

Bend Up Close: Scott Sabo Makes Suspension a Specialty

by K_Guice

If anyone had told Scott Sabo five years ago that he would be doing hotrod, air suspensions and hydraulics he would have laughed at them. However, that is one of the many things his custom shop; Suspension Specialties is known for today.

Scott Sabo of Suspension Specialties, 63055 Corporate Pl. The 39-year-old Bend business owner is known for going beyond what is normal and has made quite a name for himself in automotive circles.

“I have prided myself in being able to offer more custom stuff,” Sabo said. “I go out of my way to find the stuff that is more flashy.”

His love for working with cars started when he was a kid. “My grandpa drove a truck in southern California, so I would go with grandpa and run the truck with him,” Sabo said.

When he got into high school, he started working on a farm in the valley. "That was a great experience," he said. "You are operating farm equipment and operating machinery. I learned a lot there."

Sabo further learned his craft after he enlisted in the Army. "I was a diesel mechanic in the engineer unit," he said.

When he got out of the Army in 1989 he began working with four-wheel drive vehicles.

The Bend native's first job in the automotive field was working for a shop over on 2nd Street. It was where he built his first custom creation.

“It was a 1978 Ford Bronco,” Sabo said. “It had two-and-half ton military running gear. That is where we start dealing with a little bit more than just the norm.”

He opened his first shop in 1997 called Custom 4x4 Innovations. Then four years ago, he decided to open Suspension Specialties.

While his shop does a great deal of specialty work, he also does the everyday maintenance work that some vehicles need. “We do a little of everything,” Sabo said. “We do brake work, shocks, tires, basic accessories, air suspension, hydraulics, performance chips and some exhaust work,” he said.

Sabo says he enjoys doing different types of work on the wide variety of vehicles that roll through his shop. “I do regular suspension work and I do a lot of gears. I’ve been doing that for a long time,” he said. “I also design some suspension systems on the old cars.”

It is a job he takes a great deal of pride in. "It is basically my creation under the car," he said. However, they can offer some challenges. "You hope the floor board will stick together," he laughed.

Sabo says while he enjoys working on vehicles and the challenges they bring, it is the people that make it all worthwhile. "I enjoy working on these cars but to see some of these expressions on the people's faces when they get their cars back. It is great."

Those customers must think it is great too, Sabo says they are the best source of advertising. "Fortunately I have a good customer base," he said.

His customers have been spreading the word far and wide across Central Oregon. "I get vehicles from all over the region," he said.

He primarily works on U.S. made vehicles and says he does a few Toyota pickup trucks. The work he doesn't handle he refers to a nearby import shop.

Sabo says he is pleased at how well the business is going after a few short years. As for the future, he hopes to see the business continue to thrive, but laughs that he can only handle so much in his three-man shop.

So, he has started training for the future, starting with his seven-year-old son, Kersey.

His first lesson was welding, which Kersey has already put to use. "He had a class project he had to build a rocket," Sabo said. "And he welded it himself."

Sabo's other pride and joy is his 14-year-old daughter, Kyleigh, who lives in Portland.

When he isn't working long hours at the shop, Sabo spends as much time as he can with his kids, enjoys traveling and has a great love for dirt bikes.

However, it's all play and no work when he hits the trails. "I don't build them, I just ride them," he laughed. "It's just for fun."

Sabo also plays golf with his son. "He loves to golf," he said. "His grandpa has a golf course in Redmond, so we get to play there a lot."

Ultimately, Sabo is all work and all play. He says whether he is riding dirt bikes or customizing a car, he likes to push the norm and enjoy what he is doing.

“It’s a great business,” he said. “I get a real satisfaction more than anything.”

Bend Weekly Newslink: www.centormall.com/Suspension_Specialties

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