

# u.s. business review

Strategies, Solutions and Best Practices for Business Leaders

October 2007

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**41**

## Power Unleashed

Vertical integration helps Kimpex Inc. keep a grip on the fast-moving power sports industry.

**14**

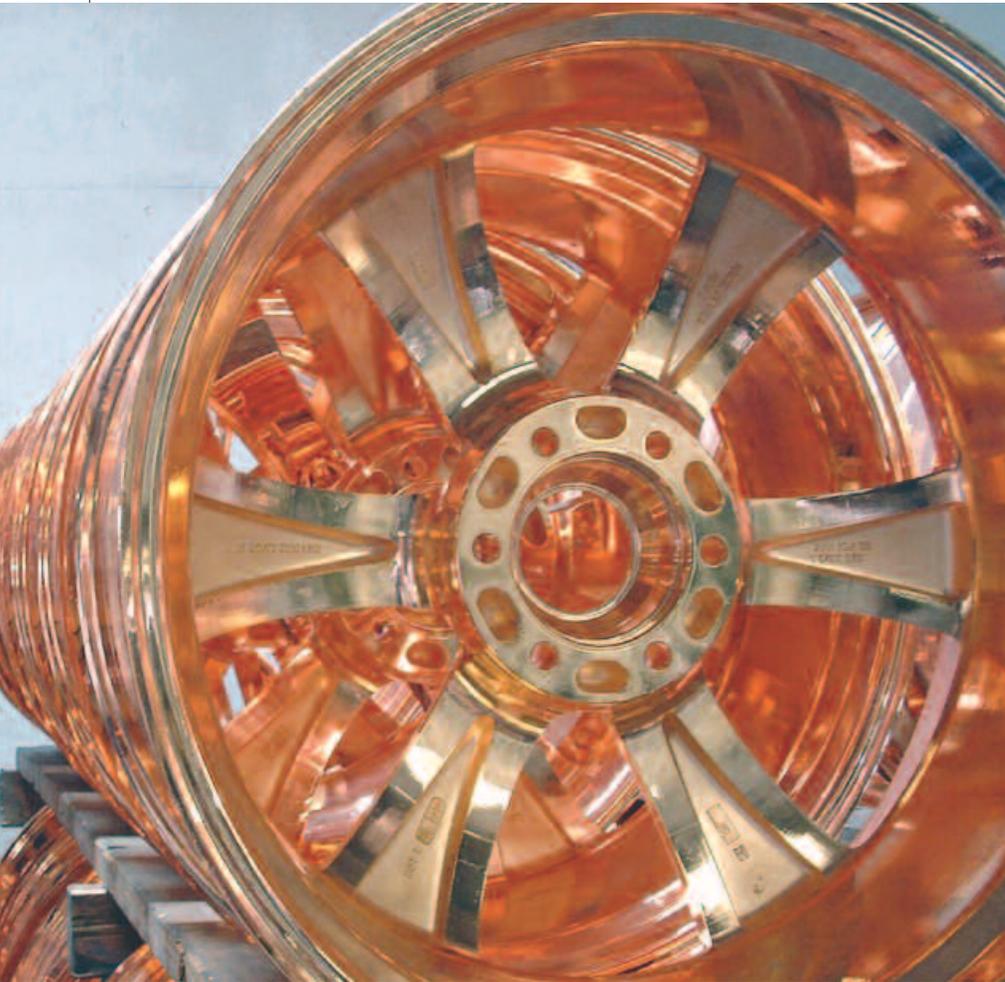
## Home Improvement

With the rental market growing again, Berkshire Property Advisors is busy revitalizing older assets.

**PLUS**

Honor thy company's ethical guidelines.





## PROFILE

### Gene's Plating

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

**Proj. 2007 revenue** \$10 million

**Headquarters** Los Angeles

**Employees** 100+

**Services** Chrome plating

**Dave Richey, vice president** "To resurrect [Gene's Plating] to where it was before, and even improve on it, is a big deal for us."

Gene's Plating chrome-plates aluminum wheels and aluminum or stainless steel accessories.

accessories used for decorative and precision parts. It serves clients nationwide, ranging from small shops to large OEMs, in the automotive and marine industries.

Its keys for surviving in the industry are its quality and service, Richey notes. "Gene's has been a premier plater for a long time," he continues. "It has a good name in the industry, but had some problems with previous owners." All it needed was a new direction, Richey adds.

"When it went up for sale, we jumped on it," he recalls. "Its employees have been with the company for 15 to 20 years. There's a good core group, so the tools are already there to make it even more successful. It just needed new management."

Richey believes its sister company gives Gene's Plating an added advantage. General Metal Finishing Inc. has knowledge in the aerospace and military industries, he says. "We pay attention to details, specs and process control, and we take [that experience] and apply [it] here [at Gene's]. We're [utilizing] old-school values blended with modern technology. We've not only regained Gene's reputation for quality, but we have surpassed it by instituting new quality control standards."

### SUPERIOR QUALITY

Gene's Plating says it doesn't take quality lightly. The company employs line inspectors, as well as operates a quality control

## PROVIDING DIRECTION

Gene's Plating, which changed ownership two years ago, says it uses 'old school values' while embracing the latest chrome-plating trends.

by Fernie Grace Tiflis

Gene's Plating says it does one thing best: providing top-quality classic chrome plating. Known for its "old school" chrome finishes, the Los Angeles-based company was originally founded in 1943. After experiencing a market slump, it was bought by J&D Acquisitions two years ago, bringing more than 30 years of metal finishing experience to Gene's plating. Today, customers say its quality is at its very best, Vice President Dave Richey states.

The company chrome-plates aluminum wheels and aluminum or stainless steel

and quality assurance department to ensure topnotch quality, Richey notes. He adds that every product goes through multiple inspections.

To improve quality, Gene's Plating is upgrading its software program this year. "The software will allow full, real-time tracking of the wheels throughout the entire process, using a bar code, which is applied during the receiving inspection," Richey says.

#### MAKING THINGS RIGHT

Customers today are always looking for a fast turnaround, Richey says. Gene's Plating ships its products in five to 10 days while maintaining quality, he adds.

"We have taken a proactive stance on quality and service, the company says. "Critical stages and checkpoints along our plating line are monitored by trained inspectors whose job is to inspect and maintain strict quality control. If it's not right, it's made right. Our inspections begin the moment parts are received and inventoried. We look for anything that

may prevent [the] wheel or part from getting the best plating results. We are capable of addressing these issues in-house and advise our customers of their options for best results."

Despite the increasing number of companies going overseas, Gene's Plating has no plans to open a facility outside the United States. "It's a global market now," Richey states. "But people still prefer our quality and service. Our customers tell us our quality is better and they like the deep blue color that they get with our process."

#### STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

Richey takes pride in the company's relationships with its suppliers. "We have long, strong relationships with them," he says. "We find new ways to improve on processes." For example, Best Finishing Inc., a Tucson, Ariz.-based manufacturer of abrasives, buffs, compounds, debur brushes and contact wheels for job shops and OEMs, helps Gene's Plating with quality improvement.

"In helping us achieve the quality

improvement we were looking for, Best Finishing Inc. didn't just sell us buffs and compounds," he continues. "They actually got into a process-improvement program with us. Together we were able to develop a flawless surface that helps produce the deep rich blue chrome that is the Gene's Plating hallmark."

#### PRESERVING HISTORY

Gene's Plating has the capacity to chrome-plate 1,200 wheels a day if need be; 400 to 500 wheels a day is the norm in the slow season, and 800-plus wheels at its busiest. It plans for a steady growth, Richey says, and plans to install a semi-automatic line to improve capacity at its facility, and developing and marketing a new coating in the next few months.

For now, however, the company will continue to provide its customers with quality and service, Richey states. "I'm proud of being able to preserve [Gene's Plating]," he stresses. "To resurrect it to where it was before, and even improve on it, is a big deal for us." *usbr*

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