



Swedish

ALVESTA, SWEDEN – Known as the home of ABBA, Ikea, Saab, Volvo, and of Koenigsegg (the creator of the mighty 800 hp carbon-fiber CCR which recently captured the title of Fastest Road Car from the McLaren F1), Sweden's cold climate has been credited for that country's steady stream of unique contributions to society. In case you can't quickly place it, Sweden is that long stretch of peninsula just west of Finland and virtually surrounded by the North Sea. Apparently all that cold, harsh, weather and their isolation, causes the hearty Swedes to be a bit innovative, a bit outside-the-box, sometimes even a bit eccentric. Above all of that, the Swedes are fantastic craftsmen. (It may also explain the Vikings, who may have used Sweden's weather

as an excuse to explore the rest of the world, and then to sack and pillage it all, but that's beside the point)

Whatever the reason, the Swedes have an enviable reputation for being meticulous, thorough, and for bravely doing whatever it takes for a great result, even if outside the mainstream.

This explains the connection of this deceptively-normal looking SUV to Alvesta Sweden. Alvesta is the home of Johan Ragnars-son, principal of JRD Development, which did the amazing customization work on what was formerly a



MODEL: KERRIANA
MAKEUP & STYLING: MEGHAN HANDY, SCOTT RICHARDS SALON,
& NANCY HANCOCK.
THANKS TO CHATEAU ELAN RESORT & WINERY
(WWW.CHATEAUELANATLANTA.COM)

Mastercraft

mild-mannered GMC Yukon.

Not coincidentally, Johan is also a good friend of fellow Swede Christian von Koenigsseg, of 241 mph Koenigsseg CCR fame (see *Makes & Models*' May issue). There is just something about those Swedes and high levels of craftsmanship and speed. And we want more of it!

Fortunately for everyone, rather than making funky furniture, or sacking and pillaging, Swedes Johan Ragnarsson and Niclas Jancic came to the U.S. to make cool cars as JRD Tuning (www.jrdtuning.com), which specializes in high-line custom-built cars along with providing engineering and tuning to Panoz, the way AMG is to Mercedes or Ruf to Porsche.

Both gentlemen grew up studying engineering together in Sweden. They had been trained in the European "old school" way of hand-rolling metal with an English Wheel in Johan's father's metal-working shop - nearly a lost art in today's automated economy.

This Yukon XL ("Yukon" being appropriate here for Swedes due to its



beautiful if not hospitable terrain] came to JRD with some customizing already done, years earlier. But it was not quite a complete job. As with so many customizing jobs, this one was done well, but only average. The earlier work was stale and not a complete package. The customer wanted JRD's Swedish touch with the simple mandate, "Make it cool."

The most obvious touch is JRD's custom front grille. Fabricated from woven stainless steel, it's then "electropolished" in a special dip process to keep it glittering beyond simply "shiny." It took them scores of hours on this alone. Its beauty is in a classy yet unique design and perfectly fit.

Likewise, the headlights seem simple, but in fact required JRD to fabricate parts of other individual headlights into one, making them both true xenons and also "halo" lights, not available anywhere else.

The body kit is really three kits, custom molded together as a complete unit by JRD. The fender flares did not quite flow with

the Erubini rear bumper. That bumper was originally one solid piece hanging down a bit too "blocky", Johan said it looked like a Zamboni ice machine. They carefully cut the flexible polyurethane horizontally, slicing a 4" strip from the middle, and then re-glued the result so that it flowed better and fit the fender flares. It was a week of body work just extending the fender flares down to meet the new bumpers.

The front spoiler needed similar attention. JRD fabricated smaller stainless steel mesh grills, matching the front grill, to insert into the body extensions and rear bumper.

The new bumper required different exhaust points, so JRD fabricated custom stainless exhaust tubing to allow twin nozzles at just the right points, and just the right size.

It already benefited from the nice air suspension, so all JRD had to do there was tighten up the front. The brakes were already bigger, too, but JRD added racing AP brakes with low-dust Stillen pads. This

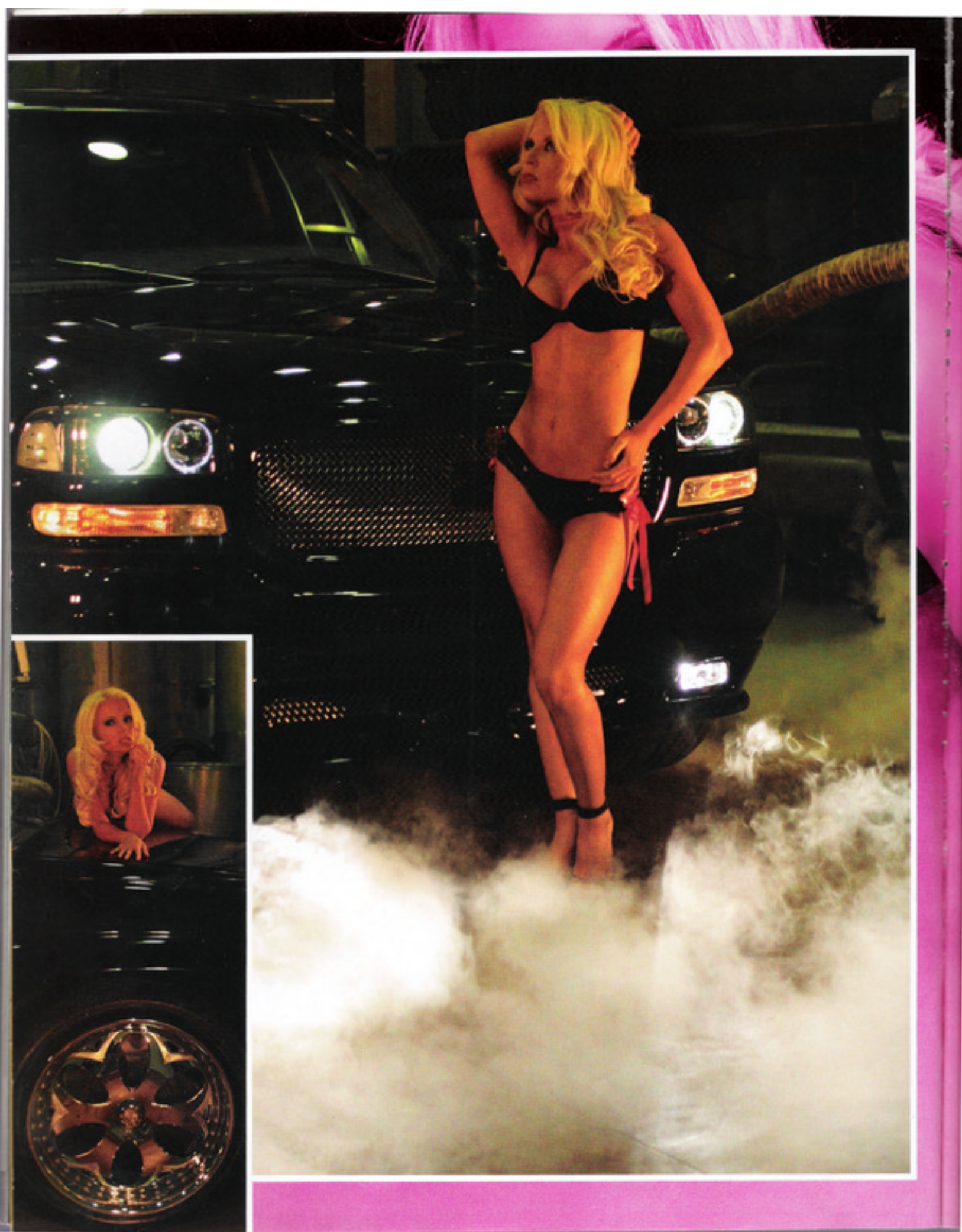


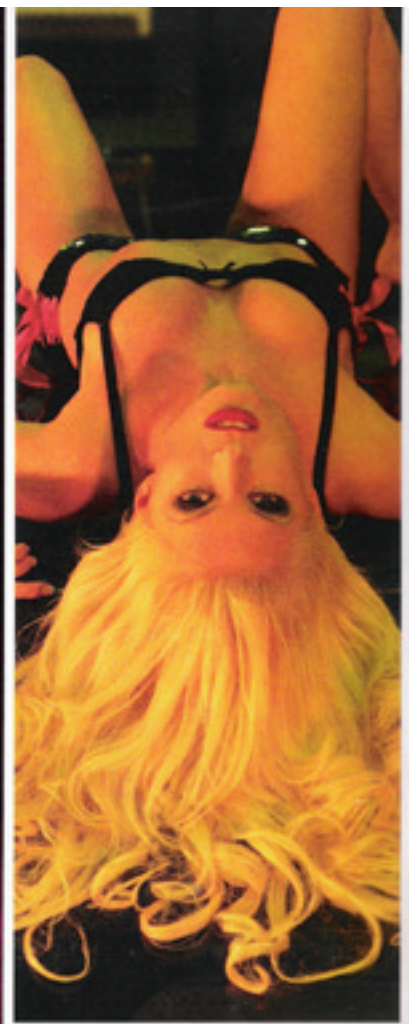


helps slow the massive 24" Davin chrome spinners on this 5,525 pound truck, now super-motivated by a Whipple twin-screw supercharger, with special massaging of its lower pulley by JRD.

JRD then turned to specialist Tim Gertz at

Anderson Audio & Performance (www.anderson-audio.com) for the electronics. The entire rear of this Yukon XL is now a custom designed and fabricated rear stereo enclosure totaling 63.6 cubic feet of subwoofers and amps.





Sparing no expense, they also installed a killer security system, an Alpine DVD player, a 6" LCD TV mounted behind the rear seat, a 15" LCD screen flips down in the rear, VCR, a navigation system and a Sony Playstation 2, with multiple controllers and remotes.

A custom fabricated center console stretches from the front dash all the way beyond the rear seats, covered in factory GM leather to match.

More JRD touches include custom embroidered carpet and leather seats, plus custom commissioned airbrush art by Craig Stanley - even initials of the owner are cast inside the taillight lenses.

They met the mandate. It is "cool." And all of it built with the loving, if a bit eccentric, craftsmanship of the Swedes.

It is quite fitting that Chateau Elan let us shoot this creation in their beautiful 16th Century 4-star winery and resort, among 75 acres of 22 varieties of Vinifera French and French-American hybrid grapes, all patiently waiting their turn at perfection in the 42,000 square foot winery. This fine luxurious ride was aged carefully like a fine wine, developed carefully by hand. The Swedes may not be famous for fine wines, but the kind of innovative craftsmanship that JRD can demonstrate is a sweet-smelling elixir that is just as invigorating.



About Our Model,

5'5" 34-24-34 Kerianna is already quite the sensation of the Southeast. She's appeared in numerous publications and in jeans, swimwear and lingerie advertisements and catalogs. She has worked for the likes of MTV, Bud Light, Baccardi, and more, in print, film and in personal appearances. She's a high-energy sparkle of fun and she also froze off what little of her tail she had, for this shoot. We appreciate her dedication as much as her beauty.