

Cashing in on Lost Sales

By Larry Hagemeister

Like many rebuilders, it is hard for me to turn away a customer that we can't help or get the parts to fix their alternator or starter. When it comes to Chinese tractor starters, that has happened too many times. I've placed countless calls trying to track down parts or a complete unit with no results.

Here is some helpful information that I have found out about Chinese starters. In the mid 80s, Chinese tractors began to show up in the United States at a very attractive price compared to the other brands available, and a lot of them were sold. They were called Rhino. They manufactured small tractors and crawlers. Sometime in 1992 Rhino pulled out of the United States, leaving behind very few or no parts to support these tractors.

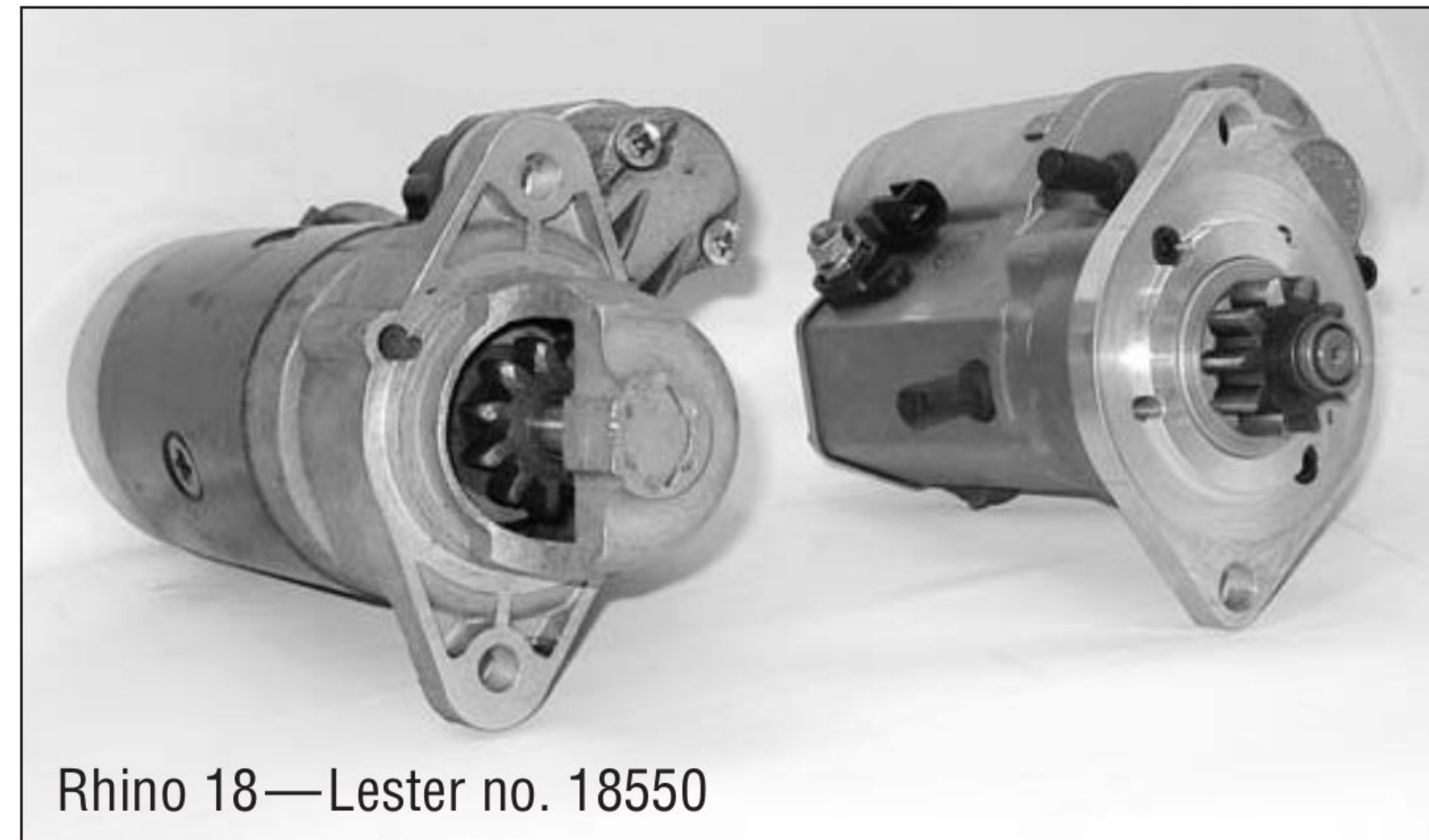
The Rhino company was bought and the tractors and crawlers started to show up again in the U.S. under many different names and colors. We think it is somewhere around 20 different names. For example, a company called Northern Tool has tractors and crawlers in their catalog (NT 204, NT 304, etc.); Northern Tool 20HP, 4-wheel drive; Northern Tool 30HP, 4-wheel drive; Taskmaster, and Hercules, to name a few.

In search of an alternative, I began design work in 2001 on a 2.0 kW Denso starter to replace these unserviceable Chinese starters; no. 18550, most single cylinder, 18HP; no. 18551 20-24HP; and no. 18552 24-40HP. I am finishing a fourth starter for a Mitsubishi 2500 tractor, 2-cylinder diesel with 25HP. This starter has no Lester number yet.

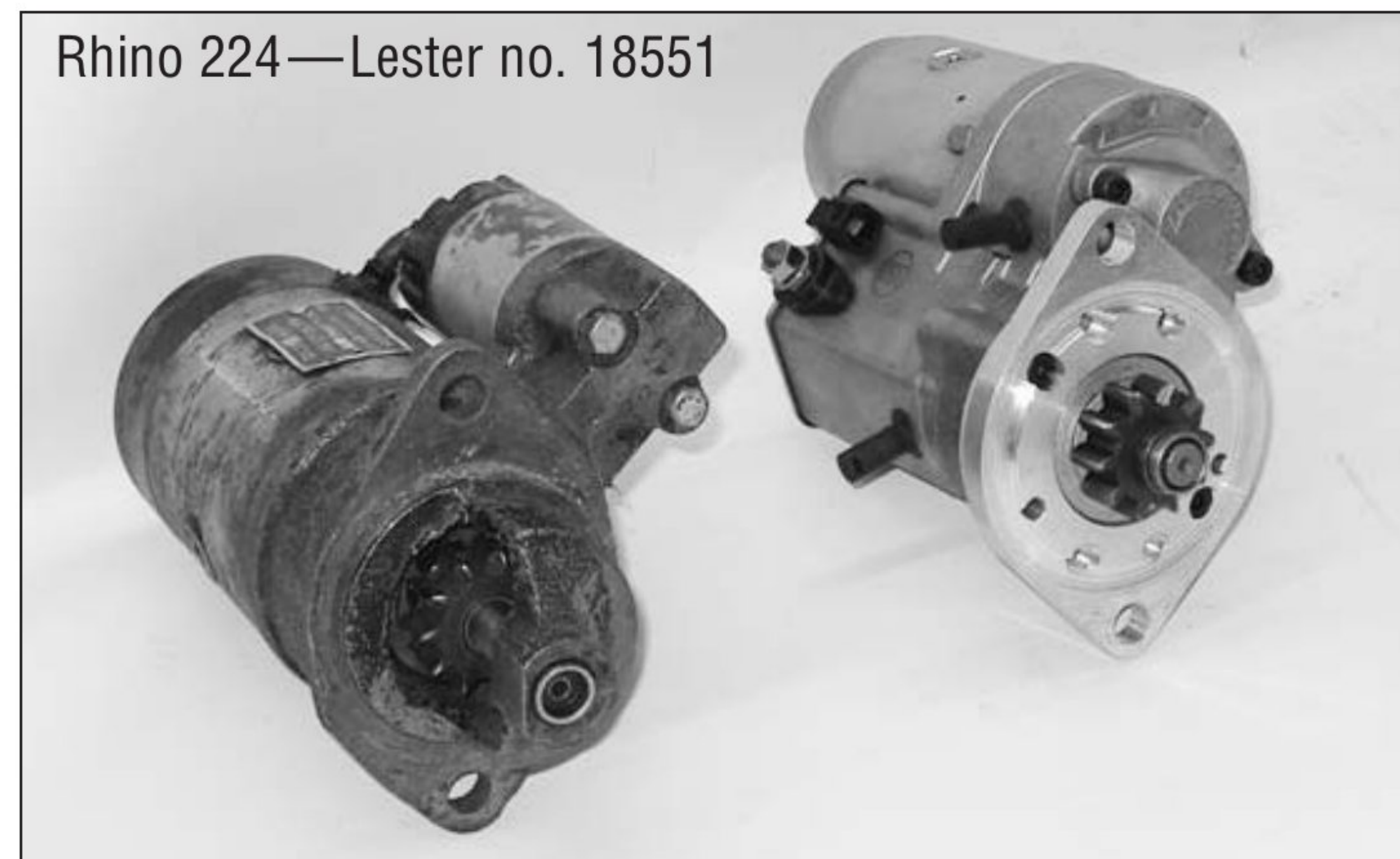
If ordering these starters, it's helpful to have the boss opening measurement, pinion rest and mounting bolt measurement.

Unlike the Chinese starter, these Denso starters can be rebuilt for your customers. The information I have provided about any Chinese tractor manufacturing company is based solely on my research and is my opinion only.

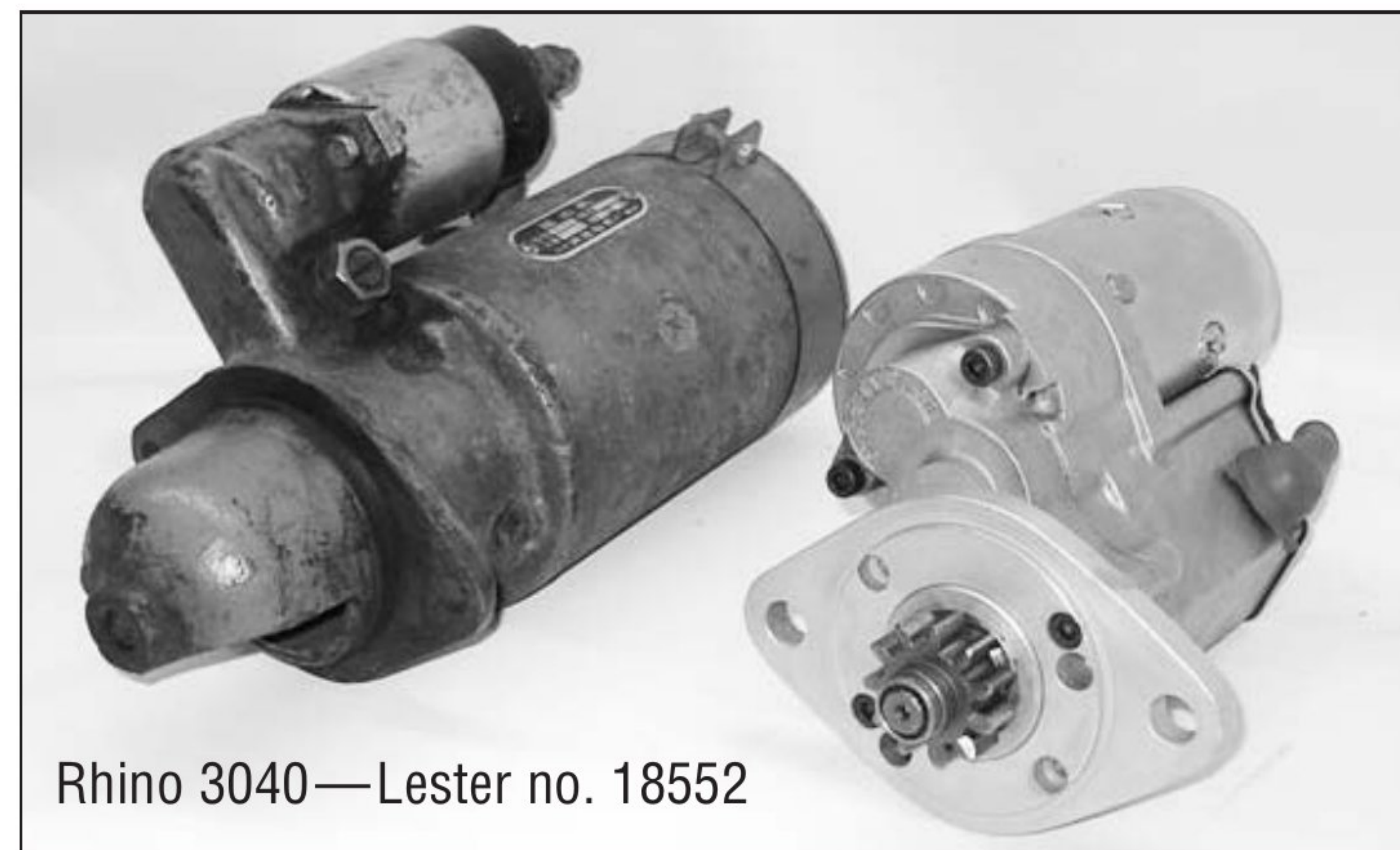
Larry Hagemeister is owner of Hagemeister Auto Electric, Lebanon, Ore.



Rhino 18—Lester no. 18550



Rhino 224—Lester no. 18551



Rhino 3040—Lester no. 18552