**Jonathan Ward: Founder and Lead Designer of ICON**

Jonathan Ward is the founder and lead designer of ICON, a Southern California-based automotive atelier renowned for having founded the modern “resto-mod” culture. ICON’s meticulous restomods of classic vehicles blends vintage aesthetics with cutting-edge technology, resulting in vehicles that are both timeless and forward-thinking.

**Early Life and Career**

Born in 1970, Ward's early years were spent in Elkridge, Maryland. In 1977, his family relocated to New York City's Hell's Kitchen neighborhood to support his budding acting career. During this time, he developed an affinity for the city's vibrant energy, architecture, and mechanical systems. He often explored antique theaters and disassembled electronics, fostering a deep curiosity about design and craftsmanship.

Ward's acting career led him to California, where he joined the cast of Charles in Charge. However, his passion for automobiles soon took precedence. He began restoring and customizing vehicles in his home garage, eventually founding TLC4x4 in 1996, specializing in Toyota Land Cruisers.

**Founding ICON**

In 2007, Ward co-founded ICON with his wife, Jamie, to expand his vision of modernizing classic vehicles. ICON's approach involves retaining the original design ethos while integrating contemporary technology and materials. This philosophy is evident in their Derelict and Reformer series, where classic cars are restored with modern powertrains and amenities, yet their vintage charm is preserved.

ICON's production models include the FJ (based on the Toyota Land Cruiser), BR (inspired by the Ford Bronco), and TR (a reimagined 1950s Chevy pickup). These vehicles feature modern components such as fuel-injected engines, LED lighting, and advanced infotainment systems, all while maintaining the classic silhouettes.

**Design Philosophy**

Ward's design philosophy is rooted in a deep appreciation for craftsmanship and detail. He often sources materials from diverse industries, including aviation and outdoor furniture, to ensure the highest quality in his builds. His commitment to excellence is evident in features like custom-machined components and innovative solutions, such as power window systems that retain the classic hand-crank interface. With no formal training, Jonathan now advises global OEM’s and design brands. His mantra? “Respect your perspective”.

**Beyond Automobiles**

Expanding his creative endeavors, Ward has ventured into watch design with the Duesey timepiece, which incorporates vintage elements into a modern luxury watch. This project reflects his broader interest in design and his ability to merge different disciplines into cohesive creations.

Jonathan is a serial craftsman, keen to constantly explore other traditional arts. A skilled leather craftsman, JW founded the JWard Collection Brand in 2022, and is a skilled tailor and clothing designer, with Campfire Coats.

**Legacy and Impact**

Jonathan Ward's work at ICON has significantly influenced the automotive restoration industry. By redefining the concept of restomods, he has set new standards for quality, innovation, and design integrity. His vehicles are not just machines; they are expressions of art and engineering, appealing to enthusiasts who value both heritage and modernity.

Today, ICON stands as a testament to Ward's vision and dedication, continuing to produce vehicles that honor the past while embracing the future.