

# CARisma RX-8

An RX-8 with Plenty of Charisma



By TODD LEE "TOADMAN"

THERE IS NO DENYING that Mazda's RX-8 has blazed a trail through new territory in the sports car market, taking home numerous accolades and redefining what makes a sports car. However, many industry nay-sayers claim the car suffers from an identity crisis; making concessions to appease the practical crowd and unable to claim the high ground in any one category.

Enter Erwin Brucelas, owner of Carisma Autotec in Chatsworth, Calif. A veteran on the performance tuning scene, Brucelas and his crew recognized the car's potential early on and have taken it to the cutting edge in design and performance functionality. (Not to mention racking up serious airfreight shipping charges from Japan.)

Brucelas took delivery of his Sunlight Silver six-speed sport package in October 2003 and soon found that giving his RX-8 wings was no easy task. The lack of goodies available in the U.S. market, at the time, had him looking eastward. Undeterred, Brucelas called in a few favors. The results, as we'll see, speak for themselves.

Under a four-week deadline to be show-ready for SEMA 2003, Brucelas and the Carisma crew installed a gorgeous Air Force ONE(tm) front bumper and skirt kit. Deciding to stick with the OEM rear bumper, Brucelas swapped out the stock exhaust for a Tanabe Super Medallion Hyper dual-tip system. The new catback was wrapped in a one-off hand-crafted Carisma carbon fiber rear diffuser. Sitting atop the deck-lid is a low-mount APR CF wing, which balances out the sleek style of the new front end.

Upfront, Carisma installed their own custom-fabricated carbon fiber B-pillar and hood trims, as Ganador powered CF side mirrors accent the sinister-looking paint-matched R-Magic headlight eyelids. The artistry of this RX-8 is topped off with custom, yet tasteful, side graphics.

In addition to the replacement CF interior panels, the factory seats and belts were replaced with black Recaro racing seats. The driver is strapped in with an imported Takata HPHR four-point harness.



Lock and load!

Brucelas swapped out the stock rims and tires for Racing Hart CX's, 19x9 245/35-19s in front, and 19x10 with 275/30-19s in the rear. Bridgestone Potenza S03s tuck in nicely all around with an aggressive 1.5-inch drop, courtesy of Tanabe S210 lowering springs.

Under the hood this RENESIS is bottle-fed, with a Nitrous Express 50-shot single port system tapped into the intake tubing. Future under-hood modifications will include a custom intake system currently under design at the



It's definitely got the look.

company's research and development facility. A one-of-a-kind, custom fabricated, Tanabe strut tower brace keeps body-flex minimized.

Brucelas finished the car in three weeks, leaving one week to spare before the SEMA show. Surprising himself and the Carisma squad, their efforts paid off when they took home the SEMA 2003 Special Recognition and Outstanding

Achievement in Design award, which sparked several congratulatory calls from auto industry executives.

When asked what additional plans he had in mind for his beauty, all Brucelas said was, "we'll see." With such incredible success with his first RX-8, and one of the first in the U.S., we can't bear being left hanging like this. **RX**



# CanZoomer

**WE WANT MORE!**

*RX-8 Performance & Accessories*

## Performance Tuning Systems

**No permanent Modifications, install or remove in 15 minutes!**

**Stage 1: 20+ Rear Wheel HP Plug-In System - \$749**

**Stage 2 - 40+ Rear Wheel HP Plug in System - \$949**

**Greddy Exhaust Systems:**

**SP2 Full Stainless steel - \$589      TP2 Full Titanium - \$899**

**JIC FLTA2 Suspension Kit:**

**Coil Over suspension. Adjustable height and damping - \$1649**

**Full line of Mazda Japan imported accessories & MazdaSpeed Parts**

**\$50 OFF**

**A Stage 1 ECU**

Clip and Mail this coupon to:  
Hard Data Lmtl.  
11060-166 ave  
Edmonton, AB Canada T5K1Y3

[www.canzoomer.com](http://www.canzoomer.com)

**Email: sales@canzoomer.com**

**780-456-9771 • Fax: 780-456-9772**