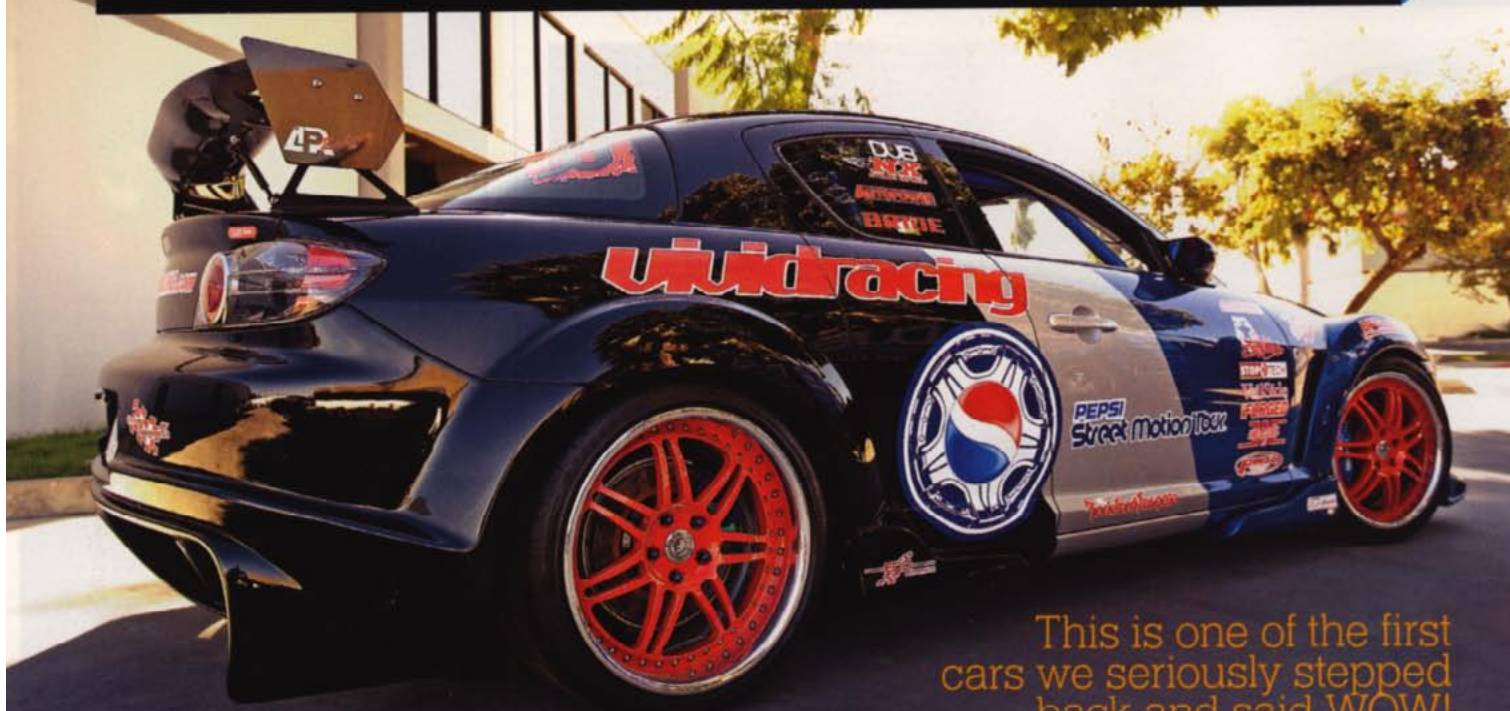
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This is one of the first cars we seriously stepped back and said WOW! The way the car came together, the inspiration behind it, and the performance was near perfect.

we would have like to have done a custom wide body. This would have allowed us to do wider tires which would give the car better handling and look much meaner. Second, if we could have, we would have rather put the 20B RX-7 motor with a big turbo for huge power gains and performance. The GReddy turbo kit does the job, as the stock RX-8's power is lacking, however, the gains from a motor swap would have made this car untouchable in all three principles of racing. Lastly, a different paint job would have made us a bit more satisfied. Our original intentions were to have the three colors fade in the middle. We did this at first, but it looked like a couple of rattle cans were used on the car. So we gave it clean straight lines. The colors we choose were perfect and the black roof helped our sponsor Tribal Gear stand out. Hey, maybe next time we can have House of Kolor help out, right guys? Overall, Vivid Racing has produced plenty of big cars that have graced many magazines. This is one of the first cars we seriously stepped back and said WOW! The way the car came together, the inspiration behind it, and the performance was near perfect.

Now this might be the last article for the Vivid Racing Pepsi RX-8 in Modified Magazine, but our circus does not stop here. With this project comes numerous responsibilities. To serve our sponsors, including Pepsi, we have many obligations. This RX-8 will be on tour for the 2006 Hot Import Nights



tour around the country. It will go from event to event in the DUB semi truck appearing at such special venues as concerts, mall displays, car clubs, and parking lot events. You might find this car in a future video game, TV show, and maybe

even some overseas magazines. Our main goal is to fulfill our obligations and gain notoriety for Pepsi and the import car culture we live in today. But as enthusiasts, vehicle builders, and business people, we simply do it for the love. ■