



Family Matters

This California car collector's passion is a domestic affair.



WHEN REGGIE BINNS first met his wife, Zelma, she couldn't care less about cars. Now she whips a 2007 Plum Crazy Charger tricked out with a True Fiber hood, Lexani wheels and an SMS Supercharger that pushes over 400 horsepower—and you better not touch it. Hers is a love for Dodges she picked up from Reggie, who himself owns a 2009 Challenger RT and a 2008 Challenger SRT8 equipped with an SMS Supercharger, MagnaFlow exhaust, Lexani wheels and other custom pieces.

Binns' passion for Dodge cars dates back to his teen years. "My first car was a 1973 Challenger," he says. "We grew up around Dodges and Plymouths. My dad had a Barracuda GT and a couple of Dusters. When I saw the new Challenger, I had to have it." But the Los Angeles native developed an even deeper relationship with the cars when

he was diagnosed with Parkinson's four years ago, while a member of the Cali-based Dodge and Chrysler club Mopar360.com.

"The group has made such an impact on my life and helped me cope with the disease," says Binns. "I put together an organization, Dreaming for the Cure, to help fight Parkinson's, and Mopar360.com helps raise money for the group with car shows."

It's this kind of family love, tied to the Dodge and Chrysler owners, that has rubbed off on Binns' sons. His oldest, Cody, owns a Chrysler 300 SRT8, and Travis, his 20-year-old, pushes a Dodge Nitro. Binns plans to give his Challenger RT to his youngest son, Dylan, next year when he turns 16.

"I'll take the supercharger out," says Binns. "That's way too much power for him." Considering the car shells out 540 horses as is, it sounds like Dad knows a thing or two about dodging trouble. **MARCUS AMICK**

Q&A



Heart of a Lion

Detroit drag racer **BRIAN OLATUNJI** is gunning for the top spot and has the courage to prove it.

AFTER SEEING HIS lifelong dream of becoming a professional drag racer come true two years ago, 28-year-old Brian Olatunji now has his eyes set on snagging an NHRA U.S. National Championship. *RIDES* recently caught up with Olatunji in between one of his 175 mph track runs to learn what drives a kid—who grew up in the inner city of Detroit—to chase one of motorsport's most coveted titles.

What inspired you to become a drag racer? My grandfather, John Broaden, was the first African-American manager of a major NHRA drag strip. I decided to take the road less traveled: racing.

When did you first start racing? When I was 15. My folks knew the people who ran Milan Dragway in Michigan. I had an '89 Chevy Beretta and would take it out on the racetrack.

What was the biggest challenge you faced turning pro? Balancing the demands of the business, working with corporate sponsors like Pepsi, Lucas Oil and the U.S. Army, while staying competitive on the track.

So what does a typical practice day consist of? Wake up, hit the gym and work out. At the track, it's typically testing different parts to make sure everything is working in perfect harmony.

How do you mentally prepare for a race? Focusing on the perfect run—you have to have a mental picture of it.

You think it'll be tough to win an NHRA national title? It's the most prestigious race in drag racing, so the stakes are high. But it's something that I do expect to win in my career. **MARCUS AMICK**

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OPTIMUS IDIOT THE *TRANSFORMERS* MOVIES HAVE GIVEN A CHINESE BOY THE MOTIVATION TO BECOME AN AUTOBOT—HE'S BEEN DRINKING GASOLINE FOR FIVE YEARS, AND HIS MOTOR ISN'T RUNNING SO HOT. GO FIGURE!