

The Boston Globe

SHINE OF THE TIMES
Today: *Sunshine mixing with clouds,*
highs 56-61
Tomorrow: *Fairly sunny and cool,*
highs 54-59
High Tide: *11:34 a.m. 11:49 p.m.*
Sunrise: *5:45 a.m. Sunset: 7:30 p.m.*
FULL REPORT: PAGE D8

THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2006

BOY HEAVEN

The high-pitched whine of tightly wound engines. Cars in colors not found in nature. A chance to play 'Bombshell poker.' Hot Import Nights is back in town.



BY AMY ROEDER | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Imagine "The Fast and the Furious," the sensibility of Maxim magazine, and an Xbox all thrown into a blender and poured out on a dance floor, and you'll have an inkling of what's in store when XM Satellite Radio's Hot Import Nights roars into the Bayside Expo Center on Saturday night.

Known by its shorthand of HIN, this high-revving touring car show and "lifestyle festival," with sponsors including Valvoline, Dunlop Tires, Mazda, and Modified Magazine, lets you get up close and personal with more than 600 tuner cars, exotic automobiles, and one-of-a-kind rides while soaking up the latest in urban, tech-savvy youth culture.

The world of the tuner car — sporty, mostly Japanese imports that have been modified to look sleek and go fast — is at the heart of HIN, and tuners make up the majority of the rides you'll see at the show. The market for customized car parts is exploding nationwide, with the industry generating more than \$3 billion in retail sales in 2004 — more than double what it made in 1995, according to the Specialty Equipment Market Association, an industry trade group. At HIN, enthusiasts and their modified buggies will be competing in 50 award categories — awards will be handed out onstage at 11 p.m. — and 50 vendors, including an assortment of local shops, will have booths flaunting in a manner of custom car parts to jump-start your own modification fantasies.

Tuners' tastes in modifications are as

HOT IMPORT NIGHTS

Sat 5 p.m.-midnight. Bayside Expo Center, 200 Mt. Vernon St., Columbia Point, Boston. 617-474-6000. Tickets are \$25 for all ages and can be purchased at www.hotimportnights.com or at the show.

Highlights include:

7 p.m. Miss HIN competition

8 p.m. Fashion show

11 p.m. Tuner car competition

awards ceremony

varied as their tastes in music, said Sterling Cole, a tuner, race car driver, and self-described "car guy" from Watertown. Shiny

new rims and a sleek bumper may get some pulses racing, while others are more passionate about their stereo systems or the high performance parts that juice an engine or a car's interior. But like football fans who root for different teams but share a love of the game, there are some things that all tuners can agree on. "Everybody likes a cool car that looks good and goes fast," said Cole, who drives a modified Mazda RX-7 for Boston-based Team GPRacing in the Sports Car Club of America New England Region race series.

In addition to the tuner cars, HIN also features plenty of the luxury and concept vehicles that automotive shows (and dreams)

are made of. Some of the cars on display will include a 2006 Gallardo Spyder from Lamborghini of Boston, along with various Porsches, Ferraris, and BMWs. There'll be a display of customized cars owned by celebs, including Boston Celtics players Paul Pierce, Al Jefferson, Tony Allen, and others. Fans can also check out motorcross champion Travis Pastrana's 2006 Subaru Impreza rally car, as well as one-of-a-kind street cars like a modified Lexus IS300 painted in a reflective tint that makes it appear to change colors in different lights.

HIN organizers have certain ideas about how to please their overwhelmingly male audiences, which is why cars aren't the night's only pulse-quickeners. Go-go dancers will enliven the show, and Boston-based model Polina Raygorodskaya will host a high-end fashion show; afterward, attendees will have an opportunity to meet and mingle with the catwalk talent in HIN's M Lounge. Ursula Mayes, Miss HIN 2005 — and recently named one of Maxim's "Sexiest 100" — will preside over a pageant-style competition for the title of "Miss HIN Boston." Poker fans can compete against one another for the chance to pit their skills against the Bombshell Models, a team of female professional poker players. To pump up the party vibe, local DJs will be spinning tunes for your dancing pleasure.

It's a little hard to picture a convention hall full of gearheads getting all jiggy on the dancefloor, but you never know — cars can inspire guys to do the cutest things.

