

TCT MAGAZINE



JANUARY 2015 • VOLUME 8 • ISSUE 1

On The Cover:
Toytec's
550HP Su-
percharged
2014 Tundra
shreds the
desert.

photo by
Phillip Jones



68

*Land Cruising
Adventure*

MY OVERLAND ADVENTURE
MARTIN & NICOLE

Ruined Adventures
A 2 YEAR OVERLAND JOURNEY



EDITORIAL STAFF



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



Jim Akers
2006 Tacoma
Colorado Springs, CO



Bob Holliday
2006 Tacoma TRD
Denver, CO



Jonathan Harris
2005 100 Series Land Cruiser
Grand Junction, CO



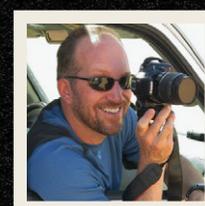
Krista Johnston
1998 4Runner | 1969 FJ-40
Casper, WY



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



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



Daniel Markofsky
1993 80 Series Land Cruiser
Denver, CO



FROM THE PUBLISHER

This issue is very special to the entire TCT team for several reasons. First, it's the beginning of our eighth year of publication, and we're optimistic for the course we're on. We're also very excited to be the first publication to show off the all new 2016 Toyota Tacoma. While many enthusiasts were hoping for things corporate Toyota just can't do right now, we like the changes and expect great things from the Toyota Truck line in the future.

As for the first full year of Toyota Cruisers & Trucks Magazine? Well what can we say other than Thank You! Thanks to every single person reading this. Thanks to our partners and sponsors, without your support we wouldn't be able to publish such a great periodical. Thanks to the families of our editors and contributors, all of us 'in the business' spend plenty of time on projects, covering events, and writing and editing content so thousands of strangers can enjoy the fruits of our labor. Without the support of friends and family, TCT would be an just a dream, not the reality we enjoy today.

From me, I want to thank our entire Team of editors, contributors, and creative directors that continue to make this magazine so amazing. I'm truly humbled by the group that puts this content together, and am happy to call each and every one of you a friend. Here's to an even more amazing 2015...I know we'll continue to dominate the Toyota off-road world!

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

Shane

Colorado Springs, CO 80923
www.tctmagazine.net

Published By

Zaxyn Media, LLC
Shane P. Williams | Publisher
Angela C. Williams, CSFA | Associate Publisher

Editor-In-Chief

Jonathan Harris

Managing Editors

Bob Holliday | Phillip Jones
Jim Akers | Daniel Markofsky
Beau & Krista Johnston

Associate Editors

Tim Mitchell | Electronics
Wes Craiglow | Overland
Colter Larsen | Special Events
Paul Thompson | Special Projects

Creative Director

Kimberly Proffitt

Contributors

Kande Jacobsen
Jared Koronkiewicz
George Labelle
Kyle Renzelman
Addison Rickaby
Brian Rogers
Adam Tolman

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New & Noteworthy Custom Splice

Throughout the Toyota community worldwide, ARB Bumpers can be found on a variety of models of trucks and SUV's. These bumpers are all designed to carry a winch while utilizing the stock roller fairlead. However if you want to run a synthetic line with your winch the options are extremely limited due to the recessed design of an ARB bumper's winch plate. A standard $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick hawse fairlead will not allow you to make angled pulls without the winch line contacting the sides of the recess and risking a cut or frayed winch line.

In walks Custom Splice with the solution. Custom Splice is a small 2.5 person company out of Lawrence, Kansas. Since 2005 Custom Splice has been offering solutions to the recovery needs for the Off Road, ATV, and Towing/Wrecker community. And now they are releasing a Hawse Fairlead designed for the ARB Bumper with the offset winch plate. Made of 6061-T6 Aluminum and designed with a $\frac{5}{8}$ " offset this fairlead will fit perfectly on the ARB Bumper and clear the winch line opening in the



winch plate of the bumper. The key factor in this design is the width. This fairlead is 1.5 inches thick! This thickness allows the line to clear the sides of the bumper recess up to angles of 40 degrees without touching the sides of the recess.

The fairlead retails for \$80 and is offered in 2 colors – Black and Silver. It fits ARB Bumpers with the offset winch plate design which includes the 2nd Gen Tacoma, FJ, and 4 Runner.

SOURCE: CustomSplice.com



“Cheap Tricks”

Part I: Black Headlight Mod (BHLM)

By: Bob Holliday

Looking to spruce up the look of your headlights or need to take apart an existing headlight for repairs? With basic hand tools, an oven and spray paint, you can shine a new light on your old factory headlights.



After removing the headlights, preheat the oven to 300°F and start prep work on the headlights. Remove the bulbs and take off any screws, plastic and/or rubber parts that can be removed.



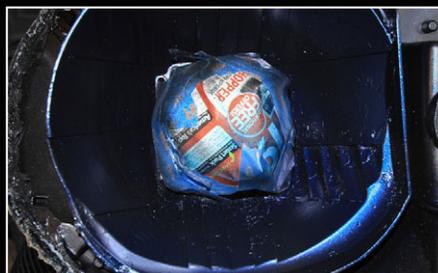
Turn the oven off and place the headlight in the oven on a piece of cardboard for 7-10 minutes. The oven will help soften up the sealant holding the clear lens onto the headlight housing. Be careful when removing the headlight as it can be hot!

Using a flathead screwdriver, separate the clear lens from the main headlight housing. Be careful around

the clipped areas as you will need those available later when resealing the headlight. Take your time as you're separating the two halves, it can be frustrating.



Remove the screws that hold the chrome surround. With the chrome removed, it is time to sand and prep the surface for paint. If you are still running bulbs that need the chrome bowl for reflection, do not follow my paint scheme ... I have a retro fit on my headlights and I have painted the chrome bowls as well as the surround. To create a smooth surface and create a better bond to the plastic chrome, I used a few coats of plasti-dip before applying color matched Indigo Blue paint to the bowl. Allow ample time to dry before reassembly.



Preheat the oven again as you begin to reassemble the headlight ... carefully, making sure not to mess up

the fresh paint. Lay down a bead of silicone or rubber glue (I used some OCI Butyl Rubber Glue from The Retrofit Source) around the edge of the headlight housing before putting the clear lens back on.



Place the loosely fit headlight back into the oven for a final bake. After 7-10 minutes, carefully remove the headlight and press the two halves back together.



With the headlights back together, it's time to reinstall and enjoy your new black headlights! 





The All New 2016 Toyota Tacoma



You saw the new design last week and many have asked us about details. Will the 2016 Tacoma include a diesel engine, solid front axle, or front locking differential.

Well, no.

While Toyota USA is unlikely to meet every whim of the hard-core off road enthusiast, we believe that the 2016 Tacoma will continue the tradition of capable, reliable, and very fun to own-and-drive Toyota Trucks.

Other than the new, tougher design, the 2016 Tacoma includes several changes that are meant to make the best selling mid-sized truck more efficient, more fun, and better in just about every way, on and off road. The decade old second generation Tacoma was a bit long in the tooth in many key areas, so the changes in this new rig are welcome, and we can't wait to get our hands on a tester!

Starting with the frame, the Toyota engineers have re-built the Tacoma from the ground up. They added high-strength steel to enhance strength and rigidity, and reinforced the body with UHS steel that strengthens while reducing weight. The suspension uses a design similar to previous generations, but has been fine tuned to deliver both a smoother ride on road as well as making the Tacoma more capable off road.

The big news though comes with the new 3.5-liter V6 equipped with Toyota's D-4S Technology. This engine features both direct and port fuel injection, and delivers higher HP and better efficiency than the previous 4.0. The previous 2.7-liter four cylinder is also still available, although most of our readers will opt for more power.

There's also a new six-speed transmission with electronic shift control, and the V6 Tacoma can be purchased with an all new



six-speed manual transmission. The Tacoma will remain the only Toyota 4x4 vehicle available in M/T.

Design updates for the Tacoma are apparent from these initial photos. Similar to the Tundra, this new Toyota pickup features a chisled face and hex grille. The wheel flares not only look great, but they allow for greater wheel travel as well. At the back of the truck, the new locking tailgate includes a stamped Tacoma logo, and for the first time a tri-fold tonneau cover is available from Toyota.

Inside the truck are several enhancements to make life on the trail easier and more convenient. The “handlebar” design instrument panel makes it easy for the driver to see what’s going on, and high-quality finishes inside are a great upgrade to the utilitarian second generation interior. The list of available upgrades seems more at home for a Lexus truck than a Tacoma, but

are welcome additions for those looking to upgrade their driving experience. Wireless charging, push-button start, and a power moonroof are all available on higher-end trim packages. Yes, every new 2016 Tacoma also includes a GoPro mount on the windshield.

The new Tacoma will be available later in 2015 in five grades: SR, SR5, TRD Sport, TRD Off-Road, and Limited. We haven’t heard officially but we believe there will not be a TRD Pro edition for the 2016 model year.

For those interested in using their Tacoma in the dirt, the 2016 model brings a slew of electronics that we’ve seen in other models for years: Multi-Terrain Select, Automatic Limited Slip and Locking Rear Differential, Hill Start Assist Control (HAC), Clutch Start Cancel (manual transmission only), Active Traction Control, and Crawl Control are all available for the new truck. 🐾



Four Wheel Campers Pop-Up Campers

A look inside the company and their Fleet Camper

By Beau Johnston



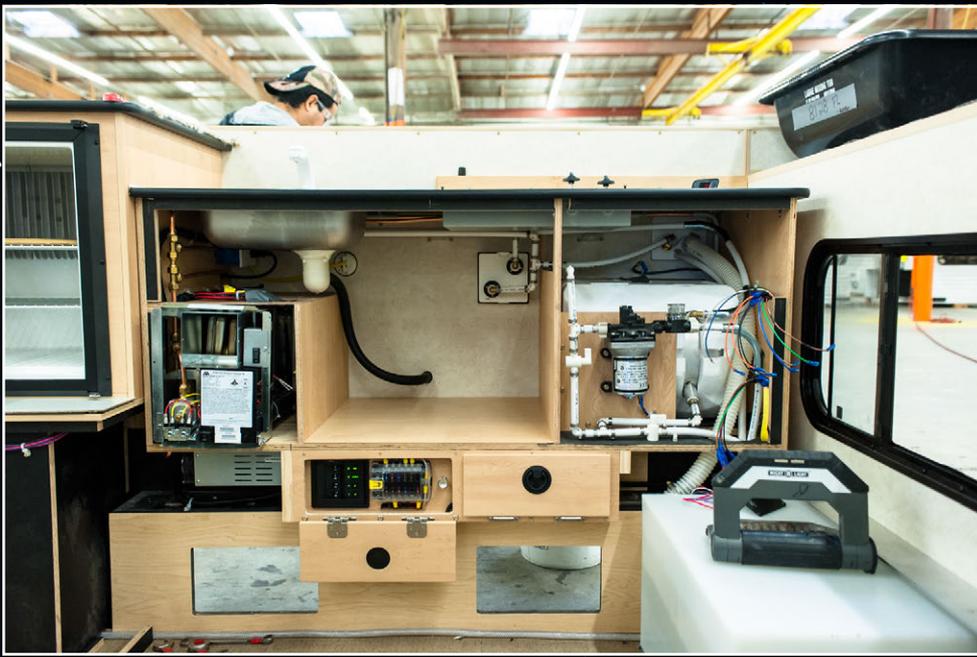
The Company

Four Wheel Campers started in 1972 in Colorado, with a revolutionary camper design for the International Scout. The product lines eventually expanded to include pop-up campers for the Scout, Ford Bronco, Chevrolet Blazer, and campers designed for pickups. While the Scout, Bronco, and Blazer have all gone the way of the dodo bird, Four Wheel Campers has continued making pop-up campers. After being purchased/sold a few times over the company's history, and relocating to Woodland, California, Four Wheel Campers was eventually purchased by Tom and Celeste Hanagan in 2001. It is here

where we begin to see the evolution of the Four Wheel Campers' camper into a modern travel platform we see on the roads today.

We recently had the opportunity to visit the Four Wheel Campers facility and check out how these campers are manufactured. We were walked through the process





of making a pop-up camper from the creation of the frame to the final quality checkout. Having personal experience designing and fabricating equipment I paid special attention to the welding and overall fit and finish of the campers as they rolled through the assembly line. All too often the frames, which are the most critical component of any piece of equipment, are slapped together with poor quality welds. I guess it falls into the "out of sight, out of mind" mentality. It was for this reason that I was pleasantly surprised to find the camper frames leaving the welding area with clean and beautiful welds.

Attention to detail didn't stop at the frame; we watched as workers meticulously installed exterior and interior components. The production area was a beehive of activity with workers buzzing around the units being built; installing and checking to make sure the components are functioning properly. We were amazed to see such a well-coordinated effort and were not surprised to find out that the assembly team produces 10 campers each week. With an increase in sales projected for



2015, we can only imagine the production floor will continue to crank out campers into the new year.

The Fleet Camper—Our Thoughts

I will be honest, I wasn't sure what to expect when we arrived at the Four Wheel Campers headquarters to pick up their 2001 Tundra that had been outfitted with one of their fully-equipped Fleet Pop-Up. I had poked around their display at Overland Expo for the last couple of years but could not wrap my head around traveling in a setup like this. Sure I had read about several couples traveling around the world in pop-up campers but they were



few and far between. Perhaps it was the thought of 40-foot motorhomes lumbering down the highway or the notion that “real” travel requires sacrificing personal amenities that creates a “stigma” of traveling in an RV. In 2013 the truck camper market saw an increase in demand of 9% from 2012, and seemingly more and more pickup truck and Fuso/Unimog-based overland vehicles popping up in our travels, there has to be something to the idea of larger overland platforms like these.

We set out to test the Fleet Pop-Up, and the overall Tundra-based platform, over a 10-day trip down the Pacific Coast Highway. Our travels would take us through crowded cities, back country roads, and winding highways. Each day would be filled with exploration and each night would bring a new place to spend the night. I was worried about the time it would take to deploy and retract the pop-up each day but was pleasantly surprised to discover how easy, and quick, it was to setup and take down. We camped the first night with our friends traveling in their Land Cruiser with a roof-top-tent. I was able to set the camper up in the time it took them to remove the cover from the RTT.





This camper survived a rollover accident and was being hauled to a dealer in Colorado for inspection.

Our Fleet Pop-Up was set up with their Side Dinette Seating configuration, with two other configurations available. The Side Dinette Seating features a large countertop along the driver-side and a three-seat dining area along the passenger-side. The configuration provided enough room for both Krista and I to move around, prepare meals, and sit down comfortably to a meal. The camper's sleeping arrangements can comfortably accommodate up to three adults, although a family of four would be well suited by the setup. The main, over-cab bed expands from roughly a full-size bed to roughly a king-size bed by pulling the platform out. All three configurations feature a bench or dining area that also converts into a second sleeping area.



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Taller folks, like myself, over 6'3" tall will notice the narrowness of the camper's sleeping area. I am 6'6" tall and had to sleep at a slight diagonal; thankfully there was plenty of room for the two of us on the camper's main bed.

Over the course of the trip I began to understand why so many folks are traveling like this. Having spent most of our travels in our 1998 4Runner, the ability to stand up inside the sleeping area was incredibly welcoming. Sure you can outfit your pick up or SUV with RTTs, elaborate camp kitchens, and hot water systems but there really is something to the idea of having a large space where you can get out of the elements. Even the added space provided by the camper van we rented in New Zealand was welcoming during the rainy days our travels often saw.

As with our New Zealand camper van, we wish there were a couple of things that were a little different. Most notably was the stove configuration. While the camper's

interior was spacious, when compared to the accommodations our 4Runner provides, it is still a fairly small space. Cooking rich meals full of garlic, herbs, and spices can overpower a space like this. Even with windows cracked and exhaust fans running, the smells of food can linger in the same space you will later be sleeping in. While there is enough space inside the camper to store a second stove, it would be cool to have something like a Partner Steel two-burner stove integrated in such a way that it could be removed for exterior cooking.

Fleet Pop-Up Specifications

Dry Weight: 845 lbs.

Height Down (including vent): 54" (most trucks)

Roof Length: 129"

Floor Length: 80"

Body Width: 75"

Adult Sleeping: 3

Extended Interior Height: 6' 4"

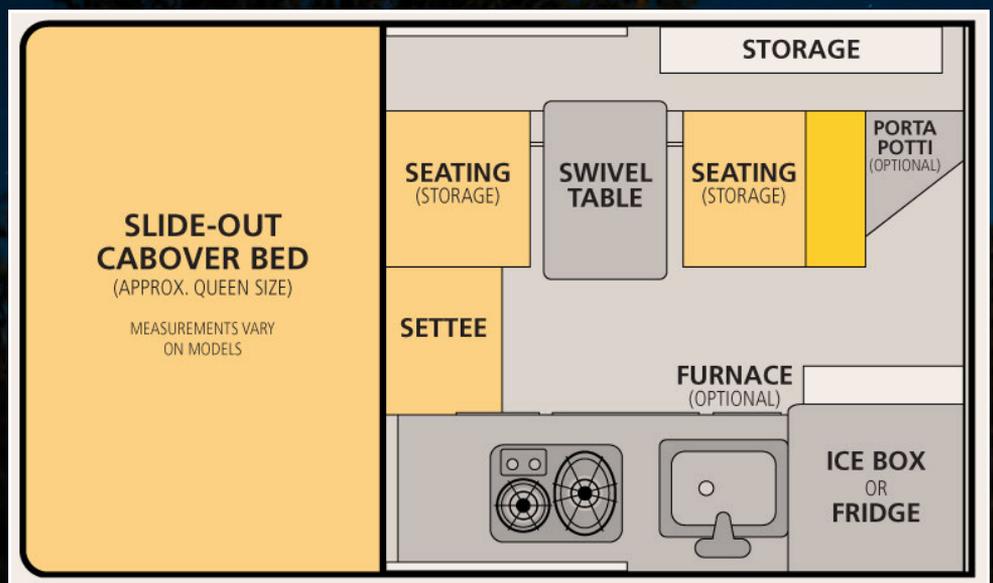
Roof/Wall Framing: Aluminum

Exterior Material: Aluminum (Fiberglass Siding Available)

Fresh Water Capacity: 20 Gallons

Base Model Price: \$14,495

www.FourWH.com



Final Thoughts

It only took us five days, into our 10 day trip, to really fall in love with the Fleet Pop-Up and the idea of traveling in a pickup outfitted with a pop-up camper. The overall platform wasn't so large that it inhibited our ability to navigate through parking garages or the narrow streets we sometimes found ourselves traveling down. The camper was easy to setup and take down, provided ample space for the two of us, and was a welcoming retreat at the end of a long day of traveling. Not only were we impressed with the Fleet Pop-Up but the overall friendliness of the folks at Four Wheel Campers. These are honest folks with a genuine desire to design and build quality equipment for the adventure traveler. I would, without hesitation, encourage everyone to take a moment to visit with the Four Wheel Campers team at this year's Overland Expo or browse through their website. These really are platforms well set up for your next adventure, whether it be exploring the Desert Southwest or traveling the world. ❤️



*The number of truck campers sold in 2012 and 2013 is estimated from the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association's (www.RIVA.org) data on Wholesale Shipments in those years.

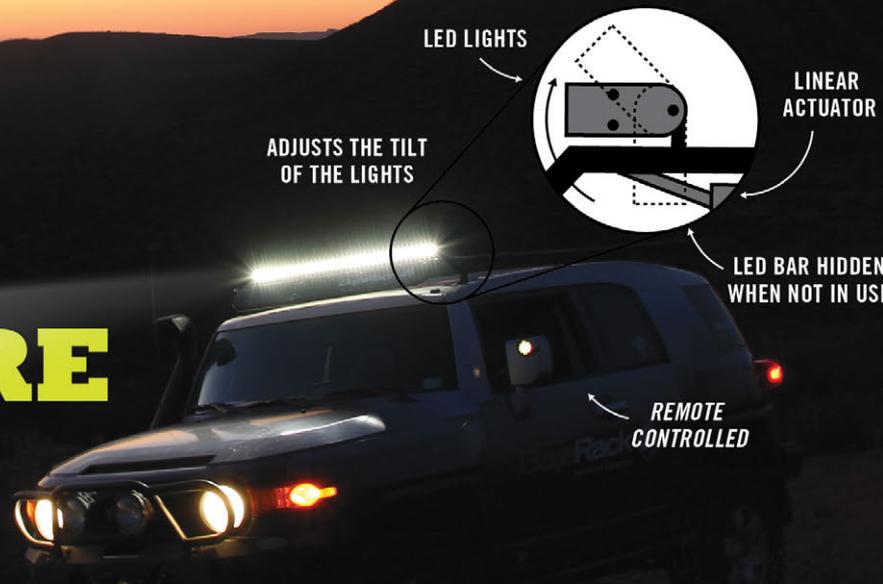
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**4
Runner**

Overland

Home on the Highway—Part 1

By Phillip Jones



James and Lauren at one of the many scenic sites found on their journey.

In 2011, James Hart and Lauren Neel took off from San Francisco and headed south of the border seeking adventure in their 1st generation 4Runner. TCT Magazine interviewed them about their fantastic journey. This is the first of a 2-part series.

Tell us about your 4Runner, what terrain you've encountered, and any breakdowns.

Our home is a 1987 Toyota 4Runner SR5 with the 4-cylinder 22RE and W56 manual transmission. The odometer shows 285K miles. It has seen a lot of crazy times. I bought the 4Runner from a 17 year-old high school kid who confessed to spending most of the time beating it up around the mountains of Northern California, and trying to jump off snowbanks.

It is equipped with 31x10.5x15 BFG A/T tires on basic steel rims. I upgraded the stock sagged-out leaf-spring suspension to an Old Man Emu 2.5-inch HD spring kit and shocks. I replaced the original motor with a newer rebuild before we left the States. My good friends from AnySeven Offroad Fabrication in San Leandro, CA did most of the install work and added sliders, bumper, and a custom rear-swing out for my water/fuel jerry cans. We pulled out the entire interior, and rear of the cockpit. We constructed a basic plywood platform for storage and threw in a cheap Ikea futon mattress for a bed.



The expedition 4Runner on the salt flat in Bolivia.



Keeping it light with a futon mattress and quick-setup kitchen.

We purposely seek out tough terrain. The PanAmerican highway is a decently paved route, you could drive from Alaska to Ushuaia, Argentina (the end of the road) in a VW Beetle if you wanted to (plenty of people have done so). We like taking the backroads, dirt tracks, and 4x4 routes.

We got stuck axle-deep in the Salt Flats in the middle of nowhere Peru, slid across frozen mountain tops of Colorado, and dug into the sugar sand beaches in Mexico. We once tried to drive up a volcano in Nicaragua via an old cattle-route, filled with giant boulders. About half-way up, we ran into a rancher running his cattle. He was wondering what in the hell these crazy Americans in a Toyota were up to. When we told him we wanted to drive to the top, he said it has never before been done, but he sure wanted to see us try. He climbed down off his horse and helped us pick the best lines. He even stacked stones for the climb!



Off-road terrain is plentiful in South America.

.....
I love this truck. It is lightweight and equipped with dependable Toyota 4WD.
.....

I love this truck. It is lightweight and equipped with dependable Toyota 4WD. We can go pretty much anywhere we want and if we get stuck, just get out the shovel and start digging. We are pretty good at self-extraction nowadays.



Getting out of sticky situations is all part of the adventure.



Weeks of frequent rain in the Misiones district of Argentina turned every unpaved road into a 4x4 adventure. This was supposed to be a quick trip to the mini-mart.

We have had a few breakdowns. Once climbing a mountain pass in Honduras the throttle cable gave out and broke in two, and the pedal went straight to the floor. We were in a construction zone and blocking the only lane of traffic. Impatient buses, cars, taxis, and construction equipment were piling up on both sides of the lane with our 4Runner stuck in the middle. We finally got it pushed out of the way and started troubleshooting. In Latin America, every male is a “mechanic” and they always wants to help you with your troubles. Soon, the entire construction site ensemble gathered around our truck offering suggestions.

When the foreman showed up, he assessed the situation and suggested we leave the truck and he would take us up into the next town where he thought we could find a cable. We jump into this

We drove away in awe of the sheer good-will and nature of this man.

In Latin America, every male is a “mechanic” and they always wants to help you with your troubles.

stranger’s pickup truck and rode in to town. The mechanic there didn’t have it, so we tried the next town, and the next after that. Eventually we realized we were going to need to go to the “big city” to find it. Problem was, the city was three hours away. We thanked the foreman for his help and asked if he could call us a taxi. He said “nonsense” and spent the entire day with us driving and hunting down a cable.

We were all working hard sweating our butts off searching everywhere in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, the Murder Capital of the world. Not the best place to be hanging around all day. At last we finally found one and all hugged and celebrated in the middle of the junkyard. By the end of the day when we were all fixed up, I went to pay the man for his time, gas, and trouble. He refused simply stating, “Today I help you, tomorrow you help someone else.” We drove away in awe of the sheer good-will and nature of this man. We encountered other helpful people like him time and time again in Latin America.



Replacing a fuel pump while in Peru.

When and where was this adventure initiated?

We started in November 2011 from San Francisco, CA. First, we traveled across the United States to Florida, then back to Texas into Mexico, down into Guatemala, all through Central America and into Panama. The PanAmerican highway runs all the way from Alaska to Argentina without interruption, it is one of the longest “contiguous” highways in the world, except for a small problem called the Darien



Gap, which is a 70-mile long strip of wild jungle and mountains that separates Central and South America. This is the area where Panama and Colombia connect. No road has ever been built here. It is home to drug runners, Colombian rebel fighting forces, jaguars, and all kinds of fun deadly reptiles. The only way around the gap is by sea. You have to load your truck into a shipping container at the port in Panama, put it on a giant cargo ship, cross your fingers, and hope it makes to the other side in Colombia. We got lucky and three weeks later, we had our truck back and were now in South America. From there we traveled south into Ecuador, Peru, Chile, and Argentina where we hit the end of the road sometime in early 2013. Once at the bottom of the continent, we did a little celebratory dance, popped some champagne, then turned around and started heading north.

Once at the bottom of the continent, we did a little celebratory dance, popped some champagne, then turned around and started heading north.



To get around the Darien Gap, the 4Runner was loaded into a shipping container in Panama.

What areas would you deem as your most memorable destinations and experiences?

We have seen so many incredible things on our trip, it is difficult to nail it down to “most memorable.” In Chile we traveled for days with our friends from Adventure Americas along a 4x4 route far up into a remote section of the Andes Mountains. We discovered a huge volcano-ringed lake, dotted with steaming hot springs and hundreds of pink flamingos. At 16,000 feet it was freezing cold and snowing, but we stripped down to underwear, busted out the wine, and had one of the greatest swims of our life in those hot springs. As the sun set it turned the valley into beautiful shades of pink/purple, it was a surreal experience taking it all in. The volcanos, the steam rising off the hot springs, all while pink flamingos flocked just a few yards away. Then the night sky turned into a blanket of stars, the Milky Way as bright as I have ever seen.

We enjoyed bobbing around on a 17-foot homemade “Panga” boat off the shore of Baja, Mexico while thousands of Grey whales and their new born babies roll, breach, and play around us. We watched as the sun was rising over the ancient Mayan ruins of Tikal surrounded by a sea of uninterrupted rainforest filled with the wild hoots of howler monkeys.

Then there was the thrill of hunting down a cheap engagement ring while my girlfriend shopped for groceries next door. We do not get much time apart, so it was a rush job! The even bigger thrill of asking her to marry me when we finally reached the end of the road in Tierra del Fuego, Patagonia. So what do you do when you find a beautiful lady who puts up with your crap, enjoys sitting three inches apart from you every day for 1.5 years, and accompanies you to the ends of the earth? Marry her of course!



Lauren shows off her engagement ring.

Sharing a meal, sharing a drink, sharing a story with the hundreds of friends we made along the way. There are so many memories and a lifetime of stories.

I had no idea how much I would fall in love with Huanchaco when we first arrived.



Scenic drive through the San Miguel de Tucuman area in Argentina.

There are so many memories and a lifetime of stories.



Camping in a desolate area.



An inviting unpaved road heading to the mountains.



What about Lauren's most memorable experiences/destinations?



This seems to be the question that I get asked most often, and yet I still find it to be the most difficult. My favorite part about traveling is that a quick trip to the store for a carton of milk can end up turning into the beginnings of an unforgettable adventure.

Of course getting engaged in Tierra del Fuego immediately pops into my head. I was not expecting it at all. I remember asking almost immediately after I said yes "When the hell did you have time to get a ring!?" I'm always amazed at the things that man is capable of pulling off.

The time that we spent living in Peru was a really special part of the trip for me. When we reached Peru, we had run out of money and faced the reality that we were going to have to go back to the US, or figure out how to make it work where we were. We found a cheap apartment right on the beach and found some online jobs. I had no idea how much I would fall in love with Huanchaco when we first arrived. It is a small beach town with out-of-this-world seafood, and some of the best sunsets I have ever seen. We were lucky enough to experience what it was like living the way the locals do. We worked, we went to the beach, we shopped at the local market, we had dinner parties, we danced the night away at the local watering hole, and we even got a cat. Not only did we make enough money to continue our trip, we also made lifelong friendships with some of the most amazing people I have had the pleasure of knowing.

More about this adventure can be found in the next issue of TCT Magazine. 

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Chasing Baja

By Adam Tolman



Drivers and chase crew for Canguro Racing thrilled with a 2nd Place finish in the Stock Full class celebrate atop the finish line platform in La Paz, Mexico.

“Canguro Race, this is Chase 1, do you copy? If you copy, key your mic twice.” ... Silence ... “Canguro Race, this is Chase 1, if you copy key your mic twice.” ... Click ... click ... “Chase 1 copies. Canguro Race click your mic for your distance from pit location.” ... Click ... Click ... Click ... “Chase 1 copies, three miles out. Click mic twice to confirm.” ... Click ... click ... The radio in the race car has a problem and cannot transmit out for the chase crew to hear so we have resorted to questions, and responses using a series of clicks.



Marc Van Tassell and Kurt Williams airing out the Land Cruiser over the Coca-Cola jump just a couple miles into the race in Ensenada, Mexico.

And it begins, the entire pit crew will be a flurry of action in a few minutes as the Canguro Racing car 8155 comes flying into the pit location for a full check of the race vehicle, a full refuel, and a driver swap. Everyone has an assignment and if we do it correctly the stop will last no more than a couple minutes before the race truck will be off again tearing into the night amidst a choking cloud of silt and blinding LED lights. This is not your typical “overland” style trip, but in reality it meets just about all the criteria. This is a 36 hour slog covering more than 1200 miles down the Baja California peninsula from Ensenada to La Paz, Mexico. We’ve got food (albeit gas station snacks), extra fuel, and camping gear. Heck, we’ve even got the requisite ARB fridge and a couple of Roof Top Tents. This is the Baja 1000 and once the race starts it’s a marathon of sleep deprivation, street tacos, dirt, and a lot of fun.

phones in cases of emergency or if they need to contact the web racers from somewhere without cell service.



Dave Connors giving some last minute instructions and checking all the safety and radio equipment for the navigator during a late night pit stop somewhere early in the race.



The Canguro Racing team enjoying the long line of race vehicles making their way through the party-like atmosphere of contingency in Ensenada the day before the race.

Canguro Racing is a team of friends who are all Land Cruiser fanatics, who also have a substantial amount of overland travel experience in several countries across several continents. For the 2014 Baja 1000 the chase crew is made up of six chase vehicles, all Toyotas except for one Chevy Duramax that’s pulling the trailer for the Race vehicle. Each vehicle has anywhere from two to four occupants who will assist at pit stops with anything from checking lug nuts and refueling to checking GoPros or anything else that arises. Each chase vehicle is equipped with a HAM radio to stay in radio contact with other chase vehicles as well as the race truck. The team also has three members called “web racers” who monitor the race from home with their computers using the GPS tracking system that is present on every race vehicle. This system sends out periodic updates from the race vehicle with the race mile and speed the vehicle is travelling. The web racers then forward that information to the chase teams via e-mail or text. These updates are vital to the chase team, especially when the race truck is in areas of the course with no radio contact. These updates are sometimes the only way to know if the vehicle or the drivers are in trouble. Both the racers and the chase team also employ the use of satellite



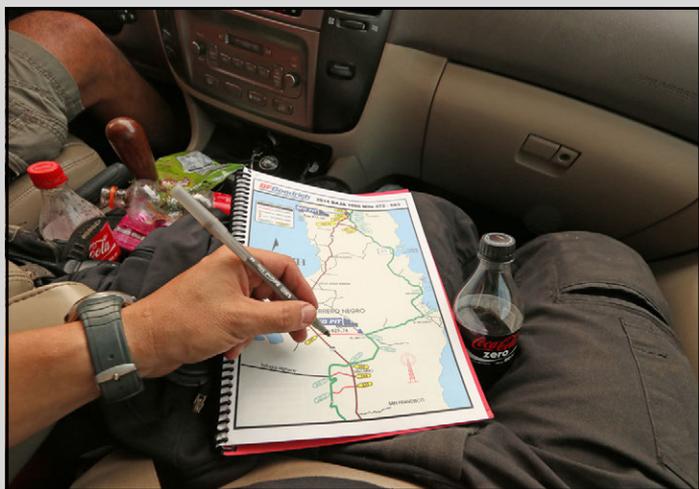
Dump cans make it possible to get 35+ gallons of fuel into the race truck in under 2 minutes.

The chase plan is created by team logistics master, Dave Connors, and has several different pit assignments for each chase vehicle/team through the duration of the

race. The chase vehicles will leapfrog each other down the peninsula to handle all the vehicle check-ins, refueling, driver changes, and monitoring radio communications with the race vehicle. The team met together in a basement conference room at Hotel Cortez in Ensenada the night before the race to go over all the details. Dave reviews the entire chase plan with the team so that everyone knows where they need to be and when. Any loose ends get tied up and any last minute changes are noted in a chase book. There is a chase book in every vehicle that includes route maps, pit locations, mileages, and timed distances along the race course as well as maps of the highways down the peninsula. Once everyone is clear on assignments the team struggles to get some sleep amidst the excitement that feels like Christmas morning leading up to the race start the next day.



Kurt Williams, Bryson Tsujimoto, Jason Goates and Daniel Markovsky, all members of Chase Vehicle 3 double check their notes and assignments during the pre-race meeting at Hotel Cortez in Ensenada the night before the race.



The chase crews are regularly checking the chase books provided by BFGoodrich. The red line and yellow arrows are the highway routes and mileages for the chase teams, and the green line with green arrows marks the race course and mileages for the race vehicle. These notes help the chase team make sure they are on schedule to be at each pit assignment.

The other thing many people don't realize about the Baja 1000 during a peninsula run is the sheer distance

each chase team has to cover between assignments. For example, one chase team will set up at a pit location and have a five minute stop when the race vehicle comes to the pit. Then they are back in the chase truck for a four hour drive covering 300 miles just to get to their next assignment where they have another five minute stop, only to hop back into the chase truck for another five hour drive to another assignment. This year's Baja 1000 covered over 1200 race miles. That is roughly the equivalent of driving from Vancouver, British Columbia to Los Angeles, California and driving that as quickly as possible over surprisingly rough terrain. The chase crews don't have to cross the same rough terrain, but they do cover a similar distance; once the race is done, they load up and drive it all over again to get back home.



Chase Vehicle 2 with Adam Tolman, Ryan Nakaya and Matt Russell makes a much needed stop for some fantastic roadside tacos between pit assignments in the beautiful coastal town of Santa Rosalia.



A pit stop at Guerrero Negro. In addition to refueling, and checking tires and suspension, the air cleaner located inside the truck had to be swapped out here since it had been clogged with silt.

It's an impressive amount of preparation and coordination that is hard to fathom unless you've been part of a race team at an event like the Baja 1000. All of this preparation is what can make the race a success or a failure. Just like any overland travel, there has to be a plan and a goal. The

vehicles need to be prepped to ensure they are in top condition; everyone in the group needs to understand the plan and know their role. Like any adventure there are factors beyond your control, but proper planning can help to manage all the things that are within your control, and hopefully avoid those things that are out of your control.

For the Canguro Racing team, even though it's a race and the team tries to be competitive, the primary goal is still to have fun. "If we're not having fun, we're doing it wrong." Overland trips should have the same philosophy. Set your goal, make your plan, get out there, and most importantly, HAVE FUN. 🇺🇸



Chase Vehicles 1, 2 and 4 break camp under blue skies somewhere near Loreto on the Baja Peninsula on the way home from the race. Roof top tents are a new addition to the chase vehicles and helped the drivers and chases stay rested during the grueling 35 hour race.



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EXPEDITIONS 7:

An Interview with Greg Miller

Part 2

By Shane Williams
All photos courtesy of Expeditions 7



In part 1 of this interview we learned about how Expeditions 7 was formed, and some of the challenges the team faced during the 58,000 plus mile journey. We continue the interview with anecdotes of exciting moments, and really what the trip meant to Greg and the entire team, and future plans for the Expeditions 7 rigs.



TCT Magazine: What was the most exciting or scariest moment, or a couple of your favorites since I'm sure there are so many?

Greg Miller: One of the most memorable moments came on the Skeleton Coast. We had crossed the Namib Desert, in Namibia of course, and we'd pitched camp about one kilometer from the shore. It was all sand dunes, very little vegetation, so we had setup camp in this little niche out of a sand dune. There was a full moon that night, and I told the guys I was going to go for a little walk. I started walking toward the ocean and I thought for sure when I got there I'd see some lights. We could probably see 20 miles of coastline if I looked all the way north and all the way south, and who knows how far into the ocean I could see. There was not a single light to be seen anywhere, other than the moon, which was so bright I could see color. I just stood there for 30 minutes and tried to drink that moment in. There was this constant roar of waves crashing, kind of a dull roar. By the way, the water was about 600 feet below us, and there was this huge slipface dune that went down to the water. The waves were lapping up against the face of that dune. I couldn't see camp since it was behind another dune. I was standing on this virgin sand dune, with a full moon bearing down on me. It was just this incredibly emotional moment. The solitude, the remoteness, it was probably the high point for me.

I think reaching the Ross Ice Shelf in Antarctica was very emotional for me, just because of the effort required to get there. The amount of planning, the physical effort to drive the vehicles—of course it came at a very high

cost—but to actually realize the goal of traversing Antarctica was something I'll never forget.



Another highlight for me was when we made it back into the US from Mexico, and we had our pickups with gooseneck trailers staged to ensure we were compliant with US laws to get the vehicles back. I wasn't expecting it, but when I drove my 78 onto the trailer, I realized that was literally the end of the road. The adventure was over for that vehicle. When I turned the engine off there was a sense of finality, and it was a very emotional moment because of that finality. We were done. We were safe. The vehicles made it back relatively unharmed. We were now going to be able to travel on interstates at 75–80 mph, and of course the fact that we were going to be home and with our families again. On the other hand, there was this sense; it was almost like the death of a loved one, because that particular vehicle, the 78, that I had driven on all seven continents was going to be retired forever. As long as I own that vehicle (and I have no plans to sell it) it will never see another mile of adventure. Partly because it's illegal in the US, but partly because there's so much adventure equity built into it. If something happened to it, where am I going to get a vehicle that's been on all seven continents? So it was a very intense, emotional moment for me.



TCT: Just hearing you tell that story really brings the gravity of that truck to light: It really is a museum piece: THE Land Cruiser that's been on all seven continents.

So do you have plans for the other Cruisers then?

GM: Possibly. There are still a lot of adventures that I'd like to have. I've got the 76 and the 79, they're super cool expedition rigs and they're both perfectly outfitted for more adventure. I would say there's a fairly high likelihood that at some point in the future I'll ship those trucks overseas and do another adventure or two in them.



TCT: Cool, but nothing specific in the plans yet?

GM: Nothing specific, but one example related to Expeditions 7: we started in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska and came to Salt Lake City, then we also went from Ushuaia back to Salt Lake City. So we've covered the entire Pan American Highway. I've also been able to travel all the way across Antarctica and back, and I've been from Nordkapp, Norway (as far north as you can drive on a road) all the way down to Prague in the Czech Republic. So if I drove from Prague to Cape Town (South Africa), I'd have the entire circumnavigation longitudinally around the world, and I don't know how many have done that. Another aspect of that, which is a real long shot right now—I'm entertaining the possibility of a geographic North Pole bid. I have the Hilux that we took to the South Pole, and I think that'd be the perfect truck to take to the North Pole. I've met a couple of guys that think they could get me to the North Pole and back safely, in spite of concerns about soft ice. So those are a couple examples of what might happen in the future, but right now it's just talk.

GM: I can give you three that I love: 1) My Nemo mattress pad, 2) Triple Aught Shell, and 3) Sure Fire head lamp.



TCT: Well, every good trip starts with a little bit of talk.

So obviously you carried a ton of gear with you, is there anything that stands out as the most important piece of kit that you had. Anything you couldn't live without? (Other than the Land Cruiser, of course)

TCT: Did you carry any kind of pocket knives or something along those lines?

GM: We all carried a leatherman or pocket tool. Of course we had a couple of machetes, but never had to use them for defense.

TCT: I just wonder, since when I do any kind of trip I like to be really well equipped, but when I start thinking about border crossings I think: what can I afford to lose, what are they going to decide to confiscate.

Is there anything you think you would do differently from a planning perspective or a route perspective?



GM: From a planning perspective, I think we got it right. One thing I would change is that I'd have a scanner with me along with a printer, so I could effectively have my own copy machine at all border crossings. That would have saved a lot of aggravation. I would also have put greater emphasis on the culinary aspect of the trip. Scott Brady (my partner on the expedition) is a machine when it comes to food. He can go weeks, perhaps months without eating. And when he does eat, he can eat out of a box, bag, can or cellophane wrapper. For me, the way my body works, I need to have nutrition, and I can't just eat Clif Bars forever. We didn't really come around to that. There were so many moving parts that we didn't really focus on culinary aspects until we got to Africa. My son Josh kind of took the reins from that standpoint and I hoped to be able to have some really neat dinners coming up through South America. I wanted a nice table, linen tablecloths, and I actually bought a couple of old kerosene lanterns so we could have kind of an iconic safari dinner. But it just never worked out. We were traveling too fast. There were too many deadlines. We kind of missed the culinary mark, and I do miss that about the trip. I think that would have lent a lot to the overall experience. So I'd definitely do that different next time.

As far as the route or timing, they were both pretty much right on. I think the route was right on for this project. We were a little late in South America and that was the result of some delays we had when I bought the 76 in South Africa and getting the paperwork handled. And the export was delayed. I would have rather done South America 45 or 60 days earlier, but that's not that big of deal.



TCT: It's interesting when we think about overlanding, people really want to focus on enjoying the countries. They'll spend years on a South America trek and they'll spend a lot of time really absorbing everything. Obviously that wasn't the focus of E7, so other than culinary points, do you have any regrets not being able to spend more time in any of the areas?



GM: I can answer that both ways, yes and no. Yes, because we were moving very quickly and we weren't able to really slow down and immerse ourselves in the culture as much as we would have liked. However, I'd say no because we were able to see a lot of this planet, given the amount of time we had to travel. So in my case, it really just whetted my appetite and gave me a sampler of places I want to go back and see (and there are many). Had we decided to just spend the

3–4 week window in a particular location, we would obviously have a better feel for that location, but we would have missed out on so much. There are those that have criticized us because we moved so quickly, but I'd say to them "you do it your way, we'll do it ours." I wouldn't call it a regret, while I do wish we could have spent more time in those places, when I look at the experience in total, I don't think I would've changed it.



TCT: Your family rotated through a lot of the different legs, it really seems like that was one of the main points of doing this journey was spending time with your family in these situations, and just exploring. Do you feel that was a positive as you hoped it would be? Or maybe even more so?

GM: I think it exceeded my expectations. I was able to have my wife (Heidi) join me for most of Europe and some of Africa and some of South America, which was great for me to spend that time with her. I had all three of my daughters participate in various segments, and most of that was one-on-one time. And then all of my sons and my sons-in-law were able to participate as well. One of the coolest things to me was that my youngest son, Oakley, was able to stand with me on all seven continents.

TCT: That's really amazing, our kids are 16 months and 4-years-old, so we're just in the beginning of that part of our adventure. Every time I see trips like this, and for us the entire idea of overlanding is about showing our

children as much as we possibly can. Was the entire family ever there all at once?



GM: There was one point where they were, in South America. I had all of my kids and their spouses (I have three married children), and one of my grandkids was there as well.

TCT: I think that covers all the questions I had, do you have any other thoughts or stories about Expeditions 7 that we haven't covered? Anything you really want to make sure our readers are aware of?

GM: While not everyone can do an expedition on the scale of Expeditions 7, my sincere hope is that our adventure will inspire others to do a trip like this within their own sphere. Something like a trip to Yellowstone can be amazing. Set aside excuses, quit talking about it, and go. Get in your car, bring family and friends, and "Go as big as your means will allow." I really hope to inspire people to embrace that thought.



TCT: I think you come across as someone who's truly interested in exploring and adventure, and I remember when I saw you speak last year, your story about going out with your dad when you guys lived in Colorado, in a Land Cruiser. To me, that's the key for this, but instead of enjoying time together watching TV, enjoy time together headed down the trail.

GM: To that point, one of the things that came into focus for me very clearly during E7, is that vehicles are the best mechanism I know for building friendships and relationships. You just referred to a moment with me that was great with my dad, in a 55, and others in Mustangs and Cobras. Those moments that were centered around a car were very memorable and poignant moments. I look back on how true that is with my friends in high school, and college years, and now the experiences I've had with my kids in Land Cruisers and other cars, and what it's done to strengthen our bonds. That, to me, is the magic of cars, and the magic of having experiences that cars provide.



TCT: It's that bonding experience that can really bring us together. I'm very inspired Greg and thank you so much for your time. It has been great talking to you and I look forward to hearing more about these adventures in the future.

To learn more about Expeditions 7, see more photos and videos at www.expeditions7.com



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80 Series Horn Repair

By Daniel Markofsky

Your 80 series Land Cruiser is old—17 to 21 years with 200,000 to 300,000 miles (or more). While it may not yet be a classic like an FJ40 or FJ55, it also has many more systems. It's amazing how long these systems last, but parts wear out.

In addition to bearings, inner axles, and spindles, I've replaced door gaskets, suspension bushings, door switches, and the fuel door spring. I have adjusted the hood bumpers, replaced hood and liftgate struts, and even an entire liftgate that was starting to rust. These repairs keep your rig in tiptop shape and eliminate the kind of neglect that leads you to miss larger problems.

Recently, I tackled a problem with multiple systems impacts. This may not be as big an issue for you. You may live in a place where people forget their Cruiser even has this feature. No, it's not the locker. It's the horn.

Like most people, I have a past. I live in Denver now. Denver is a fairly easy place to drive and people are generally polite drivers. But I grew up in Queens, New York—the city, The Big Apple. Proper use of the horn was a required part of driver's ed.

The horn stopped working in the most unlikely place, in the middle of the 10th annual Outlaws Run, in remote northern New Mexico. I must have had a good reason to sound the horn in a place so remote. I pressed, and nothing happened.

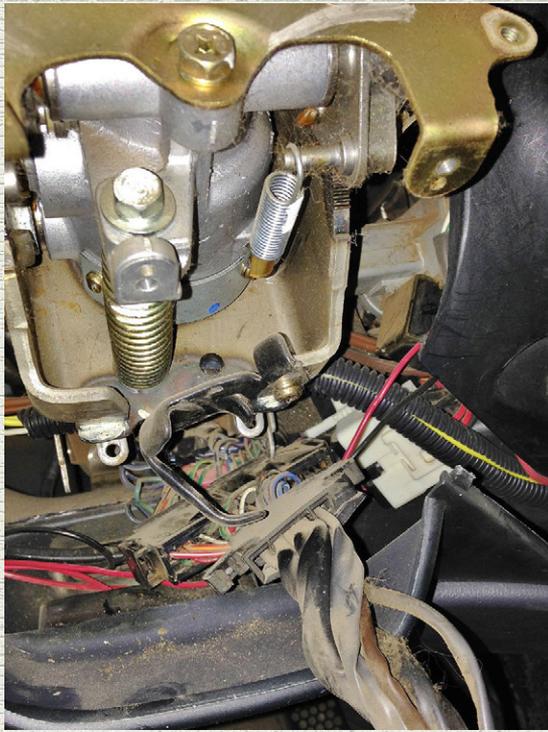
Upon returning to Denver I searched ih8mud.com and found the fault was most likely a worn contact in the steering column. Mounted to the fixed part of the column is a part called a "horn plate" (PN 84312-12040, list price \$9.25 from Dan "CDan" Bussey, parts manager at American Toyota in Albuquerque, New Mexico). Every time the steering wheel moves, it rubs the horn plate against a contact ring. It's amazing it lasted so long. It turns out that failure has nothing to do with use.



Parts.

By the looks of it, it's a pin and not at all a plate, but Toyota calls it a Horn Plate. At under \$10 it was an easy choice to buy one. Another option would be to replace the entire steering column switch assembly (known as the Combination Switch) at a cost closer to \$200. For that you would get all new steering stalks (turn, headlights, cruise, etc.) I opted for just the pin, figuring that if I needed more, I'd only be out \$15 and some time. It was the right call for me.

The first step in the job is removing the center cover to the steering wheel, known as the "wheel pad." I have a 1993 Land Cruiser which does not have airbags. If you have airbags, determine the proper procedure for your vehicle. The wheel pad is held in place by one screw located on the back at approximately 6 o'clock. I then used needle nose pliers to gently push the clips that are found at ten and two. This frees the wheel pad, but don't remove it all the way yet. Lift the wheel pad until you can see and remove the horn contact wire. It is a quarter inch spade connector. Mine slid right off.



Underside wires to free.

Removal of the wheel pad reveals a 19mm nut holding the steering wheel to the steering shaft. Loosen the nut but do not remove it all the way. Note, and perhaps mark, the position of the steering wheel as you want to reinstall it in the same position. (My steering wheel was turned slightly and this allowed me to reinstall it straight.) By holding the steering wheel at three and 9 o'clock and gently rocking back and forth, it should release. If not, you need a steering wheel puller.

When you remove the steering wheel you will see the "horn plate" (pin) at approximately 11 o'clock.



Condition on wheel removal 3 (screwdriver at pin).

Next remove the steering column cover "clamshell" that surrounds the switch mechanism. There are two screws that hold the lower half of the clamshell to the upper half and three screws that hold the lower half of the clamshell to the steering switch assembly. All are found on the underside of the clamshell and all need to be removed. Once the screws are removed you may need to adjust the tilt steering to make removal of the top half easier. The lower section may take a little manipulating around the cruise control stalk.

Next remove four screws that hold the Combination Switch assembly to a backing plate. At this stage if you are just replacing the horn plate you may be able to slide the switch assembly forward enough that you can get behind it and remove the wire and replace the pin. Some models have a circlip holding the pin from coming too far forward and you need to access this circlip from the backside of the switch. My 93 either didn't have or never had the circlip. There was just a wire clip to the end of the pin which kept the pin from coming out too far. However I loosened up the wiring harness underneath the steering column so that I could slide the switch assembly completely off of the shaft for easier cleaning and inspection. This made it very easy to see that there was no circlip, remove the wire, and install the new pin, which I did not do until after I completed cleaning.



Backing plate.

My old pin was worn about a quarter inch shorter than the new one.



New and old pin.

The switch assembly was filthy. But I was more impressed in what good shape it was in. After wiping away old grease and dirt using a combination of rags and Q-tips, a visual inspection showed the detent ball that cancels the turn signal had worn a groove in its travel path. The contact ring on the back of the steering wheel on which the steering plate rides (if anything this part should be called a steering plate) did not show any signs of wear. Cleaned and greased, the Combination Switch should continue to function a very long time.



Turn canceling worn groove.



Backside of switch.

Next I pulled off the center plastic ring/collar which contains the turn signal cancelling mechanism. Note the position of this ring before removal. The ring has three protruding nubs (12, 5 and 7 o'clock) that fit into corresponding spots in the back of the steering wheel. I decided to remove this ring as it was heavily contaminated with brass specks from the steering plate. It was also rough when rotated. To remove the center ring use a screwdriver to gently pry the turn signal canceling bar out of the way (rotate the ring and you'll see the bar move) and pull the center ring towards you. There is a spring behind the center ring but it stays put when you pull the ring off. I thoroughly cleaned the ring and the spring with soap and water and used a Q-tip to remove as much dirty grease as possible from inside the switch.



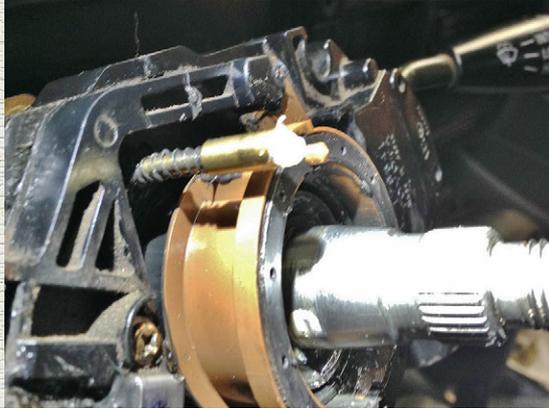
Cleaned, reassembled, greased (pin top center left).

Reassembly is the reverse of disassembly. Grease all the contact parts. I greased the places the ring was rubbing. Now it's smooth. A long thin grease nozzle that came with some bicycle parts years ago was handy for squirting a grease into all the small areas. Not necessary, but I removed the headlight switch arm which contains the high-beam switch. If you remove the headlight switch arm, do not lose the small detent ball at the end of the shaft.



Clean ring on back of wheel.

Before I put the steering wheel back on, I lightly coated the horn contact ring with di-electric grease and put di-electric grease in the hollowed recess on the tip of the new pin, and a dab at the end.



Di-electric grease on pin.

All that remains is to reattach the steering wheel. Check that the nubs on the turn signal canceling ring are in the proper position to align with the steering wheel. Once you have put the steering wheel back on the shaft I recommend you install the nut finger tight and then cycle the steering wheel and turn signals in both directions to make sure the canceling feature is working properly. Torque the nut holding the steering wheel to the column as specified in the factory service manual.

As a bonus, the steering is now silky smooth, free of that formerly present light scraping feel.

Now go honk. That's the only way to know it's working. 🚗



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f/10 1/200s 46mm



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f/8 1/500s 18mm





Spring Mountain, NV | Phillip Jones



Preparation

Getting Ready to Hit the Road

By Addison Rickaby



With the clock counting down to my May 5th departure date, my vehicle preparations were starting to line up. Pieces of the puzzle were found and installed and the bigger picture was starting to look like something recognizable. I purchased my Lexus LX450 in May of 2013 and stripped the already built truck down to its bones and reinvented the wheel with my own rendition. A vision of the ultimate trip was born in my mind with the goal of completing a massive 3000+ mile trip into the US before returning home to Canada and continuing with local adventures. This trip had been in the works for the past 8 months. We had strategically navigated our route from Lethbridge Alberta, Canada south to the promised land of Moab and beyond—a spider web of blue lines viewed in virtual topography. My work scrambles me between the office and field work locations. As much as I wish I could predict when I will be where, it just doesn't happen. I fly by the seat of my pants, often with 12 hours or less of notice before being required on some remote location. It just so happens that the months of March through June is the slow season in the oil industry in Canada due to the spring thaw. I had planned my trip specifically for this time of year to impose the least amount of intrusion on my superiors' goals and enable me to be granted the time off for such an epic adventure.



Again, my preparations were going well—new rear bumper built and powder-coated, sleeping platform 95% done, new slotted/drilled rotors and brake pads, stainless lines, all new fluids in the diffs, tranny, motor, T-Case, brakes, and coolant. However, despite my best effort I still had a few odds and ends to wrap up before I could depart. No problem, that’s what the weekend is for—until I walk into the office on May 1st to find that I’m to leave for North Dakota to drill a well with a new prototype tool we had been developing. I needed to hit the road an hour ago. Panic mode ensues and before I’m thinking of what things need to be packed into my Tundra to haul to work, I’m thinking of the “to-do list” of mods/maintenance that need to be completed before the Lexus will even roll out of my driveway under it’s own power on May 5th. I scramble, but manage to get my truck booked into my local Toyota Master Tech to have a few of the last minute maintenance items completed while I’m away at work, leaving the truck ready for some abuse upon my return.

On May 3rd I land back in Alberta around midnight. I go to bed with my main focus for the next day being to wrap up any outstanding mods and begin packing the truck for its long journey. A newly completed truck with zero tested trail runs, what could possibly go wrong? 7 a.m. and my cell phone is preaching a chorus that despite its melodic tone, annoys the hell out of me. I snooze a couple times but am awake at a reasonable hour and immediately head out to the garage to fight the rainfall and less than ideal temperatures. Progress is slow, my hands are numb from the cold, and my 80 doesn’t fit in my garage so I’m working in the rain. I get the sleeping platform wrapped up, the ARB fridge installed, fix an issue with my stereo, and get the ARB twins ready to dish out 35 psi of compressed air to the four Kevlars on the daily. I’m feeling good but I still need to get my exhaust re-worked in the morning (the 5th—aka departure day) and pack the truck. I have it at the exhaust shop the next day as early as possible in hopes of having it back in my hands before noon. That doesn’t happen and I’m rolling back into my driveway at 3 p.m., or 11:59 metaphorically speaking.

I’m scheduled to meet my father in Butte Montana at around 8 p.m. He’s traveling from Nelson BC and would be meeting up with me in Butte with another member of our company meeting us in Moab on the 6th. I recruited

my father for the journey as I had also been consulting the build of his '01 Tacoma over the past year. He sold his ATV and wanted something more comfortable that would keep him out of the elements and his mint Tacoma fit the bill. Without any 4x4 trail experience I was somewhat tentative to bring him on a

trek of this nature. However, my research dictated that Moab was full of bypasses which my father could take if anything was over his comfort level, so I digress. The third member of our group is a local Albertan who I have been 4x4ing with for the last 4-5 years. A great guy who leaves little to chance, and is never left unprepared. With a small group of three, we figured we would be quite flexible and have the ability to change our plans without issue should the need arise. Something that would pay dividends, as we would find out.



3:01 p.m.—I haven't even loaded the truck full of it's precious cargo. Hell, I just got the truck in my possession and I was supposed to be on the road an hour ago, headed for red earth and warmer skies. I load the truck with more haste than a well-prepared overlander ever should, placing my Rubber Maid bins like Tetris blocks in the back of the now seatless rear 80 Series. Packed, loaded, and probably forgetting something I kiss my fiancé goodbye and fire the thirsty inline 6 to life. Moab, here I come ready or not.

I enjoy driving a lot. There is something about the open road and the peacefulness that it can bring. I truly believe that the journey is most of the adventure and as much as I'm excited to chirp rubber on those red rocks, I'm just as stoked to be in the driver's seat, headed for new and unfamiliar terrain. It's pouring rain as I leave Alberta headed for the border. The sun is getting low as the day comes to a close and the final remnants of condensations emit a tragic display of gray cloud emitted by the sun's final rays as I pass through the US/Canada border. My Father texts me at 9 p.m. and says he's at our hotel in Butte, unfortunately I





my fatigue rule my anger and head to bed, letting the Sears Diehard control the flow of electrons until the morning.

Morning brings a weathered tow truck driver to my rescue. He's got the state of the art 80-series unlocked in minutes. We've got a LONG day of driving to get from Butte, MT to Moab, UT so we split with haste.

My awesome iPod playlist is fully prepared and ready to sing songs from Rage Against the Machine to Fleetwood Mac. However, I find my father's company

just crossed the border and am still a few hours out. A couple of Red Bulls later and I roll into the hotel parking lot at 1 a.m. In a half daze I grab my shaving bag and a fresh set of clothes for tomorrow. As I close the door to head to the room, I realize I just locked my keys in the Cruiser and left the map light on. Furious, I let

more compelling, and the only thing singing is the FRS radios as we chat back and forth for hours on end. This conversation is one of the most important parts of our adventure. Not only bringing us closer together as friends but preparing us for some of the adversity we will come to face. 📻



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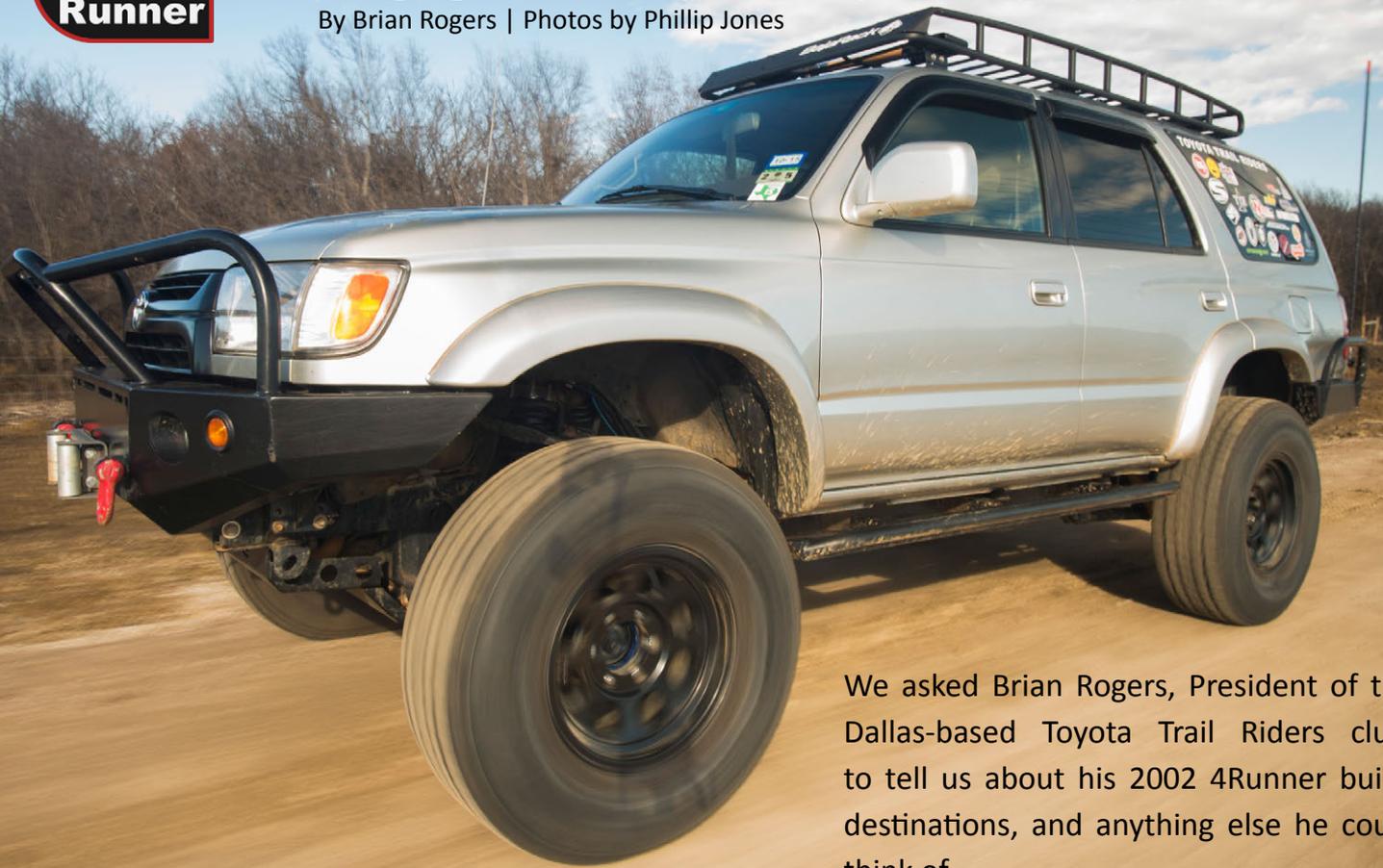
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OUTFIT FOR ADVENTURE



2002 4Runner Build

By Brian Rogers | Photos by Phillip Jones



We asked Brian Rogers, President of the Dallas-based Toyota Trail Riders club, to tell us about his 2002 4Runner build, destinations, and anything else he could think of...





Brian built his 4Runner for serious off-roading.

Getting involved with the Toyota Trail Riders is what ignited my passion. I have always been an outdoor enthusiast, but after meeting this group, it totally changed my direction. My first modification was a lift so I could try out off-roading. After one trip out to the local trails with this club, I was hooked. I continued to evolve my truck into a more capable rig, with the notion of being out in the wilderness multiple evenings.

For armor, I installed rock sliders and a full hoop front bumper, both of which were made by Outdoor Logic. An Iron Man 9500 winch sits inside the front bumper, and I use Mag Light clamps for attaching my front license plate to the fairlead rollers. I recently added a CBI rear bumper with swing-out tire carrier, a foldout table, and protection bars on each side. I went with a Savage front engine skid, and plan to add a transfer skid in the near future.

The 4Runner sits on OME struts paired with 882's on the front and 891's on the rear. I pulled the front sway bar off. Added the ToyTec adjustable LCA's to the rear. Recently I added a 1.5-inch 4Crawler body lift. The rear differential is re-gearred with Nitro 4.88 gears. Front and rear are equipped with ARB Air Lockers.



The well-organized switch panel allows Brian easy access for all of his electrical components.



Brian used Mag Light clamps as a means for attaching his front license plate to the fairlead rollers.

For rear illumination, I wired in lights attached to the backside of the Baja roof rack. I also added some Vision-X rock lights with the Ricochet Off-road light brackets for the kit. Inside, I installed a center rocker panel switch, Alpine head unit, homemade aluminum rear deck plate with a 50 qt. ARB fridge on a slide that is wired directly to the battery.

I'm a regular at Barnwell Mountain Recreation Area (BMRA). If you don't know where that is, then join us for our annual Lone Star Toyota Jamboree and you'll get to experience a very nice off-road park. I have ventured into super lift park in Arkansas, wheeled all over northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. Future destinations on my list are an expedition trip to Big Bend National Park, as well as Summit in Ouray, CO.

I really like this 4Runner and have no regrets. The size of the truck is one of the features I like the best. It is a little tight on long trips, but on the trails I love it. The width and the wheelbase, along with the lockers and gearing, make it a blast for off-roading. 🇺🇸



This CBI rear bumper includes a drop-down table and swingout tire carrier.



The Outdoor Logic front bumper provides more than adequate front-end protection.

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Ironman Foam Cell First Look

By Kyle Renzelman



Ironman 4x4 has been touting their new Foam Cell Pro shocks for some time and Excop Offroad was the first in the US to get our hands on them to put them through their paces to see if they will live up to the hype.

The Ironman 4x4 Foam Cell Pro shocks are designed to meet punishing demands of the outback while delivering a comfortable on-road ride. Extensive research and development by the

Ironman 4x4 team went into making this new line the strongest shocks for the money. Instead of Nitrogen gas charged shocks, Ironman has replaced the Nitrogen with a foam cell product that is designed to provide a more consistent and predictive ride quality.

The Foam Cell Pro shocks are the largest offering in the Ironman portfolio. The shock bodies are 65mm in the front and 72mm in the rear. Convert those to US and we're talking 2.5 in+ diameter shocks. This means they more efficiently dissipate heat caused by suspension articulation and are big enough to cope with the stresses a 4x4 vehicle endures, on road or off road.



Even though these are 2.5s, you don't necessarily need new upper control arms. They are designed to work with your stock arms.

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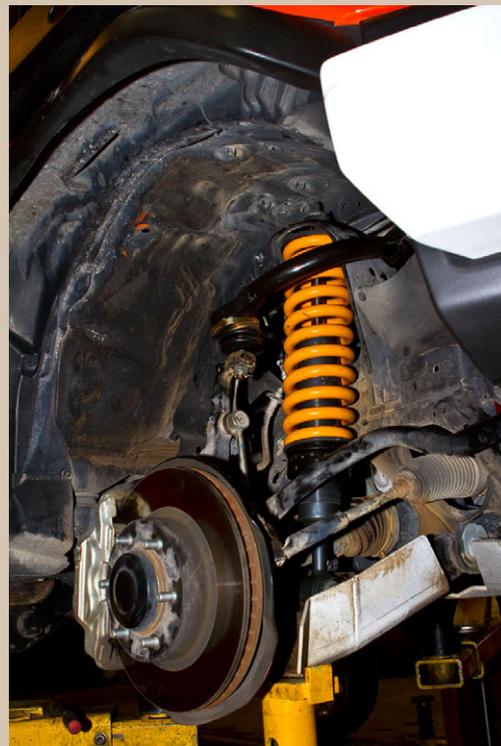
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Clear, concise, backroad guidebooks for adventurous SUV owners, serious four-wheelers and OHV riders. All books include detailed directions, a custom map for each trail including GPS waypoints, information on how to get there along with detailed ratings on trail difficulty, and hundreds of photographs to view. FunTreks is now offering data cards with trail information including Topo maps to help keep you on the right trail. 100 FREE trails available for your smart phones and mobile devices. Call 1-877-222-7623 or visit www.funtreks.com for more information.

Only if you bump up to the optional Extended Travel coilover will you need to upgrade the upper control arms—which can be added to the package from Ironman. The coilovers are adjustable giving you the ability to go from stock height to 3 inches of lift and anywhere in between.

At Excop Offroad, we have extensively tested these shocks on an FJ Cruiser in the tough desert conditions around Las Vegas. The shocks performed flawlessly. We even ran part of the Mint 400 track at high speeds and were met with a smooth—dare we say, comfortable ride. During our tests, there was no fading in dampening. The finale of our test was to jump the FJ. Landing was soft and composed.

On the street, we were surprised by the comfort of the ride. It was about as close to OEM as we could hope for. We tested the shocks both with and without the front sway bar. Even with the swaybar



removed there was little body roll in turns. Off road prowess and on-road manners make this suspension among the best bangs for your buck.

Pricing on a full kit for the FJ starts at \$1,279. That is a couple hundred higher than Ironman's entry level Nitro-gas kit, but not nearly as much as comparable, adjustable 2.5 coilover kits from the competitors.

Ironman 4x4 clearly stands behind this product—offering a 3 year/60,000km(37,282mi) warranty. Combine the warranty with the fact that the shocks are rebuildable and the Foam Cell Pros will definitely have a long life under your truck.

Nothing we have tested before has shown to be a better dual purpose suspension system than the Ironman Foam Cell Pro. FJ Cruiser kits are available now at www.ExcopOffroad.com. 🇺🇸



Nothing we have tested before has shown to be a better dual purpose suspension system than the Ironman Foam Cell Pro.

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Addicted Offroad

Bed Rack Reflections

By Bob Holliday



As Thanksgiving came and went, so did the one year mark of the first adventures with my Addicted Offroad bed rack on my 2006 Toyota Tacoma. The bed rack has been an important member to the transformation that has led me to more exploration style trips and ability to push our limits in the overlanding lifestyle.



First test for the bed rack came on an overnight trip over Weston Pass over to tackle the Holy Cross trail in Colorado. The big concern with the RTT mounted on the bed rack was the effect the higher center of gravity

would have while handling the harder off-road trails. For those familiar with Holy Cross, you know it's not a walk in the park getting up to the creek. I was very surprised and relieved when the new addition was barely noticed on the trail. Addicted Offroad was able to build the rack low enough to keep the COG down as much as possible and building the rack to the bed bolts created a very solid mounting not allowing any unwanted movement by the bed rack.



After the initial shakedown run, it was time to get the final piece to the rear end overhaul on the Tacoma. Despite the cold temperatures, I was off to Idaho Falls to see the crew at CBI Off Road and install the Bushmaster 2.0 (April 2014 TCT Magazine).



With a couple short trips under my belt with the new setup, it was time to pack up and take the new gear on a proper trip. So we checked and packed the CVT Mt Hood, loaded up the Maxtrax and Rotopax on the bed rack, packed the bed full of our camping bins and set sail west into Utah for the week. The trip consisted of: camping along Willow Springs “road,” Fiery Furnace in Arches National Park, camping outside of Crescent Junction, hiking Emerald Pools in Zion National Park then camping below the rich red cliffs within the Park, down to the White Pockets in the Vermillion Cliffs National Monument, then up to Gooseneck State Park to camp along the cliff edge, then Valley of the Gods before heading back to Denver. The trip didn’t test the

off-road boundaries of the rig, but it showed to me the possibilities that were now possible.



Now over a year later and nearly 30,000 miles tacked onto the odometer since the best transformation the truck has seen to date, the Addicted Offroad bed rack is holding on as strong today as it was the day Scotty had installed it. Since then, I’ve added a couple sets of



QuickFists under the RTT for axe and shovel mounts, wired up some dust lights and side lights, put a tube mounted fire extinguisher easily accessible in the bed, upgraded the RTT to a CVT Mt. Rainier and added a CVT 55" awning to cover the "kitchen." Structurally, there has been no weak point on the rack. Cosmetically, I've been fighting paint chips and surface rusting. When finalizing the bed rack, I chose not to go through with powdercoating which might have stood up to the elements better. With periodic touchups, the bed rack is looking as good as new.



As far as RTT compatibility goes, the 6-foot bed of the Tacoma allows a comfortable fit with the three person roof top tents. We ran the CVT Mt. Hood for a while until we moved up to the CVT Mt. Rainier. Both tents have a closed size of 48x72. The solid mounting to the bed bolts create a sturdy platform for the tent both on the trail and at camp. We've never had any concerns regarding the stability while running the RTT. One of the downfalls with the lowered bed rack can be seen while setting up the annex. The RTT is made to fit on the roof (obviously) so when you bring the mounting surface down, you create slack in the annex walls and the room under the RTT is a bit low to stand under.



Over the 30,000 miles, the truck has traversed all over Colorado and Utah with some exploring in Northern Arizona, off roading in Las Vegas and just recently finished up with a four day exploring some backcountry wonders in New Mexico.



What's next for our Addicted Offroad bed rack? Not sure, but you can bet that there will be a smile on our faces, dust trailing behind and adventures lined up ahead.





For more information on Addicted Offroad and contact information, check out their website at <http://www.addictedoffroad.com> and follow them on Facebook. 



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Three Seasons with Lexy

By Kande Jacobsen of Adventure Driven

www.adventuredriven.com

The vehicle we searched high and low for, to transform into an overland rig, was a 2007 Lexus GX 470 with KDSS and heated seats. We finally found it at a dealership in Scottsdale, AZ. It was stock, had 109,000 and was in like-new condition. We believe it had always been a commuter used solely on pavement. The undercarriage had not one scratch or ding; we were confident it had never even seen a gravel driveway, let alone a dirt road or trail. Luckily we were about to change that drastically. In my opinion we

traded up: traded to a more capable vehicle than the hot rodded, lowered BMW sedan that got stuck in our flat concrete driveway in a quarter inch of snow the past winter. We left the BMW sitting at the dealership as we drove the Lexus away. Lexy, as we now affectionately call our GX 470, joined the Adventure Driven family in the spring of 2014.

The process of the transformation began the day after we got home from the dealership. Over the course of the next three months, day and night, my husband Seth was responsible for the build. All I had to do while assisting him was fetch parts



and supplies in town; hand him tools; push, pull or hold things; give my opinion on the placement of buttons etc. and keep him fed. No blood sugar drops for those working on machinery allowed here.

In May, after attending the Overland Expo in Flagstaff AZ, we scheduled some overlanding trips for the summer and autumn. We took Lexy out on several northern AZ shakedown runs to be certain everything was working properly and not squeaking. I don't know about you, but we loathe squeaks. We did miles of rock infested washboard forest service roads at all speeds, rock crawling trails, mud trails, steep loose surface hill climbs and descents, sweeping high speed whooped out trails in the Cinder Hills OHV area and even a couple of jumps out in the desert.

Lexy performed flawlessly.

At this point, we knew Lexy was ready for the travel plans ahead. We started the summer off in June with our small group heading down the length of Baja, MX. We camped on beaches, did some spear fishing, spent time in hammocks, ate delicious local fare in small villages, toured missions and did hundreds of miles of nearly deserted dirt roads and paths.

After Baja, we went back up for some high-flying fun in the southern AZ desert with friends. In July, it was up to the San Juan range of the Colorado Rockies for leading some of the trail runs at the FJ Summit. In the autumn, we took a few small groups to explore some outstanding and very remote areas at the Grand Canyon. As the trees changed, we enjoyed mountain trails through vividly colored aspen trees. In November, we went back down to southern Baja, MX with my sister and her husband for a couple of weeks on the beach. They loved hearing about the Baja trip so much they wanted to experience it for themselves. We were more than happy to oblige.

We comfortably lived out of Lexy for over three months and traveled over 10,000 miles. Sometimes it was just Seth and me, other times with three to five passengers and very heavily loaded. In all cases, the performance was great. We just had to be more cautious and go much slower with Lexy heavily loaded.

This year Lexy, kitted as she was, made it possible for us and the people with us to travel comfortably for thousands of miles on and off road. We were extremely pleased with the choice of the Lexus GX 470 to be Adventure Driven's overlanding rig.



Are you are wondering what it took to transform Lexy into this very capable and comfortable overlanding rig?

Here is the build list and details for our Lexy.

2007 Lexus GX470 Sport, silver, 4.7 V-8 all wheel drive, KDSS, Navigation, heated seats, automatic 109,000 miles.

Overlanding Gear

- Howling Moon Stargazer/ Eezi Awn 1600 3 series roof top tent
- Fox Wing awning and one extension wall
- K9 2.2m Roof Rack System by Equipt Outfitters
- Synergy Manufacturing Hot water shower heat exchanger
- 20 Gallon fresh water tank in the stock spare tire location on an RV 12v pump with an extendable metal hose
- ARB snorkel
- Three ARB Drawers, the top surfaces slide out
- ARB 12V air compressor
- ARB 82 quart 12v refrigerator
- Custom fold down cutting board and utensils installed on the rear gate for easy food prep and fridge loading
- Custom super special foodie's dream spice box
- Two Blue Sea power distribution blocks, one under the hood and one in the rear cargo area with 100 Amp circuit breakers
- Overland Solar 95 watt solar panel with quick connector
- SunForce 30 amp solar panel controller
- 5 gallon jerry can
- Cobra CB
- Black Berry Blue Tooth module

- Ultra Gauge
- Extra front, middle and back dual USB ports
- Trash-A-Roo, a great place outside the cab for our trash and other's litter we find along the way
- IBS dual battery controller
- Twin Sears Die Hard Platinum batteries
- A shovel, hatchet, multitool, and machete come in handy often

KC Lights

- One 50" LED light bar, lights up the night so no elk, sasquatch or zombies can hide
- One 20" LED Light Bar
- Two 4" LED front bumper lights angled to illuminate the areas where we are turning
- Eight Cyclone LED rock lights; so boulders can't hide
- Four side facing LZR LED Cubes on the roof rack, great for finding the perfect camping spot at night
- Three LZR LED Cube reverse lights
- Two Cyclone LED's in rear kitchen/cargo area

Drive Train

- All-wheel drive
- ARB air lockers front and rear, we couldn't do without them
- Nitro 4:56 gears get us up and over the roughest terrain

- Cross drilled slotted brake rotors
- 4.7 V-8 Automatic
- Vented Diff's
- High output alternator

Recovery Gear

- Come Up winch 9500 lb with synthetic rope
- Come Up recovery bag, doubler, tree saver, strap
- Come Up wireless remote winch controller
- Factor 55 front winch hook and rear receiver
- High lift jack and base for sand
- Maxtrax, these things have a lot of uses

Tires And Wheels

- Cooper Discoverer ST MAXX 285/65R18
- Fuel 18x9 wheels

Armor

- Budbuilt skid plates 4 piece kit
- Metal Tech sliders
- Custom rear water tank skid plate

Suspension

- ICON Stage 6 suspension system with 2.5 remote reservoir shocks with CDC adjusters
- ICON Heavy Duty Expedition rear springs
- ICON rear pneumatic bump stops

Bumpers

- Southern Style Speed front and rear bumpers with rear tire and jerry can carriers

Would you like to enjoy experiences like this? Possibly, you would like a vehicle built for overlanding but, do not have the time or experience to do it?

Adventure Driven provides custom expedition experiences to the Grand Canyon and to Baja MX and also offers turn-key custom built Toyota and Lexus trucks and

SUVs for those that like to adventure out on their own. To learn more about Adventure Driven, go to www.adventuredriven.com or follow on Facebook at www.facebook.com/adventuredriven 🇺🇸





The Ultimate Camping Griddle Showdown



Griddles are one of the most versatile pieces of cooking equipment out there. They can transform your everyday camp stove into a multi-tasking machine, allowing you to prepare breakfast, lunch, and dinner all on the same setup. Once properly seasoned, their non-stick properties are second to none and, if treated well, will last multiple generations of outdoor adventurers.

With so many options on the market for camping griddles, which one is the right one for you? We took four of the most popular camping griddles on the market today (Camp Chef Professional Flat-Top Griddle, Mojoe Outfitters Mojoe Griddle, Partner Steel Large Griddle, and the Lodge Reversible Pro Grid Iron Griddle) and put them in a head-to-head competition to see which one would come out on top. We tested the griddles in a slew of cooking challenges, ranging from bacon and eggs to Korean beef and fried rice.

Scoring proved to be difficult, and we soon learned why these four camping griddles are so popular. Each of the griddles excelled at the cooking challenges, showing even heat distribution and great non-stick properties. It was really a pleasure to cook on each of these griddles and they each handled the rigors of back country travel with flying colors. Faced with a dilemma of which griddle to choose, and such a wide range of griddle sizes/shapes, we decided to rank the griddles in a comparison of weight as a factor of the cooking area, price as a factor of the cooking area, and the griddle's overall versatility. By factoring the weight and price as a function of cooking area, we could even the playing field between large and small griddles. Each griddle received a score from one to four and the scores of the three categories were totaled up to produce the winner.

Now enough about how we came to choose our winner, let's take a look at each of these great griddles.

Coming in at Number Four: Lodge Reversible Pro Grid Iron Griddle



Material:	Lodge Seasoned Cast Iron
Overall Dimensions:	20"x10-7/16"
Cooking Area (sq in):	153
Weight (lb):	13.84
Manufactured in:	USA
Price:	\$75
Available at:	Nationwide
Features:	One side is a griddle. Flip side a grill pan.
Pros:	Great for small two-burner camp stoves. Loved being able to reverse the griddle for a grill pan. the small footprint is great for limited storage space.
Cons:	The cooking area is small when compared to the overall size.
Conclusion:	While we like the versatility of the Reversible Pro Grid Iron Griddle, the usable cooking area really limited what we could prepare, even for two people.

Coming in at number Three: Camp Chef's Professional Flat Top Griddle



Material:	Carbon Steel
Overall Dimensions:	18"x24"
Cooking Area (sq in):	384
Weight (lb):	28
Manufactured in:	China
Price:	\$121
Available at:	Nationwide
Features:	Drip Channel. Integrated Lip. Integrated handle.
Pros:	The griddle has great heat distribution and we really liked having the integrated drip channel, especially when cooking bacon for large groups.
Cons:	The griddle is best suited for use on Camp Chef's large, multi-burner stoves and does not sit well on other stoves. We wish the griddle had two handles to move it around while still warm.
Conclusion:	While the griddle worked beautifully on our Camp Chef stove, the lack of versatility with other camping stove designs was a setback in our opinion.

Coming in at number Two: Mojoe Outfitters' Mojoe Griddle



Material:	Carbon Steel
Overall Dimensions:	24" diameter
Cooking Area (sq in):	452
Weight (lb):	40
Manufactured in:	USA
Price:	\$195
Available at:	www.MojoeGriddle.com
Features:	Campfire Feet. Removable Handles. Easily rests on standard kettle-style BBQ grills.
Pros:	Huge cooking surface. Easy to clean. Even heat. Ability to cook on kettle-style grills, camp stove, or over the fire. Great for large groups.
Cons:	The round shape does not accommodate being packed well with other items.
Conclusion:	We really like the versatility and heat distribution of the Mojoe Griddle but found the shape to be a drawback.

Coming in at number One: Partner Steel Large Griddle



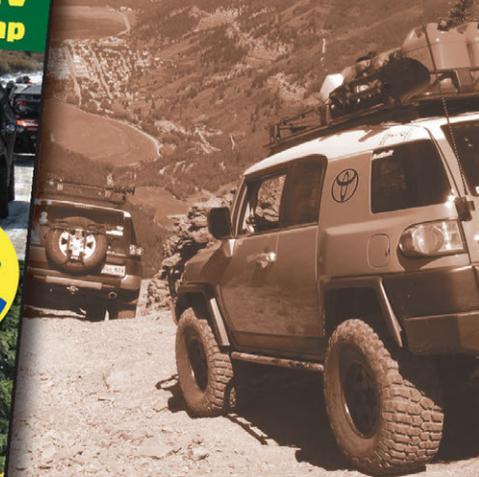
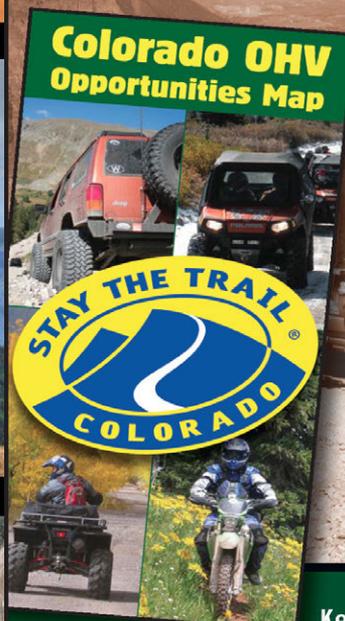
Material:	Hard-Anodized Aluminum
Overall Dimensions:	15.5"x28.75"
Cooking Area (sq in):	317
Weight (lb):	11
Manufactured in:	USA
Price:	\$98
Available at:	Nationwide
Features:	Integrated handles. Full wrap-around lip.
Pros:	We liked how little the griddle weighed and that we didn't have to worry about accidentally leaving it in the rain.
Cons:	While we enjoyed having two handles, we wish they were removable.
Conclusion:	This was, hands down, our favorite griddle to cook on. The inherent non-stick properties of the anodized aluminum worked really well, and we loved how even the heat distribution was.

Want to check the numbers? Here is a look at our rating table, and how each griddle scored in the comparison. As I mentioned earlier, all of the griddles we tested worked phenomenally well in the camp kitchen but only one really excelled in our testing. The Large Griddle, from Partner Steel, was a great mix of cooking area, weight, price, and versatility. This griddle will now be our go-to griddle for cooking classes and feeding family and friends on future adventures. 🍖

	Weight/Cooking Area (lb/sqin)	Weight/Cooking Area Score	Price/Cooking Area (\$/sqin)	Price/Cooking Area Score	Versatility	Total Score
Camp Chef Professional Flat Top Griddle	0.073	3	0.32	3	1	7
Mojoe Outfitters Mojoe Griddle	0.088	2	0.43	2	4	8
Partner Steel Large Griddle	0.035	4	0.31	4	2	10
Lodge Reversible Pro Grid Iron Griddle	0.090	1	0.49	1	3	5



You're not the first one down this trail. Don't be the last.
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The Toyota Overlanders List

Compiled by Beau Johnston

Their travels and adventures inspire us to step out into the world and truly experience life. We have followed along as they visit remote villages in South America, cross deserts in Africa, and traverse mountain passes in Asia. These are the full-time overlanders traveling in Toyotas. As a way to give back to the community, we would like to share their stories and help connect you, our readers,

with their adventures. Please take a moment to learn more about these adventure travelers as they are the ones that inspire us to get out and explore.

Editor's Note: Would you like to be considered for next year's Toyota Overlanders List? Contact Beau at beau@TCTMagazine.net.



Land Cruising Adventure

Landcruising Adventure

Where are your names? Karin-Marijke and Coen

What vehicle are you driving? 1984 BJ45 Land Cruiser with 396.375 KM

How long have you been on the road? 11 years [started may 2003]

How many countries have you traveled through? Can't remember, would have to count. More than 30 for sure ;-)

What is your favorite place you have visited? Iran, Pakistan and Brazil.

What is your website? www.landcruisingadventure.com

Desk to Glory

Where are your names? Richard and Ashley Giordano

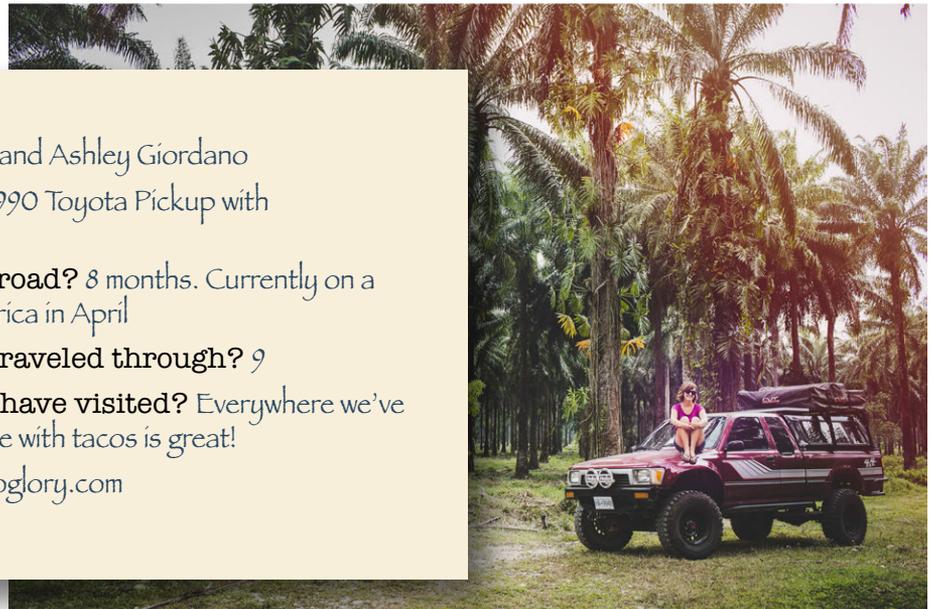
What vehicle are you driving? 1990 Toyota Pickup with approximately 400,000km

How long have you been on the road? 8 months. Currently on a short break before hitting South America in April

How many countries have you traveled through? 9

What is your favorite place you have visited? Everywhere we've been has been worth seeing! Anywhere with tacos is great!

What is your website? www.desktoglory.com



Ruined Adventures

What are your names? Brenton & Shannon

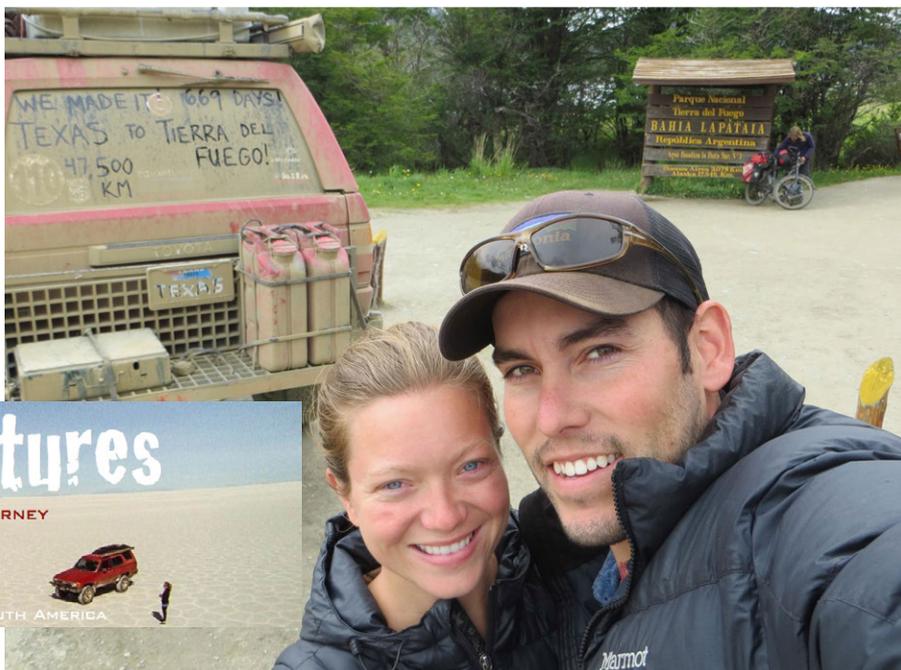
What vehicle are you driving? 1987 Toyota 4Runner DLX 295,000 miles

How long have you been on the road? 2 years

How many countries have you traveled through? 15

What is your favorite place you have visited? Patagonia

What is your website? www.RuinedAdventures.com



Lost World Expedition

What are your names? Luis and Lacey

What vehicle are you driving? 1987 Toyota Land Cruiser FJ60 with 12ht diesel

How long have you been on the road? 4.5 years—Currently on a short break

How many countries have you traveled through? 19

What is your favorite place you have visited? Too many

What is your website? lostworldexpedition.com



Sardine Taco

What are your names? Dean, Sara & Lupe the dog

What vehicle are you driving? 2001 Toyota Tacoma with 150,000 miles

How long have you been on the road? 16 months

How many countries have you traveled through? 14

What is your favorite place you have visited? Mexico & Colombia

What is your website? <http://sardinetaco.com>



Neli's Big Adventure

What are your names? Neli and her humans (Jason Tyrell & Victoria Palmer)

What vehicle are you driving? 2006 Toyota Tundra, equipped with Phoenix Pop-Up Camper, and 150,000 miles

How long have you been on the road? 1 year

How many countries have you traveled through? 7

What is your favorite place you have visited? southern Pacific beaches in Nicaragua

What is your website? www.NelisBigAdventure.com



To The Next Journey

What are your names? Benjamin Moffitt and Pegah Pourkarimi

What vehicle are you driving? 1989 HJ61 Toyota Land Cruiser (360,600 km) and 1991 HZJ80 Toyota Land Cruiser (398,650 km)

How long have you been on the road? 2 years

How many countries have you traveled through? 10

What is your favorite place you have visited? Labrador, Canada

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4 Runner



Jared Koronkiewicz of New York takes an off-camber route.

Uwharrie National Forest 4Runner Turkey Run



Allen and Jennifer Turner of Burlington, NC experience off-roading in their new TRD Pro 4Runner.



A third generation 4Runner heats up a spinning tire during a moment of crawling.

A group of members from the 4Runner forum, T4R.org, put together a Thanksgiving weekend off-road meet-up at Uwharrie National Forest. Jared Koronkiewicz sent us some photos of one of the groups in action.

Photos by Jared Koronkiewicz and George Labelle



Austin Hargett of Monroe, NC, advances on a difficult descent.



Phonexay Douangmala from Lake Wylie, SC, demonstrates what his 4Runner is capable of.



Jared Kornokiewicz flexes his 4Runner during a complicated descent. 🇺🇸



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Meet Rcfreak201 & his Desert Limo!

Interviewed by Bob Holliday



When Krish is not tacking on meaningless miles daily driving his extremely well-built Toyota Tacoma, he's pushing his truck to its limits in the California deserts. From the long-travel front and rear suspension to the cage work front to rear, this 2006 Toyota Tacoma is built to handle the abuse of desert racing while keeping its ability to comfortably handle daily driving responsibilities.



I had a chance to pick Krish's brain a bit to see what the driving force behind this impressive build was...

What made you choose a Toyota? I chose a Toyota for more than just the reliability. From the beginning I wanted to build a midsize

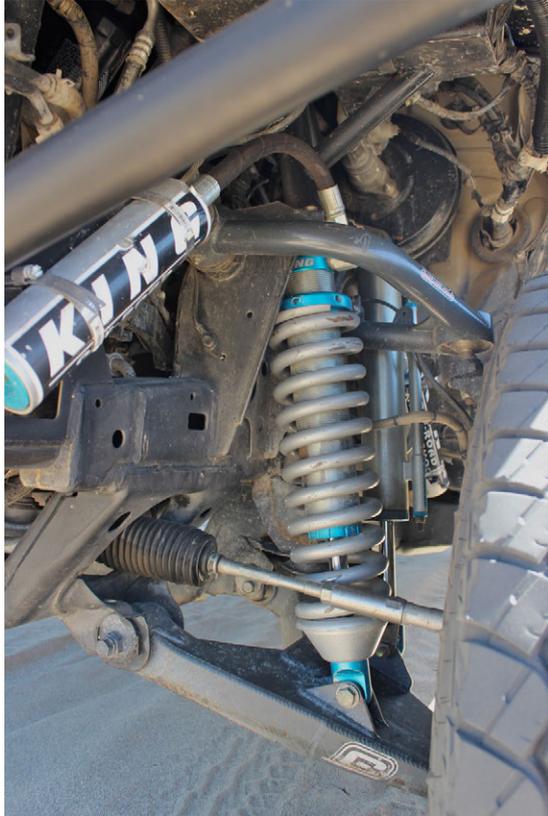
vehicle that was comfortable on and off the road daily and the Tacoma fit that category perfectly.

What other vehicles have you had prior?

Prior to the truck I've owned a bicycle. The Tacoma is my first ever vehicle and I don't plan on selling it anytime soon. In a couple of years it will retire from its daily driving job and become a full blown desert truck.

What made you choose this direction in your build?

Since I was a kid I grew up riding dirt bikes and around the off-road scene and



after witnessing desert race trucks I knew I wanted to build one for myself. The Tacoma was a perfect platform because even with the long travel suspension, it still maintains its on-road comfort.

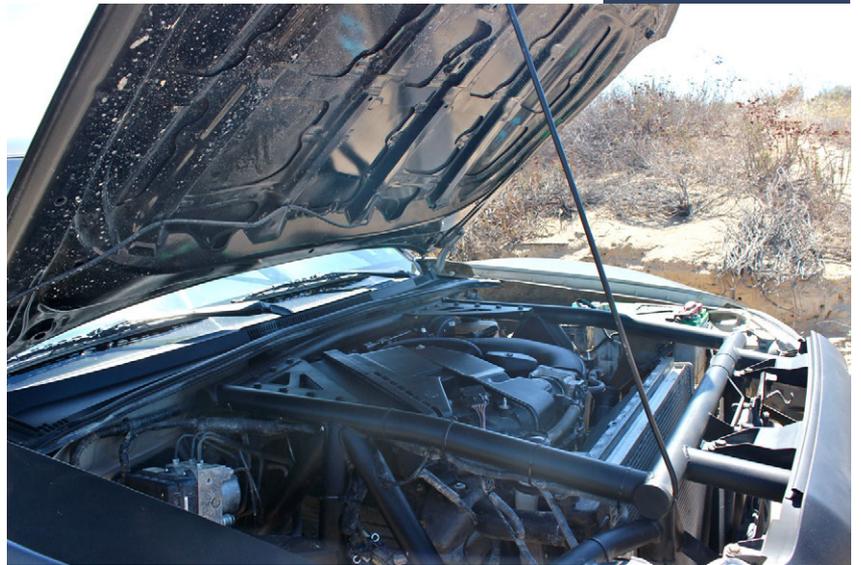
Who were some of the leading contributors/fabricators/companies into helping make this build a success?

The main suspension components on the truck are from Camburg Racing, King Shocks and DMZ Fabrication. Without their top of the line products the truck would not be as capable as it is now. LSK Suspension has also been a big contributor, doing most of the cage work and keeping my vehicle in one piece. Stealth Custom Series has provided fantastic wheels keeping the truck looking unique and stylish.

Besides fabrication, I enjoy wrenching and maintaining the truck myself.

What are some of the things you like to do with your truck?

Other than daily driving my truck I enjoy taking it out to Barstow or Lucerne, CA for some local desert off-roading.





Once in a while I will also take the truck up to Pismo Beach or down to Glamis and Ocotillo Wells for some longer weekend camping trips.

What are some of your favorite features of the truck? My favorite feature in the truck, hands down, has to be the cab cage. Before the cage, the interior started rattling apart and the cab started to crack from the constant off-road abuse. Now that it is caged bumper to bumper it has become extremely rigid and much more enjoyable to drive on and off-road.

What's the most important thing learned during the building process? The truck has been progressing for the past four years and most important thing I've learned is to purchase exactly what I want it to be in the end. I started out with a spacer lift, progressing into coilovers which eventually jumped to long travel. If I could start over, I would go straight to long travel using the top notch components I currently have. After lots of money and years I have finally become content with the performance of my truck.



What's next? I can gladly say the main part of my build is complete but like any hobby, it's never actually "done." In the near future I would like to make the interior more luxurious with a custom flooring and headliner. Eventually once the truck retires from its daily driving duties I would like to 4-link the rear and upgrade the front end to a race kit.

List of mods:

Front

- 2012+ Front End Conversion
- Camburg 3.5" Long Travel Kit
- King 2.5x8" Coilovers
- King 2.5x10" Double Bypass Shocks
- Fiberwerx 6" Fenders
- LSK Bumper Connected to LSK Engine Cage connected to LSK Cab Cage
- Total Chaos Spindle Gussets
- DMZ Fab Motor Mount Gussets
- Satin Gray Paintjob

Rear

- DMZ Spring Under Axle Kit
- King 2.5x16" Triple Bypass Shocks
- Fiberwerx 6" Trophy Truck Style Bedsides
- Sick Nicks Fab Custom Bedcage connected to cab cage



- Relentless Fab Axle Truss

Interior

- Corbeau Baja JP Seats
- Mastercraft 5 Point Harnesses
- Rigid Industries Dome Lights
- Pioneer AVH4200 Headunit

Wheels

- 325/70/17 Falken Wildpeak ATs
- Stealth Custom Series SR-8 Rims

Performance

- URD Equal Length Headers
- 4.88 Gears
- Detroit Tru Trac
- Magnaflow Exhaust 🇺🇸

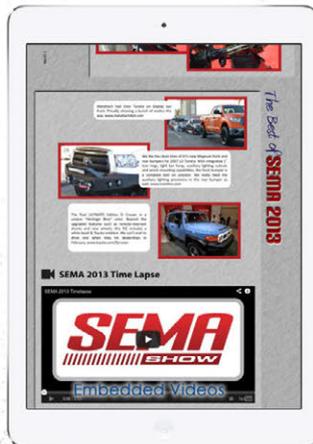


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Just hitting some trails at
Rausch Creek OffRoad park.
From Anton



Tis' the season
From Nicholas



Imogene Pass - FJ Summit #8
From Jack