

BUSINESS

CMI tricks out a Buckeye tailgating vehicle of its own

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After seven years of helping Buckeye fans build their own custom tailgating vehicles, the staff at Custom Mobile Interiors in Grove City finally has their own.

CMI is calling the vehicle the Buckeye Bullet. It is a converted and completely customized El Dorado shuttle bus that was received in trade from a client.

The bus is decked out in scarlet and gray from top to bottom. It features solid surface counters, checkered flooring, window blinds and a circular seating lounge, all

done in the Buckeyes' theme colors.

The bus features a Brutus Buckeye stained glass window, a Block O cutting board and a display case full of OSU bobblehead figures.

Scarlet and gray fuzzy dice adorn the rearview mirror, and OSU fan paraphernalia is found at every turn, including a sign in the bathroom that reads, "Buckeye Fan Parking Only."

The vehicle features two 27-inch LCD screens in the lounge area and a 15-inch screen in the restroom, all of which are hooked up to an in-motion satellite dish.

The bus was originally

known as the Scooby Bus because of its resemblance to the Mystery Machine van. The new vehicle was completely designed and constructed by the CMI staff.

The design, construction and name of the vehicle were all the result of collaboration among staff members.

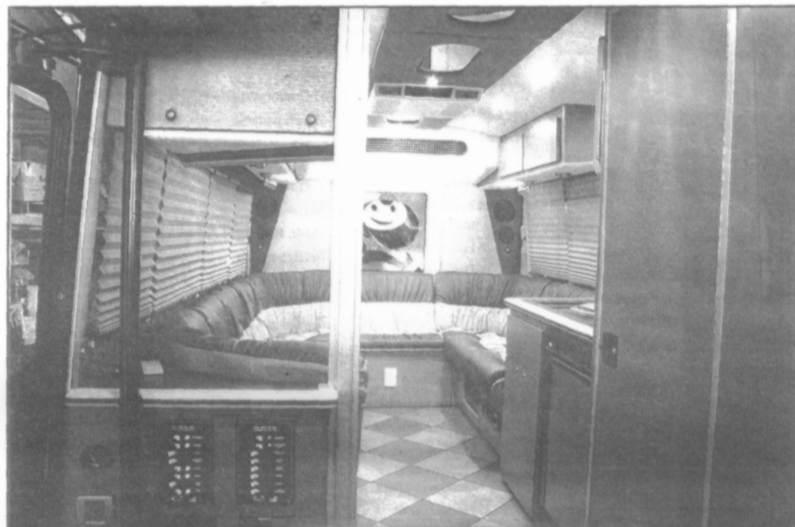
Designer Josh Gifford said, besides providing an opportunity to socialize with co-workers, the vehicle showcases the company's highly specialized capabilities.

The back end of the bus features a large company logo, but even without the logo, the bus makes a statement of its own.

"We wanted it to have an impact from visual standpoint and from a functional standpoint," he said. "It has a lot of punch and definitely stands out in a crowd."

The Buckeye Bullet will be available for use by employees and customers, but CMI officials have no intention of selling it.

"It was time to give my employees their very own tailgate vehicle," said CMI President Owen Connaughton. "I have no plans on selling it. This is our toy, built especially for us."



Creative Mobile Interiors' Buckeye Bullet features everything from a Brutus Buckeye stained glass window to scarlet and gray interior colors.

The company has built other noteworthy vehicles, including a renovated school bus called the Buckeye Buggy and a converted Mercedes Benz Sprinter called the Elsa Cruiser.

CMI also built the HP mobile photo restoration lab earlier this year. The vehicle was used to help restore damaged photos belonging to victims of Hurricane Katrina.

The company was founded in 1999 and is headquartered in four plants encompassing a total of 21,000 square feet in Grove City.

It specializes in converting motor coaches, Sprinter vans, trailers and minicoaches into luxury, commercial and specialty vehicles outfitted with custom top-of-the-line amenities and electronics.