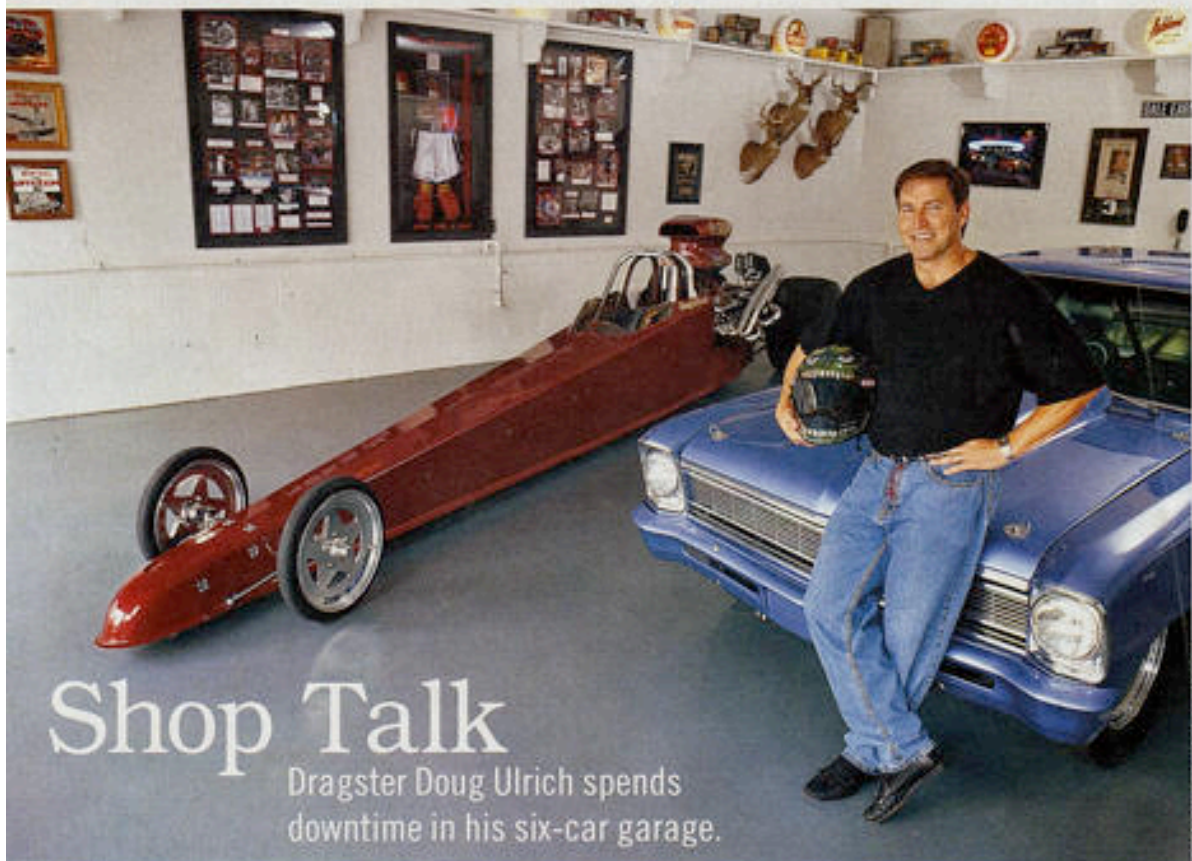


# place of his own



## Shop Talk

Dragster Doug Ulrich spends downtime in his six-car garage.

When Doug and Chi Chi Ulrich bought their Madison home shortly after they married in 1993, Doug recalls his wife asking, "If you had a big shop, would you stay home more often?" Doug said he would. Back then, Doug often hit the road for a blurred flurry of drag races across the country. He also held a full-time job as a tool-and-die machinist.

In 1995, the couple completed Doug's fully bricked, 1,400-square-foot, six-car garage which includes central heat and air and a wash bay—the same year he finished sixth in the world in the International Hot Rod Association's Quick Rod division. These days, the 43-year-old machinist still races, but he no longer travels the circuit. When he is at home, he stays holed up in his souped-up shop, working on the latest cars in his ever-changing collection.

"If I had money, I'd have a different car every day," he says with a

laugh. "It's a weakness of mine." As it stands now, "I buy and sell a lot of race cars" (although he does limit himself to two at any given time). On this particular day, the garage houses a Blue Chevy II and a needle-nose red dragster.

In addition to a Blazer he drives daily, Doug owns a customized white-and-silver four-door Chevrolet CK 3500 "dually" truck, which hauls his car trailer. The garage's ceiling trusses provide enough support to forego structural poles, allowing easy access and parking for the big transport vehicles. "My garage ceiling is 11 feet, 4 inches tall," Doug adds. "I made it high so I could keep my enclosed trailer inside."

Near the ceiling, a shelf runs along the perimeter of the room and displays Doug's collections of gas globes and die-cast cars and motorcycles. Walls boast framed memorabilia about the Titans, the late racer Dale Earnhardt, and boxer Muhammad Ali. Mementos from Doug's own racing victories liven the space as well.

A painted cement floor—so clean it belies the notion that messy car work actually takes place here—sets off the lustrous finishes of the autos of the hour.

"I'm a clean freak," admits Doug. "When I was young, my nickname was 'Clean Cut.' I had short hair, and I kept my cars clean, clean, clean."

NANCY DORMAN-HICKSON

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Doug Ulrich