

# Switching *gears*

Rally race car driver **Bill Caswell** reveals his favorite Chicago pit stops

BY JOURDAN FAIRCHILD

If the past few years of **Bill Caswell's** life sound like the stuff of movie scripts, that's because they are. From 2004 to 2009, the University of Chicago business school graduate crunched numbers as an investment banker. But after hours and on the weekends, he retreated to the suburbs to tinker with cars in the garage of his mom's Kenilworth home. In June 2009, the recession provided him with the perfect excuse to hang up his suit and focus on his passion full time. Caswell bought a \$500 clunker on Craigslist, fixed it up, entered the World Rally Championship, where he raced against professionals driving cars worth nearly a half a million dollars — and finished third.

Then Hollywood came calling. **Jeremy Renner** (right) bought the rights to his story, and Paramount Pictures will begin production on the film later this year. Caswell moved to San Diego in 2010 to live with his now-wife, Melanie, a dermatologist, but he still flies back to Chicago for one week every month to work in his mom's garage. "I can do car stuff all day, and then have dinner with her," he says. "It's not easy or practical, but I get to sleep right next to the cars and then start working again within minutes of waking up." Not only that, but Caswell craves a dose of his hometown. "I love Chicago not for its tall buildings or its lakefront — it's the people," he says.

When he's not on the track or under a hood, the 39-year-old is busy developing his lifestyle brand, Build Race Party, as well as writing for *Jalopnik.com* and *Wired.com*. Next month he'll compete in the World Rally again, but this time around, he'll be driving a new car. While he's in town putting the finishing touches on his ride, we asked him to take us for a Sunday spin.

Learn more about Caswell's upcoming races at [Caswellmotorsport.com](http://Caswellmotorsport.com).



## 11 A.M.

After a night out with friends, Caswell orders the ham Loretta — a greasy multi-topping sandwich — plus a side of cheesy hash browns at Sarkis' Cafe (2632 Gross Point, Evanston).

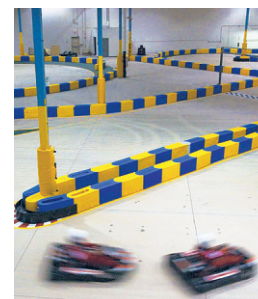
## 1 P.M.

Caswell heads to his mom's house with his pals to work on his car. If they're in need of a part, he pops over to Napa Auto Parts (1723 Waukegan, Glenview). "When I first got into cars, I learned a lot at this shop," he says.



## 3 P.M.

For expert advice or precision fabrication, he drops by Fall-Line Motorsports (1225 Busch, Buffalo Grove), home of one of the premier race teams in the country.



## 4 P.M.

To blow off steam, Caswell loves to race go-karts at Chicago Indoor Racing (301 Hastings, Buffalo Grove). It's crowded at night, so he prefers afternoon outings.



## 5 P.M.

By this point, he's worked up an appetite, so he heads to Zocalo (358 W. Ontario) for dinner. "I can get plenty of Mexican food in San Diego, but this place is always phenomenal," Caswell says.



## 7 P.M.

Before going back to the suburbs, Caswell and his crew visit Hopleaf (5148 N. Clark) for its "ridiculous selection of kick-ass craft beers."