

X-TREME PERFORMANCE



Fast Company

Steve Ali knows business in the fast lane as the owner behind Xtreme Performance.

Steve Ali was looking to purchase some used tow trucks when he visited the site of today's Xtreme Performance. "The couple who owned the building was retiring," Ali says. It was 2004 and Ali had been operating a gas station he owned in North Olmsted. Ali looked around — the property was on a main thoroughfare through North Ridgeville, a city where Ali says the mayor is a "modern-day Mayberry." "You can walk into his office, have a cup of coffee and talk about what's on your mind," he relates.

Ali didn't buy the tow trucks. Instead, he purchased the entire property, and from there he built a brand-new, 14-bay facility that opened officially in 2008.

Xtreme Performance is a labor of love for Ali, who was a steelworker and changed careers. A graduate of Ohio Technical College, Ali purchased a three-bay Sunoco station in North Olmsted — but, after some time, got tired of gasoline industry politics. He calls the opening of Xtreme Performance his "Independence Day" as an entrepreneur who's driven to provide uncommon customer service.

"We are family-owned and -operated, and we go the extra mile — we're fair, honest, we don't oversell like some chains do," Ali says. "We make recommendations and there's no pressure."

Xtreme Performance repairs all makes and models, and his technicians are Automotive Service Excellence-certified master technicians. And, the shop specializes in performance vehicles. Additionally, Ali has been interviewed and featured in Corvette Fever magazine, among industry publications.

Recently, Xtreme Performance bought out Northridge Supply — a

business about 500 feet up the road from the company's location. The owner of Northridge Supply retired after 33 years in business and sold his inventory and franchise to Ali. Now, Xtreme Performance is Lorain County's exclusive ARE truck cap and accessories dealer.

"We have the potential now to double our business in the next 18 months," Ali says, noting that he hired four people in the last few months and will continue to add to his team.

Ali, who lives in Middleburg Heights, is an involved community member in North Ridgeville. He sits on the school board for the Lorain County JVS automotive program. He also sponsors a number of local sports teams, including Little League baseball and soccer.

Meanwhile, Ali and Xtreme Performance participate in about 25 car shows across the country each year. "We'll bring our 'toy cars' that we build here, and we are the main sponsor of five to seven shows each year," he says. Ali still owns the 1977 Z28 Camaro he drove when he was 16 years old, and he has two others — a 2000 and 2007. The latter "is my baby now," he says.

Ali is a lifelong "Corvette junkie," and aficionados from across the country bring their Corvettes to Xtreme Performance. "We have cars drop-shipped here all the time — the one farthest away was from California," he says.

Car fever runs in the family; Ali's father was a diesel mechanic, and his older brother always drove the "fast cars" like Pontiac Trans Ams, Chevilles and Corvettes. "I would hang out and watch them," he says.

Ali adds, "It's pretty cool to be living your dream."

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