

PRO-FORMANCE

UNLIMITED:

Our Local Crate Engine Specialists

By Frank Adkins

In the past, building an engine for your car first meant having to find a suitable core engine. Next, you had to decide on the performance level you hoped to achieve, then select the camshaft, pistons, intake manifold, carburetor, headers, etc., that would allow the engine to live up to your expectations. You also had to team up with a trustworthy machine shop to recondition the internals of your core engine. Finally, when it all came together (usually several thousand dollars later) your new engine ran just as you thought it would, provided you'd done your homework, received only good advice, and nothing went wrong along the way. And if you weren't satisfied with the performance, you began swapping out parts in hopes of achieving your goal.

Most of us who have done it agree that building an engine from scratch is not for the inexperienced or faint of heart. Few hobbyists will build more than a handful of engines in their lifetimes, and nearly all try to stay within a budget. Wouldn't it be nice if somebody else would handle these headaches and put together a winning combination the first time? No doubt: that's why crate engines are so popular today.

A crate engine is just what the term implies—a complete engine packaged in a crate. There is no guesswork. You drop it into your car, hook it up, tune it, and go!

One area shop specializes in crate engines—Pro-Formance Unlimited, Inc., located at 23 Cindy Lane in Ocean Township, N.J. Recently I spoke with Doug Mascaritola, the owner. "I started building engines in my family's machine shop when I was thirteen. I'm 49 now," Doug says. Doug honed his craft over many years, and for a time he traveled the country as a crewmember of a successful drag race team. Finally, nearly a decade ago, he struck out on his own and opened his shop.

Today his five-man crew, which includes his son Doug Jr., operates in a 4,000-square-foot-facility. According to Doug Sr., "The first thing that impresses people is how clean the shop is. We do motors for customers all over the world. All of our machine work is done in-house, and we do installations, too." Doug and his crew take photos of each engine during the various phases of its build-up, and when it's finished the customer is given a CD with the images. Pro-Formance Unlimited has the ability to run their engines before shipping, but an on-site engine dynamometer will be coming soon. The shop recently expanded and now occupies the entire building in which it is located, and Doug says the newly acquired space will house the dyno room.

Pro-Formance Unlimited offers refurbished V-8 engines in various displacements for nearly all popular domestic cars. Depending on just how you intend to use the engine and your budget, you can select from three stages of performance.

Not long ago Pro-Formance Unlimited was chosen to build a Pontiac 455, which was installed in a Stutz Blackhawk. The car was featured on Sports Car Revolution, which airs on the Speed Channel.

Normally the shop runs with an eight to ten week backlog. "We usually have 30 or 40 engines on backorder." That's not bad considering how long it takes most of us to build an engine from scratch. Perhaps best of all, Pro-Formance Unlimited provides the core engine. Of course, if you are restoring a car and want the original engine rebuilt, they are happy to oblige.

Check out Pro-Formance Unlimited's Website at www.pro-formanceunlimited.com. There you'll find listings of the engines they offer as well as loads of pictures and video clips. Or, give Doug a call at 1-800-267-3940.

