

What's Going On: NYC Going After Car Alarms

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Photos by John Roberts

Next to the Installer of the Year Sean Young are the superheroes of car audio. The staff of Captain Install (l to r): Betsy Beardsley, Jane Scharmach, Nick Orlando, Randy Rymer, Sam Molinar, James Richey (front).

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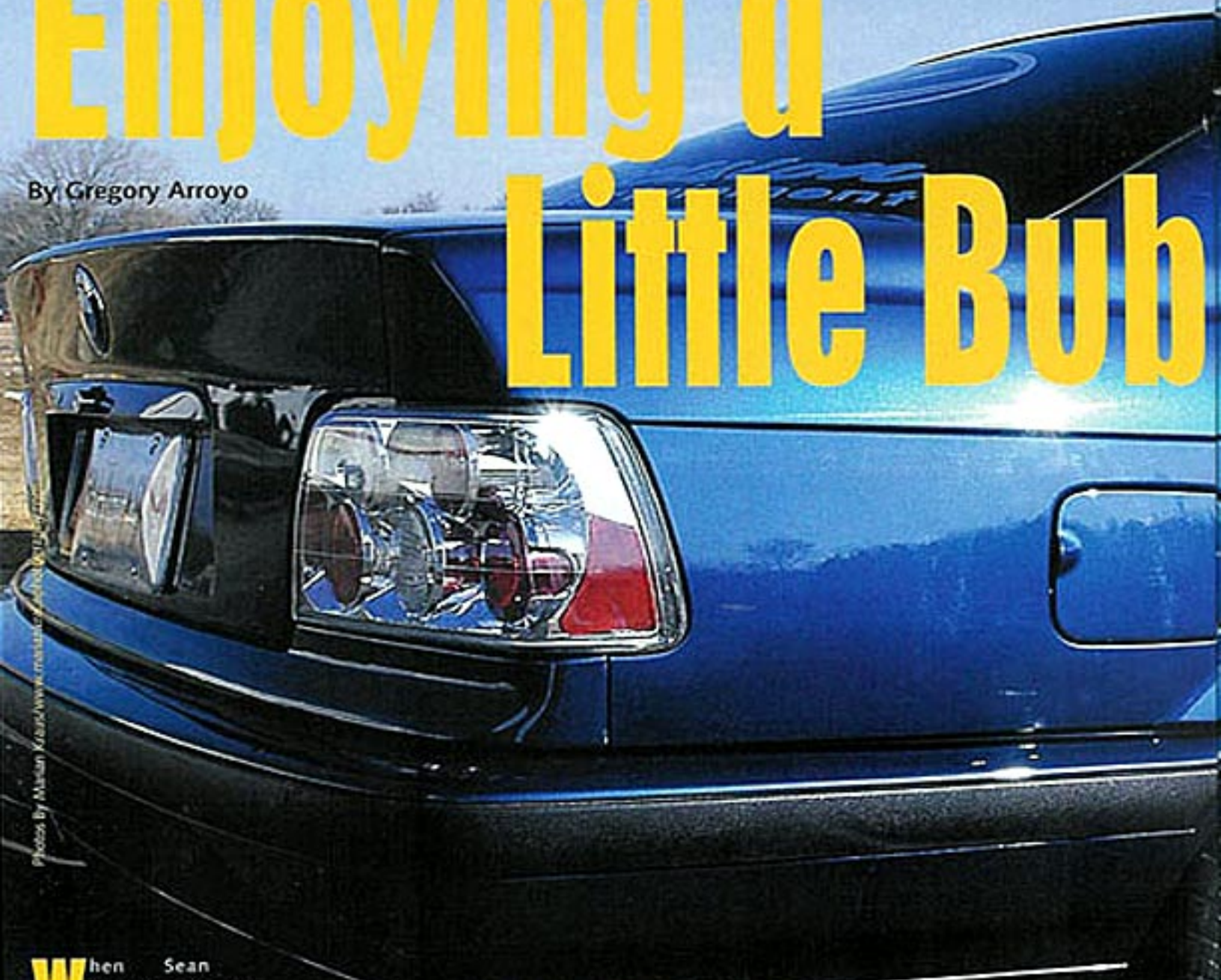
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# Enjoying a Little Bub

By Gregory Arroyo



**W**hen Sean Young and his business partner Brian Mobley decided to go it alone two and half years ago, they did so with one goal in mind. They wanted people to stop thinking of Florida, Arizona and California as the only places to find high-end custom work. Now armed with the 2002 Installer of the Year award, Young feels he is well on his way to providing his Montgomery, Ill.-based shop with that distinction.

"I owe it to my crew," said the co-owner of Sound Decision. "We work well together and I wouldn't have this title if not for them."

Young's entry for the Installer of the Year honor, a 1997 BMW

328i, has been somewhat of a lucky charm for his store. In fact, winning the award was furthest from Young's mind when his customer Neil Lombardozi approached him with the task of building a show vehicle that would grace the pages of a car audio magazine.

"Neil was a customer of mine at my former employer," said Young. "After I opened my shop he tracked me down. He never had a big-time, show-vehicle install, but he always wanted one."



only



Lombardozzi couldn't have come at a better time, either.

Young and Mobley set out on their own in 2000. Young was still working at a shop when he and Mobley began tossing around the idea of starting their own car audio business. The two started out small, renting out space to conduct

business. What convinced Young to leave his job was the day a

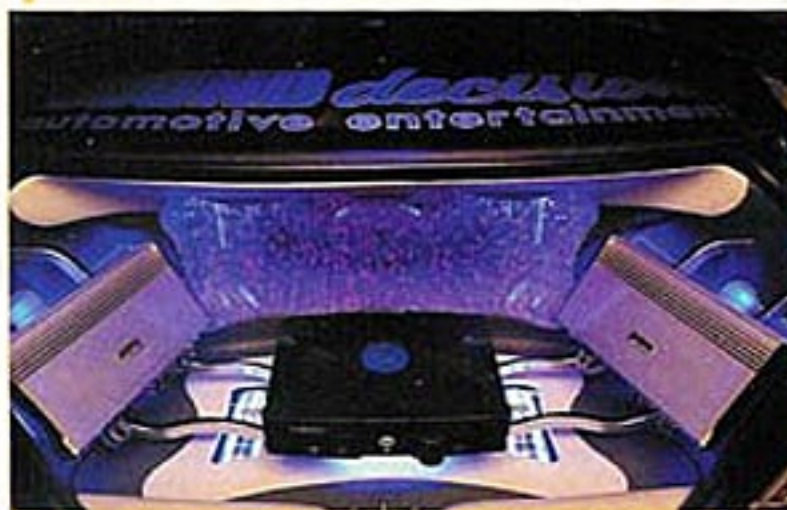
Lamborghini dealership called looking for Mobley. The owner of the dealership was familiar with Mobley's work and had tracked him down.

The two installers-turned-businessmen lived simply for the next year, reinvesting everything they made into their business. And at the outset of 2002 Young decided to attend Dave "Fishman" Rivera's Fishcamp in Daytona Beach, Fla. Lombardozzi had already commissioned Young to do his BMW before Young left for Fishcamp. Four days into the training camp, Young had a revelation.

"I called Neil at about five in the morning and told him I was going to build him a 'bubble wall,'" Young said. "It was something about being in Daytona that inspired the idea. I told him, 'Just have the car at the shop on Monday and bring some cash.'"

Lombardozzi set an initial price limit of \$10,000, but Young's outrageous plans added \$20,000 to the final cost. Young said he would have charged \$50,000, but because he was attempting his newfound techniques for the first time, he didn't mind undercutting the cost.





The metal bars linking the amplifiers and Xbox are actually half-inch Plexiglas strips laminated in 1/16-inch brushed aluminum.



The aluminum Sean Young used to laminate the bars connecting the monitor and tweeters actually carry the signal for the tweeters.

"What we gained off the car was magazine coverage and our name getting out there," said Young. "For the \$20,000 we lost in product, we got back in advertising. From Installer of the Year, I can trace it way back."

The first stop for the BMW was Chicago's 2002 World of Wheels car show, where the vehicle won Best in Class for Euro Custom. But more than gaining that title, Young said he was able to pass out 5,000 business cards at the show. The BMW then went to 12-15 local car shows, with the vehicle's show tour ending at the 2002 International Auto Sound Challenge Association's World Finals where it sat inside the Stinger booth.

The system's signal starts with Sony's CDX-MP70, which feeds three Sinfoni amplifiers: two 90.2 amplifiers and one 45.2. One Sinfoni 90.2 powers a pair of Focal's Utopia 165W3 three-way speaker set. The second 90.2 powers a single 15-inch Focal Utopia 38WX. The 45.2 amplifies the signal for a pair of Focal Polyglass 130V, which were installed in the trunk lid. Also in the trunk are a

Microsoft Xbox and a 10.4-inch NEC screen.

The vehicle also sports 16 sticks of blue neon, six pink tubes, four white tubes and 36 feet of neon rope. Connecting the audio system is Stinger's 16-gauge twisted pair speaker wire. Young also added three Stinger capacitors and a Stinger SP1000 battery.

#### Finding a Signature Piece

One of the goals Young took with him when he attended Fishcamp was to come up with a signature piece for his installs. Amazingly, that piece resides in the rear deck, which only serves as a portal for the subwoofer enclosure in the trunk.

"It was a nice platform to start from," said Young. "We wanted some flash for the Hot Import Nights show. The movie 'The Fast and The Furious' really sparked things up as far as lighting."

To create the "flying Bimmer" logo, Young first created a half-inch MDF jig. He then molded the jig in place with filler. He used the jig as a template to cut the Plexiglas, which was laminated with brushed aluminum. The Bimmer logo was made out of two pieces of white and blue Plexiglas.

While creating the shape of the emblem was difficult to achieve, getting an even glow for the neon lighting up the Bimmer logo was even more difficult. After hours of experimentation, Young figured out that he could reflect the neon off the polished aluminum underneath the Bimmer logo by bending the pieces.

"That happened definitely by accident," he said. "I'd like to keep the details on that very limited because I use that technique everyday. It's such a simple thing that's allowed us to make a lot of money."

#### Bubble Wall Is Ode to Fishman

Young's rear-deck creation isn't just for show, either. Young created four-inch acrylic ports underneath the wings of the rear-deck emblem that feed bass from the sub enclosure in the trunk to the interior of the vehicle. And it is in the trunk where one begins to see the influences of Young's mentor.

"Fish was famous for his fish tanks," he said. "I always thought his fish tanks were the coolest thing. I also thought a fish tank would be a good signature piece for our shop. I guess you can say that I did this in honor of Fish."

At first glance, the trunk portion of the install grabs the eye with its amplifier rack. Only upon further inspection does one see



The window behind the armrest gives one a peek into the trunk's sub enclosure. The "flying Bimmer" logo in the rear deck works as a port for the subwoofer enclosure underneath. The logo was lit up with blue and white neon tubes.





Two-tone Ultra leather radiates throughout the vehicle, as seen with the seats and door panels. Installer Sean Young also added Plexiglas inserts for the door, which were laminated in brushed aluminum. In addition, Young backlit the inserts with neon rope. The installer also fabricated grilles for the four-inch midrange woofer and tweeter mounted inside the door.



Below the Sony CDX-MP70 and climate controls is where installer Sean Young added voltage and temperature gauges. In between the gauges are illuminated rocker switches that control the bubbler in the rear and the vehicle's neon lighting.

what Young termed the "bubble wall," which decorates the 15-inch subwoofer in the rear.

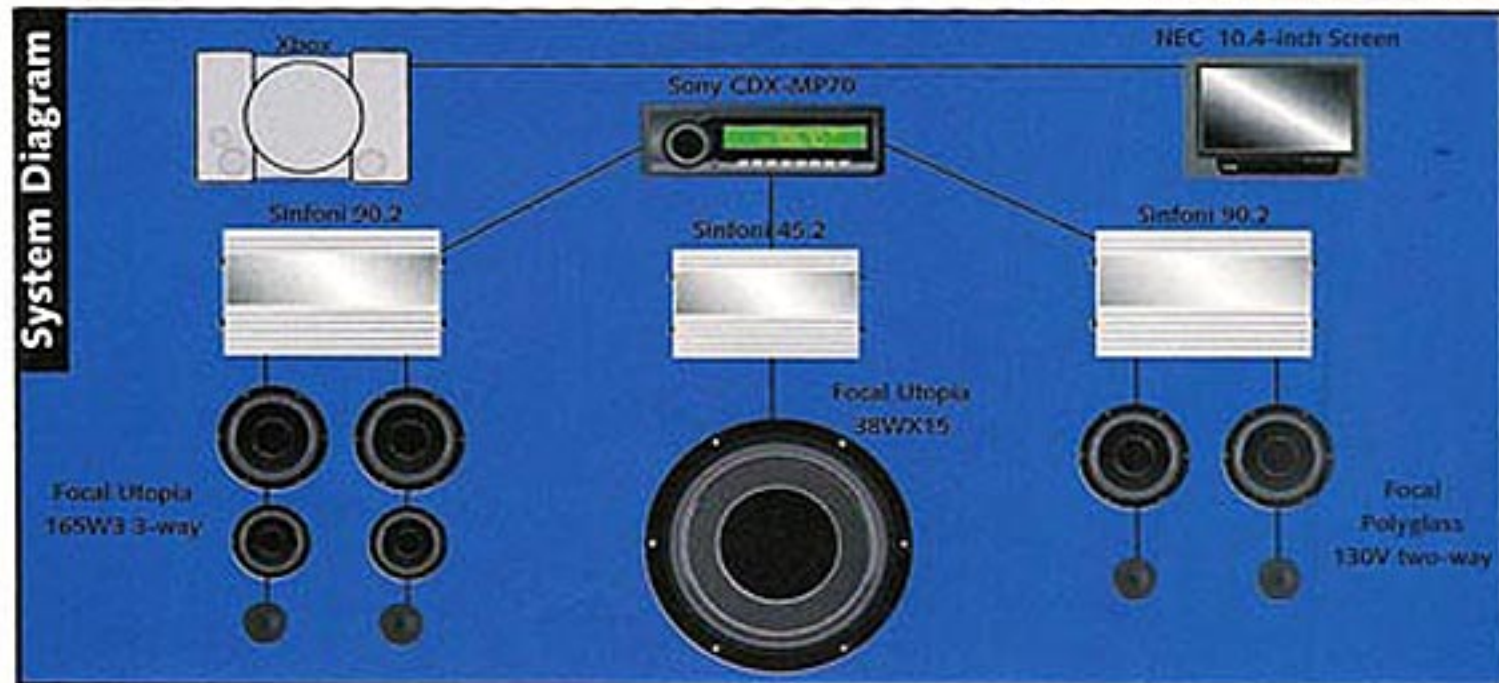
Starting with the amp rack, Young decided he would position the amplifiers over the panels he created to cover the wheel wells. The panels were made out of 3/8-inch bendable wood, which allowed Young to curve the panels around the wells. The amplifiers were then mounted to half-inch Plexiglas strips that Young laminated with 1/16-inch brushed aluminum. The strips, which highlight this part of the install, extend to the center of the trunk where an Xbox gaming unit rests. The Xbox sits on top of a Cascade power supply that is hardwired to an outdoor outlet box underneath the BMW. Young also flush-mounted two one-farad Singer capacitors on each side of the Xbox. Both caps are accented with blue neon.

The amp rack then leads to the subwoofer enclosure and Young's bubble wall, which took him 100 hours of

experimentation. At one point Young said he considered scrapping the idea, but changed his mind when his research led him to a Canadian company that specializes in aquariums used to decorate restaurants and clubs. The advice the company gave Young was exactly what he needed to motivate him.

Starting with the actual subwoofer enclosure, Young used 3/4-inch MDF for the top and base of the enclosure. The wood he used for the panels covering the wheel wells also came into play with the sub enclosure, with the panels acting as the side walls for the box. Young sandwiched the panels between fiberglass resin, which acts as a sealant for the enclosure. With the basic structure of the enclosure in place, Young moved to the bubble wall.

The bubble wall is made out of two pieces of quarter-inch Plexiglas and one half-inch piece. To get the curved Plexiglas piece for the bubble wall, Young first made a press out of MDF and bendable wood. Placing the Plexiglas piece inside the press, the







The BMW's show tour was almost over when Sean Young was contacted by Stinger. The 12-volt accessory supplier needed a display vehicle for its booth at the 2002 International Auto Sound Challenge Association's World Finals in Charlotte, North Carolina.

installer used ten heat lamps to create an oven effect. Young let the Plexiglas pieces sit under the lamps for five hours, removing them just before they became liquefied.

Once heated, Young clamped the top and bottom of the press together, allowing the Plexi piece to cool down overnight. When he returned the next day, however, he noticed his technique created markings on the Plexiglas. It took Young eight hours to sand and polish one side of one piece, and he had three pieces to fix. To remove the marks, Young used three sticks of polishing compound and four buffing wheels.

The two half-inch Plexiglas pieces sit parallel to each other with a one-inch gap separating the two sheets. Young filled the gap with three gallons of distilled water. He also lined the bottom of the tank with 3/8-inch polyurethane tubing and hand-drilled more than 80 holes using a drill bit the size of a pinhead. The bubble effect was achieved using an aquarium pump. Completing the bubble wall is the pink and blue neon the installer added.

The entire trunk took more than 300 hours to complete. But for serviceability, it can be disassembled in approximately two hours. Young added that every trim panel added to the trunk was made out of MDF, Fish fabric, polyester resin and body filler. And each panel was pressure fit into place, eliminating the need for screws.

### Trunk Lid Not Only Pleasing to the Eye

Although creativity was part of the goal for the trunk lid, Young did add some innovation when it came to the mounting of the tweeters.

For the trunk lid, Young called on Moblely for help. Moblely first lined and coated the factory lid with fiberglass resin to form a base. Next, he cut and mounted MDF rings for the speakers. The speakers were then mounted and fiberglassed in place. The aluminum rings that flush the speakers were backlit with blue neon rope.

Young decided that the tweeters and monitor would float above the entire lid, which was also lined with two-tone Ultra leather. The 10.4-inch NEC screen was flush-mounted into a piece of half-inch Plexiglas, which was laminated with brushed aluminum. The tweeters floating above the midbass drivers are flushed in quarter-inch Plexiglas, also laminated in brushed aluminum. The trick to this part of the install was the signal for the tweeter is carried through the aluminum bars adjoining the monitor and tweeters. The top bar provides positive signal, and the bottom bar acts as the negative feed.

### Young Decides On Stealthy Interior

After mounting the Sony source unit into the factory location, Young decided he needed something else to decorate the dash. He figured that adding voltage and temperature gauges to the factory pocket below the climate controls would do the trick.

The gauges were molded in place along with illuminated rocker switches. The top switch controls the bubbler in the tank and the bottom switch controls the neon inside the car. To the right of the cigarette lighter is the main system ignition switch, which controls a bank of relays that allows all of the functions of the audio/video





The trunk area is lit up by blue and pink neon. Installer Sean Young said that his store has been pushing the use of two-color neon setups to decorate installs. In all, the vehicle touts 16 sticks of blue neon, six pink tubes, four white tubes and 35 feet of neon rope.

item to be turned on without the keys in the ignition. To match the rest of the dash, Young re-textured the re-fabricated bezel and sprayed it with factory BMW dash-

The doors were the last modifications made to the vehicle, which were also trimmed with two-tone Ultra leather. Young also decided to dress the panel inserts with quarter-inch Plexiglas pieces laminated with

aluminum. The insets were also backlit with blue rope neon.

Young had the same idea for the front doors, but he also had to account for the Focal three-way component set. He added the six-inch midbass driver in the factory kick panel location, and mounted the four-inch midrange and tweeter in the door. The installer also fabricated grilles to cover the speakers. Both grilles were lit with blue neon rope.

### Young's Defining Moment

Starting out in the industry nine years ago as a shop assistant, Young has definitely come a long way. When he decided to quit his job and give his idea of opening up a business a try, he was skeptical. Even after six months of being a storeowner, Young had his doubts. The lowest point for he and Mobley was when they began fasting on bread and water to save as much as they could in hopes of moving into their own storefront. Two years later and the two have the enviable problem of having too much work and not enough employees.

"Brian and I only ate and drank bread and water at one point," Young said. "But we knew it would pay off down the road."