

# TCT MAGAZINE



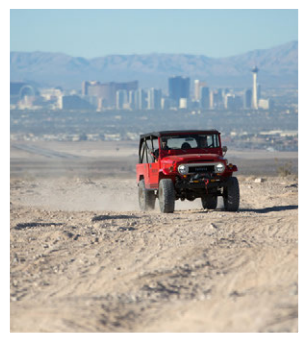
2014 YEAR IN REVIEW • VOLUME 7 • ISSUE 5



**On The Cover:**

FJ-UTE #001  
from Redline  
Land Cruisers  
during our post-  
SEMA Photo  
Shoot

photo by Phillip  
Jones



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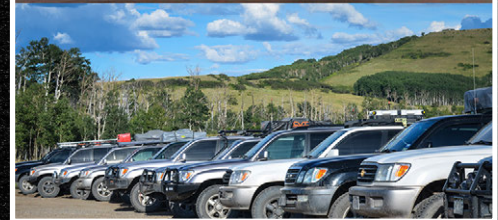
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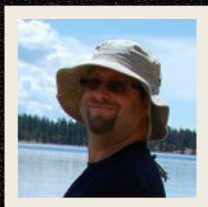
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# EDITORIAL STAFF



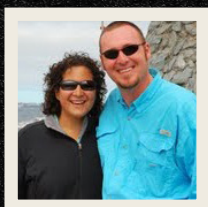
Shane Williams | Publisher  
2006 TRD Tundra  
2007 Lexus GX 470  
Colorado Springs, CO



Jim Akers  
2006 Tacoma  
Colorado Springs, CO



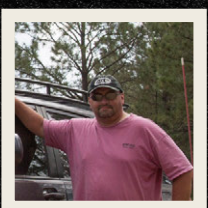
Jonathan Harris  
2005 100 Series Land Cruiser  
Grand Junction, CO



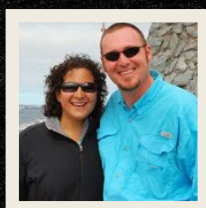
Krista Johnston  
1998 4Runner | 1969 FJ-40  
Casper, WY



Bob Holliday  
2006 Tacoma TRD  
Denver, CO



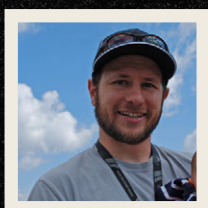
Phillip Jones  
2007 4Runner | 2006 Tacoma TRD  
Frisco, TX



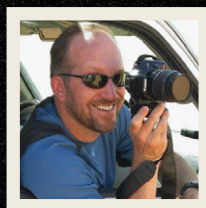
Beau Johnston  
1998 4Runner | 1969 FJ-40  
Casper, WY



## NEW ADDITIONS!



Adam Durazo  
2008 FJ Cruiser  
Denver, CO



Daniel Markofsky  
1993 80 Series Land Cruiser  
Denver, CO





## FROM THE PUBLISHER

I'm so excited to publish our first Year In Review issue! In the eight years we've been publishing magazines, we've always wanted to get SEMA coverage out to you before our January issue, and the YiR is our solution to that.

In addition to 12 pages of SEMA coverage (and much more over at <http://tctmagazine.net/sema>), Beau has put together our soon-to-be-world-famous Holiday Gift Guide! He's managed to find the coolest in gear, gadgets, and supplies to help you find the perfect gift for the outdoor enthusiast in your life.

We also have extra photos from several events this year, Off Camber event coverage, Expeditions 7 interview (part 1), the Ultimate Hitch comparison, and much more.

On the heels of this issue, we will start 2015 off with a huge January issue with even more amazing content..and maybe a few surprises! I leave you with this thought for planning your 2015 adventures:

During these cooler months you will no doubt be spending plenty of time planning for fun time when the snow melts. As we enter the holiday season I ask that you remember those that cannot be with us, those that gave the ultimate sacrifice in defense of your country. Keep them in your thoughts and prayers this season, and have a very Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, or other enjoyable celebration this month.

Until next time, Tread Lightly, Stay the Trail, and HAVE FUN!  
*Shane*



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#### Fix-n-Zip

A backcountry zipper repair kit that doesn't require tools, needles or thread. FixnZip works on almost any zipper so it can be used to repair tents, packs, sleeping bags, PFD's and wetsuits. It is available in three sizes, a choice of black or silver color and is re-useable. Includes detailed instructions and comes with a one year warranty. MSRP: \$24.99/3-pack

#### Bergans of Norway Pasvik Jacket

Made for hunting and outdoor living, the Pasvik's brushed micro fleece shell is exceptionally quiet while moving. A technical jacket made from waterproof, windproof and perspiration wicking 3-layer Dermizax™ with 4-way stretch, a soft and comfortable material. Also features an extended back lined with moisture wicking quick-drying Fieldsensor™ for added warmth, sealed seams throughout to ensure years of dry use, hunting radio/mobile phone pocket with eyelet for antennas, internal elastic loop for wire, antenna loops on the shoulders, and chest pocket with eyelet for headphones. MSRP: \$525.00



# 2014 Holiday Gear Guide

By Beau Johnston

The holiday season is upon us and it is time to start finding the perfect gift for the Toyota enthusiast in your life. Our team scoured the floors of the Outdoor Retailer Summer Market to find the very best in outdoor gear and apparel to help you, our readers, find unique gifts for those you love. These are our top picks for this holiday season.



#### 5.11 Tactical Glacier Half Zip—Women's

Sized and tapered for female operators, the Glacier Half-Zip provides superior warmth and comfort in a sturdy, lightweight package. Crafted from 6.3-oz. 94% polyester/6% spandex fleece knit, the Glacier Half-Zip offers a snug and secure fit without bunching or rolling. A full underarm gusset ensures complete freedom of movement, and flat lock stitching throughout increases comfort while reducing chafing and pinching. A textured inner fabric face maximizes heat retention, and the YKK® lock down zipper extends to the sternum, allowing you to easily adjust your core temperature. A zippered chest pocket provides accessible storage when worn as a base or middle layer. Retail: \$79.99 at [www.511Tactical.com](http://www.511Tactical.com)

#### 5.11 Tactical Traverse Pant

When seconds count, the Traverse Pant provides the speed, mobility, and utility you need to perform at peak levels. Built from a 4-way stretch blend of durable nylon and flexible spandex, the Traverse Pant offers enhanced air flow and quick dry characteristics that won't slow you down. A high rise elastic waistband, articulated knees, and a full running gusset from hem to hem offer unmatched agility, and heavy bartacking at major stress points enhances garment strength. Whether you're on a covert op, drilling at the practice range, or on a day hike, these high performance quick dry pants offer unprecedented functionality, speed, and durability. Retail: \$90.99 at [www.511Tactical.com](http://www.511Tactical.com)







### Epicurian Chef Series Utensils

Chefs love to mix it up in the camp kitchen. That requires sturdy utensils. Epicurean® Chef Utensils are thicker and more substantial than those needed in the average kitchen. Made using eco-friendly materials that gain their natural look and texture from organic content, the same material as our cutting boards, these robust tools are perfectly balanced and feel good in the hand. They take stirring, sautéing, flipping, turning and bowl scraping to a higher level. MSRP: \$14.99 ea at [www.EpicureanCS.com](http://www.EpicureanCS.com)

### GSI Java Mil

This adjustable, conical burr, ceramic Java Mill coffee grinder unlocks bean flavor better than blade-style grinders. A sturdy alloy handle folds down along the side for easy packing. Easy-to-fill top with smooth action bearing makes grinding coffee beans easy and simple. MSRP: \$29.95



### DrinkTanks Growler and Keg Kit

Drink Tanks stainless steel growlers are cast from high quality 18/8 stainless steel and do not sweat due to a double wall vacuum insulation design. The BPA free poly lid is secured by a sturdy double bail locking system that keeps your beer fresh for up to 24 hours. Order the optional Keg Cap™ and turn your Drink Tanks Growler into a personal keg. Retail: \$69 (Growler) & \$45 (Keg Kit) at [www.DrinkTanks.com](http://www.DrinkTanks.com)

### Pat's Carbonator Bottle Starter Kit

The BPA Free, shatter-proof 20oz Carbonator Bottle is designed to replace your everyday water bottle, but with the added function of being able to carbonate any liquid you put in it. The carbonation comes from an Activator Packet (reaction of citric acid and potassium bi-carbonate), that takes place in the blue reaction cup. Once the reaction has started, you just lock the lever and shake side to side for about a minute to carbonate. When ready to drink, the bottom unscrews to act as a convenient share cup. Now you can enjoy a refreshing craft brew wherever your adventures take you. 90% Less weight, space, and waste than a 12oz can of beer! MSRP: \$49.95 at [www.patsbcb.com](http://www.patsbcb.com)



### TemboTusk Wine Tote

The TemboTusk Wine Tote is a great way to transport any kind of beverage in a tough soft sided container. When the contents are empty, simply flatten and store away. The TemboTusk Wine Tote will hold a full 750 liter bottle of wine, a jar of Moonshine or any beverage of your choice. Metal shot cup included. MSRP \$24.99 at [www.TemboTusk.com](http://www.TemboTusk.com)





### Zippo 4-in-1 Woodsman

The 4-in-1 Woodsman is a bow saw that slices through oak firewood up to 4" in diameter. It converts to an axe with a 5" blade that can clear dead stands and split firewood. It's a stake puller, to help you tear down camp faster. Call it the ideal survival tool, or a handy camp tool; no one tool gives hunters and outdoorsmen more capability for the weight or the money.

The Zippo 4-in-1 Woodsman is available now for \$79.95



### UCO StakeLight

The UCO StakeLight adds a light function versus an ordinary tent stake, making it easy to find or set-up your tent in the dark. Activated by a switch and powered by one AAA battery inserted into the hollow tube of the stake, the StakeLight creates a perimeter of light around your tent. The RGB StakeLight provides up to 12 hours of red, green, or blue LED light. MSRP: \$14.99/2-pack



### Coast HP7R

The HP7R rechargeable flashlight has a beam distance of up to 306 meters (1,003 feet), making it an excellent duty light for all types of tactical, rescue, and law enforcement professionals. Coast's Flex Charge Dual Power system allows you to charge using AC, DC or USB power sources. It also includes an alkaline battery pack, allowing you to continue using your light, even without access to charging power. MSRP: \$147.49



### Sunsect Sunscreen & Insect Repellent

Sunsect, MADE IN USA and trusted by the US military for 15 years, is a patented insect repellent + sunscreen combination product that provides lasting protection against biting insects and damaging sun rays. It repels mosquitoes, ticks, no-see-ums, black flies, sand gnats, chiggers, gnats, chitras and other disease-carrying, biting insects. It is safe for children, unscented, non-greasy, water-resistant, dries clear and lasts for hours. MSRP: \$10 for a 4oz tube at [www.sunsect.com](http://www.sunsect.com)



### Bushnell Rubicon H250L AD Headlamp

Better Light – Better Sight. The Rubicon H250L AD Headlamp is a blend of extremely high lumen output, 65 years of optical craftsmanship to improve beam quality over standard LED lights and unique features that are only available on Rubicon products. Advanced auto dimming feature automatically adjusts from long distance brightness to dim light for close viewing. 250 Lumens, with 312 Lumens boost feature, combined with the Advanced Bushnell T.I.R. optic, with collimated beam technology, produces a headlamp that is tough to beat on the trail. MSRP: \$49.99

### Sierra Madre Research Nube

The Nubé is a revolutionary 3 in 1 hammock shelter engineered to protect you and your gear. The Nubé offers Rain Protection, Insect Shield, and Gear Stash that stores up to 200lbs of your gear inside. It's aerodynamic design offers complete protection from torrential downpours, wind, and insects. With the Nubé you will sleep in pure comfort and never leave your pack on the ground again. Retail: \$275 at [www.srmgearme.com](http://www.srmgearme.com)

SIERRA MADRE RESEARCH

# NUBÉ







### **Nite Ize Gear Tie Dockable Twist Tie**

The versatile, flexible Gear Tie Dockable Twist Tie bundles, stores and hangs even the most bulky or unruly tools and gear, keeping them organized and accessible where you store them and functional on the go. MSRP: \$5.59-\$6.99 at [www.niteize.com](http://www.niteize.com)

### **Adventure Tool Company Shop Roll**

The rugged ShopRoll tool roll is made to last. Period. You will never need to buy another. Made in Colorado, U.S.A., of heavy waxed canvas (or 1000 Denier Cordura) and MILSPEC components, sewn with high-tensile nylon thread and reinforced with binding tape, it will never fail. You will use it for decades, and then pass it on to your kids (if your buddies don't nick it from you first). We designed it to hold all necessary tools, parts, equipment, and manuals for a given vehicle. No more searching for the right wrench or socket, no more tools rattling loose within boxes. Everything you need for a trailside repair, in one compact and portable place. And, when open, the ShopRoll provides a large workmat area, keeping removed vehicle parts safe from the grit and dust of trails, forests, and deserts during backcountry repairs. Every ShopRoll includes a lifetime warranty. MSRP: \$89.99-\$99.99, depending on material, at [www.AdventureToolCompany.com](http://www.AdventureToolCompany.com)



### **Red Oxx Safari-Beanos Bag PR5**

It's amazing how much stuff you can cram into our PR5 Safari Beanos bag! Pack it up for a long weekend out of the city or load it up with all your goodies you don't want damaged on the flight home. Featuring a generous top loading main compartment (18"L x 10"W x 10"H), you can load most anything you'll want to carry. MSRP: \$195 at [www.RedOxx.com](http://www.RedOxx.com)





## DeLorme inReach Explorer

inReach Explorer is the world's only truly global satellite communicator with built-in navigation including waypoints and routing. Navigate, create waypoints, log your trip and find your way back, send and receive text messages, trigger an interactive SOS, plan, track and share your journey. You can do all of this from one rugged handheld device with 100% global coverage from Iridium. You can also pair it with your mobile device for access to topographic maps and U.S. NOAA charts. MSRP: \$379.95 Monthly subscription rates vary



## Peak Design Slide

Slide™ is the most versatile professional camera sling strap in the world. Wearable as a sling, neck or shoulder strap, Slide™ is made of 45mm tubular seatbelt-style webbing with internal padding. Slide™ has aluminum quick-adjusters and our patent-pending Anchor Link™ quick-connectors. Comes with 4 Anchors and 1 Standard Plate for attachment. MSRP: \$59.99



## Vanguard Alta Pro 284CB 100

With its patented Multi-Angle Central Column (MACC) System, the Alta Pro 284CT allows users to move the central column from zero to 180-degree angles in variable vertical and horizontal positions, making macro-photography and special wide-angle shots a breeze. Additional tripod features include advanced camera vibration and shock control, carbon fiber legs that adjust to 25, 50 and 80-degree angles, twist leg locks, patented premium magnesium die-cast canopy, hexagon-shaped central column for extra stability, and non-slip, spiked rubber feet for changing terrains. Its SBH-100 fluid-like ball head rotates 360 degrees and has smooth locking knobs and an outstanding loading capacity. MSRP: \$479.99

## Reactor Watch Atom

The Atom is Reactor's take on the classic field watch. A 42mm case diameter makes it comfortable to wear on any trek while Reactor's DNA standards ensure durability. The Atom features Reactor's Never Dark® patented technology, the first technology to combine the intense brightness of Superluminova with the multi-year longevity of tritium, providing optimal illumination under all lighting conditions. MSRP: \$300-\$400, depending on style



## L.L.Bean Hunter's Tote Bag, Open-Top

Use it for waterfowling, dog training or shooting – this great all-purpose bag will stand up to years of rugged use. Made from a tough 1,200-denier polyester shell with a thermoplastic interior coating that's both durable and water resistant to keep your gear dry. Overlapped seams double-stitched with nylon won't rot or break. An extra layer of polyester reinforces the bottom. MSRP: \$29.00-\$39.00 at [www.LLBean.com](http://www.LLBean.com)



## Goal Zero Switch 10

This versatile multi-tool comes ready to power a variety of current and future attachments, including a USB charging cable, a flashlight and a fan. The Switch 10 doubles as a solar power pack and can recharge a smartphone once or a POV camera twice. MSRP: \$119.95







### Eagle Creek Pack-It Garment Folder

Eagle Creek's hot-selling Pack-It™ Folders now have even more compression with the integration of stretch Compress Wings™. This packing solution keeps pressed shirts and slacks looking sharp no matter how rugged your adventure. The medium-sized folder conveniently fits inside most carry-on bags. MSRP: \$24.00-\$32.00, depending on size



### Pelican ProGear Elite Cooler

Pelican ProGear is proud to announce our bear resistant certification from the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee. The purpose of this certification is to help keep bears safe and significantly reduce bear-human encounters by ensuring that bears do not have access and become conditioned to anthropogenic foods and other bear attractants that increase these encounters. This certification involves intense impact and penetration testing by use of visual inspection, mechanical methods and captive Grizzly Bear testing over extended periods of time. Key features include: Up to 10 days ice retention, freezer grade gasket, 2" polyurethane insulation; Dual Handle System (Molded-in & Hinged Handles); Press & Pull Latches (Wide for Gloved Use); Molded-In Tie Downs. The 65qt cooler retails for \$330



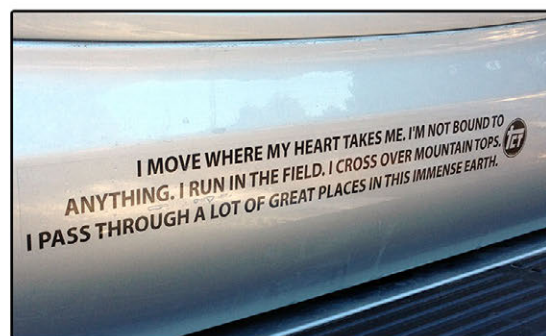
### Go Puck 5X

GO PUCK is an ultra lightweight charger storing enough power to charge any mobile device, including iPad and fits in the palm of your hand or attaches anywhere using the handy active mount. With enough power to recharge an iPhone up to 5 times, the

Go PUCK 5x can keep you going for days. MSRP \$99.00 at [www.gopuck.com](http://www.gopuck.com)



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# SEMA 2014

Photos by Shane Williams, Bob Holliday, Phillip Jones, and Jonathan Harris

This year Toyota Cruisers & Trucks Magazine sent five editors to Vegas for the week in order to bring the absolute best SEMA coverage to you live, and in this special issue.

As a team we walked over 300 miles during the week, shot thousands of photos, and over 2 hours of video. We've narrowed down these images for you to enjoy, they include our favorite new products and show vehicles, but are far from the end of our coverage. You can always find more SEMA coverage at <http://tctmagazine.net/sema> and on our YouTube Channel.

The famous (infamous) Vegas monorail became inundated with SEMA attendees being packed in like sardines on their way to the venue. After the second day, the team chose alternative transportation methods.

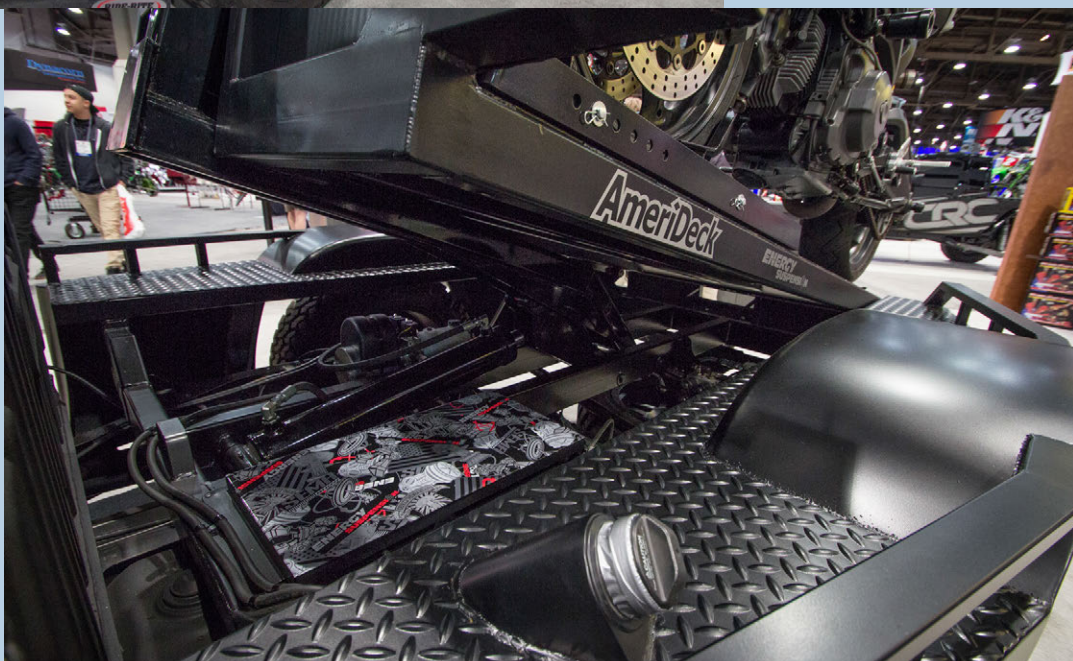


The 2014 TRD Pro Baja 1000 truck was on the floor basking in the bright SEMA lights mere days before ripping through the desert on her way to winning the 2014 Stock Full class.





Energy Suspensions had on display this year an amazing Tacoma built by Max Grundy Art and BioKustoms, called "Energetic". With a custom linked rear suspension and a flatbed that will tilt and extend for easy loading of your toys. Notice the upside down taillights? One of the cooler Tacoma builds we came across at SEMA this year.



Bushwacker is crossing into the 4Runner market with their new products designed for the 2010+ 4Runner. They plan to be available in either white or black.





As part of the Hiring Heroes campaign this Toyota Tundra monster truck as well as a well-built Tacoma were on display to raise awareness.

This Land Cruiser is ready with the VPR4x4 bumper and a Bubba Rope.



While not exactly practical, this Tundra was setup as the ultimate tailgating truck.





The Go Puck 5x wearable power pack kept Jonathan going all week Refueling the iPhone three times and iPad once on a single charge.

SEMA 2014

Performance Cruisers & Speed Shop offers an interesting twist on the competitive 4-door retro Land Cruiser market: their model comes with a 4.7L Toyota V8.



This N-Fab Tundra, looking to hide with a camo wrap, was ready for a long hunting trip.



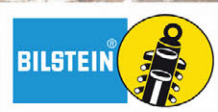
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Toytec Lifts came out swinging this year with their 550HP Toyota Tundra. One of our favorite Tundras on the floor this year, and we were grateful enough to tear up some Nevada desert with Toytec and their Tundra after the show was over!



ProLift offers suspension components for Toyota trucks, including the 5th generation 4Runner.





The finely crafted Red Line FJ-Ute is well equipped with a ComeUp winch.



Addictive Desert Designs showed off their armor on numerous Toyotas this year including the Toytec Tundra as well as these two slick Tundras featured at their booth. Storage compartments in the rear bumper of the Tundra are new this year.





Rock-Slide had their new rock rails with power steps for the Toyota Tundra on display. Although not recommended for heavy off-road abuse, these steps are a good option for those needing steps, but wanting to keep a clean look while the doors are shut.



This custom, color matched bumper on the Toyota 4 Runner really caught our eye. Crafted by InSain Fabrication of Thorton Colorado.

# Living Overland

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The gourmet recipes and equipment reviews you need to make your overland trip a success.





The SNIPER 4 Door FJ-40 from RSO Performance in full show form, unfortunately she wasn't ready to take on the desert during our photo shoot.

Expedition Overland had there Tacoma outside by the Toyota booth this year. New this year to the build is a TRD Supercharger.



# FJCRUISER FORUMS.COM



The Largest FJ Cruiser Forum on the Net!

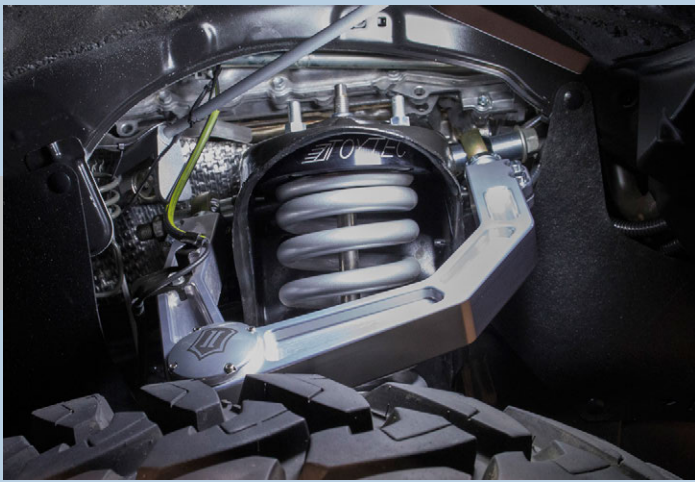
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Factory Skid Plate			11-16-2010 01:16 PM by MR2D14	0	1	<a href="#">Want to Buy (F)</a>
front locker			11-16-2010 09:14 AM	7	181	<a href="#">4x4 / Off-Road</a>
big news. Toyota CJ Cruiser in the			09-16-2006 08:46 PM	2,078	313,718	<a href="#">Picture/Media Po</a>
yuryz			11-16-2010 10:36 AM	74		<a href="#">Introductions &amp;</a>
2010 Slider Spacing Question			11-16-2010 12:34 PM	106		<a href="#">Maintenance Te</a>
2010 Navigation radio			11-16-2010 01:03 PM	458		<a href="#">Off-Topic Discus</a>
285 70 17 All Terrain - Who's got the best Deal on 5 of them?			11-16-2010 01:02 PM by Discover Time	3	84	<a href="#">General Discuss</a>



Free Membership!





The ToyTec Tundra is equipped with ToyTec coilover shocks and ICON adjustable upper control arms.

The new Warrior Products bed rack for the Tacoma is ideal for hauling accessories, spare tire, and attaching lights.



Spyder had a beautiful Tundra on display this year showcasing their front and rear replacement lights for the Toyota Tundra. They also have replacement lights for other Toyotas, such as the Tacoma and FJ Cruiser.







The nifty 2Way Air System by Rock Smasher Engineering is for inflating and deflating tires simultaneously.

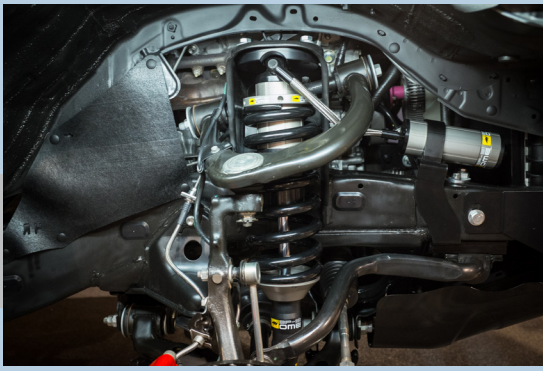


Pro Comp showcased their new Toyota Tundra long-travel kit this year. A full bolt on kit includes new upper and lower control arms, Pro Comp coilovers and air bumps.



The legendary Ironman Baja Race Truck was on display with the 2014 Baja Trucks.





Old Man Emu is shaking up the suspension world with their new BP-51 Bypass ride control suspension. Featuring on vehicle rebound and compression adjustment, adjustable spring preload, and plug and play vehicle specific applications. Launch applications will include late model Tacoma, 4Runner and 200 series Land Cruiser.



Trail-Gear had a variety of Tacomas on display this year from a solid axle 1<sup>st</sup> gen with front and rear linked suspension to a 2<sup>nd</sup> gen Tacoma sporting their front and rear tube bumpers. 🇺🇸

## Everything And More For Your Toyota! Trdparts4u | TPS

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Adventure Equipment

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# The Ultimate Hitch



Pull your off-road trailer with confidence with either the Lock-n-Roll or the Max Coupler.

Self-sustained travel is the goal of all overland travelers; especially on longer adventures where extra gear is needed and there isn't always enough room inside or on top of the vehicle. With a wife and four kids, I quickly ran out of space even with efficient minimalist packing. So like many of you, I turned to a high-clearance off-road trailer to carry the extra gear required for extended adventures.

For those that use trailers, we want a trailer that is capable of going anywhere the tow-vehicle can and therefore need a towing coupler that's up to the task. A standard 2-inch ball hitch just isn't going to cut it when the trail gets technical. A coupler with a much broader range of movement is needed for serious off-road travel. There are several options to choose from but I'm going to focus on two of the more popular couplers: The Max Coupler from Kilby Enterprises, and the Lock-n-Roll hitch from Great Lakes Forge.



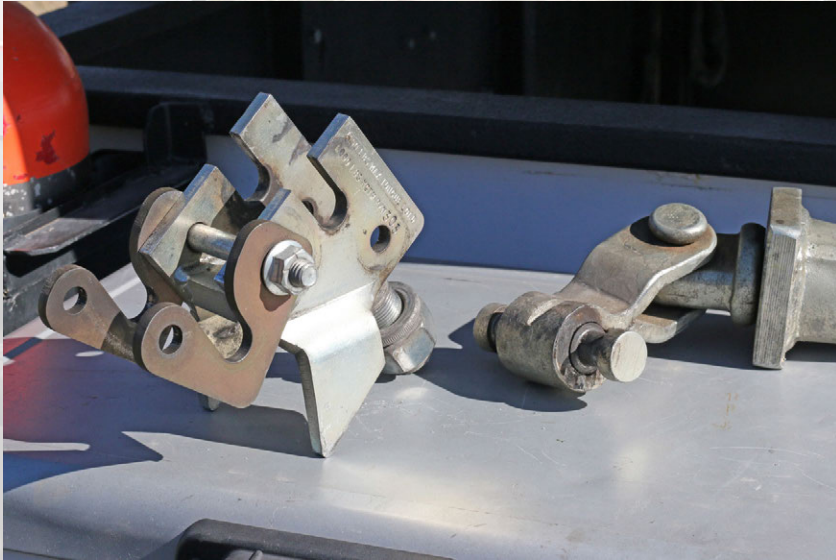
Getting crossed like this wouldn't be possible with a standard ball hitch.



## The Lock-n-Roll Hitch



The Lock-n-Roll hitch is an effective coupler for any offroad trailer, with one minor flaw.



The Lock-n-Roll hitch is two parts. The vehicle side (left) controls vertical rotation, and the trailer side (right) handles sideways and rotational movement.



The Lock-n-Roll is simple to connect. Dropping the trailer side into the slots on the vehicle side is quick and easy.

The articulating Lock-n-Roll trailer hitch is an off-road trailer hitch that allows a full 360 degrees of rotation and 3 axis movement. It uses a patented latching system that gives a tight connection that doesn't have the clanking noise and jerking action of a pintle hitch and will allow you to maneuver your trailer down the most technical of trails. The other thing that makes the Lock-n-Roll unique is the 360 degree bearing made from a solid forged piece of steel instead of a threaded connection found on some other full-rotation couplers.

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The connection  
is quiet and  
movement is  
smooth and easy.

---

I have used a Lock-n-Roll on my trailer for more than five years. As advertised, the connection is quiet and movement is smooth and easy. It requires very little maintenance which is nice after hundreds of miles of dirt roads. The best feature of the Lock-n-Roll is how the hitch is connected: flip the latches open and roll the trailer into place and lower the trailer side of the hitch into the latch with little effort.



The one flaw with the Lock-n-Roll is that it can bind when backing the trailer at extreme angles near being jackknifed. When this happens the vertical axis of the coupler pitches upward and causes the side-to-side rotation to bind. If this happens and you continue to back up the hitch will bend and twist the section for sideways rotation. This scenario is very rare but can occur. It happened to my hitch recently and could have eliminated all side-to-side rotation had I backed up any further. Great Lakes Forge claims to have addressed this issue on the newer hitches by using thicker, stronger steel in the construction that will resist bending.



Flip over the cams on the vehicle side of the Lock-n-Roll and lock it with the supplied hitch pin and you have a secure connection that won't come loose in any conditions.



This is the position that creates problems for the Lock-n-Roll. When the trailer side gets pitched upward like this the sideways rotation is restricted and it can bend.

## The Max Coupler

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The Max Coupler uses  
a greasable rotational joint  
that provides  
smooth, quiet movement.

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The Max-Coupler is made by Kilby Enterprises.

The Max Coupler is a tri-axis offset design that allows virtually unrestricted movement without binding. It uses a greasable rotational joint that provides smooth, quiet movement. It also uses sleeved polyurethane bushings and a standard hitch-pin for the truck to trailer connection. It's a worry-free connection that moves freely and can



handle extreme angles on challenging trails. The combination of the poly bushings and the greasable joint make the Max Coupler even quieter than the Lock-n-Roll in my testing.



The Max-Coupler is a tight and quiet connection for your trailer.

The Max Coupler design makes it virtually impossible for it to bind at any angle. I tried repeatedly to back the trailer into all the crazy angles that I could to try to duplicate the binding that happened to me with the Lock-n-Roll. I could not get the Max Coupler to bind in any scenario. If it were to bind, the place most prone to bending would be the vehicle

I could not get  
the Max Coupler  
to bind  
in any scenario.

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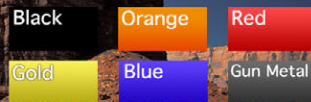
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side bracket, which if it were to bend would not affect the use of the hitch. The result could mean the hitch pin could be bound and require it to be cut out, but it wouldn't cause a trip to be cut short.



The Max-Coupler can handle extreme angles through technical terrain.



Crossing ditches at an angle is no problem with the Max-Coupler with unrestricted rotation.

My one complaint about the Max Coupler is actually hooking the trailer to the tow vehicle. It required me to more carefully move the trailer into just the right position much like you need to do with a ball hitch. It is a minor complaint, but is still something that needs to be pointed out when comparing these two couplers.

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Lock-n-Roll and  
the Max Coupler  
are going to provide  
a quiet secure connection with  
virtually  
unrestricted movement.

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The Max-Coupler can be a little tricky to line up, but with a little practice it's pretty simple.

### The Verdict

In conclusion, both the Lock-n-Roll and the Max Coupler are going to provide a quiet secure connection with virtually unrestricted movement and are both capable of tackling more technical terrain with ease. Both are comparable in price at around \$230. I prefer the hitching action and latch system of the Lock-n-Roll, but prefer the smoother movement with less risk of binding with the Max Coupler. Both hitches are great for off-road trailers but if I had to pick just one that I had to stick with it would be the Max Coupler.





If I had to pick one hitch for offroad use it would be the Max-Coupler.

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Sources:

**Lock-n-Roll Trailer Hitches**

<https://locknroll.com/>

**Kilby Enterprises—Max Coupler**

<http://www.kilbystore.com/products-max-coupler.html>

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I prefer the hitching action and latch system of the Lock-n-Roll, but prefer the smoother movement with less risk of binding with the Max Coupler.

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TRD Pro Baja Tundra, SEMA 2014 | Bob Holliday



[FRAMED]

f/4.0 1/125s 10mm





**[FRAMED]**

*f/9.0 1/60s 75mm*







Crowsnest Pass, Alberta, Canada | Addison Rickaby



FRAMED

f/5.6 1/1600s 240mm







Canguro Racing's 200 Series, 2014 Baja 1000 | Daniel Markofsky



ERAMED

f/11 1/125s 10mm







Clover Creek, Bonanza, Colorado | Bob Holliday



# EXPEDITIONS 7:

## An Interview with Greg Miller

### Part 1

By Shane Williams  
*All photos courtesy of Expeditions 7*

As we introduced in the last issue, Expeditions 7 was an epic undertaking with the goal of driving the same Toyota Land Cruiser vehicle on every continent on the planet. Greg Miller, who is the CEO of the Larry H. Miller Group of Companies has been a Land Cruiser enthusiast his entire life, and four years ago began planning for this once in-a-lifetime adventure. I had the opportunity to chat with Greg about the Expeditions 7 team, vehicles, and his motivations and thoughts. This is part 1 of the interview, part 2 will be published in the January 2015 issue.

the event and I appreciate the support. Your coverage of the event is a great thing and it will help it continue to grow. You guys are always welcome!

TCT: Now that the 3 year Expedition is complete, what are your overall thoughts & feelings. I can imagine how exhausting it was.



TCT Magazine: Thanks so much for the opportunity to chat today. First I want to thank you for allowing TCT Magazine to attend, teach, and cover the CruiserFest event a few months ago.

GM: It was a great experience for me in many ways, a growth experience for me and I learned a lot from the time the idea first crossed my mind until we completed the expedition. To give you an idea of how much I didn't know, in my original plan I wondered if we would take one or two vehicles, what equipment would be needed, who would attend, what time of year we would go, you know, all the questions that come to mind when planning an expedition this big.

Greg Miller: Well that goes both ways, I think it's neat that you guys chose to launch at

I've learned so much since then, and most of those lessons came from watching Scott Brady do his great work. He answered a lot of those



initial questions early on, and he lot throughout the trip. He made hard things look rather easy.



To get back to your question, what are my thoughts, I'm very excited that we were able to achieve our objective of being able to drive one vehicle on all seven continents. The pursuit of that objective is really where the growth occurred, and we were able to have countless wonderful experiences along the way.

As one quick example, in the middle of the outback we stumbled into an aboriginal elder's funeral, purely by chance. We were invited to come to the graveside service and listen to the sermon prior to interment.



All of the natural things were incredible, the elephants, sunsets, snow, mountains, all of it.

Another interesting story comes from the southern tip of South America. Literally our first kilometer toward home in Salt Lake City started with a challenge. There was a group that was protesting their wages and working conditions, and literally barricaded the road. They were burning tires and crates on the only road in and out of town. They wouldn't let us leave so we asked the police to help get the barricades moved. They said 'we're not getting in the middle of this', so we backed out and left on the same road we had gone in on. I could tell you stories all afternoon, but the sum total of all of that experience is that I'm a better person because of those experiences.





TCT: It seems like you have enough great information for years of talks, and we look forward to hearing you speak in the future.

GM: I certainly don't want to wear it out, but I also don't want to starve people if there's an interest. If people want to hear about it I'd love to share it, but I'm not going to force it on anyone.

TCT: You mentioned Scott Brady, a legend in the overland world, you were able to put together what I call a 'dream team'. What was the most notable part about the team you were able to put together and how were you able to assemble such a great team?

GM: It started when I met Scott through our mutual friend Kurt Williams, who of course you know. At the outset, and I think Scott would agree, it was going to be Scott and I, a photographer/videographer, and my sons. We were just going to keep it small. Like most worthwhile projects, you get in to it and start thinking about it, and gain new insights and start connecting dots. Soon you're saying



As far as how the team was assembled, everyone was more or less hand picked. Everybody that participated was either someone that Scott Brady knew very well, or I knew very well. Every time we talked about adding a new team member, Scott and I had a very open discussion about how that person would affect the chemistry of the group, and by extension, of the trip. So if Scott or I endorsed somebody, that was usually enough, and it worked.



'we should do this' and 'we should have one of those' and pretty soon it takes on a life of its own. That's exactly what happened with Expeditions 7, in fact when Scott and I were driving back from Alaska to Salt Lake City on the first half of the North American Segment, we already knew we needed a third vehicle for more camera gear. So we had the third truck lined up before we even got home from the first segment. That was typical of how this whole thing evolved, right up until the end. By the time we were done there were six vehicles that participated rather than the original two. We also had 51 different individuals participate by the time it was over.

One of the things that hit me on the way home, on the last leg from San Diego to Salt Lake: In the 58,000+ miles of driving, and all the challenges and countless hours in close confines, I don't remember a single cross word being shared between team members, which is quite remarkable.

TCT: It's astounding that you were able to do such a huge trip and not have major fights or really any drama at all.

GM: Not even an argument. Everybody brought so much experience, knowledge, and credibility to the project that I think they



garnered a lot of respect as soon as they arrived. As we got through different challenges together and got to know each other better, I think that level of respect just increased. It is (trying not to sound outdated) marvelous that we did all of this and never even had the slightest argument.



TCT: That is very remarkable. I saw Clay Croft at Overland Expo East a few weeks ago, and I commented to him that you don't see this

kind of true epic expedition much anymore at this level. Doing a trip for the main purpose of accomplishing something that's never been done, it's on the level of Amundsen, Scott, and Peary. In the modern era most iconic expeditions are usually sponsored by major corporations such as GoPro and are more of a PR event than anything else. The fact that you were able to complete this with nary a harsh word between team members is very exciting.

GM: You touched on another point when you mentioned GoPro on something that I'm very proud of. We were able to keep this trip very pure from a sponsorship standpoint. Of course we had a handful of companies that generously either provided equipment or deep discounts on equipment, but that was in most (if not all) cases out of their generosity and kindness. There may have been a couple of times where Scott worked existing relationships, but nothing about this trip was commercial. We didn't have to worry about wearing the right logo for the camera, or having stickers on the vehicles or anything. The level of purity really added to the trip.

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The non-commercial aspect of it really gave it a high level of quality from my perspective.

TCT: So, driving Land Cruisers around the world..did you experience any mechanical issues, anything serious that had you worried?

GM: There was only one Toyota OEM failure during the trip, and I'll touch on that in a second. We did have a handful of accessory issues, a circuit board went out on a fridge, some lights on the rack went into strobe mode instead of just steady, but overall very minor things, almost not worth mentioning. The only OEM problem happened on the two 78's and the 79: the diff lock switch on all three vehicles failed within about 1,000 miles (or less) of each other.



We had gone across the outback and through so much sand and terrain that the switches took a beating, and essentially shorted out. We were able to short the circuit and engage our rear diffs when needed, so the workaround was easy. The problem only came about after a lot of hard use in extreme conditions. It could have been prevented with a steel plate welded to the differential to protect that area. Luckily that small common issue didn't even slow us down, and otherwise these trucks performed literally without a hitch.



You could add that in my truck, after all the up and down and terrain, prior to the Atacama Desert a few pounds of coolant bled off, so my A/C failed. We were able to get that recharged at the next town and it was a non-issue. This just illustrates how nit-picky we have to get to have anything to complain about.



TCT: That really shows how well these trucks can stand up. I wish I could buy one in the U.S.

GM: Amen to that, you and about 50,000 other people.

TCT: Speaking of Toyota OEM, did Toyota USA or Corporate Toyota offer to help with Expeditions 7 at all?





GM: A contact I had at TMS USA who put me in touch with the right people in Japan to help get the vehicles ordered was about the extent of support from Toyota. There was no endorsement or sponsorship of any kind.

TCT: We've found that it can be difficult to get Toyota Corporate to support our hobby much (other than TRD who's been an advertiser with us for years).

Along those lines from the Toyota side, what are your thoughts on their support of the (off-road) industry overall? Obviously they ceased production on the FJ Cruiser in the US mainly due to government regulations, but the new TRD Pro line shows that they care about the enthusiast market. Do you have any thoughts on where they're going with that?

GM: I share your enthusiasm for the TRD Pro line, I just ordered an Inferno 4Runner for my wife, of course it will take a while to get here. I think that was a step in the right direction to stay connected with this demographic, and I'd like to see more of it. I've told everybody at Toyota that I can get an audience with what my recommendation would be: Turn the Sequoia into the luxury SUV with all the bells & whistles, and return the Land Cruiser to its roots of ruggedness. I've cited the possibility of bringing the 76 series into the US, with whatever engine they want. I think that 4 door wagon would just kill it here. Maybe offer a couple of versions, the utilitarian version with the rubber floor mats and maybe an upgraded version with all the bells and whistles. That way they could cover the US market and our particular demographic. I've shared that with multiple people inside the Toyota system, and

so far it hasn't gotten any traction. That's how the Toyota world would be if I got a vote.



TCT: I think you would be in very good company if they would actually do that.

During the trip, was there any major emotional challenge that you had to overcome? Either you personally or the entire team?

GM: I think there were several emotional challenges during the trip. We had a difficult time getting out of Magadan, Russia in particular after being there for 28 days. We had some issues with visa's and passports, we weren't sure we were going to get out of the country. That was the first time I really got concerned and the emotions ramped up from an anxiety standpoint. There was a lot of difficulty, I'd say a ridiculous amount of difficulty, with border crossings in south and central America. For context I should say we were extremely well researched. It's not like we were just rolling through unprepared. Between Scott Brady and Kyle Patten there were hundreds of hours of research that went into border crossings and making sure we had the right documentation and that the vehicles were compliant and so on.





It seemed like without exception, whenever we came to a border crossing in South America, the border officials would say “We know what the website said we wanted, but that doesn’t matter, here’s what we really want”. It got to the point where it was just overwhelming. It took nine hours to get into Peru, four hours to get into Mexico, and I want to say 5 hours to get into Honduras. It was all over ticky tack little things: Just one challenge we faced getting into Mexico: we rolled into the immigration station and we had all the documents the website said we needed, including copies of our passports. The lady stamped that passport and said “now I need a photo copy of this”. Kyle said “There’s a copy machine right next to you, let’s just make a copy”, she said “This copier only works for our documents, you guys will need to go down the road 10km to get copies”. We had a portable printer because we expected some of this. So we took a photo of the stamped photo copy, popped the SD card into the Mac, and printed a copy. We brought that to the lady and she said “First of all, this is a color copy and we want black & white”. We finally convinced her it was OK to take color, but then she said that this was a copy of a photograph, what we need is a photo copy, I kid you not. She was really jerking our chain. Finally Kyle dropped a name of a man he had gotten to know inside the ministry of tourism in Mexico and as soon as she heard that name she said “Oh you know him”, and became far more cooperative and we got things moving. If Kyle didn’t have that resource, we may still be waiting to get into Mexico. That was the aggregate experience of all the border crossings in that area. I mean, you expect some of that, it’s part of the adventure, but it went so far beyond the exotic overland travel experience, to where it was harassment. It got a little old after a while.

TCT: Do you wonder if that has to do with the high profile of the vehicles? I’ve heard stories that when you’re high profile, sometimes it helps you and sometimes it doesn’t.



GM: In the cases I just cited I think it was neutral, I don’t think it helped us or hurt us. Most people didn’t have any idea about E7, I don’t think any border patrol did. I can tell you on whether high profile helps or hurts, in my experience it was a blessing in our case. Whenever we were together we rarely got stopped and searched, but if three vehicles would move on and the fourth had stopped and was lagging, then they almost always got stopped and searched. It wasn’t as efficient with one vehicle, but rolling together we seemed to have a lot less trouble.



Read the rest of this interview in our January 2015 issue to learn more about how the E7 team completed this epic journey, and what’s next for Greg and his quest for exploration. 📖



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# Off Camber 2014

By Dennis Lloyd



I just came in from 96° outside after unpacking a few lucky raffle prizes out of my FJ from the weekend's Off Camber event. I have the AC on and a fan blowing on me. I would much rather be back at the event enjoying a 50° evening and a camp fire with friends new and old. Since owning my FJ I've been to every FJ off road event at least once and many of them several times. Why do I go? What makes me drive all over the Southwest to meet up with like-minded individuals that want to romp on trails all day?

Off Camber is the reincarnation of what used to be known as SedonaFest, which originally started in 2007. After a break in 2013, SedonaFest's directors were met with tough resistance from the Forest Service in obtaining trail permits for the event. Instead of just ending the event altogether,

the directors teamed up with the Mormon Lake Lodge 30 minutes south of Flagstaff, AZ to provide a venue, raffles, dinners and camping like the original event. There would be no need for trail permits because trail runs were up to the attendees to organize on their own. Since its new location at Mormon Lake Lodge near Flagstaff, AZ was too far from Sedona it wouldn't make sense to keep the original name so, Off Camber was born. The directors reinvented the event and started fresh, but like all SedonaFests of the past the underlying goal was to provide an event which fostered community, camaraderie and passion for the outdoors. Something I noticed the Arizona FJ folks are very good at. Although there were mainly FJs in attendance, there were also plenty of 4Runners, Tacomas, FJ40s, 70 Series, 80 Series, 100 Series.







Many registered attendees arrived on Thursday and Friday, while others opted for day passes on Saturday. There was a large tent designated as Off Camber Headquarters where you came to register, pick up your t-shirt and buy raffle tickets. Further down the dirt road behind the tent was the Findlay Toyota sponsored off road track, a permanent landmark of Mormon Lake, where you could test drive a new 4Runner on inclines, articulation whoops, descents, and a log bridge.



I drove up from Southern California on a Thursday with another SoCal FJ via I-40 into Flagstaff then dropped down into Mormon Lake in late afternoon. We made camp and welcomed two other SoCal FJs into our camp area then set off to register at HQ. After a brisk night, a cozy camp fire and a belly full of Korean short ribs and rice we woke up to a beautiful cool morning.



The plan for Friday was to wheel at the famous Broken Arrow trail in Sedona, AZ. After breakfast, I prepped for a day on the trail. Snacks. Check. Drinks. Check. Camera. Check. We were planning on meeting up with AZFJ crew members at a restaurant in Munds Park that morning. We rolled out about 8am and onto trail 240 to Munds Park. It was an easy graded trail, but it had some fun mud to play in near the end. We arrived in Munds, only to realize I had forgot my camera back at camp. Doh! I had set it down on the camp table and forgot it. I told my sad story to the rest of the group and went back to camp hoping there was still a chance to get on another trail run.

Back at camp, the camera wasn't on the table. What the!? My \$2500 Canon 5D Mark II was missing! If you've ever lost a valuable item you know exactly how I was feeling at this moment. I searched high and low. Nothing. I zipped open the tent and with a sigh of relief saw it sitting on



the floor. I confirmed later that day that Kyle, a new FJ'er from SoCal who had opted to bow out on doing Broken Arrow in his stock FJ, had placed it in my tent for safe keeping. Whew! I found it just in time too, because there was a large group of FJs about to roll out for the Expedition trail run. I jumped in my FJ, checked with the trail leader for the okay and we were on our way to a full day of traversing dirt trails in a huge loop back to Mormon Lake.



The convoy was 10 rigs strong, including a father son team with a dirt bike and a 3rd generation 4Runner. We would be criss-crossing open-range ranches most of the day and finish with tight turns through the pine trees. There was even a trail side mishap as we stopped to help out a fellow offroader who bent his rim which caused a flat. The first thing was to get his spare off but it proved to be a difficult task since he didn't have the proper tool to remove the spare from under the truck. Luckily, there was someone in our group that had the right spare tire removal tool to hook into the slot to lower the spare from the undercarriage. As the rest of the group stayed behind, another FJ and I opted to make haste and get back in time for dinner so I could take some photos.



nice going to events like this with catered meals and not have to worry about cooking after long trail days. Although at our camp we like to eat, so it's almost tradition to cook up a second meal or snacks to eat around the campfire. As folks ate their dinner a few announcements were made, old and new friends chatted about their adventures of the day, which trails were taken and why the heck was there a rental Buick out on the trails suffering carnage. After dinner some watched the free movie under the HQ tent while most settled into their campfires for the night. The AZFJ crew built a monster of a bonfire and let the good times roll. A perfect ending to a day on the trails.



Included in the Off Camber event registration is two nights of catered meals provided by Mormon Lake Lodge. The first night was BBQ pulled-pork sandwiches and the second was hamburgers. It's





As the sun rose over Mormon Lake you could hear the rustling of tents and pans as folks started to wake and cook their breakfasts. It was another beautiful day for playing in the dirt. Today I planned on heading into Sedona and the famous Broken Arrow trail with a handful of SoCal FJers and one stock Lexus GX470. We made our way into Sedona via the infamous Schnebly Hill Road. The trail is basically a graded fire road until the last sections which are notoriously bumpy with small rocks and boulders. The shocks got a nice workout as we made our way onto pavement in Sedona and fought the slow traffic... and roundabouts. After all it was a Saturday and the town was buzzing with tourists. Our group finally made it to

the trail head only to find more traffic, because Broken Arrow is undeniably the busiest trail in Arizona. We had two Off Camber groups ahead of us and another behind us along with a hand full of offroad tour trucks. We slowly traversed our way up the tight trails and played on various sandstone boulders which provide a mini-Moab experience. The most famous obstacle on Broken Arrow is Devil's Staircase, a steep section featuring large stair stepped rocks to crawl down... or up... or in reverse and up like one of the AZ FJs accomplished the day before. It's definitely a daunting task for first timers like myself, but steady as she goes, watch your spotter and it's not a problem. The stock GX470 in our group did it with a few scrapes on the stock engine skid, but made it look easy. Our group finished the trail without any major damage and we started to head back to camp after a fantastic day at Broken Arrow.



As we rolled into Mormon Lake campground I could see that the 4x4 Truck Show was in full swing near the HQ tent. Although it consisted of mostly FJs, there were also Tacomas, Tundras, 4Runners, 80 series Land Cruisers, FJ40s, and even a rare diesel 70 series LC that was for sale. As attendees browsed the rows of rigs, others made their way under the tent with their catered dinner. The night's entertainment would be provided by a



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band named Ebenezer. The AZFJ crew lit up large campfire. Everyone was enjoying the last night with full bellies and cold drinks reflecting on the days trail rides and reminiscing of past ones.



It was Sunday morning and the last day of the event. Everyone was breaking camp and packing up their rigs for the journey home. The first order of business was to get our rigs to the group photo area behind the Mormon Lake Lodge offroad course. After the photos were taken the fun began as a Tacoma decided to challenge itself to a mini mud pond. It did well skirting the edges, flinging mud and water, but eventually got stuck and needed to be pulled out.



We were all looking forward to the main event, the raffle. We can't deny the raffle at any offroad event is a big deal. Everyone likes to go home with a new mod to install while supporting the event and/or charities. The Off Camber sponsors stepped up big time for the inaugural event. All the big names were present, Findlay Toyota Flagstaff, Discount Tire, Icon Vehicle Dynamics, Demello Offroad, General Tire, BajaRack and lots more. The attendees made their final trip to the HQ tent for the raffle. You could see all the goodies lined up on several tables in front of the stage with bulky items stacked on stage. From roof racks to sliders and t-shirts to tool bags we were all eager to win anything. I was lucky enough to win a set of ToyTecs new BOSS coilovers. As the raffle finished up end everyone started to congratulate each other on their wins, said goodbyes and went about getting ready to pack the final items into their rigs and leave for home.



Off Camber 2014 officially came to an end. I have to hand it to the organizers and the sponsors. They took a lemon of a false start with SedonaFest and literally made lemonade with Off Camber. Sharing trails and a campfire with old friends and making new ones? Isn't that what it's about? Sure the trail rides are a big part of any offroad event, but what good is a trail if there's no one to share the experience with? Off Camber came through in a big way to provide its attendees with all the experiences they needed to make the event a success. I'm looking forward to the next Off Camber and hopefully many of you reading this will consider it next year. Happy Trails! 🚙





Top of the World during the Kokopelli drive to Cruise Moab ( Jonathan Harris)



A 100 Series gently idles down slickrock, Cruise Moab 2014. (Jonathan Harris)

# 2014 Event Round Up

The TCT Magazine Crew



An alternate view from Top of the World, Cruise Moab 2014. (Jonathan Harris)





Cruise Moab = great trucks, great friends, and amazing terrain. (Jonathan Harris)



Kokopelli Trail on the way to Cruise Moab 2014. (Jonathan Harris)

Our GX-470 enjoying the summer wildflowers and epic views, FJ Summit #8 (Angie Williams)



No event is complete without a wheel stand. Cruise Moab 2014. (Jonathan Harris)





The last time Angie wheeled the TRD FJC before she was sold, FJ Summit #8 (Shane Williams)



It's always great to see a 200 series Land Cruiser on the trail. FJ Summit #8 (Shane Williams)

FJ's lined up near Lake Como, FJ Summit #8. (Angie Williams)





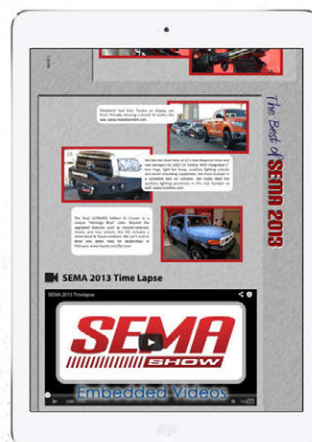


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Toyota Cruisers, Trucks, and SUVs lined up at event HQ.  
2014 Lone Star Jamboree (Phillip Jones)



Inching down the Steps on Black Bear Pass, Hundreds in  
the Hills 2014 (Paul Gardner)



100 Series Tackling the Waterfall on Black Bear Pass  
Hundreds in the Hills 2014 (Paul Gardner)





A little international flavor imported for Overland Expo 2014 Paul May & Equipt Outfitters (Jonthan Harris)

Trucks lined up, getting ready to get dirty(er). Rock Therapy 2014 (Bob Holliday)



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A line of Toyota Cruisers & Trucks cross a river. 2014 Lone Star Roundup (Perry Lowery)



Slow climb at the 2014 Lone Star Roundup (Perry Lowery)



Taco. Air. Rock Therapy 2014 (Bob Holliday)





A little skinny pedal & she'll make it! 2014 Lone Star Roundup (Perry Lowery)



A well built 4Runner prepares for a night run. 2014 Lone Star Jamboree (Phillip Jones)

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# Building the FJ-UTE



Like us, you've probably followed the Redline Land Cruisers 4-door FJ-40 style "FJ-UTE" project with great anticipation. The truck we originally wrote about in the October issue was unveiled at SEMA 2014 in the Radflo booth, and we were able to get some shots of her in the dirt during our post SEMA photo shoot.

During the build process we gave Justin Robbins a spare point and shoot camera, so he could document some of the build process. For full details on the build and to learn more about the FJ-UTE, and to secure your place on the growing waiting list, visit [RedlineLandCruisers.com](http://RedlineLandCruisers.com)



Building an FJ-40 style grille means a little surgery is in order.

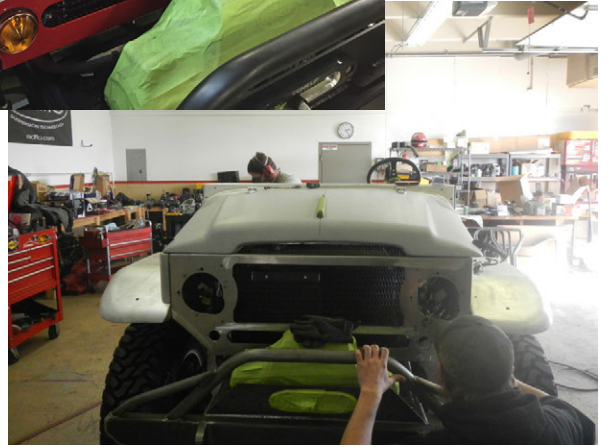




Getting the roll cage dialed in.



Classic FJ-40 front end with a little extra room



Plenty of work went into an OEM style hood.



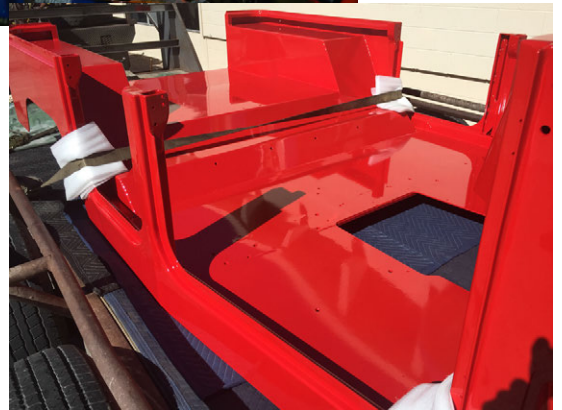
New gears are an upgrade option for every FJ-UTE.



Justin and the team made sure the entire drive train got some love.



The chassis is ready to go—waiting for the body to arrive.



The FJ-UTE body returns from Powder Coat.





Wheel test fit - just need Cooper tires.



Wiring and finishing touches three days before leaving.

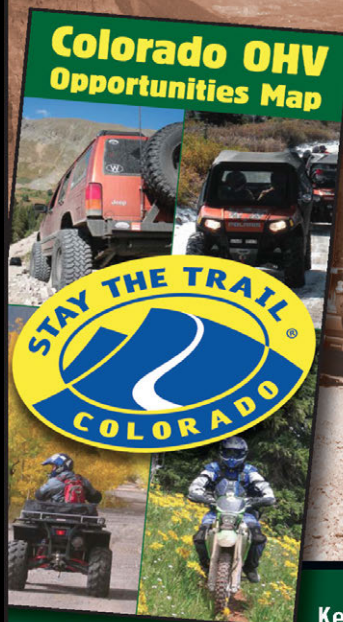


Right now there is a line of nine FJ-UTES waiting to be built, and Justin says he plans to build 20 trucks per year, so if you're in the market for a reasonably priced custom Land Cruiser, get in touch soon. You will see plenty more of FJ-UTE 001 in the future as we've already scheduled a long-term test drive for early in 2015. 🇺🇸



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# The Iconic Retromod Global Tacoma

By Shane Williams



Around the time we started Tacoma Magazine, I found a thread on Expedition Portal entitled Containerized: Retromod Global Tacoma ([LINK](#)). In that thread, “containerized” aka Karl Muth ([karlmuth.com](#)) went through his entire process of building a Tacoma that was very much customized to accomplish a few goals. First, he wanted to keep the tried and true 1GR-FE that his previous FJ Cruiser ran. He found the FJC a little too difficult to pack due to the small storage area, and he wanted a truck that would fit in a 20-foot shipping container. He also wanted something that looked more like a 70’s or 80’s Hilux pickup but in a modern platform with readily available parts.





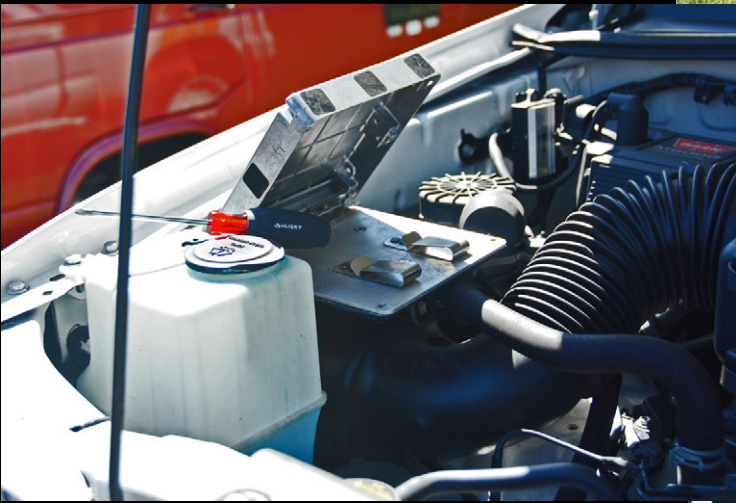
After 43 pages of build thread and comments, our Land Cruiser editor and Rising Sun member Daniel posted a cell phone pic of Karl in front of his custom Retromod Tacoma. As a Toyota Truck enthusiast, this build is certainly one of the top of the list for ultra cool trucks for me, so imagine my surprise when at Overland Expo East, this truck rolls right past me. At the time I was on the phone with Angie and all she heard was...“Uhm...I have to go.”

As soon as a truck this iconic rolls into an event, crowds begin to gather. The first question to Karl, who’s always happy to show anyone the details of this rig, is “what is it,” since it doesn’t look too much like a Tacoma. Despite having the vin of a 2012 Taco, the front end is custom with FJ-80 headlights. The rear includes an old-school TOYOTA tailgate grafted into the Tacoma Tailgate, and of course it’s much shorter than a stock Tacoma. The truck is so heavily modified that, according to Karl, “The only un-modified panels on this truck are the rear doors.”



The little touches on this truck are truly amazing. The rear wheel wells have been customized to mimick the original but with a shorter bed, and accommodate the huge tires. The front grille includes an original style Toyota emblem, which is custom of course. The bed is covered by a customized canvas cover from Ogden Tops in Chicago. OEM style TOYOTA wheels are color matched to the body. Don’t miss the 80’s era graphics, that’s paint you see—not vinyl. There’s even something special in the stock-looking engine bay: an old ECU found in a junk yard has







been turned into a holder for spare copies of your driver's license, passport, or other important documents. To top off the special touches, he even found an original Alaska 1974 license plate to really confuse onlookers.

In the many parts of the world Karl travels, this truck comes off as a very nicely restored old school Hilux, or perhaps an imported model that's only available in a small obscure market. In the US though, it shows what a little time, effort, and of course money can produce in the way of a very cool, custom, and most of all—usable Toyota Truck. ❤



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Paul May from Equipt Outfitters explains their offerings to a curious couple.



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# The FIRST OVERLAND



## EXPO.2014 EAST

By Shane Williams



Recovery course showing how to creatively use straps and logs when no trees are available.



Rhonda shows how to evaluate terrain during the XELles navigation course.

Blue Ridge Mountains, early autumn, and a slew of adventurers of all types—that pretty much describes the first Overland Expo east of the Mississippi.

During the first weekend in October, like thousands of other overland enthusiasts I traveled to Asheville, North Carolina to see how an eastern Overland Expo would fare. The location, a large private ranch near Fletcher, NC is everything you would imagine in a great outdoor venue. Dirt roads, log cabins, and (unlike the Western version of this event) a lake full of water.

Also unlike the Mormon Lake location, the layout of the event seemed a little more spread out and random. There was a main road that most people walked down, but instead of setting up booths in a linear fashion, vendors chose a more natural way of organizing. Many parked vehicles on an angle in order to have a nice campsite with their neighbors. Many trailers were circled in the manner of pioneers circling wagons. The





The XVenture Trailer display was fully prepped for the chilly weather.



An outfitted Four Wheel Campers Tacoma overlooks the lake, training tents in the background.

OVERLAND



EXPO.2014  
EAST

overall feel of the property and event was more intimate, despite the additional space between vendors.

Like all Overland Expo Events, the classes were top notch. I had the opportunity to sit in on a few courses, but my favorite was hearing Rhonda Cahill and Rachelle Croft talk about navigation through the lens of their recent Rallye Aicha des Gazelles adventure. As a

This 4Runner is nicely outfitted, as is the trailer with tent and awning.



A clean Tacoma sporting a CVT—ready for exploration!

long time map and compass nerd and survival instructor, it's always exciting to see great navigation information being passed along.

What I found most intriguing about this event though, were the visitors. This is only the second time I've had the opportunity to converse with fellow enthusiasts that reside in the much more populated eastern half of the country. While the western Expo consists



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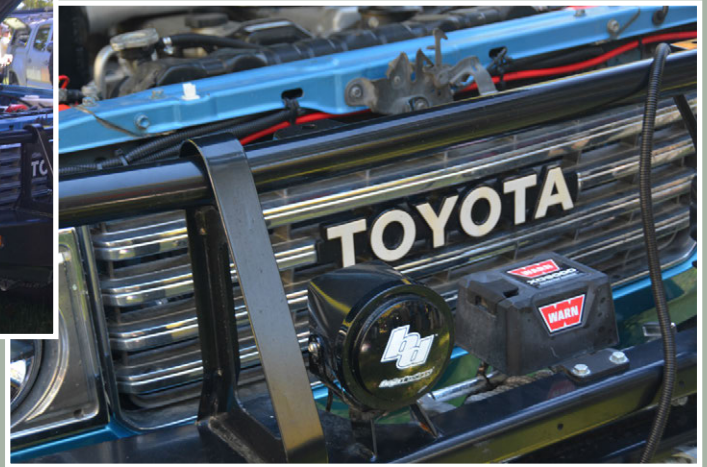
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This 60 series tops off her batteries with a flexible solar panel on the awning.



of many multiple-time attendees, this show brought out many more people that are curious about our hobby of overlanding.

In comparison to the western "main" Overland Expo, I would say that I certainly enjoy the

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A well outfitted Land Cruiser includes a ramp for the dog.

location more. This event was a little smaller, which I think leads to that community feeling in a more profound way than the larger event. I'm sure in time the eastern Expo will grow, but hopefully that community is not lost. 🐾



# YOUR RIGS



Anton, Eddie, Sara, Ste,  
and Todd in central PA  
From Anton



Blasting through Browns Camp  
Oregon in my 2014 FJ "Black Sun-  
shine"

From Dalton