

For Immediate Use
Sept. 26, 2011

([Read this release online](#))

Reality TV auto customizer, auction house team up to benefit UCLA's Operation Mend

Camaro by West Coast Customs to be sold at Mecum Dallas Auction Oct. 7

Roxanne Moster, rmoster@mednet.ucla.edu
310-794-0777
McCullough Public Relations
3330-244-9980

Dana Mecum, president of the Mecum Auction Company, and Ryan Friedlinghaus, founder and CEO of West Coast Customs, a luxury automobile restyling company, have joined forces to offer a custom 2011 Chevrolet Camaro convertible to raise funds for [Operation Mend](#). Both companies are featured in weekly programs on Discovery's Velocity network.

Operation Mend is a partnership among Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center, Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, and the Veterans Administration Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System that was established to help treat U.S. military personnel severely wounded during service in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Friedlinghaus, who has transformed cars for numerous celebrities and corporations, will customize this one-of-a-kind Camaro with a blend of camouflage colors. The car will debut at the Mecum Dallas Auction, Oct. 6–8, at the Dallas Convention Center in Texas. The team at Mecum Auctions will sell the Camaro at no reserve on Friday, Oct. 7, at 7:30 p.m. CST, drawing bids from the crowd, as well as from online and phone bidders.

"Having the opportunity to create and auction a one-off custom Camaro to benefit Operation Mend is an honor for me and the entire West Coast Customs team," Friedlinghaus said.

"Having met patients, families, doctors and volunteers really helped provide inspiration for this build. We have the opportunity to honor the men and women who have dedicated themselves to protect our freedoms, which is a privilege for me."

Both Mecum and Friedlinghaus star in popular television shows on the Velocity network. The Camaro's journey from stock to custom will be documented on "[Inside West Coast Customs](#),"

now in its second season, while its sale will be featured live on "[Mecum Auto Auction: Muscle Cars & More](#)," which is in its fourth season.

"Our company is honored to sell this custom Camaro to benefit Operation Mend, and we are grateful that we can do our part to help the brave men and women who have sacrificed themselves to protect our country and our families here at home," Mecum said.

The stars of the project were brought together by Constellations Group, a strategic relationship development firm, with the mission of benefiting those who have given so much in defense of our country.

"It has been an honor to work with the individuals and organizations that made this project a reality," said Bill White, chairman and CEO of Constellations Group. "We are humbled and ever grateful to all the men and women who have put themselves in harm's way to protect us."

All proceeds from the sale of the custom Camaro will be donated to Operation Mend.

In addition, the new owner will have the opportunity to drive the Camaro as the lead Grand Marshal Car in New York City's Veterans Day Parade on Nov. 11, with Mayor Mike Bloomberg and New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, in front of 50,000 veterans. The Camaro will also seat returning war heroes currently undergoing surgeries at UCLA through Operation Mend to repair their faces, which were damaged by explosions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

To learn more about Operation Mend and watch featured videos of wounded warriors, visit www.operationmend.ucla.edu.

"On behalf of all of the wounded military personnel that will benefit from the proceeds of this wonderful opportunity provided to Operation Mend by West Coast Customs, Mecum Auctions and the Constellations Group, we thank you," said Dr. Tim Miller, lead surgeon for UCLA's Operation Mend Program. "Operation Mend is funded by generous donations from caring Americans, and this will go a long way to providing more medical care to those who so proudly serve our nation."

The **Mecum Auction Company** has been specializing in the sale of collector cars for 24 years and is the world leader in collector car, motorcycle, boat and memorabilia sales. Their inaugural Dallas Auction is open to the public, with tickets available in advance or at the door for \$15 per day. To register to bid on site, online or by phone, visit www.mecum.com or call 815-568-8888.

West Coast Customs has grown into one of the most powerful and recognized brand names in the custom automotive industry, with franchises stretching across the world and ventures across various media platforms. Founder and CEO Ryan Friedlinghaus created a multimedia

empire that revolves around the world's premier custom car shop. Check out "Inside West Coast Customs" Sundays at 9 p.m. EST on Discovery's Velocity network. For more information, visit www.westcoastcustoms.com.

Constellations Group is a strategic relationship and business development firm that advises corporations, foundations and high-net worth individuals on their business challenges and philanthropic endeavors. They are a solutions-focused firm that stands ready to assist their clients in all matters, at all times. A cornerstone of the firm's mission is to strive to find ways across their client base to show their support for the brave men and women of our armed forces and first-responder communities and their families. For more information, visit www.constellationsgroup.com.

For more news, visit the [UCLA Newsroom](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).