

## ARIZONA BEE FARM FIND MAKES HONEY AND HISTORY

BY SUE MEAD / BUILD PHOTOS: VOLVO CAR USA / SEMA SHOW PHOTOS: JOHN JACKSON, NOT STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY

**"IT WAS IN ROUGH SHAPE— IN MOSTLY PRIMER AND VARIOUS COLORS OF PAINT AND FULL OF SPARE PARTS. BUT, AS AN ARIZONA CAR, THERE WAS VIRTUALLY NO RUST. I EVENTUALLY GAVE IN..."**



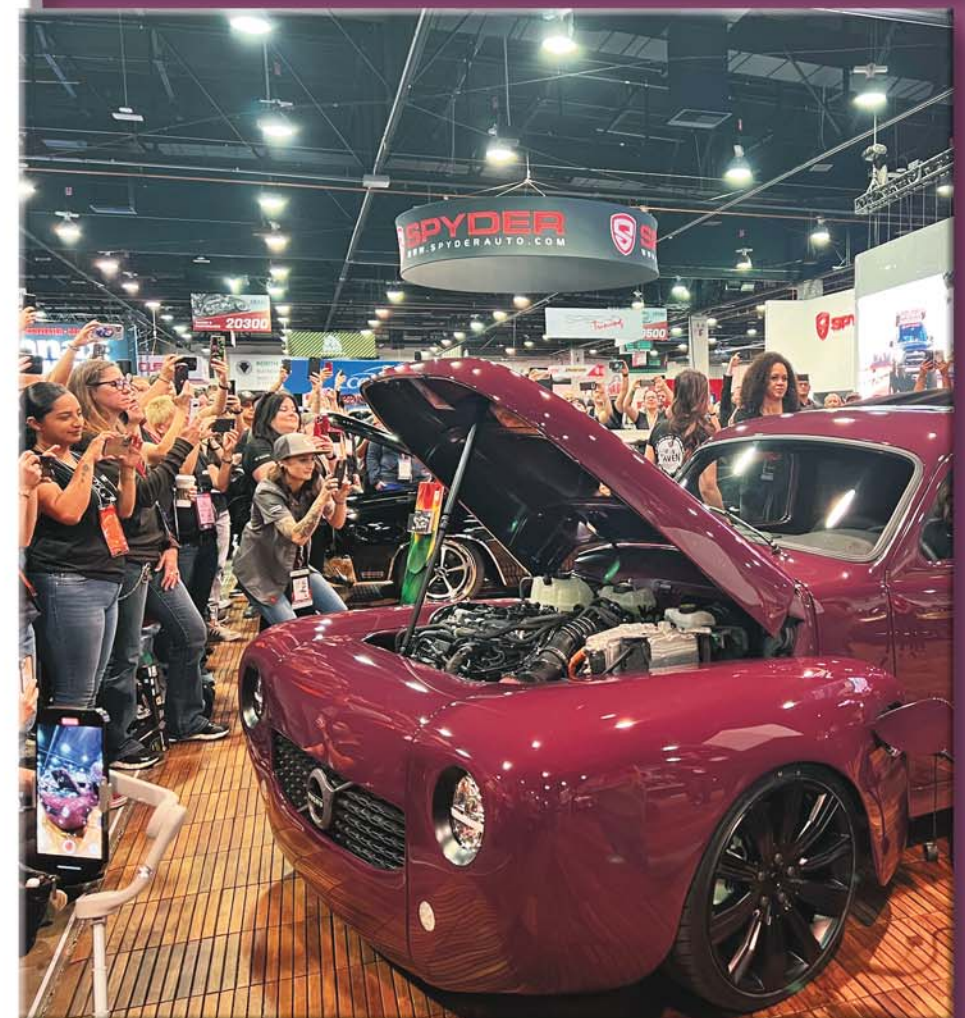
*It took nearly 10,000 hours of work and more dollars than expected, but Sarah "Bogi" Lateiner, a mechanic, custom car-builder and celebrity TV personality from Phoenix, would tell you that it was a honey of a deal and that both she and the 1961 Volvo PV544 have made history with this swoopy, vintage vehicle found on a bee farm on the outskirts of the city.*

Bogi's 'underdog' restoration project was not only a hit at its unveiling at the 2022 Specialty Equipment Manufacturer's Association (SEMA) Show in Las Vegas recently, but it took her to the stage as a panelist at the *Washington Post's* Global Women's Summit in November and will now send her across the US to share her retro-build story and the story of women in the automotive industry.

Bogi is not new to car builds nor to training and supporting women in the automotive world. Iron Maven—the meld of a Volvo PV544 and a modern-day 2019 Volvo S60 Recharge Polestar—is the third restoration for Bogi, founder of Girl Gang Garage and the longstanding TV host of *All Girls Garage* and *Garage Squad*. Bogi has spoken to and trained thousands of women across the country and worked with 90 women on her first build, the Chevy Montage (a '57 Chevy pickup), and 60 women on the High Yellow '56 (a '56 Chevy pickup) build.

Not long ago, she was an outsider to the automotive industry; however the 44-year-old who hails from Phoenix has now attracted a huge following. When she first learned to drive, it was her experiences at repair shops that made her want to also learn how to fix her own car. She attended Universal Technical Institute, trained at BMW's factory training and worked as a dealer technician for seven years. That led to the vision to develop her own auto repair shop where she could welcome and train women as technicians. She opened her first shop, 180 Degrees Automotive, in her driveway in 2006, before opening her namesake shop, which she has co-owned with friend and fellow auto enthusiast and design technologist Shawnda Williams.

*(cont'd)*





“The PV544 originally was a planned project car for someone I knew. He was a camera guy for a news segment done about the first all-female build. When he told me about the car, I told him I wasn’t really looking for another project and I don’t do customer work. He pressed, saying he wanted it to be an all-female build because he so supported what I was doing and that he didn’t care if it took multiple years or if total newbies were working on it and that he would fund the build. I initially turned him down, but I researched the car, and checked it out and then couldn’t shake the idea.” When he was unable to fund it, Bogi took it on.

That was the first step, but next was the motivation from Volvo to use the hybrid. “I originally had a much less intensive project in mind. I knew I wanted to do a modern Volvo and originally thought that their V8 would be fun, but I discovered Volvo’s 4-cylinder turbocharged and supercharged engine, and I was in love. When I did the research, many challenges came up, so I reached out to Volvo because of their demographic of buyers and history as a manufacturer. I thought that they’d be really into it, if I could just get it in front of the right person. I reached out to everyone I could find on LinkedIn, asked everyone I knew if they had any Volvo contacts and finally got in front of someone who saw the vision and said yes. It came with one caveat though—he wanted to highlight their plug-in hybrids. I

figured this is going to be a huge challenge as it is, so why not step it up one more notch! It took the whole concept of the build to the next level—to celebrate the past, present and future of cars, of custom-car building, and of women in the automotive trades. It was like many of my crazy ideas that start out small and then grow and grow and grow.”

In this case, it grew to a team of 165 women from the US and beyond; support from technical experts at Volvo; and the mutual goal to publicize this all-female project to bring awareness to the need for more women to join the auto industry.

“I haven’t tallied the actual hours, but a quality restoration typically takes 2,000 to 4,000 hours,” Bogi says. “With this being a custom build, a body swap, and a teaching model with 30 to 40 percent of the women being hobbyists or newbies, I wouldn’t be surprised if we were closer to 10,000 hours or more.”

### THE BUILD

The Iron Maven was melded and updated with the technologically advanced elements from the Volvo S60 T8 Polestar-engineered sedan that sports a plug-in hybrid drivetrain—a Drive-E four-cylinder gasoline engine paired to electric motors. Polestar is an electric performance car brand associated with Volvo vehicles, that injects more power and torque into an engine through software and adds other

(cont’d)

### THE MISSION

Bogi Lateiner was a presenter at the recently-held Global Women’s Summit that brought top female leaders from around the world who are driving change and shaping the world—from government to politics, sports media and the arts—to share their voices and their story.

“I was at the summit speaking on a panel on behalf of Volvo, sharing my story and views of bringing more women into the automotive trades. I also took the opportunity to bring up the issue of women in the automotive trades, that is really a part of a much bigger issue of the shortage of trades folks in general, and how the effect of that shortage will soon start to be felt on a global level by everyone. I emphasized that the supply chain issues we are experiencing these days are just a teaser for what we will experience when there are no techs to fix the things that make our world go round, and that we need a societal shift towards valuing the trades and trade schools as equally respectable careers to white collar jobs and four-year degrees.

According to US Bureau of Labor Statistics data, only nine percent of automotive repair and maintenance positions are held by women, compared to the average gender split of 46 percent women employed in other industries.

Volvo Cars is looking to increase the number of its female service technicians and is dedicated to increasing the number of female technicians within its retail network through accelerated training programs for current automotive technicians, recent graduates and military veterans. The company offers a series of development programs, scholarships, partnerships and more at training centers across the US. This includes a 50/50 Gender Neutral Leadership Commitment in recruitment and promotion to leadership positions, as well as a larger focus on supporting the company’s transition to a fully electrified lineup of plug-in hybrid and battery electric vehicles.

Lateiner is also consulting with Volvo. “They have taken the issues I’ve brought to them very seriously, and are taking action. Since I brought them the Iron Maven project, they created a

Female Technician Forum and have now held it twice, gathering all their female techs for training, career development, personal growth, but most importantly networking and connection, which I believe is one of the most important factors in retaining all the new female talent that we are working so hard to attract.

“Since I spoke at the conference and challenged them from the stage, they have initiated a uniform redesign that is under way, including new uniforms for women that actually fit—and the list goes on. They’re really trying and have increased the number of female technicians dramatically (like four-fold!).”

Bogi and Volvo have plans to tour the Iron Maven in 2023 to various car shows, women’s events and other events, “where we can reach both young women and also the parents and influencers in children’s lives, in an attempt to increase conversation around women in the trades and attract more young women into exploring these trades.

Volvo Cars and Girl Gang Garage programming, as well as the Iron Maven project build, also relate to technical, vocational and STEM learning at schools.

“I was blown away by the Iron Maven” enthused Russell Datz, head of media relations for Volvo Car USA. “This was no resto-mod; it was a heart/lung transplant. To cut the chassis, running gear and entire electrical system out of a fully modern plug-in hybrid like the S60 Recharge and implant it in a 60-year-old car that is two-thirds its size is nothing short of incredible, even for the most skilled builders, engineers and artists.

“As we look toward the next decade, the automotive industry will see new technologies, embrace electrification, transform its approach to manufacturing and find innovative ways to connect with customers,” said Anders Gustafsson, senior VP of Volvo Car America and president and CEO of Volvo Car USA.

“With these advancements,” he continues, “one of our biggest challenges will be developing a strong, diverse talent pipeline and an inclusive culture to support this transformation. Investing in programs that grow female and minority representation in automotive is critical to the future of our business at Volvo Cars and the future of the automotive industry at large.”

“The car and Bogi will now be on the road for the next 12 months,” Datz reminds us, emphasizing that “there are women on Bogi’s team who would be great assets to any custom shop, auto repair or collision business—and they should call her right away.” •



parts, as well. The compact luxury sedan also came with a Polestar-engineered suspension, modern vehicle control systems, and a Sensus infotainment system.

Among the modifications were custom 3D-printed components and by-hand fabrication, with technical analyses to ensure the final product carried through a blend of classic, current and forward-looking elements and approaches.

Bogi and her team of professional and amateur female mechanics, body technicians, painters and welders, alongside the group of talented female technicians in Volvo Cars' network that are Hybrid-Certified, worked the mojo to make a seamless meld of the modern 415-horsepower plug-in hybrid with the classic design and vintage body shell on top. It was painted Rebel Berry Purple, a color that was selected through voting, when Bogi created a contest to let others choose the color, and was given the name Iron Maven, as the Volvo symbol is the symbol for iron and maven means expert.

"I've been a mechanic for more than two decades, and I love that the technology is always changing and it's always a new challenge. But getting into metal work and body work and customizing on the first all-female build in 2017 was a game changer. I love the challenge of the build ...I love the women...the constant energy in the shop of new ladies coming to work and meet and learn...the connections and the conversation...seeing personal growth

...watching them overcome fears...figuring things out together...learning together...creating connections and community...making new friends...it's all amazing."

For Bogi, the process of learning and failing are also fun, but she knows she and the women are in the spotlight.

"Some of the most fun days are ones where none of us know how to do something and we have 'science day' or 'experiment day' at the shop, and we literally are testing and playing and failing until we figure it out—collectively and in a safe space. I know that women are often judged more harshly in this industry than men are, and if it doesn't look amazing, people won't even stop to hear or learn that close to 30 percent of the women who built it had never worked on cars before, nor would we get to accomplish the purpose of changing hearts and minds and increasing conversation about women in the trades. All of this leads to lots and lots of sleepless nights, as does the challenge of time and money; these builds put a huge strain on me financially—in fact, every spare penny I have goes into them." ■

To learn more about the Iron Maven build, follow @bogisgarage and @girlganggarage on social media and visit the Girl Gang Garage at [www.girlganggarage.com](http://www.girlganggarage.com)

Information about technical training programs and similar opportunities with Volvo Cars and Girl Gang Garage are available at: [www.volvocartechs.com](http://www.volvocartechs.com) and [www.girlganggarage.com/classes-events](http://www.girlganggarage.com/classes-events)

# GIRL GANG Garage

## CAR CARE CLASS

Girl Gang Garage provides a range of year-round classes and events at their primary location in Phoenix, along with a collection of virtual and off-site sessions for all skill levels.

Their Women's Car Care Class shares some of automotive expert, ASE certified mechanic, host of *Motor Trend's All Girl's Garage* and nationally recognized educator Bogi Lateiner's favorite female-friendly techniques for basic auto care, walking you through the process of how to:

- ▼ Change a tire
- ▼ Check fluids
- ▼ Change wipers
- ▼ Check belts & hoses
- ▼ Jump start a battery

Bogi will also cover the basics of brake and cooling systems and any other car care processes or general car care questions you may have.

Class sizes are limited and fill quickly. Find the latest info online at:

[www.girlganggarage.com/classes-events](http://www.girlganggarage.com/classes-events)

