

# Parked in the lap of luxury



MICHAEL RHODIG

## The final frontier of home improvement

By Steve Fisher

FOR MANY PEOPLE, a car is a necessity: a tool to convey the individual and family to work, school, shopping and recreation. But others have created a much deeper bond with automobiles. They have a passion and need to collect as many as economically feasible. Others have made such a substantial investment that protection of that asset is of the utmost importance. Some might consider it an obsession. Costco member Michael Rhodig considers it his niche.

"There is one part of the house that has been neglected!" declares Rhodig. "The garage is the final frontier of home improvement."

Determined to go where no garage-builder had gone before, Rhodig started GarageMahals, a company that offers a unique soup-to-nuts (and bolts) approach to high-end garage design and construction for the serious car aficionado. "My average customer has a million dollars in cars," claims Rhodig.

The Fountain Hills, Arizona, resident had bounced around, workwise, prior to discovering his calling. "I had an eclectic career," he laughs. After graduating from Oregon State University with a degree in mechanical engineering in 1987, he worked at Lawrence Livermore Laboratories on "Star Wars"—the defense program, not the movie—then segued into mortgage banking and software company mergers and acquisitions. "I had a couple garages done for me by the typical garage guys," he recalls, "and one day in 2003 it just came to me: The garage could be so much more. I saw a market poised for tremendous growth, and decided to give it some product and services it wasn't otherwise getting." He began a long research-and-development phase, and GarageMahals was born in September 2005.

Rhodig's clients are mostly in the United States and Canada, but the idea has a worldwide allure. He has received calls from Australia, New Zealand,

England, France and Dubai. The smallest garage he designed was 150 square feet, the largest an 18,000-square-foot multi-level, multiuse structure. Price tags have ranged from \$30,000 to \$500,000.

"The half a million's for a client in Chicago," says Rhodig. "He has a fascination with Las Vegas. The design would have him driving into a recreation of the Strip with facades of famous hotels and casinos."

This garage also contains a private casino as well as a "showroom" for the owner's daughter, complete with a stage and karaoke and drop-down panels featuring different themes.

Other than the price tag, the process is painless. Rhodig conducts an in-depth interview, by phone or in person, to learn the client's interests, tastes and budget. He then uses computer modeling to create 3-D design renderings so the client can visualize the final space. Once a design is approved, Rhodig works with contractors to construct the garage.

Rhodig is set to drive into a new phenomenon. From coast to coast, wherever car collectors or luxury car owners abound—but parking spots don't—developers are building car condos: dwellings in which to store prized automobiles or automobile collections. Many feature lavish, climate-controlled environments. They have started to spring up in New York, Florida, Arizona and Nevada.

The ever-optimistic Rhodig says, "If you build it, they will come." ☐

### The Costco Connection

Whether you're planning a dream garage or something more basic, Costco and costco.com have shelving, accessories and flooring to help make it a reality.



Top left, GarageMahals' first creation. Above, 1,500 square feet of auto luxury in Paradise Valley, Arizona.

## member profile

**Name:** GarageMahals

**Owner:** Michael Rhodig

**Member at:** Scottsdale, AZ

**Employees:** One

**Products/services:**

Creative garage design, metallic flooring

**Contact:** 16537 E. Laser Drive, Unit 8, Fountain Hills, AZ 85268; (602) 315-4473; [www.garagemahals.com](http://www.garagemahals.com)

**Comments about Costco:**

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