

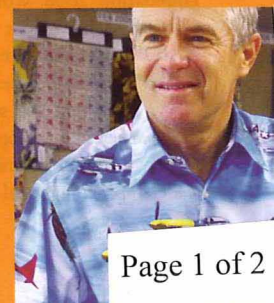
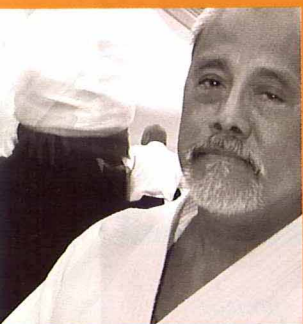


# Pau Hana

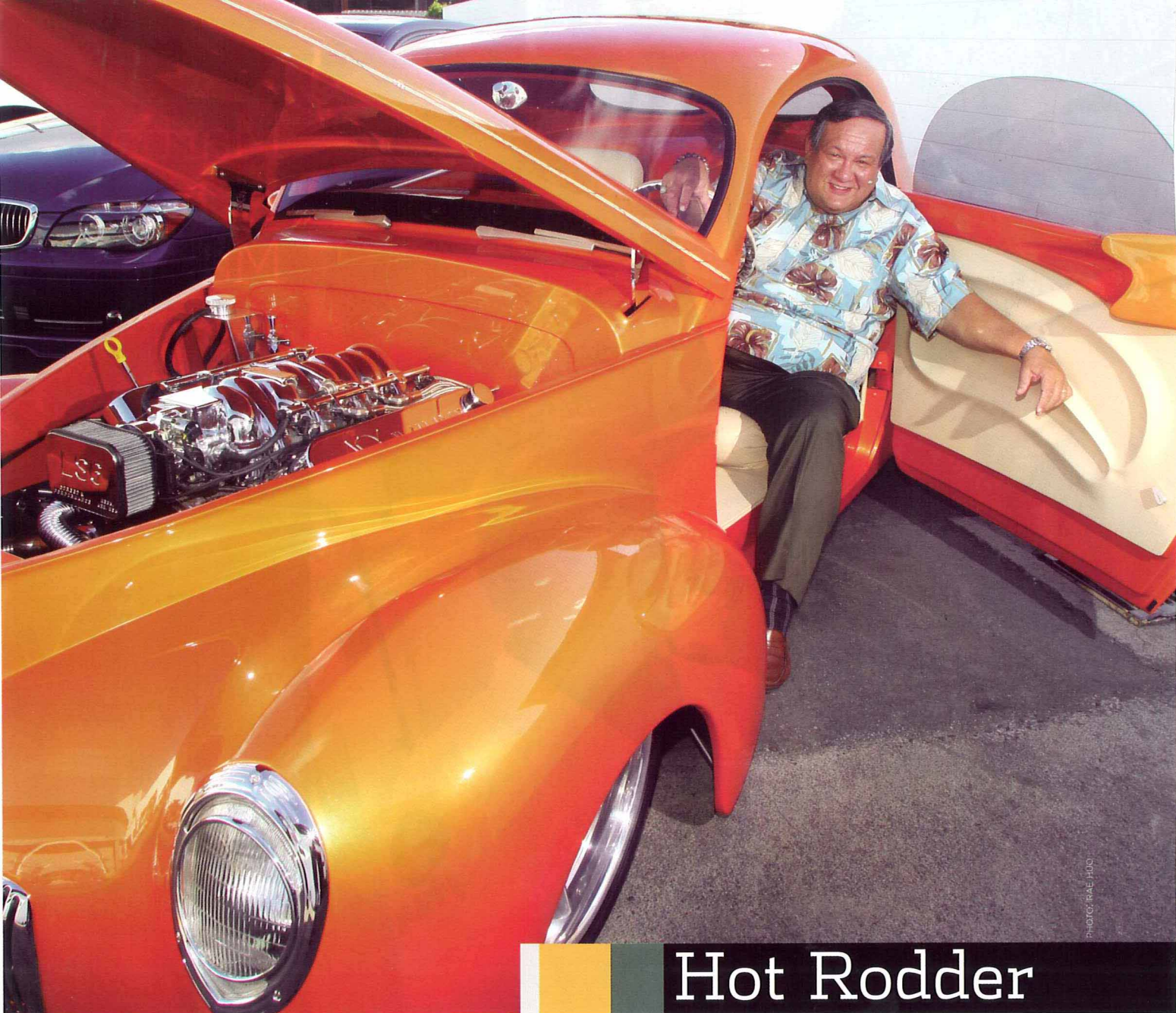
*These executives run some of Hawaii's best known companies. We uncover what they do when they're not working.*



AS TOLD TO CATHY CRUZ-GEORGE  
PHOTOS BY RAE HUO & OLIVIER KONING







## Hot Rodder

*Dexter S. Kekua, senior vice president and chief executive officer, Heide and Cook Ltd.*

I used to build cars when I was younger. Now, I design. I know what I want a car to look like, and it comes out exactly the way I want. I take pleasure in building rather than driving. I spend two and a half years building a car. I drive it a few times and then it's like, "What's next?"

It bothers me that a lot of hot rods are bought. When you buy a car, you buy what somebody else built. It's their idea, not yours. I'm old school. In the old hot rod days, you got together and built it to your imagination.

I have nine cars in total. Two are in construction. One of them is a 1933 Willys, the world's first compact car. It started out

as a coupe, but as we went along, I didn't like the lines. I was concerned about the size, so we chopped off the body. We widened it, lengthened it and slanted the window back. Afterward, we said, "That's not exactly what we want," so we ended up chopping the top off.

I have a 1931 Ford that's almost finished. It was a national winner for Street Rod of the Year in 1988. I call it my "McDonald's Car," because I'll drive to McDonald's in it. On nice days, I'll take it out. It's a convertible.

My [BMW] B7 is the only one in the state. There are only 60 in the world. It's as fast as a Corvette. I also have a tricked-out 2005 Hummer. They supercharged it for me and lowered it because my wife couldn't climb into it.

My 2-year-old grandson's first word wasn't "dada" or "mama." It was "car." You can't put a baby seat in the back of a hot rod, and there's no airbag. I'm thinking of building a Ford 1932 sedan, where I can put a backseat for a baby seat, so I can take him riding in the car.