

As Seen in the  
Yavapai Yellow Sheet

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BY MARK DUNCAN

# The Busted Knuckle Garage®

## One Dream, No Waiting

There's no such place, of course, as The Busted Knuckle Garage®. Unless you believe, as Warren Tracy does, that it's at the end of all our driveways.

Tracy, whose thriving retail, wholesale, catalog and Internet business grew out of the basic truism that mechanical work will wreak havoc on your hands, built the garage that isn't really anywhere, and wants to share it with his customers.

"It's about celebrating the experience of tooling with your vehicles," he said: It's not ours, it's yours. It's your Busted Knuckle Garage."

Tracy, who teaches entrepreneurship at Yavapai College, is a self-described "closet business historian." But it wasn't until a middle-of-the-night epiphany a decade ago that he realized where his own legacy might begin.

"I woke up at three in the morning, and I drew this," he said, pointing to the wrench-wielding, crudely bandaged hand that is the Busted Knuckle's ubiquitous logo. He trademarked the logo a year later, but still didn't know what to do with it.

He put the logo on four-foot wooden signs and sold a few, then added more signs, including the first appearance of the Garage's motto: Repair & Despair Under One Roof.

It was while he still worked overseeing the operation of the Phantom Ranch at the Grand Canyon that he introduced a line of skin-care products for mechanics and others who work with their hands. Then the whole Busted Knuckle thing started to really catch on.

Tracy sold his small car and motorcycle collection, mortgaged his house, quit his job and started going to 25 to 30 car shows a year, promoting a product line that just keeps growing. Today, the Busted Knuckle — you remember it doesn't exist, right? — has more than 200 products, from hats and T-shirts to floor mats, wall clocks, coffee mugs and desktop tool boxes.

The car shows are almost a thing of the past for Tracy, 49, who still does a few, including the upcoming Barrett-Jackson exposition and auction of the world's finest automobiles in Scottsdale.

For the most part, he spends his time researching and developing new products for the line and marketing his busted knuckles off. He is about to sign a distribution agreement to get his line in the 3,400-store Advance Auto Parts chain, and recently won a contest in Entrepreneur Magazine, which provided him with a complete makeover of his Web site.

The products are primarily for men, Tracy said, but he has come to realize that some of his best customers are wives and sisters and daughters who historically have had some difficulty finding gifts for their hands-on men.

"These are very approachable products for women," he said, noting that 80 percent of his holiday-season sales are to women.

The Busted Knuckle name is such a perfect fit for a gearhead business that it has been usurped more than once. Tracy has received reports from customers about trademark violations, including a couple of near-exact reproductions of his logo, from as far away as Colorado, Connecticut and Sturgis, S.D.

Tracy's retail store in Prescott is in the Old Firehouse Plaza on Goodwin Street, which is currently undergoing remodeling and expansion. And for the past six years, buoyed large-



**Warren Tracy, creator of The Busted Knuckle Garage, shows off some of the garage's products in his store in the Old Firehouse Plaza on Goodwin Street in Prescott. Tracy began the business almost 10 years ago when he dreamed up the logo and now has about 200 products that target the whimsy of professional and casual mechanics.**

ly by his experiences with the Busted Knuckle, he has tried to inspire his students to take hold of their dreams, believe in them and make them real.

"If you want anything to manifest itself in your life," he said, "you have to first believe in it."

Even, perhaps especially, if it doesn't even exist.

[www.BustedKnuckleGarage.com](http://www.BustedKnuckleGarage.com)

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