

Text by Paul Rachwal // Photos by Marketing Elements

**C**hances are if you're trying to name hotbeds of the aftermarket tuning scene, you'll probably go through hundreds of places first before you mention Canada's Maritimes. Located along the Atlantic seaboard, the 'Times area is comprised of four Canadian provinces including Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. Known more for its stunning sights and outstanding seafood, customized automobiles in the area are few and far between. However, the region's best kept secret (before the *Trailer Park Boys* exploded) is Serge Leger, who has single-handedly put Maritime tuning on the map with the release of this fire-breathing 2004 Nissan 350Z.

And he's not just jumping on the bandwagon with this Z, as Leger has owned the arguably sexier predecessor, the timelessly styled Nissan 300ZX twin turbo. Leger is very involved in the Maritimes' sport compact scene, customizing cars for about 15 years. He owns and operates Henry's Auto Body and Xtreme Motorsports in his hometown of Shediac, New Brunswick, and the shop has hosted an annual Fun Run show 'n' shine since 1998. Back in May of 2002, we spotlighted Leger's custom '95 Acura Integra in our pages, the first ride from the Canadian East Coast to ever grace these pages. That car was Best of Show winner at SCP and the Darknights Nationals back in 2001. Leger is an automotive artisan, who has mastered the knowledge and craft behind automotive body and paintwork passed down from his skilled father.

Recently, we spotlighted another one of his works of art, as Leger had a hand in last issue's cover car, the Castrol-green Top Tuner Pontiac Solstice built by Team ETC (Elite Tuners of Canada), which he's part of. The money-coloured car even went on to win the Best Paint award at SEMA! Yes, that SEMA, the one in Las Vegas. I guess Leger simply can't get enough of playing with cars, working his way up to some impressive projects and creating a few very worthy specimens indeed.



Inside you'll find a Sparco steering wheel, VeilSide shiftknob and Alpine's IVA-W200 touch screen head unit surrounded by butter-soft leather and Candy Hot Raspberry fibreglass. The flawless door panels house an impressive set of ARC Audio Foose Design FD6000 6.5-inch components with silk tweeters

The mean 350Z showcased before you is Leger's own project, built at his own facilities, as between the custom paint and performance shop, there is little Leger can't do! First, let's tell you about this Z's sculpted body. Leger had his crew, Pierre Leblanc and Christien Bujold, prepare his canvas by taking the car apart, shaving the door handles, antenna and emblems and moulding the rear spoiler into the hatch. Speaking of the hatch, it's been wrapped in carbon fibre, the weave of which peaks through the thin layer of paint and clear-coat. The roof underwent a similar process with the weave made from a mould thanks to a new Nissan roof, all to match the Seibon carbon fibre hood which caps off the engine bay. The pillars remain metal, just the sheet covering the center of the Z is carbon fibre, bonded with sponsor 3M's adhesive agent. The fuel door has also been moved, and now a Sparco fuel cap sits in place of the rear license plate.

Leger sourced the sought-after VeilSide V.3 wide-body kit with a V.2 wing and had it extensively modified to suit his taste. The kit was separated so the sides and bumpers are easily removable for simple transport. Those voluptuous fender flares required

cutting off the quarter panels and 'tubbing' them, drag-car style, but outwards instead of in. The net result added 2.5 inches in girth back there, making for a sexy booty indeed.

Finally, Leger stepped in and covered all these components in Candy Hot Raspberry from DuPont's Hot Hues line. Pros like Leger describe this as a special fade-out two-tone, and it looks stunning in person. The body is kept looking hot at the shows thanks to a full line-up of Meguiar's products from his supportive sponsor.

The stock headlights got a yellow tint for an old-school, exotic look, a la JDM race car. With the car in the paint booth, the stock suspension components were removed and replaced with some aftermarket goodies, though not before the latter were dipped in the new body-matching paint. Leger went with TEIN Basic coil-overs all around with Kinetix adjustable control arms in the rear. A GReddy strut tower brace stiffens the structure.

Bolted to the hubs are Stoptech brakes comprised of massive 4-piston calipers squeezing two-piece cross-drilled rotors 355mm (or 14 inches) in

diameter. These pizza trays are hidden by Riverside Trafficstar wheels, which are popular premium rollers in continents other than North America. Leger went directly to Japan, the company's home country, for his set. The front 19 by 9.5 inchers are wrapped in Continental's ultra high performance ContiSport-Contact2 rubber in a 255/35-19 dimension, while the rear 20 by 11s get the same Continental rubber, though 50mm wider, at 305/25-20. The dubs sport a massive 5.5-inch lip.

The hefty metal and rubber is easily explained once you look under that carbon-weaved hood and find a couple of hairdryer-sized turbos. The twin turbo kit came from Air Power Systems, more commonly referred to by its acronym, APS. Leger opted for APS' aptly named Extreme Twin Turbo system. Everything in the kit is catered to provide huge boost and appropriate power levels. Leger couldn't resist giving his flagship Nissan a big twin turbo punch, like his old one. All the APS parts were sourced from Johnston Research & Performance (JROnline.com.)

The stars of the kit are the two Garrett GT-Series dual ball bearing turbochargers with such good- >>



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ies as Inconel (alloy of nickel, chromium, and iron) turbine wheels and Ni-Resist (very hard and high-temperature tolerant iron compound) turbine housings. They're mounted on Ni-Resist cast manifolds. The twin blow-dryers are good for 22psi of boost. The pressure is handled by Australian company Turbosmart, namely via a couple of 48mm Pro-Gate wastegates and Type 3 Supersonic blow-off valve, though a Kompact KTPB25 BOV was temporarily fitted during our cover shoot. A Kinetix Racing SSV Extreme intake manifold that's seen the Extrude Hone process sits atop the engine.

The intercooler is equally serious, as a 5-inch deep vertical core peeks out through the gaping mouth of the VeilSide front bumper. In front of it sits DEI's CryO<sup>2</sup> system, which further cools the intake charge thanks to liquid CO<sup>2</sup> that flows from the twin 5lb DEI bottles mounted in the hatch.

On the hot side, APS' 3-inch turbo-back test pipes were plumbed into the 3.5-inch APS downpipes. A Koyo rad keeps the motor cool, while a full complement of Unorthodox Racing pulleys ekes out some more juice. Finally, a Nitrous Express EFI wet system was plumbed in under the Z's hood, with the 5lb bottle feeding it residing behind the two seats, between the two CryO<sup>2</sup> bottles.

A set-up of this calibre needs to be fed like An-

dre the Giant, so APS threw a more-than-capable system into the equation. Leger got two fuel pumps, two billet fuel rails with 4-bar (58psi) fuel pressure regulators attached and six 880cc fuel injectors. All of these components make up the full return fuel system that makes tuning easier. Speaking of tuning, APS does not provide an engine management system with its kit, as it feels customers who buy it have their own favourites. Leger's happens to be the Turbo XS 350Z-UTEK stand-alone. Leger estimates his set-up is good for 700hp, once dialed in. Gaithersburg, MD-based Altered Atmosphere Motorsports is tuning the car, using its own AAM-Spec MaxFlo Big Pump Upgrade fuel pump.

To handle the boost and power levels heaved at the VQ35DE, the block has been reinforced with Darton sleeves and filled with JE Pistons slugs and Carrillo rods. While it was apart, the block was painted pearl black and the valve covers and transmission covered in gold pearl. Firing off the explosions are NGK race plugs. At this point, a SPEC twin-disc carbon clutch was wedged between the transmission and engine.

Yet another employee on Leger's payroll, Xtreme Motorsports' Matt Robillard, performed all the engine work. Suffice it to say the bite of this mean-looking Z is matched by its bark. ➤



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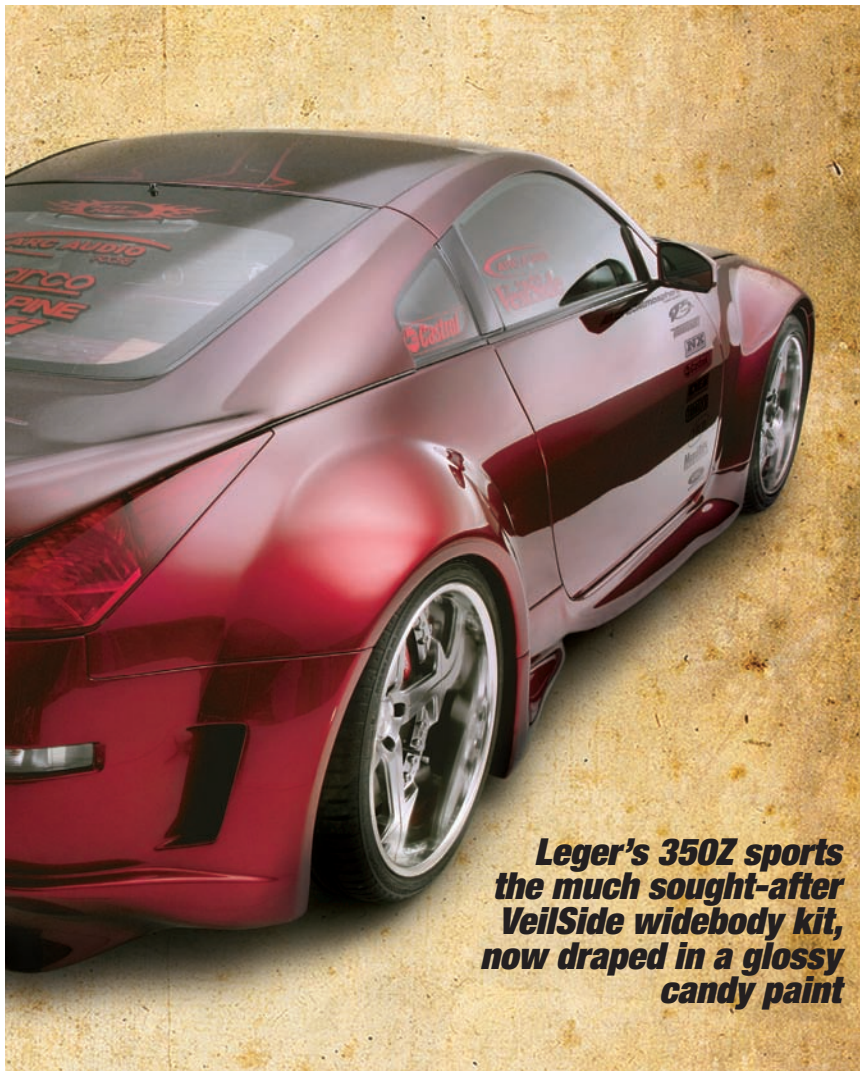
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**Leger's 350Z sports the much sought-after VeilSide widebody kit, now draped in a glossy candy paint**



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The immaculate hatch install features ARC Audio's Foose Series gear, including candy colour-matched ARC Audio FD 2200 and FD 4100 amplifiers between a pair of popular ARC Audio 12-inch FD 12D2 woofers.

This potent engine room is controlled from a very cossetting interior for two. This is the only part of the build Leger subcontracted, as Collins Upholstery in Moncton, NB, re-upholstered all panels as well as the ceiling and sun-visors in two shades of buttery-soft leather. What hasn't been lined with leather got the glossy paint treatment, making for a very eye-pleasing and consistent presentation inside and out.

Leger controls his creation via a Sparco steering wheel and a VeilSide shiftknob from the comfort of VeilSide VSD-1 Carbon / Kevlar buckets looped with Sparco's 3-inch race harnesses. The passenger-side airbag cover now holds moulded gauge openings, each of which is filled with a Defi display: one for boost, another for exhaust gas temperature and fuel pressure.

The center console holds Alpine's IVA-W200 touchscreen head unit, which in turn controls the simple yet effective and very sexy ARC Audio entertainment system. The installation was handled in-house at Xtreme Motorsports by Pierre LeBlanc and Luc Boudreau. The door panels themselves are works of art, hous-

ing ARC's FD 6000 Foose Design 6.5-inch component sets with silk tweeters and crossovers. The audio components are suspended in Candy Hot Raspberry-coloured fibreglass, while the rest of the door panel is covered in oh-so-plush leather. It's a simple yet functional and quite attractive creation. The rear factory locations contain ARC's FD 6022 coaxials. The four-some of drivers are powered by ARC Audio's FD 2200 amplifier, also colour-matched to the Z's paintjob.

The trunk is home to this amplifier and an FD 4100 which juices the two 12-inch FD 12D2 subwoofers, each mounted in its own fibreglass enclosure in a corner. The underside of the hatch itself got a 14-inch monitor moulded in. The floor, panels and doors were lined with DEI's Boom Mat to quell vibrations and keep the sound inside the car, where it belongs.

Leger has been cashing in on his East Coast creation as it's been gathering accolades lately and turning a lot of heads. At SCP7, the car took Best Paint, Best 350Z, Best Nissan and 5th place Best of Show, having to compete against more established

rides. At ImportFest in November, he cleaned up again, taking home Best 350Z / G35, Best Nissan and Best Paint. Leger confessed the countless Best Paint awards he continues to win mean the most to him, as the talented painter spares no expense when it comes to picture-perfect paint.

Leger would like to acknowledge a few supporting sponsors of his ride, but it's a short list that includes 3M, Altered Atmosphere, VeilSide Canada (Tuner-Works), JRP, Continental, DuPont Canada, Nitrous Express, Carrillo, Darton, DEI, Turbo XS, Turbosmart and JE Pistons. Thanks to these companies and Leger's employees' at Henry's AutoBody and Xtreme Motorsports and his own time investment, this car came together in a very busy four months, during which we're told nearly 1,000 hours were put into this beauty. Leger can't say enough about the collaboration and team effort. As you can see from the product, it was time well spent and definitely made Shediac, NB and all of Canada's East Coast for that matter, now known for more than just lobster and seafood. **PAS**

DEI's Cryo thermal tuning tanks harness Co<sup>2</sup> that reduces temperatures for cooler air/fuel intake charge

