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Racing Roots & Family Values

SHAPED NORDSTROM'S AUTOMOTIVE



A Family Legacy

Racing Roots and Family Values shaped Nordstrom's Automotive

By Heather Jordan | Photos by Nordstrom's Automotive

Nestled amidst the farmlands of eastern South Dakota, Nordstrom's Automotive stands as a beacon of innovation, sustainability, and family legacy. What began as a modest dairy farm in the late 1960s has grown into an award-winning Gold Seal Certified Auto Recycler, drawing visitors from across the globe to witness its state-of-the-art operations and rich history.

Humble beginnings on the farm

The origins of Nordstrom's Automotive trace back to the late 1960s when Art and Marie Nordstrom took over the family dairy farm after the sudden passing of Art's father, Walt Nordstrom. Walt, a respected state senator, along with his now widowed wife Leona, left behind a legacy of hard work and determination, which inspired Art and Marie to dig deeper into the farm's potential. While the farm provided for their family, Art's passion for vehicles began to take center stage.

Their journey into the automotive world started with a simple need: a functional pickup truck for the farm. Art purchased a wrecked Ford pickup, repaired it, and sold it for a small profit. This initial success sparked an idea that would soon evolve into a full-fledged business.

"That Ford pickup gave them the idea eventually," Shannon Nordstrom notes. "They used the pickup for a little over a year, and then my dad sold it, made \$72 on it, and he realized that he could do that again and duplicate the process. So, that is what started fixing up Ford pickups, Chevy pickups, and fixing a few for neighbors and friends, eventually getting into fixing up grain trucks."

Art began repairing more vehicles, first for neighbors and then for a broader clientele. By the early 1970s, what was then Nordstrom's Used and Rebuilt Trucks was on its way to becoming a household name in South Dakota.

In the words of Shannon, "Build it, and they will come."

Racing roots and family values

The Nordstrom family's love for racing played a pivotal role in shaping their identity. A modified Ford tractor, lovingly dubbed the "Nordstrom Special," became a symbol of their weekend racing adventures. The family would gather at local speedways, including Huset's Speedway and Lake County Speedway, cheering on their creation as it roared around the dirt tracks. This racing culture instilled a sense of camaraderie and excitement that permeated the family business.

The tractor, custom built on the farm by Art and with the help of his brother Greg Nordstrom, was fitted with a 390 Ford Mustang engine. According to Shannon, "That tractor was a symbol of our excitement. There was always hard work going on here at the farm, but that tractor was the excitement. My dad would crack open the throttle of that tractor and the 390 Mustang motor would come to life!"

This spirit carried over into their business practices, where every customer was treated like family. Whether it was providing a playroom for children or keeping a refrigerator stocked with refreshments, Art and Marie emphasized creating a welcoming and supportive environment for everyone that came out to visit what they called "The Funny Farm." "There were cows, crops, and cars all growing, and we were all a bit zany and liked to laugh, so the funny farm fit perfectly. We all had names on the CB radio that coincided with it, too," Shannon recalls. Art was the "Funny Famer," Marie was the "Funny Gal," their oldest daughter, Yvette was the "Funny Girl," the middle daughter Suzette was the "Happy Hippo," and Shannon was the "String Bean." They all grew up



working the farm, working and learning about vehicles, building their new found faith as new Christians in 1972 and learning how to keep many balls in the air at once.

This "on the job training" would treat them well and lead them to levels that none of them expected. Yvette would go on to persevere and create the famous "VanderBrink Auctions." Suzette would work her way up to a regional sales and training position with Monrovia Nurseries, and Shannon would lead the automotive business, working with a great team of people.

Faith played a large role in the Nordstrom's upbringing and when Shannon's mom became a Christian, she brought the rest of the family into the fold and that was HUGE and the origin of where PTLA (Praise The Lord Always). "Art put it on the tractor as a silent testimony. Mom and Dad used to pray hard, too, and the neighbors who had a bible study used to pray, 'If those Nordstrom's could be as good as they were bad, they could be something special.' Shannon recalls. Thank you, Jesus, those prayers came true. That is why the letters PTLA is on EVERYTHING we put public facing," Shannon explains. "Faith is our foundation for everything as our mission statement says."

Growth through Innovation

In 1989 Shannon convinced Art to sell his 1964 Impala SS the family took on their 2nd honeymoon. "Art and Marie renewed their vows in the church after becoming Christians, all of us kids were in the small wedding and went on the honeymoon to the Black Hills for a weekend with them," Shannon adds. "The car was a big deal. Art would love to find it back, and it may have

1979 Trans AM 10th Anniversary with 1,900 actual miles. Pontiac 400 with 4-speed.



been one of my best sales pitches in my life convincing them to sell that car and buy a computer system. This would later be replaced by the Hollander System and Shannon and the team would partner with them to renovate many things for Nordstrom's and the industry. Ironically, to this day Art has never turned a computer on and still uses a flip phone.

Today at Nordstrom's 2.0, the facility has added a 65,000-square-foot building boasting a geothermal system with 21 miles of underground plastic piping. The company's dedication to green practices extends to every aspect of its operations, from properly and safely recycling fuels, oils, coolant, refrigerant, tires and



Shannon and Tamie love their 2024 Bronco Raptor that they had wrapped and the personalized plate reads, "WRAPTR."



now even being one of the first Certified High Voltage Vehicle Dismantlers in the country, equipped and ready to handle the newest technology vehicles. The building was designed by Shannon with the help of his team and the contractors working with Cleveringa Construction. "An architect was only hired at the end to make sure we were doing the things needed to be in compliance with county regulations," Shannon adds.

"So, in the environmental piece of what we do, being green is important to us," Shannon notes. "This building is green itself. Our entire 65,000 square foot building of new construction is heated and air conditioned by geothermal. Our employees wanted a wonderfully comfortable workplace and adding the air conditioning and all-LED lighting lets us run this building in the coldest months of winter at an extremely affordable rate."

The "Under the Hood" Radio Show: A business within the business

In 1990, Nordstrom's Automotive ventured into broadcasting with the launch of their highly successful "Under the Hood" radio show. Inspired by an idea from Shannon Nordstrom's mother Marie, the show began as a local program on KSOO-AM Radio.

"It started as my mother's idea while she was out custom windrowing alfalfa," Shannon adds. "She was listening to Wayne Pritchard on the radio and said, 'You know what? We should have a little show to talk about our cars and parts business on the radio.' My dad had connections through the fair with the tractor pull, and she went and talked to KSOO radio, and after a few conversations, they agreed to put a 19-year-old kid on the air."

The Show was put on the air as the "Nordstrom's Cars and Parts Show" on KSOO. The show matured over time eventually with Shannon bringing on new employee Russ Evans and then moving to KELO AM 1320 and becoming the "Nordstrom's Under the Hood Show with the Motor Medics."

The show provides automotive advice, helps listeners save

money on repairs, and showcases the expertise of the Nordstrom team. Shannon, along with co-hosts, Russ "The Super Tech" Evans and Chris Carter use the program to connect with a broader audience, further cementing Nordstrom's reputation as an industry leader.

"Chris is from the Chris and Doc Show, the number one radio show in Sioux Falls. He's the voice of the people and is running the board. Our producer Doug Mashek with Prairie House Productions and also takes the calls. All we get is a call screen, or a screen that says, 'Bob from Nebraska, '94 Ford pickup starter. Or Tom from California, 2014 Toyota Tundra, suspension noise.' That's all. We have no resources in front of us except for a notebook where I keep notes and we give people automotive advice on the air," explains Shannon.

"That's what the show is all about, saving people money, making them better consumers of the automobile, and having a lot of fun doing it," Shannon adds.

Shannon and their small team have learned, worked hard, made connections and have self-syndicated the show to now play on close to 250 radio stations from Westwood One Satellite, weekly podcasts on all the major podcasts sites and are now growing a YouTube channel. "The Studio and technology were



all "hand built" by Russ Evans, and it is quite impressive to all who visit!" Shannon exclaims. "Russ has helped grow the show by learning the industry, technology and bringing next level "color of the wire" insight to callers. He is amazing, and now a partner in the show," Shannon notes.

Building a legacy of leadership

A cornerstone of Nordstrom's success is its emphasis on leadership and mentorship. After a short stint in tech school for telecommunications, Shannon knew his heart was in cars and joined Art and Marie and handful of key employees in the business full time in 1988.

Under his guidance, the company established the CANI (an acronym for "Constant And Never-ending Improvement") principles and the training room named for it, where employees receive monthly training and feedback. "It's been very important that we continue to stay in front of our employees," Shannon adds. "When we built Nordstrom's 2.0 it was imperative that we had a training room for those meetings that we had every month. We can fit every employee in the room and we are able to show multimedia things that we want to train on, pictures of things that have been done well, and things that we want to improve on."

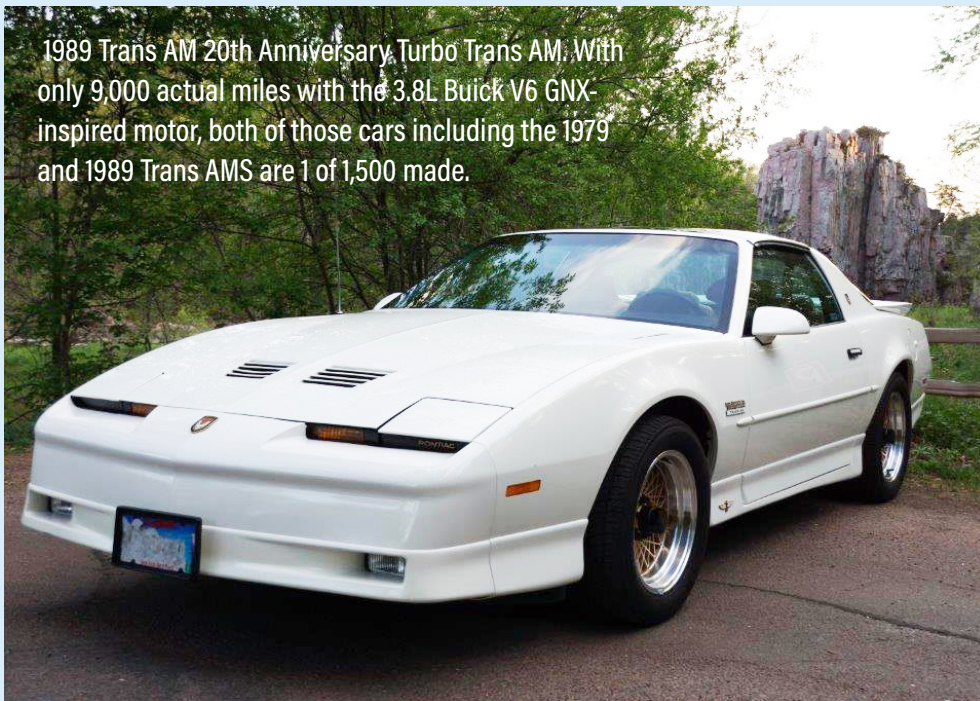
In addition to using the room for dedicated meeting space, Nordstrom's also used the space to meet the needs of the community. "During COVID, we were able to let Victory Life Church use it for their youth group. There were up to 120 kids up here praising the Lord on Wednesday nights. That has been a blessing for us to be able to have that opportunity available."

Shannon also carries the family's dedication to community and industry leadership. and has become a respected industry speaker. As an active member of the Automotive Recyclers Association (ARA), he has served in various leadership roles, advocating for the industry's growth and sustainability. In recognition of his contributions, Shannon is set to take on the role of ARA President this fall in Birmingham, Alabama, further solidifying Nordstrom's influence in the automotive recycling world.

Expanding operations and embracing technology

Today, Nordstrom Automotive's goal is to dismantle 50 Full-Service Vehicles per week, meticulously dismantling

1989 Trans AM 20th Anniversary Turbo Trans AM. With only 9,000 actual miles with the 3.8L Buick V6 GNX-inspired motor, both of those cars including the 1979 and 1989 Trans AMS are 1 of 1,500 made.



OUR MISSION

THE **NORDSTROM'S. TEAM** WILL STRIVE DAILY WHILE EMBRACING **CANI**, TO MEET OR EXCEED OUR CUSTOMERS' EXPECTATIONS.

WE WILL OFFER MONEY SAVING OPTIONS WITH **BEST-IN-CLASS** WARRANTIES TO GIVE CUSTOMERS **COMPLETE CONFIDENCE**®.

WE WILL PROMOTE A **FRIENDLY, INTEGRITY-RICH CULTURE** WITHIN WHICH WE CAN PROVIDE **OPPORTUNITY FOR MANY** WHILE BUILDING LONG LASTING RELATIONSHIPS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF THE COMPANY.

WE WILL PROFITABLY OPERATE A **CLEAN, GREEN, MODERN, EFFICIENT** ORGANIZATION THAT GIVES BACK TO THE **COMMUNITY** AND THE INDUSTRY.

PARAMOUNT TO ALL OF OUR GOALS IS RECOGNIZING ALL GLORY GOES TO **GOD** AS OUR **FAITH** IS THE FOUNDATION FOR **EVERYTHING**.

THE NORDSTROM'S
PTLA

1st Thessalonians 5:18

"in the country"
PTLA
NORDSTROM'S
Automotive, Inc.





2022 BMW M8 Competition Convertible:
Tamie and Shannon call it the “date night” car.

and grading parts for resale. Each vehicle is assessed using advanced software that calculates demand and market value, ensuring the company maximizes its inventory's potential. All parts dismantled from vehicles are photographed and the complete vehicles have photos and videos on YouTube so that customers can see exactly what they are buying.

Nordstrom's is also a proud member of Team PRP, a national

network of over 200 auto recycling yards. This partnership allows them to fill the voids in their extensive inventory and also to sell products to partners all of over the U.S. Nordstrom's is proud to be part of this group to open up more markets and ensure inventory completeness.

Shannon realizes he is not always the smartest person in the room and he trusts input from his employees and team of managers.



Nordstrom's now has 80 employees and Shannon commits to a calendar to take each of them out for lunch to talk and more importantly listen, during their annual review month. Shannon works with leading the team, along with integration of technology.

A commitment to sustainability and community

Environmental stewardship remains at the heart of Nordstrom's mission. "The EWE Pullet (you-pull-it) Self Service Used Auto Parts yard is a separate business built on ten acres on the north side of the property where customers are able to pull their own parts from a rotating inventory of over 1,200 vehicles," Shannon explains. "It is a totally different business model with amazing savings. The trademarked slogan is "Your Tools, Your Labor, Your Savings" with the registered trademark symbol at the end." In addition to that trademark, Nordstrom's is a registered trademark with the USPTO, along with "Under the Hood Show, and are just a few of the patents that I have achieved." Shannon notes.

Beyond its environmental efforts, Nordstrom's is deeply committed to its community by supporting many faith-based and family-based events in the area. Nordstrom's has supported KNWC Christian Radio since milking cows in the barn and Art and Marie are proud of the Nordstrom-Johnson building at the Sioux Empire fair grounds they gave to the county to be the permanent home of the Faith Temple Friday Food Giveaway that delivers sustainable food to thousands of people weekly, no questions asked. This spirit of giving back is a testament to the Nordstrom family's values and their belief in building lasting relationships.

Looking to the future

Art, Marie and Shannon, along with his wife Tamie, who has worked in the business also since they were married in 1995, have led a great team to make Nordstrom's what it is today, and



they are not satisfied. Grounded in faith, they will work hard with CANI to reach new heights.

As Nordstrom's Automotive enters its third generation of family leadership, the company remains dedicated to innovation, sustainability, and customer service. Shannon and Tamie's son, Riley has recently started his journey at Nordstrom's. He will be learning the ropes and giving them three generations working in the business at the same time and the opportunity for a 3rd generation to lead them.

From its beginnings on a small dairy farm to its current status as a global influencer in automotive recycling, Nordstrom's Automotive exemplifies the power of hard work, faith, and family. It is more than a business; it is a testament to what can be achieved when passion and purpose align. PTLA.

