



## Fender Bender Renderer

**Mike Kennedy** used to be an accident reconstructionist consultant, working on behalf of law firms in the crumple zone known as B.C. – 47,653 collisions in 2002. He saw the burdensome job cops faced when they investigated serious accidents – not the part where they're at the scene taking measurements, but the tricky, time-consuming part back at the office where they have to render all that data into some graphic fashion that can be presented to the courts or claims adjusters. Kennedy knew there had to be a better alternative to the complicated AUTOCAD-type programs that many law enforcement agencies were using. He founded Visual Statement (VS) in Kamloops and began designing purpose-built collision reconstruction software with low learning curves.

"Instead of spending hours trying to draw a diagram of a crash or crime scene," says Kennedy, "officers can get it done in 20 to 30 minutes. And that includes calculating the speed of the cars – a complete analysis. They can then convert that drawing into a real-time 3D animation." He says 3,500 law enforcement agencies around North America use VS products, and there are another 14,500 he would like to see buy in at \$2,000 per user. □

When Abbotsford vintners David and Liz Avery of the tritely named A Very Fine Winery realized they were in over their vines to the banks, they called in a marketing consultant to spruce up their labels. He sold the couple on the idea of naming their wine Lotusland and going for an urbane look. On the 2002 Merlot he plastered the bottle with 21 black and white portraits of more or less prominent British Columbians (everyone from Vicki Gabereau to Ross Rebagliati), creating a geometric collage that also serves as a pre-meal parlor game. (None of the faces is captioned, challenging even the most ardent news hound to I.D. them all.)

In February the christening received airtime on CBC's *Venture*. But it was too soon to say what effect the bold branding by Bernie Hadley-Beaugard would have on the Averys' sales. But now that David is working on the second harvest for Lotusland wines, he says the strategy has paid off. Two wines

have sold out since the launch – all 465 cases worth – and half his Pinot Noir is gone. More important, Hadley-Beaugard shopped Lotusland around to all the high-end restaurants in this province and most agreed to stock the label on a trial basis. The question now is, with the wine enjoying some success, will they be able to find another 21 B.C. celebs to appear on the label *pro bono*? "We'll approach people just on the horizon of being famous," says the brand man. That should push the difficulty level of the bottle puzzle into the Mensa range. □



## An Internal Affair



Usually when companies stage career fairs they're reaching beyond their walls for help. Brad Herbert, VP of HR at Electronic

Arts, turned that concept inside out earlier this year when he invited employees at the Burnaby studios to attend an internal career fair in the building's lobby. It was a chance for code-weary gamers to escape a manager from hell, or an obnoxious cubicle neighbor.

Only these wouldn't be overnight escapes. The jobs offered at this talent fair are what Herbert calls "stretch roles" – a chance for workers to contribute to another project while holding down their regular duties. The promise: if you can prove your value to the new team, you may eventually be transferred. Of 330 employees who were looking

for change, 100 were interviewed, 21 struck gold.

"What we've found," says Herbert, "is that when people move [within the company] it unlocks passion for them. They get onto a new game and they go hard at that new challenge. That next huge idea that may make a game sell 10 million more copies, that could come from that one new person." Herbert also adds, reassuringly, that none of the internal applicants had to tell their current managers they were attending the fair. (Hence the balloon arches: a place to hide when the boss takes his lunchtime stroll on the atrium's second-floor catwalk.) □