



**VEILSIDE'S FORTUNE
FD3S RX-7 IS ONE
OF THE FIRST CARS
CONSIDERED FOR
A PROMINENT ROLE
WITHIN F&F 3.**

TheReal **JDM**

JDM Goes Hollywood



The Real JDM is a monthly column written by Ben Schaffer of Bespoke Ventures. Bespoke Ventures operates a number of JDM related businesses including: Bulletproof Automotive, Top Secret III, Ings+1 USA, VARIS USA, HyperRev USA and C's USA. Visit www.bespokeventures.com for more information.

BY BEN SCHAFER

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS franchise is an undeniably powerful force that nearly everyone reading Modified has strong feelings about. Although the first two films have been tremendous commercial successes, many enthusiasts and companies within the industry still feel betrayed years later. As our culture and hobby has been translated to the big screen, the bold flavors have been diluted to the levels of baby food in an effort to force feed the masses. The result has been bittersweet. On one hand the F&F franchise has helped to propel our industry into the public eye, bringing big corporate sponsors and an expanded worldwide marketplace for tuning parts. On the other hand the movie has alienated many of those whom it wished to portray, leading many enthusiasts and industry businesses to distance themselves, as one would with an old Vanilla Ice music collection. Whatever you've felt, as a reader of The Real

JDM your feelings may become amplified to find that Universal Studios is hard at work on The Fast and the Furious 3, with the movie's cameras aimed clearly at the world of drifting and our beloved JDM tuning.

Just as F&F parts one and two brought "spo-com" to the mainstream, part three will for the first time bring JDM to the mainstream. The results will be significant enough to either propel JDM to superstardom or to turn it into the next mainstream joke. While we all have an intimate knowledge and respect for the JDM scene, there will be millions of viewers who next year will be introduced to drifting and the world of JDM for the first time. I nervously wonder what the reaction will be. How will we the enthusiasts and our industry be represented? Will Ludacris be rapping about D1 on MTV? Will Paul Walker be doing monkey poses like Nomuken? Will F&F force its past spo-com ways onto the image of

JDM tuning?

The first thing that I've learned about F&F 3 is that nearly nobody from the earlier movies is involved, something that I as a JDM enthusiast am tremendously grateful for. After the unrealistic portrayal of the spo-com lifestyle in F&F 2, there couldn't be a more optimistic and fresh start. Since the third installment is focused on Japan and drifting, Universal started things off right by adding Keiichi Tsuchiya the "Dorikin" (Drift King) to the payroll and promptly sending their staff to Japan to experience D1 competitions and wangan meetings first hand. Next up, Universal in June rented out Irwindale Speedway to hold a private event for their staff. The event allowed everyone from the producers to the movie's up-and-coming director Justin Lin to get a first hand look at drifting.

By the time you read this many of the cars in the movie will be in production or nearly



finished. If you are like me and the majority of the audience that Universal expects, you are more interested in the cars than the actors who are drifting them. Interestingly, as of mid July Universal has said that there will be no big name movie stars, despite the fact that the new movie's budget exceeds that of either predecessor. Further reinforcing that statement, Universal's casting agency in July opened up the opportunity to the general public, using the drifting.com message board to recruit fresh faces to fill character roles including even the lead character. This all clearly conveys that Universal is banking on the cars to be the movie's main box office draw.

Let's talk about the stars of the movie: The cars. Universal is working with an ambitious list of cars ranging from VIP to exotics to the movie's most prevalent category, drifters. Nissan's 350Z will be heavily represented with multiple examples as will the Silvia in both S13 and S15 configurations. My favorite controversy stirrer is a '67 Mustang featuring a RB26DETT GT-R powerplant which will be sure to create an uproar with American muscle car purists.

The influence of previous F&F movies has been international. In Japan under the Wild Speed title, F&F parts one and two were box office successes. Although many performance oriented companies in Japan want nothing to do with the image of past F&F movies, the movie has also been the catalyst for many new spo-com manufacturers, magazines and car shows. With countless magazines in Japan now representing the newly popularized spo-com segment, it is apparent that F&F certainly left its mark in Japan.

Will F&F 3 propel the sport of drifting? Absolutely. Universal is clearly an expert in the area of Hollywood excitement and action. There should be no doubt that drifting will look amazing on the big screen and that the action will captivate those familiar to the sport and those seeing it for the first time. The Drift King's involvement,

just like with Initial D, should create excellent drift choreography and realism that can satisfy real world drifters, video game drifters and those just there to watch the action. I foresee the popularity of drifting soaring to levels unlike we've ever imagined. The flip side to this is that the police will undoubtedly crack down further on touge runs as inexperienced new drivers watch the movie and get an unrealistic burst of driving confidence only to find themselves tumbling down the side of a mountain. Longtime touge drivers will find it a painful reality as their favorite mountain passes become filled with reckless new drivers and police trying to prevent the carnage. For quite some time after the movie is released, drift day and track day events will be the only feasible option to enjoy drifting.

Will F&F 3 propel the image of JDM tuning? The answer is far more difficult to predict. While the Drift King assists with drifting realism, the movie studio artists and staff are left with the monumental responsibility of how the cars turn out. Whether the cars are produced realistically to JDM standards or whether the over-stylized spo-com image oozing from the past movies gets splattered onto drifting Silvias and Zs will depend the influence of many Universal staff who just now are getting a crash course on JDM tuning. The risk of misrepresentation within the movie is most significant in the development of the cars. Like it or not, the time between July and October during which all the cars are prepared and finished will have a prominent voice in either the advancement or regression of JDM



Garage Saurus of Japan has built some brutal time attack and drag GT-Rs. Universal became inspired from this Saurus RB30 engine for a Mustang!

as a tuning style and market.

The Fast and the Furious 3 is the most exciting and scary thing that has ever happened to drifting and JDM tuning. The power of film as a medium to influence the masses makes it a risky time for everyone involved with JDM tuning and drifting. As we wait out the next year or so until the movie is released, we're all left to wonder whether Hollywood will better our culture or destroy it. However, we shouldn't feel alone in our anxious thoughts as Universal also has a lot riding on part 3. After the fan's disappointment of F&F 2, the new movie will either bring redemption to the franchise or possibly bury it. The future of JDM and the F&F franchise relies on the talents of Universal's team and we can only hope that they have one of their famous Hollywood endings in store for us all.

Look for next month's The Real JDM as Ben brings more cutting-edge industry insider knowledge from Japan to Modified's pages. ■■■

Send your feedback to: TheRealJDM@modified.com