



# SHIFT COLORADO

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Issue 15 | Winter 2026



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MOTORSPORTS  
ADVENTURES AT PIKES  
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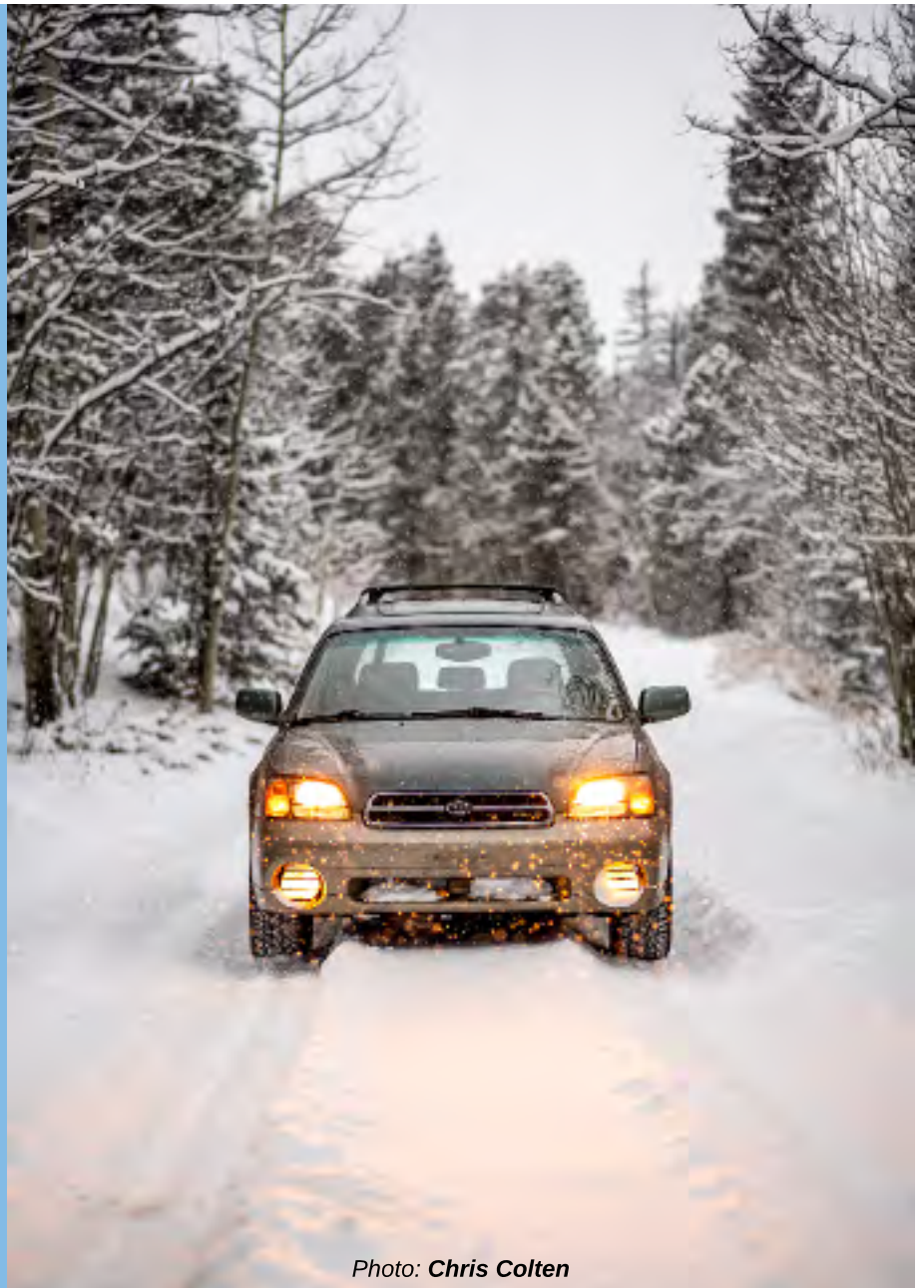


Photo: **Chris Colten**

## We could use the moisture.

What a ridiculously dry winter it's been.

I hate to see it.

Classic winter events got warmed out this year, and that's a bummer. We love our Georgetown Lake ice racing and snowy roller shoots. Having numb hands and a camera covered in snow is just part of the typical fun for the winter months.

I also take offense to this warm weather because I haven't had much opportunity to shred through powder on my shiny new set of studded tires. It's truly a shame.

So while I'm out screaming in the unnaturally dry woods about the weather, please enjoy the 15th installment of SHIFT Colorado Magazine.

Even though we didn't get to enjoy solidified precipitation, it was still an acceptable winter.

We got into our usual press and feature activities, got some new project cars to show off, and spend a lot of time talking about Toyota 4x4's.

Before sitting down to read this issue, please do me a favor, and do a little snow dance. ❄️

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Photo: Chris Colten

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**The best 4x4 ever made**

This JDM import Land Cruiser is an excellent example of the finest automotive engineering, ever

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**If Pit Viper sunglasses were a truck**

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Photos: Brendan Garst, Scott Minshall



# JON'S 1997 JDM

Story: *Marty Kier* Photography: *Jake Laino*

There is a certain kind of vehicle story that makes more sense the longer you sit with it. Not because it was perfectly planned, but because every previous car, every frustration, and every change in direction seems to point toward the one that finally fits. Sometimes the right car is not the fastest thing you have owned or the flashiest thing you have chased. Sometimes, it is the one that lines up with how you actually live.

That is exactly how Jon talks about his 1997 Toyota Land Cruiser diesel, a Japanese import that has now been with him for about two and a half years. He bought it from JDM Sport Classics in

Michigan, sight unseen, flew out one way, and drove it back home. That alone tells you a lot. This was not a random impulse buy. It was a shift in priorities, the kind that happens when your environment changes and your idea of the ideal vehicle changes with it.

Jon is originally from Florida, where sports cars were the natural gravity. His first genuinely cool car was a second-generation Cadillac CTS V, which feels about as far from an imported diesel Land Cruiser as you can get without switching hobbies entirely. Moving to Colorado changed the equation. A high horsepower rear wheel

drive car as your only vehicle starts to lose its shine once weather, mountains, and real year-round usability enter the picture.

That pushed him toward four wheel drive ownership and eventually into building up a pickup for off-road use. Like a lot of enthusiasts, he found out that modifying a newer vehicle can put you in an awkward middle ground. You are still making payments, there is still a warranty in the background, but the truck has changed enough that the warranty starts feeling less helpful. Add in maintenance headaches and electronics that require dealer intervention, and the ownership



## TOYOTA LAND CRUISER DIESEL

experience stops being fun. That was the turning point.

After spending time watching Australian off-road content, especially 4WD 24-7, Jon started zeroing in on the 80 Series Land Cruiser. Shaun's truck helped push the idea from interesting to inevitable. The appeal was obvious. It was old enough to have character, proven enough to have trust behind it, and simple enough to feel like something you could actually own instead of something you were constantly negotiating with a service department.

Seeing Jon's Land Cruiser in person, it is immediately clear that this is not a build

Winter 2026





chasing trends. It feels purposeful. Every modification seems tied to how the truck is used, which makes it more interesting than a pile of expensive parts ever could.

The foundation is a full Dobinsons suspension with IMS shocks and around three inches of lift. Jon kept a little extra height in the rear so the truck sits level once it is loaded down with camping gear. Up front, it wears an ARB bull bar and a Badland winch, both of which match the Land Cruiser's honest, work-ready look. It also runs a Dobinsons snorkel with a pre-cleaner, which sounds niche until you hear the reasoning. The pre-cleaner helps keep rain, snow, and dust out before the air reaches the main filter, which matters when the truck is spending time in conditions like those. Out back, Jon built a custom drawer system with one side dedicated to recovery gear and the other to camp essentials, the kind of setup that makes the whole truck feel ready at a moment's notice. Sitting on 35-inch Falken Wildpeak AT3s, it has the stance and capability to back up its purpose without drifting into cartoon territory.

That balance is the point. Jon is clear about what he wants this truck to be. It is not a trailer-only rock crawler, and it is not something he wants to destroy on the hardest trails possible just to say he did it. The goal is moderate capability with real comfort and dependability, something that





@cohdj81



Watch The Full Video

can take family, dogs, and camping gear into the kind of places that make a vehicle like this worthwhile in the first place.

When I asked Jon about his favorite thing about the vehicle, he could have reached for the obvious. He could have pointed to the right-hand drive layout, the diesel power, or the import story, all of which would have been fair. Instead, he mentioned something smaller and more personal. When the truck was auctioned in Japan before export, someone cleaned it up but missed a tiny area behind the steering wheel. Tucked inside was a small cat charm, likely left by the previous owner. Jon found it after buying the truck and keeps it in the vehicle as a good luck charm. It is a reminder that imported cars do not just arrive with interesting configurations. Sometimes they arrive with little pieces of their previous life still attached.

Owning something like this in Colorado is not all romantic road trip energy and mountain views, though. Jon was quick to point out that the hardest part is not the truck itself, but everything around it. Registering an imported diesel here comes with extra hoops, especially with full time four wheel drive involved. It is the kind of administrative headache nobody brags about, but it is part of the reality. He also pointed out another truth that surprises people once they live with an 80 Series. For all their presence, they are not endlessly spacious. Once you factor in two adults, two kids, two 70-pound dogs, and camping gear, it can get tight. That is not a flaw as much as a real-world constraint, and it makes his storage setup feel even more essential.

That practicality carries into what is next. In the near term, he wants to regear the truck and add lockers. Right now, it has a center locker, but not axle lockers, and he sees that as the next step in capability without changing the personality of the build. He would eventually like to move up to 37s, but not before the gearing is sorted. He has also toyed with the idea of running a small trailer behind it, partly because a roof rack would keep the truck from fitting in the garage. Again, every plan is rooted in use.

Before we wrapped, Jon added one final thought that had nothing to do with suspension or tires, but everything to do with why vehicles like this belong here. Public lands are what we make them. If people want to keep access to trails and campsites, they need to take care of them. Leave it better than you found it. Pick up trash. Put out campfires properly. Do not give anyone more reasons to restrict the spaces that make this lifestyle possible.

This Land Cruiser is cool because it is imported, diesel, and built with intention. But it is memorable because it reflects the person who owns it. It is not about showing off obscure parts or forcing a theme. It is about building something honest, capable, and durable enough to support the life around it. In a world full of builds that try very hard to tell you what they are, Jon's Land Cruiser does not need to. It just does the job, and it does it with character. 🚩



Story & Photography: *Pikes Peak International Raceway*

As winter loosens its grip on southern Colorado, the sound that replaces it is unmistakable—engines firing to life, tires warming on pavement, and a community ready to kick off another motorsports season at Pikes Peak International Raceway. Each year the opening stretch of events sets the tone for everything that follows, and 2026 is shaping up to launch with serious momentum.

The early season schedule brings together skill-building clinics, community-driven track days, and one of the biggest festivals of the year. It's a lineup designed to get drivers behind the wheel, introduce new competitors to the culture, and remind longtime racers why the season's opening weeks carry so much excitement.

The action begins March 21 with

Galentine's Ladies Track Day, a celebration of women in motorsports that continues to grow year after year. The event is built around participation and confidence behind the wheel, giving women a supportive environment to develop driving skills and enjoy the track together. Activities include Track Sprints, Gymkhana, and Open Lapping sessions that allow drivers to explore different styles of performance driving throughout the day.

Galentine's has quickly become one of the track's most energetic community events. Drivers share tips, cheer each other on, and create a welcoming atmosphere that turns first-timers into returning competitors. The focus is on empowerment, learning, and building a network of women who share a passion for motorsports. It's a day that

proves the future of racing includes a growing number of talented women taking the wheel.

One week later, drivers looking to master a different skillset will find their opportunity during the Drift Clinics on March 28 and May 9. Drifting is as much about precision as it is spectacle, and these clinics break down the fundamentals in a controlled environment. Professional instructors guide first time drivers as well as seasoned Drifters through techniques like throttle control, weight transfer, and maintaining angle through a slide.

Held on the infield skid pad and C-Course, the clinics provide guided practice sessions along with real-time coaching. By the end of the day, participants gain the knowledge needed to confidently slide through corners





while maintaining full control of their vehicles. For anyone planning to drift during the raceway's larger festival events, attending a clinic is also the gateway to earning a drift license.

March 29 and May 10 also bring another crowd favorite to the schedule: Summer Off The Streets. This full-day event combines two different styles of motorsports into one adrenaline-packed experience.

The morning begins with Super Sprints, an expanded version of traditional track sprints that utilizes multiple configurations across the entire facility. Drivers run timed laps without obstacles, testing their ability on both the high-speed oval and the technical infield road course. It's the kind of event that rewards smooth driving and encourages participants to push their limits with plenty of track time.

As evening rolls in, the focus shifts to Saturday Night Drags. Drivers line up for straight-line runs in a safe and controlled environment, bringing the spirit of street racing onto a professional track. The night also features the Drags Cash Days Shootout, an elimination-style competition where racers contribute to the pot and the final driver standing takes home the winnings.

All of that early-season energy leads directly into the first major festival of the year: Spring Fling, happening April 10-11. This

two-day event marks the official launch of festival season at the raceway and delivers a nonstop lineup of motorsports action.

Spring Fling packs the schedule with Off-the-Street Drags, Circle Drags, Track Sprints, Drift, and Open Burnout sessions. The Drags Cash Days Shootout returns for high-stakes head-to-head racing, while Circle Drags challenge drivers to battle through a tight course where precision and aggression collide.

One of the most anticipated moments of the weekend arrives with Round 1 of the Summer of Smoke Burnout Competition Series. Drivers will fill THE RING with tire smoke and horsepower as they compete for points toward the championship later in the season. Last year's champion set the standard high, and the opening round promises a new wave of competitors eager to claim early bragging rights.

Off the track, the festival atmosphere keeps the momentum going with live music, vendors, games, karaoke, and crowd favorites like the Cornhole Competition and Costume Contest. The combination of racing, entertainment, and community creates an environment that feels more like a celebration than a typical race weekend.

The season continues building toward Summer Vibes Women's Motorsports Festival, June 5-7, another major ladies only gathering that expands the motorsports experience with a full weekend of

competition, music, and automotive culture. Ladies, follow the PPIR socials for more information about Summer Vibes!

Every racing season begins with anticipation, but the opening months at Pikes Peak International Raceway feel especially electric. Drivers are eager to test their machines, new competitors step onto the track for the first time, and the community returns to the place where horsepower and passion meet.

The gates are opening, engines are warming, and the 2026 season is ready to launch.

**For more details about the 2026 season, please visit [PPIR.com](https://www.ppir.com).** 🏁



 **Pikes Peak International Raceway**

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**Sponsored Content Notice:** This article was an editorial article sponsored by Pikes Peak International Raceway. We work together with host organizations to highlight interesting car related events in advance of them coming out!



# Curran Eastes

@the.fast.shutter

Out on Colorado's Western Slope, where red rock meets mountain passes and horsepower echoes through canyons, a new generation of photographers is carving out its own lane. When our Staff Photographer and resident Western Slope correspondent Nate Hughes told us we needed to check out Curran Eastes' work, we listened.

At just 22, Curran is already building a name for himself in the motorsports and action sports world, blending raw energy with thoughtful storytelling. From campus sidelines at Colorado Mesa University to hill climbs deep in the Rockies, his lens is drawn to speed, movement, and the people behind the machines. We caught up with Curran to talk about how a video game sparked his photography journey, the influence of car culture, and why endurance racing is high on his bucket list.

Intro: *Jake Laino* Story and Photography: *Curran Eastes*





**SHIFT:** Let's start off with who you are and what you do; tell us about yourself!

**Curran:** My name is Curran Eastes. I'm a 22-year-old motorsports and action sports photographer, originally from Carmel, Indiana. I'm currently in my fourth year at Colorado Mesa University in Grand Junction, where I'm studying photography and film.

I've always been drawn to the outdoors and anything that involves speed, precision, and motors. I spent much of my childhood and high school years running, riding mountain bikes, and obsessing over all kinds of motorsports. Now I'm living the dream—riding dirt bikes, mountain biking, working on and driving cars, snowboarding, and recently getting introduced to the world of vintage stand-up jet skis. If it has a motor or gets the heart rate up, I'm probably into it. Deciding to move to Western Colorado a few years ago has definitely been one of the best decisions I've made, as it's given me the perfect environment to explore these passions and be around like-minded people. I'm still proud of where I grew up and the people and places that shaped me, but Western Colorado is home now, and I'm proud to call it that.

During my sophomore year, I applied for a student photographer position with Colorado Mesa University's Marketing Department, and I'm really glad I did. In this role, I photograph a wide range of events around campus, from athletics and student life to special events and other university activities. The job has given me real-world experience working in fast-paced environments, adapting to different situations, and consistently delivering professional images on deadline. It's helped me grow not only as a photographer, but also in terms of communication, reliability, and working as part of a creative team. Because of this experience and the skills I've developed, I've been able to take on additional work around the Grand Valley, including projects with Colorado Mesa's Cycling Team and the Grand Junction Sports Commission. These opportunities have given me more experience shooting action and events, working with different clients, and continuing to build my portfolio in the areas I enjoy most.



**SHIFT:** What got you started in photography? What was the draw to automotive as a subject, and when did you know you wanted to get serious about it?

**Curran:** Growing up in Carmel, a suburb of Indianapolis, I was surrounded by a diverse and passionate car culture. From classic American muscle and JDM builds to exotics and professional race cars, there was always something happening in the local scene. With the Indianapolis Motor Speedway only about 30 minutes from my house, along with several motorsports teams and performance companies in the area hosting events and being part of the community, racing and automotive culture were a constant presence in my life.

My interest in photography actually started in an unexpected place: a video game called Forza. The game had a feature that let you take photos of the cars you built while driving them around the open world. It might sound unusual, but it ended up being a great introduction to photography. You could move the camera anywhere, experiment with different angles, adjust framing, and even use basic editing tools.

One of the coolest parts was the variety the game offered. You could shoot everything from off-road trucks in the dirt to supercars on mountain roads or city streets, all in completely different environments. That variety helped me start thinking about how location, lighting, and surroundings change the mood and story of a photo.



Spending time in that photo mode taught me a lot about composition, perspective, and how small changes in camera position could completely change the look and feel of an image. It got me thinking more creatively about how to present cars and capture their style and movement. That experience eventually made me want to pick up a real camera and start applying those same ideas in the real world.

The camera became a way to capture the things I was already passionate about. I began bringing one to local car meets, track days, and events, simply wanting to document the cars, the people, and the atmosphere. Over time, I realized I really enjoyed the challenge of photographing motion, details, and the personality behind each build.

The more I shot, the more I wanted to improve. What started as a hobby quickly turned into something I wanted to take seriously. As I learned more about lighting, composition, and storytelling, I began to see automotive photography as more than just pictures of cars—it was a way to capture the energy, culture, and emotion behind the scene. That's when I knew I wanted to pursue photography more intentionally.

**SHIFT:** Can you tell us where you draw your inspiration from? Are there specific photographers, artists, places, or experiences that have shaped your style?

**Curran:** I draw much of my inspiration from automotive, motorsports, action sports, and adventure photographers who have shaped how I see and approach my work. There are too many to list, but a few have had a major impact on how I'm developing my style.

Larry Chen has strongly influenced how I understand and respect car culture. His work showed me that every car—regardless of platform, style, or budget—represents someone's time, effort, and passion. It's not just about how fast or "cool" a car is, but about the story behind it: the late nights, the setbacks, and the pride in getting it right. Watching how he documents builds taught me to slow down and notice the small details—the welds, fabrication work, worn interiors, tire marks, and imperfections that make a car feel real. Those elements give a build personality and depth. His approach also reinforced that as a photographer, you're documenting someone's hard work and identity, not just a machine.



Jimmy Chin has influenced how I think about being present in the environment I'm shooting in. His work emphasizes atmosphere, scale, and the feeling of being there—not just the subject itself. From that, I've learned to pay attention to the surroundings, the light, the conditions, and the overall experience. Whether it's dust in the air or dramatic weather, those elements help tell a bigger story. I want my images to feel immersive and intentional, giving viewers a sense of the moment rather than just showing the action.

I'm also inspired by Jamey Price, whose ability to capture speed and intensity at the highest levels of racing has shaped how I approach motion in my own work. Beyond his images, I respect his professionalism and mindset. He emphasizes consistency, learning from mistakes, and continuing to improve—reminding me that growth comes from experience and putting in the time.

Across automotive culture, motorsports, and outdoor adventure, I'm constantly learning from creators who value storytelling, authenticity, and capturing real moments.

**SHIFT:** Looking through your work, it's obvious you're drawn to action sports and motorsports. Is there a sport or activity you haven't shot yet that's on your photography bucket list?

**Curran:** Being part of Colorado Mesa's Marketing team and working with the Grand Junction Sports Commission has given me the opportunity to photograph a wide variety of sports and events across the valley. Shooting so many different activities has helped me become more adaptable and comfortable working in a range of environments.

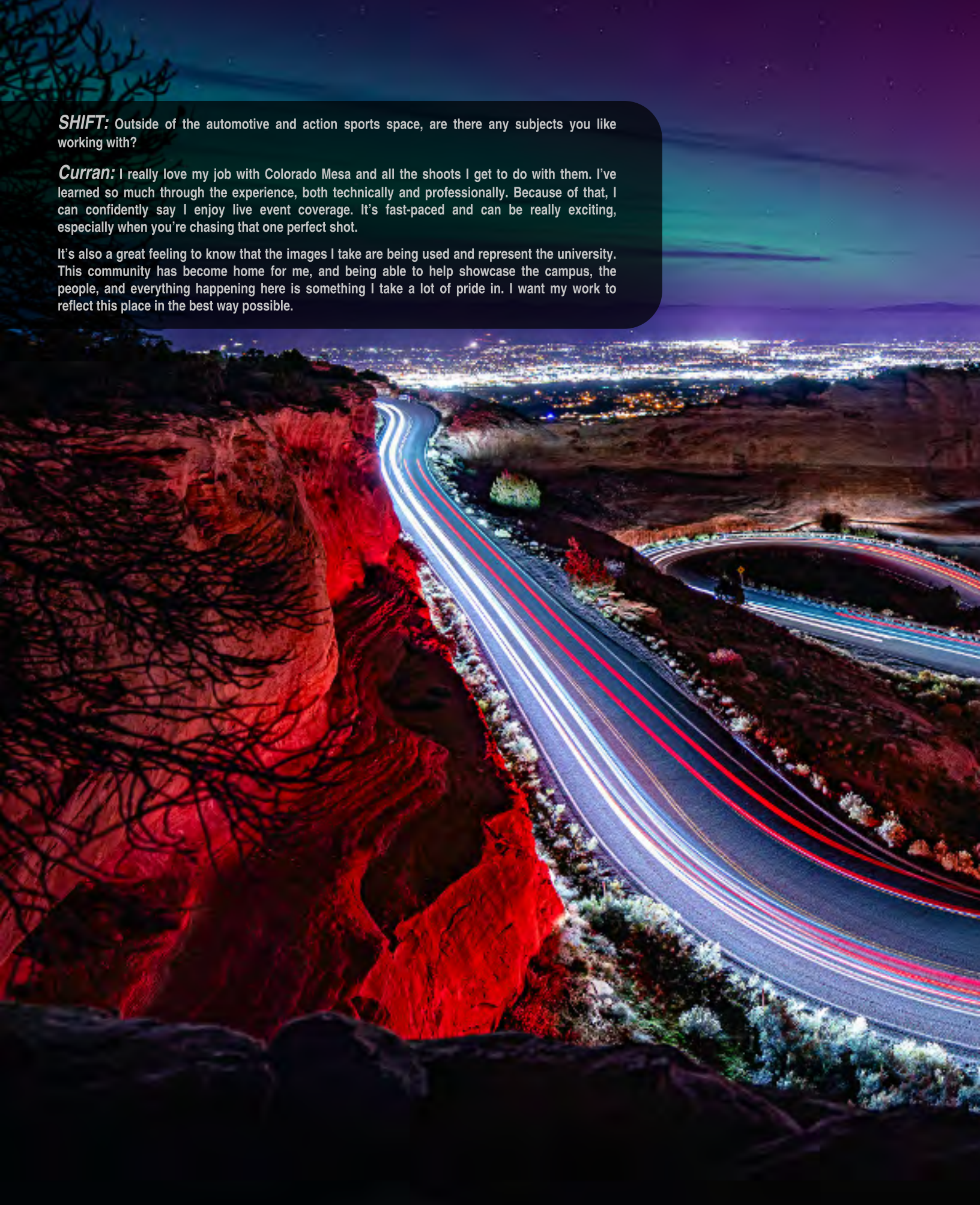
One thing I haven't had the chance to photograph yet is a true endurance race, like the 24 Hours of Daytona or the 12 Hours of Sebring. There's something especially exciting about the challenge of those events—from shooting through changing light as day turns to night, to capturing the endurance, teamwork, and intensity that make those races so unique. It's definitely something I hope to photograph in the future.



**SHIFT:** Outside of the automotive and action sports space, are there any subjects you like working with?

**Curran:** I really love my job with Colorado Mesa and all the shoots I get to do with them. I've learned so much through the experience, both technically and professionally. Because of that, I can confidently say I enjoy live event coverage. It's fast-paced and can be really exciting, especially when you're chasing that one perfect shot.

It's also a great feeling to know that the images I take are being used and represent the university. This community has become home for me, and being able to help showcase the campus, the people, and everything happening here is something I take a lot of pride in. I want my work to reflect this place in the best way possible.





**SHIFT:** What is your ideal two-car garage?

**Curran:**

1. SCCA 1965 Shelby GT350R with the 289 and four-speed
2. 2014 Ford Raptor

**SHIFT:** What is your favorite car-based event in Colorado?

**Curran:** The Colorado Hill Climb Association Series. There's something really special about hill climbs that sets them apart from other forms of motorsport. They're raw, intense, and incredibly personal—just a driver, their car, and a narrow road climbing straight into the mountains.

I'm drawn to the Colorado Hill Climb Series because of its variety. Each event has its own character, whether it's tight technical sections, fast open stretches, or dramatic elevation changes. You'll see everything from purpose-built race cars and vintage machines to street cars that people have poured countless hours into. That mix of vehicles and personalities really reflects the passion behind the series and makes every event feel unique.

From a visual standpoint, hill climbs are unreal. The combination of cars pushing their limits against Colorado's mountain landscapes creates an atmosphere you don't get anywhere else. The changing light, weather, and terrain add another layer of challenge and excitement, both as a fan and as a photographer. You're constantly moving, finding new angles, and reacting in real time.

More than anything, I love the community around these events. The drivers, teams, and spectators all share a genuine love for racing, and that energy is contagious. It's the kind of environment that reminds me why I'm so passionate about automotive culture and motorsports in the first place.



**SHIFT:** Colorado has an amazing photography community; Any advice you'd offer to folks who are just starting out in photography?

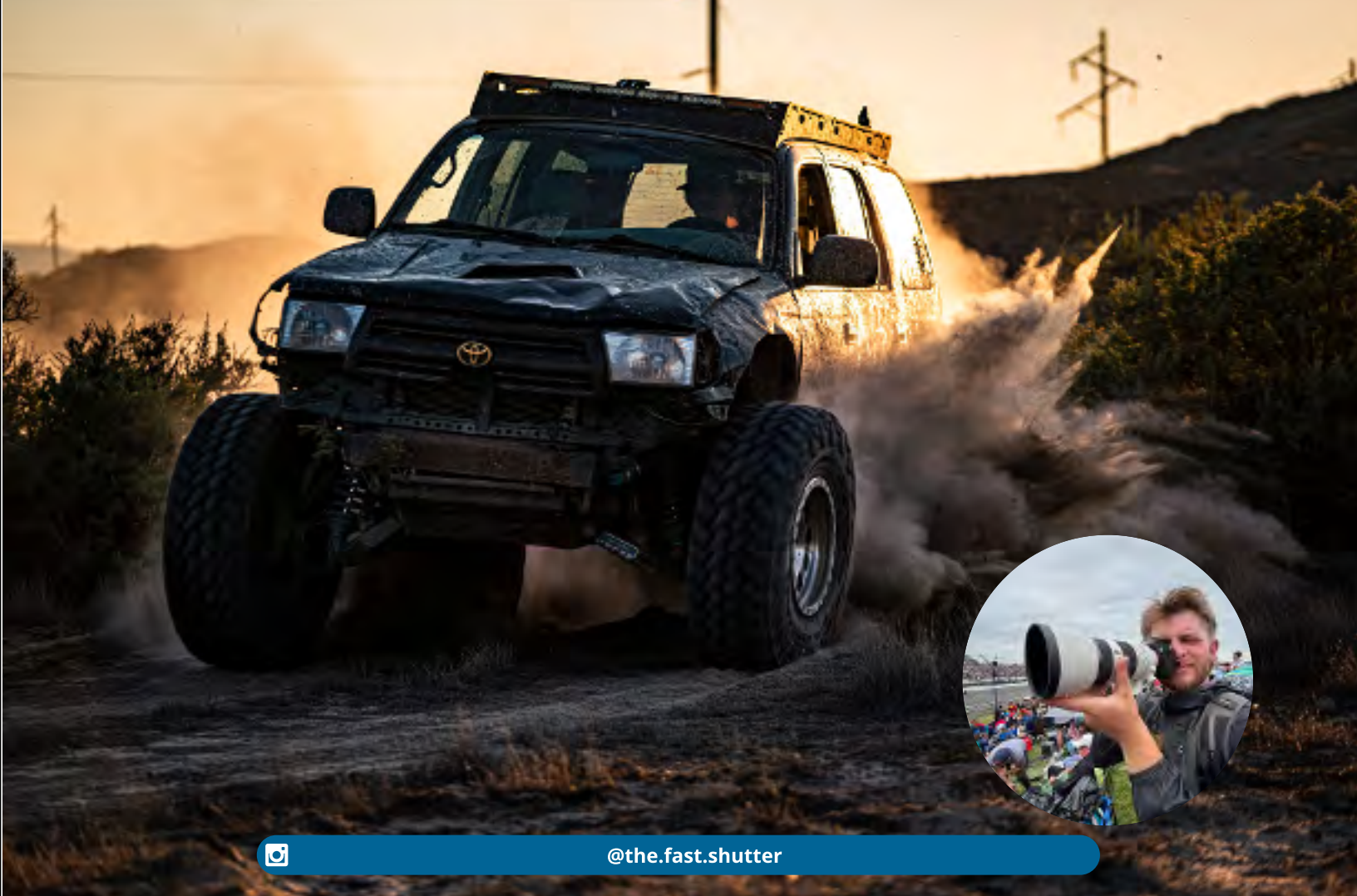
**Curran:** Just go out and shoot. The most important thing you can do is pick up your camera and use it. If you never try, you'll never improve. I've taken plenty of photos that didn't turn out the way I wanted, but those moments weren't failures—they were learning experiences. Each mistake helped me understand what to do differently next time and pushed me to improve.

Photography is all about practice, trial and error, and being willing to learn from what doesn't work. The more you shoot, the more you discover your style, refine your timing, and understand what needs adjustment. Don't be afraid to mess up—every missed shot or bad edit is just another step toward getting better. 📷

**SHIFT:** Anyone you'd like to shoutout, or mentors you'd like to thank?

**Curran:** My parents have been my biggest supporters from the very beginning. Without their constant encouragement and belief in me to chase what I'm passionate about, none of this would be possible. They've always pushed me to work hard, stay focused, and go after my goals, and I'm incredibly grateful for that support. My sister has also been a huge part of that support system. She's always there to encourage me, celebrate the wins, and keep me motivated. Having a family that truly believes in what I'm doing has made a huge difference and given me the confidence to keep pushing forward.

My next shoutout goes to my Grand Junction crew, the Junction Junkies. Without them, my photography wouldn't be what it is today. They've played a major role in helping me grow, giving me opportunities to shoot, and always being willing to get out there and make something happen. Whether it's early mornings, long days in the desert, chasing good light, or testing ideas that don't always go as planned, they're always down to be part of the process. Having a group of people who trust your vision makes a huge difference. They've been there through the learning stages, the experiments, and the progression, and they're truly the backbone of my photography here on the West Slope.



@the.fast.shutter

# BUILDING A BETTER 914



**FIFTEEN  
ELEVEN**



Story and Photography: *Brendan Garst*





If anyone knows how to throw a party, it's our friends at Porsche Colorado Springs. We've gotten to hobnob with the likes of Singer Vehicle Design, drive a 911 Turbo S cab through their annual Klassiker rally, and see what amounted to owner Don Hicks' lifetime of achievement in collecting Speed Yellow in Issue 14. At the Speed Yellow party, we started hearing rumors that Don had found something interesting at car week, and the dealership would be hosting it at some point in the future.

It wasn't long before that rumor was confirmed to be FIFTEEN ELEVEN DESIGN LTD's (Lets go with "1511" from here) beautiful re-engineering of



Porsche's venerable little sports car. The 914 has been missing quality love for some time, always a bit of the nerd's Porsche, maybe maligned a bit even beyond the transaxle trinity of the 924, 944 and 928. Don't ask me why, I have always liked them. They're quirky and they don't come with some of the existential anathema that comes with vintage 911 ownership. A 2,100 pound exercise in lightweight, short wheelbase engineering; the pinnacle momentum car. The problem was, in its most fettled 2.0 liter form of its parent Volkswagen's flat four motors, the car made 95 horsepower. You have to get up to speed at some point to have a momentum car.

Porsche corrected this themselves in era, with the 914/6, the 914/6 M471, and the 916, with the first concept chassis dubbed 'Brutus' internally, fitted with a 2.9 liter Carrera RSR motor good for 290 horsepower.





The 914 was produced from 1969 to 1976 officially, a seven year production run, compared to the 911's dance card that will likely never expire. It was niche, and US emissions and crash regulations combined with the 924 coming on as successor sealed its fate.

Now, 50 years later, 1511 has set out to painstakingly create a 914 experience with a host of modern features, centered around the use of Porsche's 987 running gear, namely the 3.8 liter flat six, reworked to offer 380 horsepower.

The powertrain isn't the only place 1511 has done work; the car has a widened full carbon body, with projectors tucked in where the turn signal lenses used to be, and large driving lights dominating the front fascia. An equally bespoke Recaro leather trimmed interior offers a lot of luxury where the standard 914 felt utilitarian at best. An exposed shifter with the knurled wood knob is flanked by the company's 5 color diamond motif, also found on the fenders.

The suspension has been re-worked to accommodate the 987 running gear as well, and the





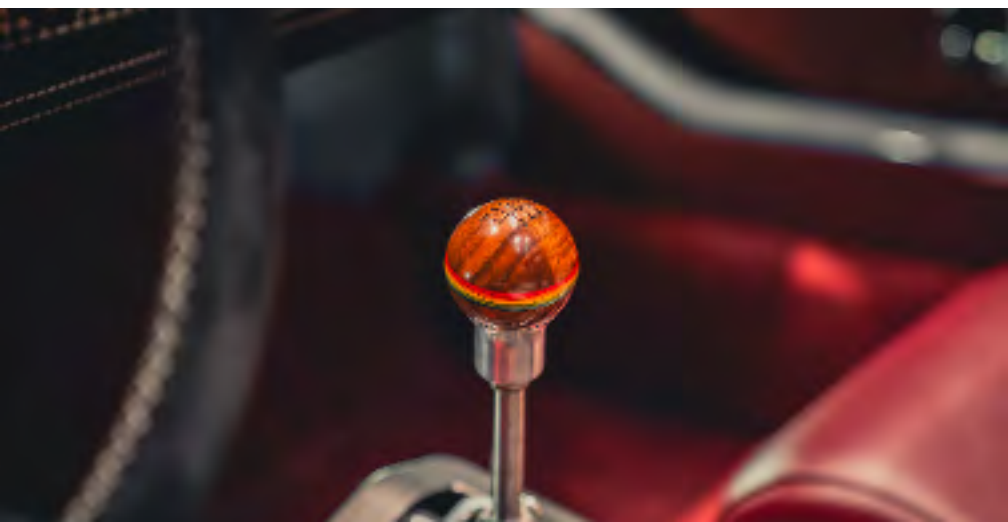
chassis has been reinforced and stiffened, with tubular steel structural elements. Brakes are by way of AP racing pedals clamping Brembo 4 piston calipers,, and the car rides on Reiger three way adjustable coilovers, and other racing inspired goodies like an FIA Compliant fuel cell from 1511's sister company, Mellors Elliot Motorsport; themselves, experienced in WRC fabrication.

Its an excellent recipe with pedigree, and in person the level of detail is phenomenal. Nothing looks half-assed, you can tell this car was painstakingly produced, from the bodywork, to the huge 18 inch Fuchs throwback wheels, and all the other fit and finish throughout, its beautiful.

Beauty has a cost, and the 1511 914 is no different, starting at roughly 350,000 pounds sterling, or \$440,000+

US Dollars depending on exchange rate and options. This may explain some of the company the car shared the night of the party; occupying the showroom was a 914/6, a 914/6 M471 nicknamed the Strenger Six, and a 916, all mentioned above as rarities, and all under Porsche Colorado Springs' roof for the event.

Director of 1511 Ben Mellors took the floor, answering questions, like Why

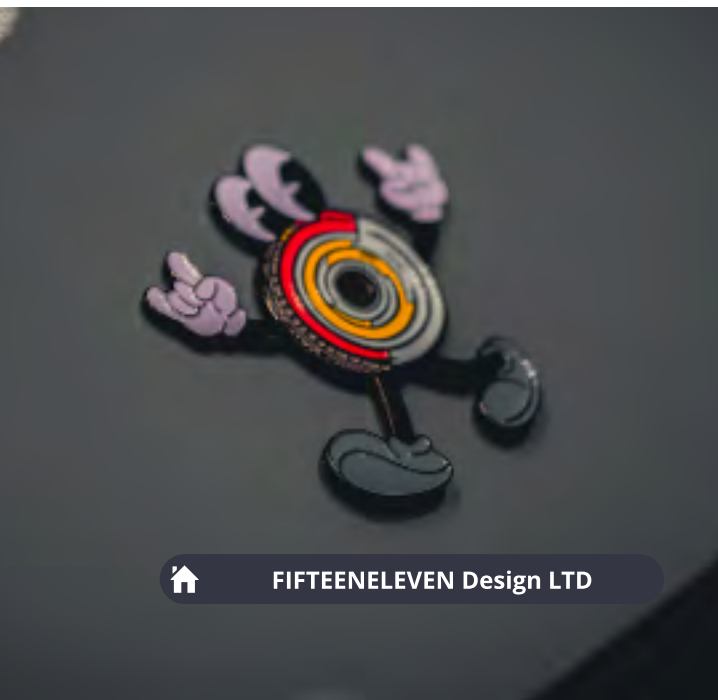




1511? "1511 is our daughter's birthday—15 November. This car is family, built into metal and carbon." He continued, "Underneath, it's 987 Cayman running gear—so it drives like a new Porsche, only turned up to eleven."

Ben was also asked why the firm hadn't attempted a 911 yet; "Everyone builds the 911. We chose the 914—because being different is the whole point."

The evening was fantastic, a beautiful car, flanked by more beautiful and rare cars, being enjoyed by the folks who love them. Of course, we've come to expect as much from our friends at Porsche Colorado Springs. The Fifteen Eleven is making a comeback tour in mid March, and will be viewable at Porsche Colorado Springs for anyone who missed out! 🏁



FIFTEENELEVEN Design LTD



Porsche Colorado Springs

# DOUG'S DREAM DRAW



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## BMWCCA's 2025 Classic Dream Car Raffle

*Big Winner: Doug Schuler Story: Brendan Garst Photography: Chris Colten, Jake Laino*



Sometimes the best enthusiast car stories are not about the newest thing, the fastest thing, or the most expensive thing. Sometimes they are about the right thing. That is what made this year's BMW Car Club of America Classic Dream Car Raffle so compelling. The prize was not an overtly computerized modern machine, wrapped in menus and driver aids; It was a refreshed 1998 BMW E36 M3 sedan, finished in Alpine White over Dove Gray, with a 5-speed manual, rear-wheel drive, and exactly the sort of analog purity that has made the E36 a lasting hero among the BMW faithful.

When the winning ticket was drawn on December 16, 2025, the car went to Douglas Schuler of the Rocky Mountain Chapter, tying one of the year's coolest club-car stories back to a BMW enthusiast in Colorado. Doug, a longtime Colorado resident, driving instructor, and BMW enthusiast has been a friend of mine for the better part of a decade, and when I heard he had won this year's classic car dream raffle, well, we couldn't help but chat with him.

"BMW CCA has regular car giveaway raffles, but I believe this was the first classic car variant. I usually buy a few tickets just to help support the club." Doug said, speaking on why he bought his pair of tickets to the raffle. When the phone rang, "I actually missed the call, and had completely forgotten about the drawing, but their voicemail was enough to get the ball rolling to confirm my ticket was the winner. I did eventually talk with BMW CCA to get the official confirmation. I was surprised... I've never won a raffle like this before." That outcome feels fitting, because this was never just a giveaway car. It was a love letter to a specific era of BMW enthusiasm that Doug has catered to for much of his time in the automotive industry. Doug's personal passion project is an E46 M3 I have watched him develop over the years.





On the official raffle page, BMW CCA framed the E36 as a “sweet spot” in the M3 lineage, and it is hard to argue with that. The car sits at a perfect intersection of old-school BMW virtues: compact dimensions, communicative steering, a manual gearbox, naturally aspirated straight-six character, and just enough civility with the addition of a pair of rear doors. This particular sedan carried 169,000-plus miles, but that only added to the appeal. Rather than preserving it as a static museum piece, BMW CCA and its partners leaned into the idea of an enthusiast’s car meant to be driven, enjoyed, and appreciated for what it is.

“It took probably a month to get things organized to go pick it up,” said Doug. As a busy father, getting the timeframe to accept the car and get it back to Colorado took some doing, and a touch of heroic driving; “The redeye flight and subsequent cannonball-esque run back to Colorado was efficient, but not

terribly fun. Less than 48 hours after leaving the house to DIA and I was back from Virginia with the car. Definitely doable for a weekend car grab though.”

A major part of the car’s draw was the refresh performed by BimmerWorld, one of the best-known names in BMW performance and race preparation. BMW CCA’s official raffle materials listed BimmerWorld as the company that refreshed the car, and the club also highlighted an extensive partner roster behind the project, including Clutchmasters, Continental, CSF, Meyle, OPTIMA, Powerflex, and Red Line Oil. Even in still photos, the M3 came across as exactly what you would want from a thoughtfully sorted E36: clean, purposeful, period-correct, and not overdone. BMW CCA even noted that the winner would receive all six original refreshed OEM E36 M3 tires with the car, a wonderfully nerdy detail that feels perfectly on-brand for a club





raffle aimed at people who notice the little things. "The car is great! James Clay and his guys at Bimmerworld went completely through the car and replaced basically everything that fails or wears out on an E36, so it's very solid and tight. I hatched the idea of a 6-speed swap on the drive home, and recently completed the work. The extra gear transforms the car on the highway, and I wish I had it for the cross country trip!"

Doug's win also underscores something important about enthusiast communities: these cars matter because the people around them matter. The Rocky Mountain Chapter is the Colorado-based BMW CCA chapter, listed by the club with a Broomfield, Colorado address, and Schuler's name being attached to that chapter gives the story a welcome local connection for enthusiasts here. This was not a faceless national sweepstakes ending with a generic announcement. It was a club member, from a real regional chapter, taking home a car that many BMW people regard as among the last truly analog M3s. I'd argue Doug's travels to Bimmerworld's headquarters to pick up the Alpine White sedan gave the raffle an even more satisfying final chapter: the car did not just get won, it got handed off in the sort of pilgrimage-worthy moment a car like this deserves.



There is also something refreshing about what this raffle says about enthusiast taste in 2025 and 2026. Ticket sales were just \$25 each, and proceeds help offset club program expenses. With Doug as the winner, Colorado won a small place among one of the coolest BMW enthusiast stories of the year: a proper analog M car, won by the kind of club member who likely understands exactly why it matters. "The E36 is a great HPDE car for both beginners and experienced drivers. More modern vehicles are so damn fast and have so many electronic aids that drivers can miss what's important to learn about high performance driving, and instructors like myself can struggle when students have more car than talent. The E36 hits that time honored adage of *better to drive a slow car fast than a fast car slow.*" mused Doug, reflecting on the car from his position as an instructor.

Doug plans to drive and enjoy the car over the summer, but like many of us, suffers from a terminal lack of space for the N+1<sup>th</sup> car. Doug candidly shared "The car is great, but we don't have room for it at the house, so it will need to find a new home this summer." Most of us have been there; and while it's a bummer, it does mean an incredibly nice, well sorted E36 M3 will be hitting the market for another Colorado enthusiast to enjoy soon! 🚩

2026



# Hummer Super Truck

Story: *Brendan Garst* Photography: *Chris Colten, Brendan Garst, Jake Laino, Scott Minshall, Justin Rohr, Shannon Smith*

**The 2026 GMC Hummer EV 3X Pickup crab-walked onto the scene** the same way its turn of the century family member did in the early 2000's with the introduction of the Hummer H2; large, loud in presence (if not in sound), and distinctly American. The H2 became a cultural icon, with huge demand in its nascent years; it was the GMT820-platformed vehicle to be seen in for sports celebrities, reality

television stars, and more. The car had prominent placement in *Entourage*, and was driven by the likes of LeBron James, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and other pop culture icons before Hollywood apologism replaced them culturally with the more socially responsible Prius. Coming with a hilarious EPA fuel economy of 10 city, 14 highway, the H2 didn't owe you, its parents, or god an apology. Nothing

really demonstrated this like Will Smith and Martin Lawrence mowing down rows of Cuban Favelas in a bright yellow example in *Bad Boys 2*. It truly was a truck of its time, a fact underscored by how quickly it fell out of favor, followed by production, when times changed with global economic recession and the unreasonably high gas prices which defined 2007-2009.

The brand died shortly afterwards in



# 3X Carbon Edition

the bankruptcy and subsequent bail out of General Motors in 2010. Something this outlandish just couldn't stay dead forever; rumors began to swirl in late 2019 that the marque was making a return, which was proudly teased in a high production and high dollar commercial during Super Bowl LIV. This time around, things were different; the truck was electric, boasted unholy numbers, and had the

car community talking about the new revival.

One thing that didn't change was Hummer's luck. Shortly thereafter, we found ourselves shackled up at home in the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic, significantly delaying the truck's reveal. Production capacity at GM shifted to producing ventilators and medical equipment, and the market for a six-figure EV behemoth became

questionable even before further headwinds like supply chain impacts on computer chips, batteries, and more made the truck seem suspect to vaporware.

The headwinds didn't blunt interest. GM sold out the first year of production shortly after the truck was revealed in October 2020, and it began making deliveries despite all of the ongoing environmental factors and in



spite of its own \$112,595 Launch Edition price tag. Produced here in the US at GM's Detroit-Hamtramck Assembly Center, now Factory ZERO, the GMC Hummer EV was again on the scene, and visible to the public. Call of Duty? Yep, it was there. YouTube spectacles? Oh yeah. The Truck and the Brand were back in the public eye in a big way.

So what happens when you take away all of this mythos and give it to our crew of oddballs? Pop Culture may be civilization's yardstick, but we wanted to see how this four-door, three-motor, solely electric pickup with

more than 1,000 horsepower (in some configurations) works in the real world.

## Exterior

The Hummer EV 3X Pickup is an enormous machine by any measure. Let's go with some specs; 18 feet long, over 7 and a half feet wide, and about the same amount tall. A towering gross vehicle weight rating of 10,300 lbs. It's a big boy, and it is ABSOLUTELY the first thing you notice. This is truly the kind of vehicle that approaches the curb with the sort of swagger native to those who need no validation. You can't be shy and drive this thing,

people ask about it everywhere.

The design is boxy; I see callbacks to the H2 in it, certainly more so than its more distant and tenuous relation to the H1 and HMMWV of early '90s fame. With a very high beltline and low roofline, it has a squat, boxy, bunker like quality, except approaching it I'd more expect to be shot at with a T-Shirt cannon than any harmful artillery. The truck prominently features 4 T-Top panels which pop off with the flick of two levers and stow in panel bags in the frunk. It's not as self-serious as the H2 in my mind, the size becomes comical the more you



look at it. It's disarming; welcoming even.

Park it at a public charger; I dare you. The Hummer towers over the other cars at the electron watering hole, which can either draw ire or enthusiasm from your fellow public charger users depending on their feelings at any given time.

The truck's stance is aggressive, but low front and rear overhangs for the batteries limit approach and departure angles. Still, it gets the brand identity across in a new and pleasing way. The Magnus Gray Matte paint looks fantastic, and as grey is a color that tends to minimize size, I wonder what kind of presence this would have in person in a color like white, or better yet, Solar Orange.

Our truck was equipped with the \$14,900 Carbon Fiber package, with bespoke emblems, skid plate and approach shield, and the best part; 22" Carbon Fiber wheels. We wondered if they were real or an applique; a \$4,300 per wheel replacement cost per a bit of searching lends some credence to them being authentically carbon. It keeps the unsprung weight down, after all.

I can't help but like it. It's modern Hummer DNA, updated for the EV era — sharp light signatures, a muscular front end, and a silhouette that I have always liked (I hate to admit I enjoyed the H2 when they released the truck variant). It's all of that done in a way that works and doesn't look dated in 2026. PS, who thought 3 arms worth of windshield wipers was a dead concept? Given the long squat windshield... They're back for the first time since the 2014 FJ Cruiser, and just lend further entertainment factor to the ridiculousness of the truck.





## Interior

Inside, the Hummer 3X leans into its premium aspirations, and gets them right in some spots. Large screens, high-end materials, and tech rule the day. The Velocity Ember interior splashed a bit of red across the seat backs, door cards, dash, and other surfaces. Visibility is better than expected given the low roofline, but it definitely feels a bit like a fort when you look out over the hood through that long, narrow windshield.

The roof panels, dubbed “sky panels”

by GM, were the thing that felt the most unfinished; just black pieces of acrylic, outside and in. GM offers a set of transparent Sky Panels and a convertible front Sky Panel as an optional extra. Wind noise was minimal, they fit well, and they were not a major production to pull on and off. And let’s face it, the type of person in the market for a Hummer EV is likely to drive with them off more often than not. Another flash trick is the front T-Top frame can bolt out, offering a true convertible experience up front. In the dead of Colorado’s 2025/2026 winter season, I spent most of my time

with the truck’s panels off, enjoying the absurdity of it.

The one big gripe I have here is GM’s decision to do away with CarPlay, starting with EVs in 2023 and moving across their lineup by 2028. I understand everyone has a Google account, and yes, google is serviceable, but how about us WAZE aficionados? It was one of the more impactful absences in the Hummer’s interior.

Rear seating is spacious, easily and comfortably seating 2 adults no problem, and a 3rd in the rear bench really wouldn’t break an



uncomfortable proximal sweat in the grand scheme of things.

There are plenty of other creature comforts in the Hummer, like a powered rear window, heated and cooled seats, tri-zone climate control, cameras galore, and even a chunky “shifter” that changes the drive mode and selects forward or backwards; a nice nod to back dated hardware even if it’s not actually connected to a transmission. My time in the truck was enjoyable and primarily filled by listening to hair metal on the 14 way Bose Centerpoint audio system while driving around with no roof in January. It was the best of times.

## Price & Trim

Pricing here is tough. Our truck as tested topped \$120,000 (\$122,370 to be exact) with the addition of only one option, the \$14,900.00 Carbon Fiber package, which got us a carbon fiber skid plate insert, mirror covers, interior accents, and absurdly, the Carbon Fiber wheels mentioned above. You know, to keep the unsprung weight manageable.

Reality tells a very different story. At the time of writing, nearly 80 new units were available between the truck and the SUV form factors, with prices starting with a 7, and model years ranging back to 2024. Dealers are incentivizing and discounting heavily online, perhaps a product of a decreased EV adoption rate, perhaps lack of interest from the relatively high \$104,700 standard price for the 3X truck, or more likely a combination of both. In my opinion, people are short changing themselves on an amazing experience at a steep discount, but we’ll get to where the real fun begins in the next section.

## Drivetrain

The Hummer EV is expensive, ostentatious, huge, and they took away CarPlay. It doesn’t sound like a great start. What the Hummer is however, is a nod to what is possible in an EV architecture, and if folks could open their mind a bit, there is a lot for the enthusiast, the standard consumer, and the crayon-eating lunatic to all enjoy here. This is more like a demonstration of things to come with further development of EVs and smaller packaging, but here today in a gigantic, loveable package.





**The power. Good Lord, the power.**

1,000 horsepowers and rated at 11,500 pound feet of torque, this is hilarious. I picked up my British Cousin from DIA, a 777 pilot who semi-regularly flies from Heathrow to Denver and visits family on his layovers. When we got on the open road and floored it, inevitable comparisons to the thrust on his Boeing were made. It's sadistic, relentless, and that's just in normal driving.

Watts to Freedom is the first of the Hummer's many party tricks. Select the

mode, and the truck lowers to its lowest roadgoing setting on the trick air suspension while theatrical animations spool over the dash and cluster. You pin the truck's brakes, and it then encourages you to floor the accelerator pedal. When you release the brake, the nearly 5 ton pickup rockets to 60 in 3 seconds flat. We actually took slow motion video to see if it wrapped tires on the rim; fortunately it doesn't but I still can't imagine your tire's sidewall loves this exercise. It's stunning; and that just

scratches the surface.

The truck has four wheel steering, which has been advertised and YouTubed profusely. It's nimble in a way that it shouldn't be, but on our photo routes the Hummer could easily outturn our Lexus LX700h at U-turns where we'd have to double back in the LX to take another pass. That's just in the standard modes; the truck also features CrabWalk and King Crab Mode.

CrabWalk steers all four wheels in-phase up to 20 miles an hour where





they'd generally steer out of phase to improve the turning circle, **leaving the truck capable of moving in a straight line other than where the front of the truck is pointed. It's jarring.** I could think of a limited number of scenarios where this might help, but hooking up to a trailer is certainly one, being able to "strafe" the truck into position instead of trying to turn and crawl to correct. Mostly, it's a gimmick to demonstrate what is possible with 4 independently turnable suspension uprights, but once I figured it out, I started doing it everywhere. I rolled quietly and diagonally through so many photos of our Lexus this issue that our photographers were overjoyed when the Hummer went home, and they wouldn't have to chase me giggling out of their shots.

King Crab Mode is sort of the opposite, having the rear wheels steer

counterphase at nearly twice the rate of the front wheels, again up to 10 degrees. It gives the faint sensation of drifting, stepping the truck's ass out much faster than the front of the truck turns, again violating feelings of what the right physics would be for something like this at low speeds.

All of the party tricks shut down at 20 mph, leaving you, unfortunately, to only make due with an all-wheel steering, 1,000 horsepower monster with a range of nearly 375 miles on a full charge from the 212 kilowatt hour 24 cell battery pack. It's not the most efficient use of electrons, but as you might expect from something with the Hummer badge on the front, it makes up for it with "More". The only challenger is Rivian with efficiency from a Dual Motor and its max battery pack yielding an EPA estimated 410 miles of range, but GM's large electric truck architecture packs a lot of power

and doesn't sacrifice the fun on the altar of range. Tell me that's not the American way?

## Experience

**So it's not for everyone.** Many will find it too loud, showy, or large. Many may not know how much better life is in a vehicle with T-Tops and may question the need. Many may not be able to justify the expense at MSRP.

**For me, the Hummer truck has entered the hall of fame, a press car I'd aspire to own one day, a distinction previously only occupied by the Ford Maverick Lobo, now a seat uncomfortably shared by two unconventional pickups at either end of the spectrum.**

I just couldn't stop enjoying it. Everything is big and preposterous but fun to drive. It's like the truck you'd draw pictures of, and has specs that



you'd probably make up telling your friends about your conceptual drawing. 11,500 Torques, 1000 Horsepowers, and a 0-60 faster than some supercars. It's mental.

I drove it proudly, with the tops off, and enjoyed every second of it. We drove it up Moffatt Pass in search of winter (only to find it had been cancelled for the year), but boiled a pot of AeroPress coffee in it using the convenient in-bed power and reflected on Hummer looking out of place in nature (it does, it wasn't a long discussion). When I needed agility, I had it. When I wanted power, I had an absurd amount of it. It became endearing.

The Hummer EV is your soccer hooligan buddy turned into a car. Ever think about headbutting a K-Rail? The Hummer would gleefully do it just to see what would happen, and I feel like if it could talk, it'd probably goad you into doing so with it. It makes you feel like a kid.

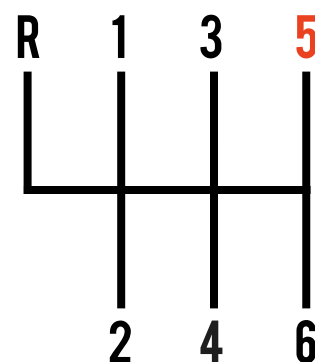
I wanted to come into the loan with a sophisticated perspective, and wanted to lambaste it as so many others have, but I can't; it's too much fun, and that's what cars in this segment should be. The tech is undoubtedly cool, the gimmicky drive modes are hilarious, there is just nothing here I could find not to like, other than the pricing, and the persistent invisible hand of supply and demand increasingly resting its finger on the scales towards the buyer that can justify this purchase.

I need one in my life, and I am not ashamed to admit that. GM Dealers in Denver, hit my digits.

**The 2026 GMC Hummer EV 3X Pickup is one of those vehicles that whether you love it or find it ridiculous, deserves some respect for knowing and being exactly what it was designed to be.** It's a statement in scale, capability, and electrified performance, offering unmatched straight-line acceleration and genuinely impressive off-road tech for an EV pickup.

Its drawbacks, the colossal size, questionable efficiency, and a price tag that demands justification every time you fill it with electrons — are real and matter to real buyers. But for those who value presence over practicality, spectacle over subtlety, and torque numbers that feel made up by a defensive toddler, the 3X rewards with a performance and capability package few trucks can touch.

**In the full mosaic of electric trucks, it may not be the most efficient, most practical, or most mainstream pick — but it's certainly been the most memorable; A real achievement on its own.** 🚩





# SECOND OPINION



Story: *Marty Kier*

Photography: *Chris Colten, Scott Minshall, Shannon Smith*



I went into my time with the Hummer EV thinking the conversation would be mostly about size, and it is, because you cannot ignore the fact that this thing feels like a rolling skyscraper. The more interesting question for me was simpler, and honestly, more relevant for the kind of person who ends up with one. Can you live with it every day without turning every errand into a small event?

This particular truck makes that question even funnier because it is not just a Hummer EV, it is the Carbon Fiber Edition with Magnus Gray Matte paint, a Velocity Ember interior, and twenty two inch carbon fiber wheels. The price of our truck landed at \$122,370, and at that MSRP, practicality stopped being the only point roughly a well equipped new 4Runner ago. The Hummer is allowed to be theatrical. The surprising part is how normal it can feel once you are behind the wheel and actually using it.

Let's start with the thing everyone assumes will be miserable.

Maneuvering. The truck is tall, wide, and you sit way up in it, yet the rear wheel steering changes the whole experience. The turning radius is borderline absurd in a good way. In city driving, it feels less like wrestling a heavy duty pickup and more like guiding a big, square, high tech object that happens to be able to leave an intersection like it got launched. Parking is also less stressful than expected, mostly because the cameras do so much of the work. The backup camera view is clean, and the system will even pull up a front view when you come out of reverse, which helps you place the corners without doing that slow creep that normally comes with something this tall.

Visibility ended up being the second surprise. The windshield is a little squinty and it reminded me of an FJ Cruiser in that specific way where you feel like you are looking out of a visor slot, yet the side glass is big and the mirrors are genuinely useful. You also sit high enough that you can see over

plenty of traffic, which helps, as long as you remember the flip side of that. You need to stay aware of smaller cars and motorcycles that can disappear into the lower parts of your view. The blind spot monitors help, though I wish modern cars were better at understanding context. If you are in a turn lane with your signal on, should the truck really act like you are about to merge into the car next to you? The seat vibration alerts can go from helpful to obnoxious fast, especially when you are intentionally driving close during a shoot, or you are simply trying to position the truck precisely in traffic.

That seat vibration thing sums up a lot of the Hummer's personality. It wants to feel futuristic, and it does, yet it also wants to manage you a bit. The lane keep system itself is one of the better ones I have used because it is not overly forceful, and it does a solid job tracing the lane without feeling like it is wrestling you. The truck still loves to chirp and buzz when it thinks you are



doing something questionable. A week of ownership would probably include a long session in the settings menu, and I would not blame anyone for that.

The driving feel is exactly the contradiction you expect. It is an EV, so the torque is immediate and hilarious. If you floor it, the truck squats hard enough that your sight line tilts upward, and for a second, you feel like you are looking at the sky. You can also feel bumps like you would in a truck, and you can feel body roll if you push it into a corner, yet it does not rattle, it does not feel flimsy, and the cabin stays impressively quiet. The steering is precise but muted, which fits the mission. You are not buying this for the delicate road texture through the wheel. You are buying it because it is a Hummer that can do crab walk moves, and still feel composed while doing normal commuter activities.

There are also a few small daily driver quirks that matter more than people admit. The truck can make you feel like you are going slower than you actually are, which is a weird side effect of sitting high with a calm cabin and a big, stable platform. I also noticed the speed limit display was not always correct, and that is one of those little tech annoyances that is easy to ignore until it is not. On the plus side, the brakes feel well-balanced when you do use them, and that matters because regenerative braking

takes a little time to smooth out. The first hour can be a bit jerky if you are not used to lifting off the throttle and letting the truck slow itself.

Inside, the Hummer feels better than the exterior suggests. The layout is straightforward, the screens are easy to navigate, and I never had that new car moment where you spend ten minutes trying to find basic climate controls. The interior color on this one is bold, and it suits the truck. It feels like the designers understood that subtlety was never going to be the point here. I also appreciate that it avoids the glossy piano black surfaces that love fingerprints and scratches. Instead, it leans into rugged luxury with big vents, chunky grab handles, and a cockpit that feels purpose-built rather than decorative.

Tech-wise, it is mostly a win, with one big talking point. The infotainment experience is easy, and the pairing process was painless, yet there is the whole Apple CarPlay situation that has spurred a lot of arguments. Is that a deal breaker? For some buyers, yes, and I get it. When you are spending this kind of money, you want your preferred ecosystem to be there without debate. The rest of the everyday tech is strong, though, especially the camera system and the way the truck helps you place it in the world.

Storage is better than expected. The center console is deep, there is a wireless charging pad, there are usable cup holders,

and there are little compartments that keep revealing themselves. I also love that the rear window drops into the bed, because it is the sort of feature that makes the truck feel fun instead of serious. The moon-themed Easter eggs are another little touch that gives it personality, even if you are not the type to hunt for them.

The removable roof panels might be the most charming part of the whole thing. They come off easily, they are not heavy, and it genuinely changes the vibe. Is the long term question exactly what you think it is? Yes. How

do those seals hold up over years of temperature swings and real use? That is the price of having something this playful in a truck this complex.

Then there is the bed. It is short, and I actually think that is honest. EV trucks still lose range fast when you start doing real truck things, so a shorter bed feels like a quiet admission that most owners are not buying this to haul drywall every weekend. They want the look, the stance, the tech, and the experience, plus the ability to do truck stuff when it is convenient, not because it is their job.

My takeaway is that the Hummer EV works better as a daily driver than you may assume, mostly because the rear steering, the camera systems, and the general usability are doing a lot of heavy lifting. It is still huge, and it will still demand attention in tight spaces, yet it is not punishing and surprisingly practical. If you can charge at home, and if you accept that this is more spectacle than spreadsheet, the Hummer EV makes a surprisingly strong case for itself. It is easy to live with, and it never lets you forget you are driving something completely ridiculous. 🚩



# Bootleg - 02

EXPLORING THE  
INTERSECTION OF CAR  
ENTHUSIASM AND BRICK  
CONSTRUCTION  
TOYS . . . . AGAIN

Story & Photography: **Brendan Garst**

**I remember feeling the itch on January Second of 2026; Winter was upon us.**

Snowy short days with much inside time were in my future, and car related brick-construction kits from the far East have been the cure for what ails me. Unaware we were not to truly *have* a Winter of 2026, my credit card took a beating with two objectives: Keeping myself entertained, and bringing back BOOTLEGO, one of my favorite topics I've covered at SHIFT!

I'd wager that there are many of us car-folks out there who can identify a certain wrapped gift by the sound that it makes. Little bits of plastic, rattling around in cellophane, waiting to meet you and realize their potential.

That unmistakable sound is the sound of LEGO (or similar interlocking brick-based construction kits). As a kid, I used to revel in the ability to shake a box and know it contained one of my favorite toys, and I'll bet I'm not alone there.

LEGO as we know it was invented by Ole Kirk Kristiansen in Billund, Denmark. **Originally styled as "Automatic Binding Bricks", the earliest ancestors of the bricks we know today first showed up in 1949**, and the LEGO "SYSTEM" blocks we're familiar with today made their way onto the scene in 1958.

From these beginnings, LEGO have gone on to introduce more complicated and intricate sets including motors, gears, lights, moving parts, and ornate details

# CHECKING THE SCALES



1:8

1:10

1:12

1:18

1:24



with their “Technic” line. LEGO sets have fascinated both car enthusiasts and non-car enthusiasts alike for 65 years.

**How does this tie into cars, you may be asking? My first real point of this article is that if you like cars and legos, the last 10 years have been an amazing time to be alive and equipped with fingers.** In March of 2015, LEGO Introduced their “Speed Champions” line; a 1:24-esque line of real licensed cars in the 300-500 piece

range that can be built in about an hour. This was the gateway to an ever increasing number of interesting licensed sets which have been released over the last nearly 10 years, not only in the speed champions scale, but in 1:12 scale Technic sets. For the truly impassioned: 1:8 scale Technic masterpieces with over 3,000 individual pieces.

**Are you a fan of screaming 5 cylinder Audi Quattros ?I am, and there was a**

**set for me.** The “Back to the Future” DeLorean? Would you like that in small or medium? Like the “Fast and the Furious” franchise? There’s a fantastic amount of options on deck for you. You get the drift; where once we’d make due with trademark safe car kits like 5767 “Cool Cruiser”, we now have the ability to build 42154; the “2022 Ford GT”.

In 2015 I had more or less kicked my childhood LEGO habit, and occasionally



built one when I got one as a gift. **I received a few Speed Champions kits, and was hooked again. I tiptoed into the bigger models, and built my first 1:8 scale car during COVID in 2021.**

This was all amazing, but it's easy to bump into the macguffin that leads me to the second point of the article; **LEGO ain't cheap.** Ranging from \$25.99 for a Speed Champions build, up through the roughly \$150 price point for midsize cars, **to \$450.00 for the most recent McLaren P1 1:8 Scale kit.** It rapidly becomes something aspirational, something you wish you could be building instead of something one gets to enjoy doing.

**Enter the internet and its remarkable impact on global trade;** ethics aside, if someone makes something, there's 10 people out there willing to copy it, and building bricks are no different. Going to

## HERE COME THE CLONES

Aliexpress and searching "MOC" (short for My Own Creation) will open your eyes to a world of vehicular based construction toy sets, some of which look awfully familiar if you're familiar with LEGO's offerings.

**As it often does, the internet at large managed to salvage some good from questionable origins.** With the supply of non-genuine bricks available for use, many people started creating and selling their own MOC kits or instructions, offering the ability to build pretty much any interesting car you've ever considered wanting in real life. Outlets like Rebrickable ,Pingubrick s, The Block Zone and more offer amazing sets, all re-imagined with these bricks as the basis. Local brick and mortar stores like Bricks and Minifigs also encourage the MOC hobby. It's truly remarkable to see what can come from a little off-grid imagination with building bricks.

**I had so many questions when I first happened upon MOC kits; wondering about the legitimacy, completeness and quality of the products I'd receive.**

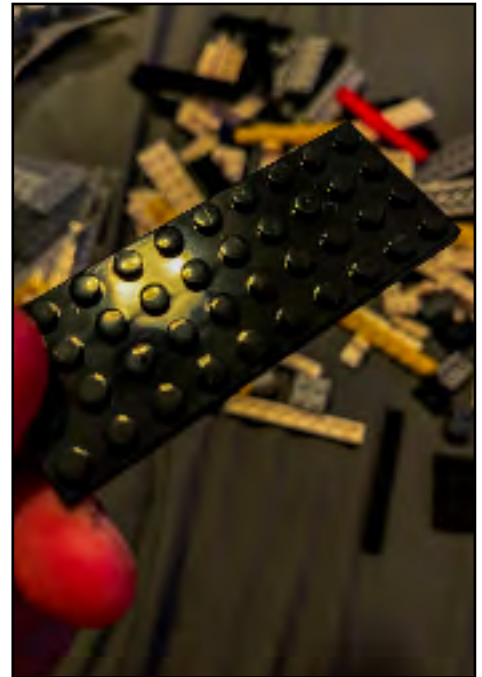
Bootlego 1 all the way back in Issue 6 of SHIFT Proved that yes, you can have alot of fun with a bit of money. This time, I went a little funkier with my MOC choices, to see if

changes in the world had changed the MOC scene in the last two years.

Armed with these questions and my credit card, **I sent Aliexpress \$550.00 of my dollars (really about \$1,100 but I only got to half of what I ordered) for another round of MOCs.** I wanted to see what I could build in MOCs for the rough cost of one 1:8 scale car and a couple Speed Champions cars from the name brand.

**The answer is a lot.** For this article I ordered and assembled 13 sets and nearly 19,000 pieces of vehicular construction toys to find out what these are all about, and what the true value proposition is to buying less than genuine toys.

**Read on for the impressions!**



## Blue Supercar Model Set - Porsche GT3 Go-Kart



There is an interesting new phenomena; showing models fawning over 1:8 scale kits with impossible prices. What I got instead was a 911 Go Kart, featuring doors, a center mounted steering wheel, and not much else. For \$9 I didn't have high expectations, but it strikes me that this could catch someone less aware of what they're doing out when ordering. It was still a fun little lego set, just not something I'd display. **All parts were accounted for, and this was a neutral build. Running Total: \$9.05.**

## Blue Racing Building Block Toys





Much the same as the previous Porsche, I saw another 1:8 kit being aped for an impossible price, the Bugatti Chiron, shown appearing massive on the man's table above. In reality, you get a mostly hollow Chiron that doesn't look terrible, but comes in slightly off-sized to any established scale, and would be a lot more at home as a gateway to technic style builds for first timers, or for kids, than in anyone's collection. I didn't really enjoy it, but hey, every comparison needs its losers. **Ring in at \$10.22, we have a running total of: \$19.27, for two relatively meh builds. Not a strong start.**

Cada 1:24 Technical Drift Racing Car C42 Sports Car

Lets fix that. CADA is a Chinese manufacturer who brings a touch more quality and realism to their kits, and this one represents Mazda's storied 787 race car. With claims of being licensed, a set of true Mazda branded decals, and a good level of detail, I thought this little car was **great to build for an hour for \$11.05, bringing our running total to \$30.32 and 3,175 pieces assembled. I'd highly recommend this one for people who want an awesome little Mazda model.**



New MOC Car Model s 1992 Viper RT/10 DIY Creative Educational

Another 1:24 scale MOC that I couldn't resist, to build a little speed champions scale car based on my early 95 Viper RT-10. This one was another bummer; it was missing a ton of parts (see the out of place blue? I substituted blue everywhere I was missing a red piece), and ultimately, its not that great of a facsimile. It has some cool building techniques to get the shapes, but for \$25.41 this cost the same as a genuine Speed Champions kit, without the quality control. **This brings the total to \$55.73, with only one winner in the bunch. Yikes, what could save us!?** called SNOT, or "stud



### Ideas Shelby Cobra Sports Car 10357 Model Building Block Sets



How about for four dollars more, a graduation to the next scale? Now we're onto some of the midsize cars, with scales in the ballpark of 1:10 to 1:14. These involve higher part counts, which means more opportunity for things to go wrong. The Builders 0265 is a recreation of LEGO kit 10357. At 1,241 pieces, this was definite step up. The kit included a well illustrated paper manual, and was a fun roughly 5 hour build, yielding a great looking Shelby Cobra, complete with mechanic's toolbox for the trunk, \$100 bill plate for the dash and a car show trophy. The build features working steering, doors, trunk, and hood. **The kit took roughly 5 hours to build, and cost \$29.30, and that price is a bargain compared to branded pricing of \$150.00**

### Doc Brown Value Van Moc building blocks Kit - Detailed Movie Theme



I can't be the only one who thought Doc Brown's GM P-60 Value Van box truck from Back to the Future Part 1 was almost as rad as the DeLorean when I was a kid. I used to try to build DeLoreans out of my legos, then build the van to put them in. Thanks to MOC builders, the GM is now sorted, complete with rooftop lighting and fold down ramp. There's no steering and the doors are open. The build quality is a little dubious, its easy to break the floor out of the van, but if you have a speed champions scale time machine as recently released, I can't think of a cooler accessory! **Build time was roughly 2 hours for the 533 piece kit (including reinstalling the floor twice), which cost \$29.02 bringing the running total to \$135.96**

### Coupe GT Super Racing Car Model MOC Classic City Vehicle

This was just the coolest little 1:24 Speed Champions Scale I have ever built, mainly because someone gave Audi's Coupe GT, the calmed down front wheel drive version of the Quattro, its own MOC kit, which was my first old car and a gateway drug of sorts for me. Its not the famous car, and I thought that was even cooler! Its an ok kit, the tolerances are such that the wheels don't roll, it doesn't have any real features, and **it's expensive at \$34.09, but whatever, one million out of ten based on subjectivity.**



## Lamborghini LC5000 Countach Quattrovalvole Vehicle Model



**Enough underdogs and box trucks, how about a sleek sports car from a storied manufacturer like Lamborghini?** This 1,251 piece kit is my shot at redemption for the terrible Countach I build last time, that I still refuse to touch because of its propensity to self-disassemble. This one is from Mould King, and despite the off putting brand name, they are another quality kit-maker in the space. This one was much more robust than last time's Countach, and features working steering, scissor doors, a working hood, bonnet, and boot, and was pretty fun to put together, for **\$46.99, bringing the running total to \$197.95, and a parts count of 6,832.**

## Classic and Retro Convertible Model 10304 Building Chevrolet Camaro



Another copy of a branded kit, this is a knock off of the LEGO 10304 Camaro, another \$150 kit. The kit weighed in at 1,456 pieces and took roughly 4-5 hours to complete. The set was complete, and offered the same optionality that the branded set does to have red, white or gray stripes, and build as either a coupe or convertible. I went with the classic conservative coupe in black with white stripes. There's a nice detailed interior, working steering, a detailed motor, working doors and trunk, etc. This thing is sharp too! This would make a great display or desk fidget for the Camaro enthusiast, and I thought was one of the better detailed kits of the bunch. **This kit rang in at \$47.96, bringing the running total to \$245.991.**

## MG50 1:8 MCL38 F1 Car Building Blocks MOC Technic Toys

LEGO recently moved into models of F1 cars in the 1:8 scale, offering slightly less complex options for folks who want to take on large scale technic builds, or F1 fans in general. This is a knockoff of the McLaren MCL38, but came with decals to dress it up as a trademark safe version of any car in the F1 lineup. I enjoy all the fake sponsors (ELVO instead of VELO, WORKED instead of Workday, MCAENR instead of McLaren, OXH instead of OKX... we get it, you don't want to get sued.) but fear the proportions are a little long to the rear, as the manufacturer left space to add a drive and steering motor if the kit was so optioned (you could have an RC MCAENR MCL38!) The kit is impressive in size, and features working suspension and steering. **At \$50.85, it's a solid value if you can overlook the inauthenticities!** Now



Technical Land Rover Supercar Off-Road Building Blocks City Racing Car



Now we're getting into it with the big boys, a 1:10 scale Land Rover Defender, which is again a copy of a LEGO kit. We start seeing boxes in this price range, and if the folks knocking these off aren't sometimes quite ballsy, I don't know how else I'd put it. The box literally says Technic on it and is a straight up copy of the LEGO Box. The model was awesome, featuring bagged ordered parts (doing a bag at a time is very helpful in these large kits to keep your table space needs and amount of tiny parts to wander off to a minimum). The truck has a ton of features, like opening roofbox and side box, a folding ladder, a working gearbox, moving pistons, a working winch, working steering with a removeable steering knob on the roof to stage your steering angle, removeable traction boards, a locking tailgate and double damper suspension. It is an AWESOME model, and fun to build with no missing parts.

**Parts count balloons to 2,570 in this case, costing just \$51.22, and this kept me entertained for the entire runtime of HBO's fantastic Chernobyl miniseries, about 7 hours and change. Whats really compelling here is the LEGO version retails for \$240.00, this offers value by nearly a factor of five, and no discernable differences.**

MOC Bricks GT3i RS Technical Car Compatible



**This was it, the daddy, the kit that got me interested in these value oriented kits.** In 2016, LEGO released the first 1:8 scale kit an orange Porsche 911 GT3. The kit was wildly popular and spawned the market for building large scale kits; used assembled copies sell for between \$500-\$800 USD, and sealed unbuilt kits sell for nearly \$1,200, making it unapproachable for many compared to its release MSRP of \$250.00. I built this last go-round but with a copyright safe twist of doing it in a GULF Oil Company livery, but I built the orange one as a gift for our friends at the First Dibs Podcast. It comes with a paper manual that was very good, and included sizing guides for beams, axles and gears, as it can be easy to pick the wrong ones. The kit came in two gigantic cellophane bags full of bricks that didn't really have a numbered order. I just dumped a bag and started building, and dumped the second bag when I couldn't find something.

The kit took approximately 15 hours off and on to build. These kits have awesome features; moving doors and motors. Functional 8 speed gearboxes, transmissions and differentials, working steering, a detailed roll cage and more. The size is truly impressive, it's nearly 2 feet long. **This 2,704 piece kit cost \$72.68, bringing the running total to \$420.44 and 14,985 pieces assembled. I've built this kit 3 times now, and never not had fun doing so!**

## Technical MOC 1:8 Racing Sport Retro Rally Car Classic Sportscar



This was the absolute treat of the bunch. The most complex as well, boasting a 3,887 part count, lighting, and bespoke parts for a MOC, the first I've seen of that level of detail. This is a replica of an Audi A1 Group B rally car, wearing the numbering and livery of Walter Rohrl's S1. The kit features moving doors, a detailed I5 motor, forward/reverse gears, working steering, a working differential, and opening hood and trunk. There are a ton of little cool touches like the Sabelt fabric seatbelts, the individual spark plug wires, the working headlights and taillights, there is just so much here. It comes in an extremely nice box, with a manual that includes a lot of cool info on the real Audi rally program, offers a nice printed set of instructions, and even comes with a little display plaque. It came in 12 numbered bags, that took about an hour to two hours each. **The 13th and final kit in our run cost \$145.48, but I would gladly pay it again for a kit with this level of quality and visual detail. This is possibly the coolest one of these I will ever build. Our final total for the article stands at \$566.14, and I assembled 18,900 individual components. While I really didn't need to hunker down for the winter that never came, these always ensured I had something fun to build!**

There's no doubt that these kits represent a fantastic value, we built 11 pretty cool models and two bad ones for the price of one big LEGO kit and a couple little cars to go with it. On the other side of things, you do get a much more polished experience and pretty much never have to do any problem solving with a LEGO kit unless you make the problem for yourself, versus the occasional missing or broken components on the AliExpress sets.



There's also something to be said for paying for the company that spent time to develop the kits, versus just copying them, but at what point is that IP usuriously priced versus fairly priced? Plastic is plastic, and there is a reason LEGO is one of the most profitable privately held companies in the world. I leave it to you to live by your own morals.

What about Tarriffs, you may ask, a concept that didn't really exist when we ran the last batch of Bootlego through the grinder? Well, interestingly, I was never assessed a tarriff on these that I saw discretely

from the purchase price of the kit. I don't know if manufacturers are absorbing these or if some of the tricks of distribution (they never arrived via a major distributor like FEDEX, they were always hand delivered by GOFO or UNIUNI couriers. I thought it was strange but welcome given tarriffs would have effectively doubled the price of this article at the bare minimum.

No matter where you stand on the matter, it's hard to argue that it's a bad time to be a car enthusiast who is also a building brick toy enthusiast as well. So many awesome kits are out there

that one can feasibly keep themselves building cars they love for a very long time. With the holidays coming up, I hope some of these wind up in your nondenominational holiday gift-receiving rotation, and you get a chance to reconnect with the joy of these iconic toys! 🏁

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- MAY 9 - DRIFT CLINIC #2
- MAY 10 - SUMMER OFF THE STREETS
- MAY 22-23 - SLUSH MOTORSPORTS FESTIVAL
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# HORSEPOWER *Heroines*



*Honoring the women behind the wheel, under the hood, and leading the charge in Colorado's motoring community.*

Interviewer: **Tish Gance** Photography: **Lauren Crofts**

## Meet Lauren...

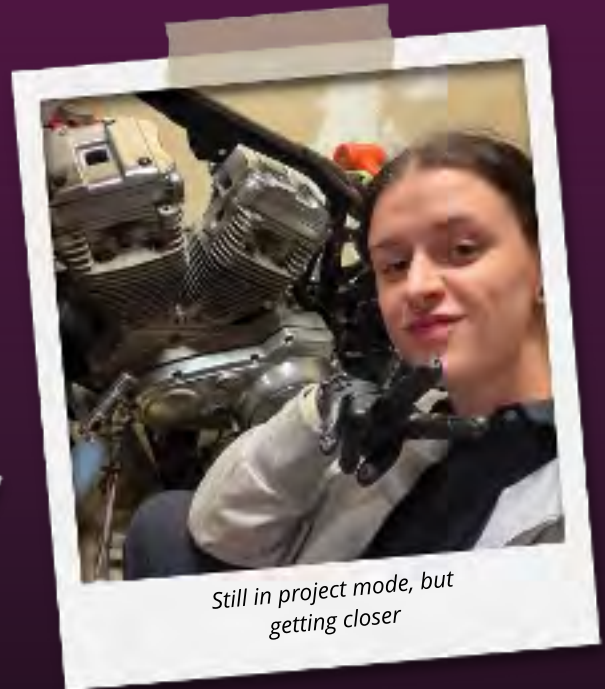
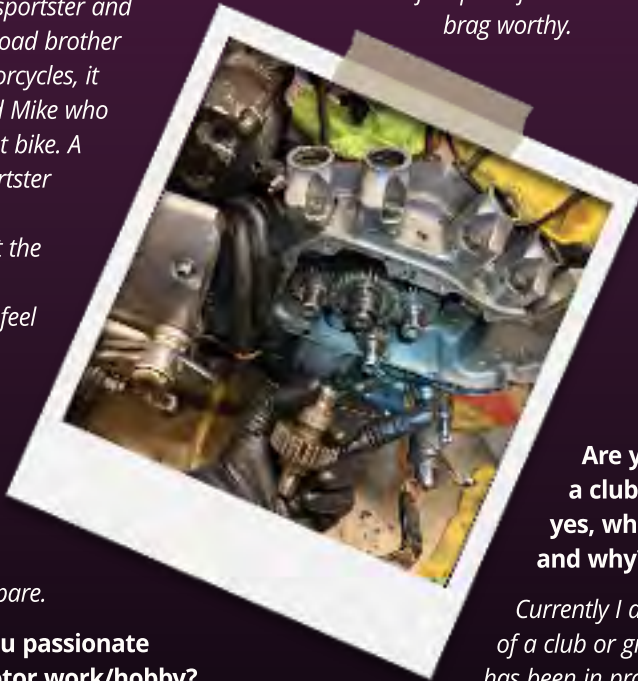
### Who or what got you interested in cars/bikes/motors?

I was first introduced to motorcycles by my Dad and my older brother. My Dad started off on a sportster and now is a proud road brother got me into motorcycles, it was my husband Mike who gifted me my first bike. A 1988 Harley Sportster Hugger. There's something about the sound of motorcycles, the feel of riding them, and even working on them that pulls something out of you. It just doesn't compare.

### What keeps you passionate about your motor work/hobby?

When I got my bike it wasn't running. I've had to take it apart, read the manual, ask questions, and try not to throw parts and tools across the garage. What keeps the passion alive is the pride I will carry telling people that I, a woman, rebuilt my own bike. Not a shop or a friend, but me. Rebuilding and riding a motorcycle as a woman shows

other woman and young girls it's possible to be part of this male dominated world. That we can do it too. Plus it's just plain fun and brag worthy.



*Still in project mode, but getting closer*

### Are you part of a club/circuit? If yes, which ones and why?

Currently I am not part of a club or group. My bike has been in project/rebuild mode. But I would love to ride one day with The Litas. A woman's only riding group that gets together and plans various routes here in Colorado. There's something so cool and supportive about having a group of woman to ride with. There's skill levels of all sorts in this group. So you never feel like you aren't "good enough" to ride or "don't know enough".

Aside from this group I would love to be part of charity rides for various causes.

### My daily driver is a:

2016 Honda Crv. She's no show boat but she gets the job done.

### If money were no object, I would have:

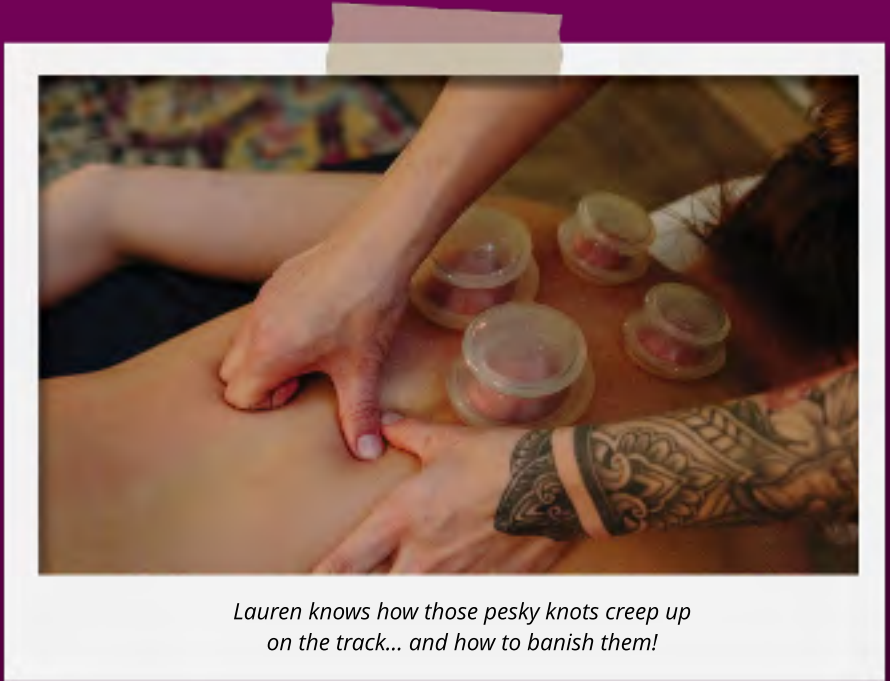
If money were no issue, I'd have a 1978 Shovelhead chopper and the K5 Blazer. Restored and beefy!! They'd be show projects for sure.

**When not playing with cars/bikes/etc, I am:**

*When I'm not working on my bike, I'm enjoying the beautiful outdoors of Colorado, trying to train our 9.5 month old golden retriever, expanding my journey into weight lifting, and working. I run my own business and that tends to take more of my time than I like sometimes.*

**I make money to support my habit by:**

*I am the proud owner of Denver Athletic Massage, [denverathleticmassage.com](http://denverathleticmassage.com). This year marks 8 years as a licensed massage therapist and 5 years in business. In my practice I use a therapeutic approach to help people recover and prevent injuries. Meaning I'm the one you pay to get that stubborn knot out. This isn't a spa experience, this is a dig deep and breath experience. I enjoy encouraging my clients to be active and heal their bodies through fitness and exercise.*



*Lauren knows how those pesky knots creep up on the track... and how to banish them!*

**Tell us one short, fun, hobby related story:**

*Oh man, I got way too excited and ahead of myself when I was replacing the pistons on my motorcycle. I had removed the shop cloths from the crankcase too early. I still had to put the gap rings back in and those are stubborn little pieces. Well it took one slip for that ring to fall into the crankcase. I just sat there like, are you f-ing kidding me?! I'd been in the garage for a while at this point and this was the last thing I was going to do to get the cylinders back on. I had to drain oil and*

*finagle a magnet down in there to get it out. Not funny in the moment but laughable now. Learned that lesson.*

**Anything else to share?**

*I want to give a shout out to **Blacktop Choppers**. Matt and his crew have been a great resource for me. They pointed me in the right direction with new pistons I didn't know I needed. I was treated with respect and dignity. That's huge for me. It's totally possible to integrate woman and men into these industries. To share our love and passion of things that go fast and sound cool.*



*Thanks to Blacktop Choppers for these beauties!*

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# TRI STATE SWAP MEET *DEAL OR DIE*



*Story & Photography: Steve Clark*

Diving into my new role as the Scoop guy, I headed out to experience the Tri-State Swap Meet in Denver over a warm February weekend, thank God for global warming. Held at the National Western Expo Center, more famous for rodeos, bulls, and the 4H Club, the Sabers of Denver car club organizes this massive event.

Among the fainter smell of cattle, the slightly stronger smell of gasoline, rubber, and BBQ wafted over the rows upon rows of muscle car parts, tools, signs, and the bric-a-brac of Americana. Spread out over several buildings, down in the basement,

even in the cattle auction stadium area, there was a car corral, where deals were being made for running cars and a smattering of abandoned projects.

I stopped by to see Tracey and her husband Wayne, in Booth 1065, proudly displaying THE LATEST SCOOP on a huge banner, handing out National Street Rod Association 2026 schedules. We discussed the upcoming issue of Scoop - this one - and the difficulty of verifying car events. There are so many sources of events, but too many are outdated or offer bad information. There's a lot to wade through.

In the car corral, the cars ranged from a Bandimere family collection pristine, red 1957 Chevy 2 door hardtop, 3 speed manual priced for \$94,750, a shortie 1957 Chevy 4 door Bel Air customized into a shortened, 2-door piece of awesomeness for \$12000, a 1964 Oldsmobile Starfire for \$8500, a 1966 Chrysler 300 for \$4975, and a 2006 Subaru Baja for \$4500.

Walking row after row of merchandise, I stopped by the Shannon Watts art display and introduced myself to Shannon and his wife, Julie. Shannon's a fantastic artist, and I loved his "Is There Life After Death" t-shirt.



Wandering down a few aisles, I met up with Burke Payne of BP Appraisals, whom I've known for a while as a Colorado Cars & Coffee sponsor. Burke provides appraisals, fighting the low-ball offer you might get from the insurance after your ride's been totaled.

Also stopped by the Sabers of Denver Car Club booth and said hello to Lance Jarman, whom I knew when he worked at Paddock Imports. It was great to say hi and congratulate Sabers on a very smoothly run swap meet.

Had a great time, met a few folks, talking Model A's, artwork, and classic car appraisals. Parking was a racket at \$20, but the experience was lively and the people watching fun!



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# PROJECT PATINA

Story and Photography: Scott Minshall



## Betsy The Bell Van

Sometimes we go through life collecting things, searching for that next great find, trying to realize the ideas and fantasies in our minds. Then one day, we find that one piece that fits into our life and our collection so perfectly, it's like we were meant for each other, and we wonder, have we met before? Have I seen you before? Did we pass each other on the road along the way and not even realize it?

Tony Paradiso collects lots of things, but mostly he collects old phones. We're talking about landline phones. For those of you who may be too young to know what a landline is, it's what we used to use in our homes and offices before cell phones were a thing, with a literal cable that connected the phone to the wall. Landline telephones are just as unique as old cars; there is one with a personality to match nearly any type

of environment or person. I like old phones as well and have always wanted an old phone booth in my house, kinda like the one from the movie *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*. So when I came across Tony and his old work van, I had to know more about their story. This isn't just any old van - it's a Mountain Bell Telephone Company service van that, based on its appearance, has many of its own stories to tell that



were earned through many years of loyal service. The van fits right into Tony's curated collection of old phone service memorabilia, where it lives among its landline-connected cousins.

The Bell Telephone Company was founded in 1877 and connected much of the United States together, eventually pulling the Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph

Company under its umbrella to become Mountain Bell, serving the Colorado region. Service vans were the vehicle of choice and were manufactured by the big three: Ford, Chevy, or Dodge. Everyone, even the phone company, got in on the van craze of the 60s. These service vehicles possessed some distinct traits: a solid panel on the driver's side and windows on the passenger side, paint in their signature "Bell

System Green" with blue and yellow stripes, their iconic Bell logo with the name of the specific regional company they represented, and, almost always, the fitment of a yellow ladder.

Tony originally saw a similar van in a YouTube video and knew he had to find one for himself. After a little searching, he found one on Craigslist and was able to complete



*Then one day, we find that one piece that fits into our life and our collection so perfectly, it's like we were meant for each other*

the purchase. Tony has been the owner of the van since 2017 and has been collecting AT&T/Bell/Qwest memorabilia since the early 80s, making him a perfect candidate to give this van another life. His particular Bell service van started life as a 1966 Chevy G-10 that was originally equipped with a 194 cu in (3.2 L) I6 engine. After talking to Tony and finding out more about him, I learned he is not just a collector, but a curator of many things. His house is full of vintage relics from different industries, such as old radios, a wine press, and lots of great telephones. Tony just loves vintage things, from gadgets and tools to truly classic pieces of our hard-working past, and Betsy the

Bell Van fits right into his collection. Tony even works as a Communications Technician, and he has Betsy decorated with lots of Bell-related material from his service over the years. An employee of Mountain Bell (now Lumen) since 1979, Tony has been part of the company's evolution, looking towards the future but with a mind and heart that still honors the past. Though they met after her retirement, it is in that spirit that Tony has given Betsy, the old service van, a new role and a new lease on life with the ability to continue hitting the road with the glory she deserves, proudly displaying the scars and character earned from years of hard work.





After Tony's acquisition, Betsy sat around for a few years before Tony added his touch, eventually replacing the tired inline six cylinder with a 350 small block crate engine sourced from BluePrint, sitting between the front seats and a 3.55 Posi rear end out back. The van still has a three-speed on the steering column, like many vans from that era. Tony said he wants to upgrade the gearbox one of these days. An addition he's proud of is a 48v bell mounted on the front bumper and powered by a rectifier, one of the same bells used by the phone company, and painted in the same iconic 'Bell Green' that is seen on Betsy herself.

He enjoys the camaraderie the van brings; it allows people to share their stories about their connection to Mountain Bell, whether it was their Mom or Grandpa who worked for the phone company. Betsy seems to bring up good memories for people and is very recognizable, still decked out in her original service color and logos.

These old Ma Bell vans have become harder and harder to find throughout the years because they were work vans and often discarded or left to rot after their service life was over. Finding one as intact as this one, with almost 70 years of history behind it, is especially rare and special. Tony feels very fortunate to have found Betsy in such great condition, with proud and proper patina, and loves that she possesses so much character and that together they can continue to make new stories together. 🚩



# Temerario Launch



## LAUNCH EVENT AT LAMBORGHINI DENVER

Story: Jake Laino

Photography: Jake Laino, Shannon Smith, Justin Roher, Kevin McGraw



The SHIFT staff is a funny group. Each of us seems to follow our own denomination in the Church of Car Culture. Somewhere along the way, I carved out my niche as the resident shitbox and crust-bucket guy, and you know what? I'm perfectly fine with that. Sure, I appreciate just about anything with four wheels and a motor, but you're far more likely to find me behind the wheel of a clapped-out 300ZX, a Miata race car built on a budget of pocket change and light beer, or a pickup truck that's slowly being reclaimed by the elements than a high-end sports car or supercar.

Which is exactly why it feels a little

Winter 2026



funny that I'm here to talk to you about something decidedly more upscale than my usual beer-fueled garage antics. On this particular evening, the SHIFT crew, grungy reputations and all, cleaned up, put on our Sunday best, and made our way to the beautiful Lamborghini of Denver showroom for the local debut of Lamborghini's newest machine: the Temerario.

I'll be honest, the note on the invitation that said "cocktail attire" caused a little concern among members of the SHIFT staff. Still, I'm proud to report that we cleaned up reasonably well for an evening of smooth jazz, cocktails, car talk, and racing simulators, all while admiring the beautiful new Italian machine sitting at the center of the room.





A few days before the event, Lamborghini of Denver's Marketing Manager, Foster Pounders, kindly offered the SHIFT photography crew an early-access preview of the Temerario. That meant our photographers were among the first people in Colorado to see the car in person, an opportunity we were more than happy to take advantage of.

Arriving at the event itself felt a little surreal. A valet took the keys to my truck as I stepped through the entrance, greeted by a handful of familiar faces and the evening's centerpiece glowing beneath its cover in the middle of the showroom. I soon spotted the rest of the SHIFT crew; coincidentally, right along my path to the bar, which was pouring classic Italian cocktails and imported Italian beer. I grabbed a Peroni and started making the rounds.

While guests mingled and worked their way through trays of hors d'oeuvres, the lights in the showroom slowly dimmed. Alex Ciccolo of Village Automotive Group,





Lamborghini of Denver's new ownership group, stepped forward with a microphone to say a few words about Lamborghini's latest creation. Moments later, the cover was pulled away, and the room broke into applause as the unmistakably Lamborghini-shaped machine revealed itself, finished in a stunning coat of Giallo Inti yellow.

With the reveal complete, the doors of the Temerario were opened, and guests were invited to climb inside and take a seat behind the wheel. The mingling and catering continued as the SHIFT crew wandered into the next room, where Speed Lab Sim Racing had set up a few of their mobile simulators. The rigs gave guests a chance to experience the Temerario virtually, sending it around some of the world's most iconic racetracks.





Naturally, we couldn't leave without making sure a SHIFT staffer ended up at the top of the leaderboard, props to writer Kelvin Lal for taking care of that. With bragging rights secured, we made our way back to the main showroom for more of what SHIFT does best: car talk. We caught up with familiar faces, made a few new friends, and soaked in the atmosphere of an evening centered around one very special machine.

A big thank you to our friends at Village Automotive Group and Lamborghini of Denver for the invitation and hospitality. 🇵🇪



# NEW CAR SEASON

Story and Photography: Chris Colten, Jake Laino, Brendan Garst, Justin Wong, Marty Kier



Over the course of putting together our winter issue, we got some new cars. Let's check them out!

## Chris Colten

To ring in the new year, I picked up a 2002 Subaru Legacy Outback - LL Bean Edition from marketplace to serve as a runaround car for my partner and I. The odometer reads a paltry 214,000 miles and change, but the shape of the body and undercarriage would not suggest so. I believe this example was garage-kept

with the H6 engine that was originally reserved for the higher trim Legacy models. In stock form, the EZ-30 sends 217 horsepower and 213 lb. ft. of torque to all four wheels via a four-speed automatic transmission with manual gear overrides. It runs so smoothly and the startup is imperceptible from the driver's seat. It's not the quickest car off the line, but in the meat of the rev range,

has a number of really cool features that make it particularly great in inclement weather. The first being how many heated accessories are on board. The seats are a given, but the side mirrors also heat, and there are spots on the windshield to keep the wipers warm. The original radio is capable of picking up weather-band frequencies, which is a great way to stay prepared for the



and mechanic-maintained for its entire 24 years of existence.

There's hardly a scratch, dent, or speck of rust anywhere on the gorgeous two-tone paint.

What makes this car so special? I'd say it comes down to a few things, starting

it really pulls. Ascending steep mountain roads is an effortless task for the car.

The rear end is also equipped with a limited-slip differential for this trim, further enhancing the capabilities of the already legendary Subaru AWD system.

Powertrain aside, this LL Bean wagon

conditions ahead when in areas without cell service.

Plans for the car are pretty straightforward. At the time of writing this, I've already equipped the car with a set of studded tires and have begun baseline maintenance. It doesn't need much aside from some regular wear

items and addressing some oil seepage. At least, that was the plan. It started to exhibit a stalling condition, which would occur when the car came to a stop or when it was put in gear. The local Subaru experts diagnosed this as a torque converter failure - it's not releasing as it should. Replacing this with a used transmission would run more than I spent on the car. Combine that with the fact that they noted that it was "leaking oil from everywhere it can leak oil", which would require an engine-out reseal, and mechanically totaled the car. It'll be a sweet project for someone else.





## Marty Kier

First, some context. My first car was a 2G 1996 Mitsubishi Eclipse. I can't remember if it was the RS or the GS. Whatever it was, it was a slow automatic, and I thought it was the coolest thing in the world. This was

hands on the oh-so-desirable, fast and furious 2G eclipse GSX. The model sporting the Evo turbo engine (4G63) and AWD.

In October 2025, this opportunity popped up only a five-minute drive from me. It looked rough, but I told

injectors, a Walbro 255 fuel pump, an SRS 3-inch exhaust that sounds great but scrapes on anything taller than a fingernail, some old coilovers on lowering springs, and a comedic, but addicting, blow-off valve. The car has about 178k miles on the chassis and 128k on the engine.



back in 2013 and my dad and I did a decent bit of work to it including suspension, basic maintenance, and a ton of aesthetic work because #ricerlife. I'm sure my dad secretly did a few other things that I wasn't even aware of. However, the years went by and I lost interest in the car. It sat in my dad's backyard and was eventually donated. Ever since then, I was always curious about getting my

myself, "If this runs and drives and is relatively rust-free, we're gonna be in trouble." Well... we were in trouble. This was probably the most spontaneous car decision I've made; I couldn't turn it down.

As with basically any hot DSM, you can't find them stock anymore. This junk missile has a 6-bolt swap, meaning it's running a 1G engine. It also came with mystery-brand 1050

I immediately took it to Automotive Evolution in Golden for a new timing belt, a new power steering pump, essentially a new rear differential, fluid swaps, a new steering rack, and new axle seals all around. I then took on most of the suspension work myself, replaced the valve cover, failed to replace the driver's side door handle, broke the driver's side window switch, and then took it back

to the shop a second time recently. It got an alignment, new tires, and they finished installing my rear lower control arms (a project that I started but abandoned once I realized the rear sub-frame had to be dropped). I'm sure I'm forgetting a few things, but you get the idea. I'm bringing this thing back from the graveyard.

Somehow, it's now driving; probably better than it should. The throttle feels heavy, and boost really sneaks up on you in second gear. It definitely still needs a bit of work, but I'm surprised by how quickly it's reached its current state. I've greatly enjoyed getting to understand its driving characteristics, and its absolute



dog-shit turning radius.

The plan is to continue restoring it slowly, keep it as reliable as possible, get some paint on it, fix a few interior things, dial in a proper tune, maybe step up to a slightly bigger turbo (the injectors and fuel pump are kind of begging for it), and call it a day. I've found myself saying, "If I'd owned this instead of my base-model Eclipse growing up, I'm pretty sure I'd be dead by now," because the car is that addicting to drive, and I know I probably would've sent it way too hard.

I know my younger self is proud that I made this purchase, which makes me feel warm and fuzzy. I look forward to sharing more as this project continues.





## Jake Laino

With an audience of car enthusiasts, I'm sure most of you know the feeling of getting a little bored with a car you've owned for a long time. In my most recent case, that car was my 1991 Toyota 4Runner. It was a rig I

I tossed around the idea of selling it and putting the money toward more responsible adult purchases, abandoning the childish dream of having a fun weekend project and resigning myself to the boring life of a guy with just one reliable car. But then my irresponsible car-enthusiast

My criteria were simple: two seats, rear-wheel drive, a manual transmission, and something built before the year 2000. I fired off messages to a handful of Miatas, a couple of MGBs, a Triumph Spitfire, and even a super rad 1970 Chevy C10, but I hadn't been having much



had always wanted, and for the better part of the 14 years I owned it, I absolutely loved it.

However, after a decade and then some, I found myself driving it less and less. I bought a more responsible pickup that could handle daily duty and still make it up to the mountains on the weekends, and sadly the 4Runner began spending more time sitting in the driveway.

tendencies kicked in, and before long I found myself scrolling through Facebook Marketplace with one very specific keyword in the search bar: trades.

All of a sudden, I was immersed in a world of poorly running Miatas and title-less MGBs. The spark was reignited. It was time to find a new, barely running shitbox and once again embrace the project car life.

luck. I would either get the typical "left on read" or a ridiculously overvalued request for cash on top of trade.

I wasn't having it. I was either going to trade straight across or not at all. Then, finally, the right one found me: a low-mileage (47,000) 1984 Nissan Z31 300ZX. Things moved quickly. I went to check it out after work one evening, and we swapped keys to

take each other's prospective trades for a quick test drive.

The clutch was on its way out, the digital dash only worked intermittently, and it squeaked and rattled its way down the road... I was in love. We pulled back into the seller's driveway, climbed out of each other's cars with the same grin on our faces, shook hands, and agreed to meet the following weekend with titles in hand.

The very next Saturday, Marty followed me over to the seller's house; because when you're picking up a project car, it's always wise to bring a backup rig. We each gave the



cars a quick once-over in the daylight and walked each other through our respective spare-parts stashes. After that, it was time for the formalities: titles signed, hands shaken, keys swapped and we each headed our separate ways.

That first drive home went great. I immediately knew I had a fun project ahead of me. Despite all the broken pieces and horrific misfires anytime the tach went over 3000 rpm, the exhaust note and feeling I got every time I grabbed a new gear had solidified the fact that I made the

right choice.

Marty and I pulled into my driveway, hopped out, and instantly spotted my first repair project. There was a trail of oil running all the way down Carr Street and straight into the spot where I had parked.

The next few weekends were spent replacing miles of dry-rotted vacuum lines and heavily worn ignition components. Each part I swapped out brought me one step closer to having a semi-reliable driver. A misfire here, a clogged fuel filter there; exactly the kind of small troubleshooting projects

a hands-on car enthusiast secretly loves.

I'll finish this by saying I still have plenty of work ahead of me. The Z is still riding on 42-year-old suspension components, the fuel injectors likely haven't been touched since the day it rolled out of the factory in Japan, the clutch is hanging on for dear life, and every interior piece I touch seems to disintegrate on contact. But despite all that, I can't help but grin every time I think about weekends in the garage and late-night drives on mountain roads in my new Z.



## Justin Wong

Some people peak in high school. I peaked shortly after, specifically the moment I got the keys to my dream car: a Subaru STI. It was my entire identity. It was so low, you couldn't get a Vans slip-on under it, and a

most tragedies do: with a sudden realization of how ridiculous I looked. When I finally wedged a car seat into the back, I had to pull the front seat so far forward that the STI effectively became a three-seater. It was two people in the back and me in the front with my knees tucked into the

rigs that had already been through the wars. I flirted with the idea of an older Land Cruiser, but I knew deep down that it would just be another project car in disguise. It would be a beautiful, expensive distraction from actual life.



soundtrack provided by an open dump wastegate that I spent my youth gleefully opening next to unsuspecting commuters.

For years, I told myself the compromise was worth it. Lately, however, the "loud car" was starting to feel less like a badge of honor and more like a liability.

The transition happened the way

dashboard. Then there's the smell. Running catless meant the STI simply smelled bad, to the point where I'd catch myself checking the rearview mirror to see if the driver behind me had their face scrunched up in disgust.

I looked at the "cool" alternatives. I scouted 4Runners, but at my price point, I was looking at high-mileage

Then, my mother stepped in. After I mentioned I was looking for a third row, she started not-so-subtly dropping that fact into every conversation at the local pickleball courts. She was specifically targeting any neighbor she spotted driving an older SUV.

That's how I ended up as the owner of what is easily the cleanest 2013

Highlander in the neighborhood. This wasn't just any Highlander; this was Dave's Highlander.

Dave is my parents' next-door neighbor, a retired dad and former basketball coach. Buying the car from him felt like a ceremonial passing of the torch. It was as if Dave was officially handing down a pristine pair of New Balances to the next generation. It had 89,000 miles and a service history so meticulous it bordered on the obsessive. If I looked through the stack hard enough, I'd likely find handwritten notes on the exact tire tread depth and rotation pattern from every season since the car was new. I justified the purchase



with car enthusiast math: it's reliable, it has a third row, and it's powered by the 2GR-FE V6. I'm basically driving a Lotus Evora, but I qualify for Uber XL and have rear climate control. Plus, Dave still gets to see his old car every time I stop by to pick up Juju from grandma's house.

The epiphany didn't hit me until I had to face my old nemesis: Air Care Colorado.

In the STI, going to emissions was a high-stakes psychological thriller. I'd spend the week prior driving in specific patterns to make sure the emissions systems were actually

"ready," praying the Check Engine light wouldn't pop up. I felt like I'd be taken to jail the moment I pulled into the testing lane. With the Highlander? I just drove in. There was no sweating. It just passed.

The first time we took it to the park, the "Dad Life" reality set in. I didn't have to move my seat forward to fit the car seat. I could actually hear Juju talking in the back instead of shouting over the drone of a three-inch exhaust. My butthole remained entirely un-clenched over every speed bump.

I've realized I haven't given up; I took

care of the priorities in a different order. By choosing the easy route for the daily grind, I'm not wasting my time or sanity on general maintenance for a car that makes my life harder. I'm playing the long game. I want a car that does normal car things and just works, so that I can save my bad ideas and mechanical energy for a project car that actually deserves it.

I'm driving a Highlander now. I've traded the turbo flutter for the silence of a well-oiled machine. Honestly? I've never felt more like an adult and more ready for a really dumb project car to fill the void.



## Brendan Garst

So it may be a bit of a cheat, but I'm declaring it acceptable for how excited I am. In June, I set off with SHIFT Editor Jake and Troy, SHIFT's unofficial serial co-conspirator and ne'er do-well to take a look at something truly stupid in the warm climes of sunny Southern California.

That something is a true, short-wheelbase Audi Sport Quattro replica, assembled through the careful process of stapling parts of up to three Mid-80's Audis together.

Plenty of people build long wheelbase Sport replicas, bringing the wide haunches, asymmetrical hood, and front end consisting almost solely of vents and a set of B2 Passat headlights together, like our friend David Hackl's hometown Pikes Peak build. You truly have to have devotion to the inane to look for a car with another foot of wheelbase chopped directly out of the middle; an attribute that I have in spades.

Audi's short wheelbase B2 chassis Sport Quattro's have enjoyed a huge revival in the last five years, seeing auctions for legitimate examples

fetching well north of half a million dollars. Other places like Group B Garage have made faithful Group B Racecar recreations (and recently, even a street car that came to Colorado), which fetched pricing around half to three-quarters of a real example. These are not dollar amounts where I can function; I had already been preparing to make a long wheelbase car out of a black UrQuattro I had socked away in my garage, with an 07k build planned and even supplied by a road trip previously featured in SHIFT.

This car came along; as with others,



an amalgamation of elder Audis and some fiberglass bodywork assembled to give the gist of a true Sport Quattro. There are some things that will never be truly correct (the windshield rake, for example, from which Audi used a windshield, A-Pillars, and doors from a 4000 2-door to reduce rake and glare). Neither will the C-pillars and rear glass. Who cares; I want to drive this thing.

The previous owner had been a shop that had been fabricating this in off time, and it featured lots of cool stuff, like a full cage, JRZ suspension, 5 lug conversion, and mostly the fact that the major feat of welding and fab had already been completed, the car was the correct length, and the work was done well.

After a fantastic scoping trip, Troy and I returned with a trailer, trading off my Black Ur-Quattro and a fair chunk

of change to bring this home to my doorstep. I am in the early stages of sourcing parts to assemble the motor (still planned to be a longitudinal 07K) and build a Malachite Green monster of my own. I'm super excited, and the trips themselves to inspect and purchase the car were trips for the books. I can't wait to cover the progression of this thing in SHIFT!



# 2026



## RAM 1500 Rebel

*Story & Photography: Jesse Evans*

First off, my name is Jesse Evans, and I have an admission to make: I am not from Colorado. I did however meet the SHIFT team at a manufacturer event in May, and we hit it off so well they asked me to try my hand at writing for them. I am a freelance automotive journalist with experience covering

(add some color on how you'd like to present yourself).

The off-road truck space has become a strange kind of arms race. Every manufacturer seems determined to prove they can build the most aggressive, most desert-ready, most Baja-inspired pickup imaginable. Ford

has the Raptor, Chevrolet has the ZR2, Toyota has the TRD Pro lineup, and Ram... well, Ram has several answers.

Everyone associates Ram with the formidable supercharged whine of the TRX. Now the new generation RHO (Ram High Output) is taking over and leaving everyone in the dust. The only

# INTRODUCING: TEAM OREGON

(WE LIKE TO THINK OF IT AS COLORADO PT. 2)



problem is these halo trucks have a halo price tag.

The 2026 Ram Rebel 1500 represents an affordable yet extremely capable offroad machine. With Stellantis transitioned away from the beloved HEMI V8 for its Hurricane inline 6, and just as quickly the recent

announcement that the HEMI will return. The Rebel sits at the intersection of tradition and change. I know Hemi is the favorite for its sound and its deep rooted history but maybe this new powerplant is the tuner's dream.

The question is whether the Rebel still

delivers the character that made it such a compelling truck in the first place.

One thing we know is that Ram can create an aggressive yet elegant design. They did it so well, the Ram fourth/fifth generation platform was



around for 15 years. It looked as good for its farewell tour in 2024 when it left as it did when it rolled onto dealer lots in 2009. The sixth generation was introduced in 2025, and this new design language is something I hope sticks around for a long time.

Our loaner Rebel in Bright White has to be my favorite because of how well the black trim and decals look on top of that high gloss white paint. The sharp contrast in colors make the graphics on the truck stand out, ensuring there's no mistaking what this truck is and what it's about. Black trim and accent features like the hood vents really pop and give the Rebel an aggressive look.

Adding to the aggressive styling, the wide stance and 33" Goodyear wranglers hint at the Ram's serious intentions when it comes to offroading. It's not some sticker package for a few extra bucks either, this truck's 4x4 system comes with a locking center and rear differential, and an off road tuned suspension from Bilstein's world class catalogue.

With the bigger than life accents, the world class suspension, the meaty grippy Goodyear tires the body lines are smooth and clean. They aren't overly sharp or exaggerated. In a world where automotive design is starting to look like a dystopian future, Ram has kept it clean and elegant. These lines give off a more classy and luxurious feel; Like you're about to sit in something comfortable, not a full blown race truck. The result is a truck that looks serious without looking desperate for attention.

When you sit down in this Ram you don't believe you're sitting in a truck. Starting with the back seats, you have ample room for your legs and head. The seats are unbelievably comfortable and really make you wonder what magic Ram is doing; rear cab seats are usually not the most comfortable of places. The front seats are even better, including power adjustability and best of seat heating. Made with two different materials the center is a nice cloth and the sides are durable leather. I feel as though a seat built like this gives you the best of both worlds between the two often debated materials.

The center console is wide and very deep with different levels and plenty of storage. The center console lid is leather wrapped with a bold Ram logo smack in the middle. The lid opens to a shallow basin with the pull of the top latch The second latch opens the entire top of the console,

exposing a shelf that has three different locking locations providing ample storage throughout the entire console. With included cupholders and an area in front for a wireless charging pad and ports, the Ram can capably stow, organize and charge all of the stuff you can throw at it.

The Drivers display is digital and simple with different customizable options for appearance, allowing the driver to tailor it to what they like.. The steering wheel has all the controls you'd expect, plus the leather wrap feels wonderful to the touch on the appropriately sized heated steering wheel.

The massive 12" touch screen display dominates the dash board. Coming from a 3rd gen tacoma with what seems like the smallest display, Rams 12" display feels like an ipad making everything big and easy to read, running Stellantis' Uconnect infotainment system. Thankfully along each side of the display are physical buttons for the climate control, always a preference for adjusting the temp easily without having to dig through menus or accidentally pressing the wrong command while driving. The only options that are tied to the touch screen are your heated wheel and seat options but these options are never hidden if the screen changes menus. Overall the Ram's interior is by far one of the best in the light full-size truck segment, and would never complain about road tripping or off roading.

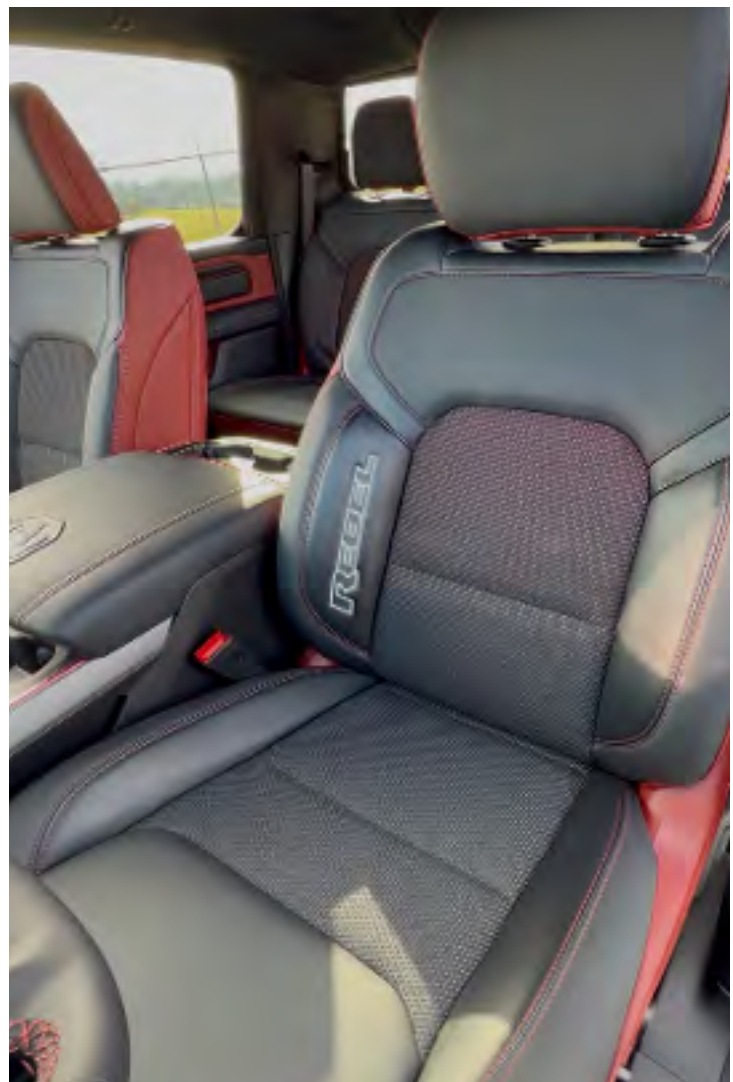
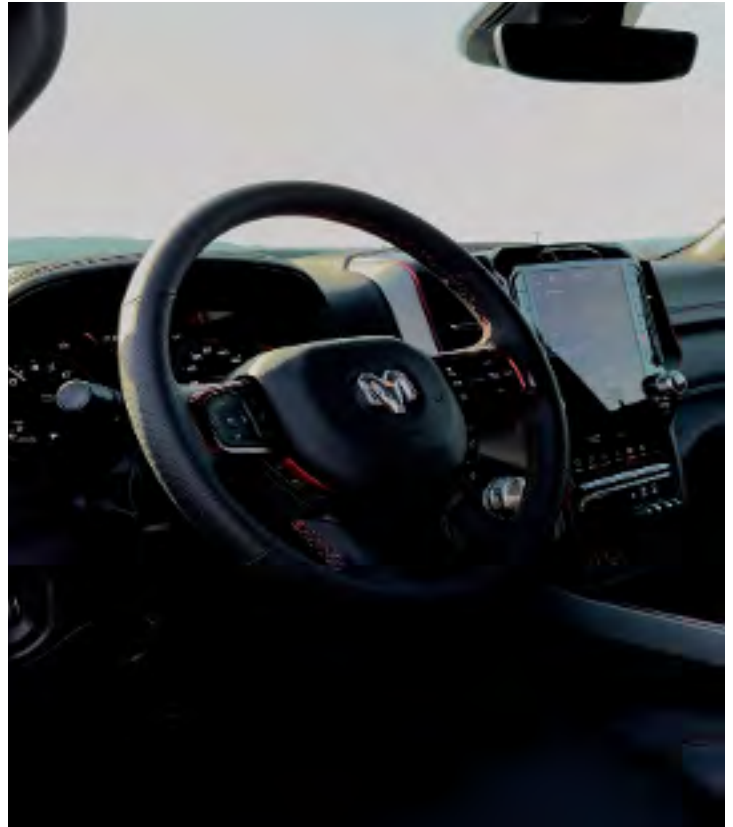
For the price and what you get on this truck, it offers a pretty strong value proposition. You are getting an offroad machine, a luxury car interior, and a power house of an engine for \$67,000. It bears saying our truck as tested is based at \$64,000 with less than \$1000 in options, meaning the gap is destination and handling charges. The Ram Rebel sits about halfway up the trim line up and I think it's the perfect amount of utility and luxury. Of course the TRX/RHO are the big dogs but there's nothing stopping you from throwing some King suspension of your choosing on the Rebel and going out to mix it up with them.

The Rebel is positioned to compete with trucks like Ford's F150 tremor, Chevy's 1500 ZR2, and Toyota's Tundra TRD Pro. I feel it's an excellent contender among its peers in the market, and for the price point you are getting a great deal for what you are paying.

### Drivetrain

The biggest story for the 2026 Rebel is the Hurricane inline-six engine replacing the old HEMI V8. On paper, the numbers are impressive: more power, more torque, and better efficiency than the ousted V8.

The engine and its shifting points are fast yet smooth. The twin turbo inline 6 delivers 420hp and 469 lb-ft of torque. All this is fed into the 8 speed automatic transmission that you can shift manually if you so please. You have selectable 4 wheel drive with high/low options to include a locking transfer case and rear axle.





So whether you are cruising the highway, doing pulls with your friends or trying to get to that hard to reach camp site, the Rebel does everything you need smoothly, quietly and quickly. Of course if you step on it and let off you hear those faint turbo blow off sounds that make any car enthusiast giggle.

Some, myself included, see it as a change and step forward in power and efficiency. MOPAR's devoted peanut gallery wants the Hemi, and the people at Ram have listened. The Hemi is returning to the Ram lineup in 2026, which makes most of us happy. The Hurricane currently isn't going anywhere, so if its an option you want, it will still be available.

Driving the Rebel for the short week I had it demonstrated that Ram is building an incredibly versatile truck. You can, without a doubt, daily drive this truck and hit the trails Friday afternoon on your way home from work. The Good Year Duratrac Tires are quiet on road, yet aggressive for your offroad aspirations. The Bilstein suspension is, as always, so good. They provide a digressive action, meaning they start stiff at first then give way to a

soft feel. This is perfect for on road speed to absorb fast bumps and body roll. In slow offroad actions they provide a soft smooth roll for trail stability. It really is the best of both worlds.

Nothing beats a full-size truck. It's tall and does everything you want. It gets fair mileage, it commutes, it offroads and does it in pure luxury. Gone are the days of buying a truck and it being a stiff backbreaking work horse. The Rebel really makes any terrain enjoyable.

From the driver's seat, everything you see looks amazing. Everything from the digital display, the center display, the leather dash or the cavernous grand canyon of a center console. When looking at the steering wheel everything makes sense in its layout and position. This makes hands free driving easy and enjoyable. Looking overtop the wheel you'd expect a massive flared hood but you don't. You can clearly see in front of you which makes it perfect for off-roading. The seats are truly the champions of the interior; I'm broken from years of racing dirt bikes and turning 30, these seats are truly comfortable. They support you in all



the right ways and when you start feeling sore you turn on those heated seats and melt away. It's a truck that doesn't ask you to be an off-road expert to enjoy it.

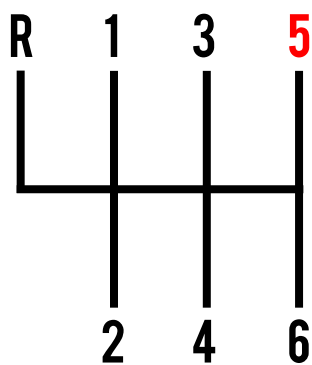
## Conclusion

The 2026 Ram 1500 Rebel remains one of the more balanced off-road trucks in the half-ton market. It doesn't chase extremes or attempt to dominate spec sheets. Instead, it focuses on delivering a comfortable, capable truck that works well both on and off pavement.

The new Hurricane engine improves performance and efficiency, even if it sacrifices some of the character that the old HEMI brought to the table. And while the Rebel may not be the most hardcore off-road truck available, it's arguably one of the easiest to live with day to day.

In a segment increasingly defined by excess, that restraint may actually be the Rebel's greatest strength.

The Ram Rebel continues to strike a smart balance between capability, comfort, and everyday usability. It may not be the most extreme off-road truck on the market, but it delivers a refined driving experience and strong performance in a package that remains practical for daily life. 🏠



# CARS OF THE SHIFT STAFF

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OUR HOT GARBAGE: 2007 COROLLA, "SHIFTBOX"

Story: Brendan Garst Photography: Chris Colten



**We love cars here. All kinds; We have been as excited to attend a Lamborghini launch party as we were to drive a new Toyota Crown Signia last issue.** We know that's weird, but you're still here, and we're still writing, so let's make the most of it!

I have always wondered when the collective group of SHIFT would get its own car. I figured it would be a lemons sled, destined to die in battle at High Plains raceway somewhere between 15 and 30 minutes after the beginning of a "High Plains Drifter" Lemons race. That proved to be false, because in December, we assumed "ownership" of our very own 2006 Toyota Corolla LE with no brakes, no title, and no plan.

Jake, Steve, and I hitched up the trailer and drove to Evergreen to meet the new SHIFT car. Phantom Gray Pearl over Beige Cloth, no catalytic converter, and terrifyingly, no brakes, as advertised. After some anxiety navigating Jake's

GMT900 Sierra and attached UHaul trailer through the confines of Evergreen's narrow backroads, we had some more trouble trying to load a brakeless car onto the trailer. Fortunately, all went well, and we were on our way to Bailey to share the joy of our new car with Chris.

We set to work, Steve taking videos, Chris and Jake assessing the mechanical condition of what we have started to call the SHIFTRBox, and **Brendan locking the keys in the car within 10 minutes of getting it situated in Chris' detached garage.** After prying, swearing, and clothes-hangaring the locks open, we stood back and assessed the car to need a driver's front brake caliper, by the stream of brake fluid down the inside of the driver's front tire. We stood back to admire our new vehicle, equipped with a Toyota 1ZZ-FE motor good for 126 horsepower, 122 pounds-feet of torque, and channeling that fury to the front

wheels through a 4-speed automatic transmission. Scintillating.

After an outing in issue 14's press cars, we took a stroll through our local LKQ, securing a cheap caliper. Unfortunately, on closer examination, we found the caliper had had a bleeder broken off in it, which wouldn't extract. Oh well, we have parts for the next time.

In January, Chris, Marty and I met again in Chris' driveway, determined to restore braking to our new fixation. We bore witness to some of Chris' handiwork that had occurred while we were out; TRD-adjacent drift zipties held a previously tattered bumper together. The key now contained a Porsche Key fob with "DO NOT LOCK IN CAR" scrawled on the back of it in passive-aggressive black Sharpie. Chris had already done a fine job with some housekeeping improvements.

Armed with a fresh reman caliper in tow,





we quickly threw it on the car, and bled the brakes. We putted through Chris' Bailey neighborhood, noting the car seemed like it could now stop. A major win for the home team! Unfortunately, fear of not being able to stop had led us to overlook one of the Corolla's more major problems, a significant lack of power. With three people in the car, the SHIFTBox would not accelerate past 30 on an admittedly steep road that winds up a hill on the way to Chris' mountain chalet.

**This is a car that is a bag of mixed bags. We have no idea what to do with it; it has no title, which points it at a life of Lemons or perhaps Pissed In Cup with our friends from World of Redneck this fall.** Unfortunately, its also a death knell for many charities, as an un-registerable car doesn't really do anyone any good, even with the best intentions.

On the other hand, I have always been a fan of Mighty Car Mods, where they make an uninteresting car into a rad little

track toy by sourcing parts from other cooler variants, in our case, the XRS or other Toyota toybox parts from the era.

The only thing we've decided we should do so far is to ensure that no matter what, this car gets a familiar blue and orange livery that became popular in the 1960's related to an oil company that went defunct in the 80's. Beyond that, we're flying blind. What would you do with this? If you have some ideas we're all ears! 🦋



@shiftcoloradomagazine



# 2026



# Lexus LX700h

Story: *Chris Colten*

Photography: *Chris Colten, Jake Laino, Shannon Smith*

The Lexus LX lineage holds a very special place in my heart. It's no secret that I've had my LX450 for a long time and have put over a hundred thousand miles on it. I was also able to form an opinion about the LX600 Ultra Luxury, as previously reviewed in SHIFT about a year ago. To say that the LC300 platform has evolved a lot since the FJ80 era would be an understatement. What was once the most minimalist of all Lexus models is

now a marvel of modern automotive engineering.

So once again, it's time for me to benchmark the latest and greatest Lexus LX variant against what I consider the gold standard, my trusty 80 Series. But more importantly, review the vehicle through the lens of someone who enjoys using their vehicles for their intended purpose. How well is the LX700h Overtrail set up for the great outdoors? Let's find out.

## Exterior

The LX700h is a minor facelift of the LX600. The Overtrail variant changes the trim to a darker shade of silver and adds contrast to the wheel arches and other exterior elements with a splash of black. It's simultaneously boxy and sleek, an elegant design for what is a hardcore 4x4 at its core. The fenders and wheel-well area have a chiseled,



# Overtrail





box-flare-like appearance while still being blended seamlessly into the body. Under the front tray, a skidplate is in place to protect the vitals of the engine and other components.

An observation about the proportions - the 700h has a very square appearance from the front and rear ends, they're nearly flat. There are no

protrusions in the bumper areas as you'd see on older versions of the LX. I believe this began with the facelifted version of the LX570. The only negative I see to this is that there's nowhere to set a coffee mug down on the outside of the vehicle while stooping over to tie a bootlace, aside from the hood. Is this a petty grievance? Absolutely. But it's a

real-world problem that I've encountered.

My other critique at this point is equestrian pulp. The LC300 platform as a whole is missing my favorite ingredient from the older Land Cruiser models: The split tailgate. I'd like to see it make a comeback in a mid-production facelift or appear on



the aftermarket scene.

It makes me happy to see that the six-spoke wheels on the Overtrail variant are wrapped in a proper Toyo all-terrain tire instead of a street tread less suited for departing pavement. I am also glad that they downsized the wheel to an 18", which allows for a meatier tire and better ride quality.

The exterior lighting could be described as highly detailed. The triple-beam LED headlamps feature a plethora of different shapes. Hexagonal angles and Nike swoops blend with clean edges and just the right amount of pizzazz. The taillights wrap around the entire trunk, forming a shape Lexus refers to as the "Blade".

Overall, it's a great-looking SUV. It combines purposeful dimensions with great aesthetics.

## Interior

There is a ton of technology in here and some very comfortable seats. Let's break it down.

There are a slew of buttons, screens, and dials dispersed throughout the interior space, and I'm happy to say that they're all in intuitive places and labeled well. The steering wheel houses all of the stereo and cluster controls we've come to expect from Lexus. The cluster itself is a configurable screen which can display engine vitals, adaptive cruise and map info, media, a compass, and the obligatory tach and speedometer. There's also a driver attention monitor located on the steering column, which will prompt the driver to put their eyes back on the road as needed.

The touchscreen seated atop the center stack is well placed and doesn't look too out of place. I didn't have any



issues getting the screen synced with my Android device. There's a ton of functionality packed into the console, some of which I admittedly didn't explore - I'm naught but a simple minimalism enthusiast. The most important tech metric to me is the audio quality, and I'm pleased to report that the Mark Levinson Reference Surround Sound experience is bonkers. 2,400 watts distributed across 25 speakers far exceeds my home stereo. I sampled a variety of genres through the entire volume range; it's fantastic. 10/10, no notes.

The second and smaller screen is used for climate control, drive mode info, and even has an inclinometer for off-road usage. There are also a lot of physical buttons for core vehicle functions in this area, which is greatly appreciated. I strongly prefer tactile

controls over distracting screens. Dials are used for selecting drive modes and the high/low speeds of the transfer case. Continuing the flow of buttons, we come to the seat temperature controls, ride height adjustments, and some other traction-related items. The shifter itself comes from the Lexus hybrid parts bin; it's more akin to a Prius component than something fitting of a large SUV. That said, with how tall the center console is and how much stuff is packed in there, it does make sense to have a small shifter instead of something large and chunky. There's also paddle shifters behind the steering wheel.

All of the obligatory charging ports are present in the form of USB-C plugs. There's a wireless charging pad located adjacent to the generously proportioned cupholders for those

who don't want to plug in their device. Under the armrest is a cool box, which will fit a couple of things, but not raw fish. The lid itself is quite clever and can be opened from either side.

The leather on the Stone Brown seats is super high quality, there's a ton of adjustments, and they're heated and cooled. I felt zero fatigue after spending hours in the saddle. In general, all of the interior surfaces feel premium, including the little things like the turn signal stalk.

The interior of the LX700h Overtrail is a very nice place to be.

## Price & Trim

Coming in at \$116,685, the LX700h Overtrail is not an inexpensive vehicle, but it does cost less relative to the





Luxury and F-Sport variants. This trim includes luxuries such as a heated steering wheel and heated and ventilated seats, which are always nice when out in the elements. The more important upgrade, which is included in the package, is the locking front and rear differentials - a must for any off-road enthusiast who plans on pushing the limits.

## Drivetrain

The 700h Overtrail arrives from the factory with a 3.4 liter twin-turbo V6, assisted by a hybrid system. The V35A-FTS produces 457 horsepower at 5,200 RPM, and 583 pound-feet of torque between 2,000 and 3,600 RPM. The beans are delivered to the wheels through a ten-speed transmission and a two-speed, full-time 4WD transfer case. Fuel economy is an EPA estimated 19 MPG city, 22 MPG highway, or 20 on average. For such a large vehicle, getting mileage into the 20's is impressive. In contrast, my older LX averages 12 MPG, regardless of how it's being driven.





## Experience

Speaking candidly, the thing that matters the most in a vehicle to me is how well it drives. Especially one that I'd be spending entire days in, off-pavement. This encompasses things such as ride quality, steering feel, power delivery, and so forth. I'm pleased to report that the LX700h Overtail passed my tests with flying colors.

Let's start with how it puts horsepower to the ground. The twin-turbo V6, assisted by the hybrid system, propels this Lexus with great ease. Tooling up and down mountain roads didn't even come close to taxing the engine and permanent-magnet motor combo. I appreciated having the paddle shifters for maintaining a consistent speed when descending long hills, so as not to cook the brakes. When merging onto the highway, stabbing the accelerator to the floor induces a slight lag as the transmission kicks down, then it rockets forward as boost and electricity combine. This LX has the beans in spades.

The suspension had a number of different modes. I found myself mostly using Comfort and Sport+, depending on whether I was cruising or canyon carving. Yes, this giant SUV is nimble enough to be borderline fun in the twisties. Is it a Miata? Absolutely not. But for something it's size, tackling tight turns does not feel like a chore. The suspension has both variable ride height and damping, which is felt as the different drive types are picked. The steering weight also changed with the settings, and the steering wheel did feel well-connected to the front end. It felt great and responsive on pavement, but more importantly, it also felt very smooth and controlled on washboard roads. It simply ate up all of the bumps and potholes that can be experienced on a dirt road. This is an SUV that I would happily drive for 10 hours a day through the desert for a week straight, if given the opportunity. (Lexus, please let me do this before this press rig



is scrapped).

It was important for me to verify that the trunk could hold all of the overlanding essentials. In my testing, I found that I was able to load everything that I'd need for a week out without any problems. As tested, the 700h Overtrail in question did not have the third-row seating option, which lowered the trunk deck space by a few inches. The stock roof rack is able to carry up to 176 pounds, which is





higher than average for most factory options. It's worth noting that for those who seek to equip a roof tent or other heavy items, the official accessory page does offer the Prinsu branded roof-rack. The trunk also has a standard 120-volt plug, which is great for powering portable refrigerators, recharging large power banks, or heating water kettles. The only area for improvement I have here is repeating my scream into the void for the return of my favorite tailgate configuration.

I also did some quick measurements of off-road geometry. With the height-adjustable suspension maxed out, the height of the

running boards on the LX700h matched the height of the rock sliders on my LX450. Overall ground clearance was great, as were the approach and departure angles. Even the exhaust had an aggressive cut to the tailpipe to prevent it from dragging across rocks, as I have done many times in mine. Thankfully, the aftermarket supports this platform well, so for those who want to wheel hard, steel bumper and other armor options are out there.

In my miles of testing, the theme that kept repeating in my head was "effortless". Ingress and egress were easy, thanks to the running boards and automatic access height. Everything on the inside felt like it

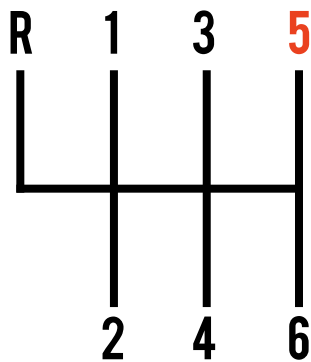


was where it should be, and the materials are wonderful. City and mountain driving were equally stress-free thanks to the power and chassis dynamics.

## Conclusion

I'm covering this more in an adjacent article about my LX450, but it's a tough act to follow. Even after thirty years of improvements. When developing the latest generation of Land Cruiser platform, Toyota opted to use the 80 Series as the benchmark for rough road handling, it's that good.

The LX700h Overtrail definitely stacks up as a capable vehicle. It has plenty of ground clearance as needed, gobs of power for hauling lots of people and gear, a rugged build for longevity, and all of the luxury comforts expected from a brand such as Lexus. I really enjoyed my time with the LX700h Overtrail and would recommend it to anyone who has the means to obtain one. 🚩



The 2026 Lexus LX700h



# SECOND OPINION



Story: *Jake Laino*

Photography: *Chris Colten, Jake Laino, Shannon Smith, Brendan Garst*



On August 1st, 2023, Toyota dropped a bombshell that sent the off-road world into a frenzy. After a three-year absence, the Land Cruiser nameplate was officially returning to the U.S. for the 2024 model year. Forums lit up. Reddit exploded. Overlanders started mentally spec-ing roof racks and snorkels before the press conference even ended. The king was back. Or... was he?

It didn't take long for enthusiasts to realize that this wasn't the full-size successor to the 200 Series many of us had been holding out for. The new U.S. market Land Cruiser rode on the smaller 250 Series platform, better known globally as the Prado. Still body on frame. Still legit. Still very much a Land Cruiser. But undeniably not the same heavyweight Americans had grown accustomed to. For some, it felt like a step down. For others, a return to the Land Cruiser's more utilitarian roots.

Then, in October of 2024, we got the rest of the story. The full-size Land

Cruiser platform did make its way back to U.S. soil, just not with a Toyota badge on the grille. Instead, it arrived wearing a tailored suit in the form of the Lexus LX 700h, the luxury hybrid variant built on the 300 Series Land Cruiser platform. Same global bones. Same serious capability. Just wrapped in leather, tech, and a healthy dose of electrified torque.

So no, the king didn't disappear. He just decided to show up dressed a little nicer this time.

Now, I know what you're thinking. Toyota must've decided Americans didn't want a proper, off-road-ready 300 Series, so instead we got the dressed-up Lexus version, trimmed in satin chrome, sitting on 22-inch wheels, and polished enough to feel more at home in a Target parking lot than on a trailhead.

And honestly? At first glance, that wasn't an unreasonable assumption.

But then we saw it, the Overtrail trim. Suddenly, the satin chrome was gone,

blacked out and muted. The flashy 22s were tossed aside in favor of 18" wheels wrapped in 33" all-terrains. The stance looked right. The proportions made sense. This wasn't just a luxury SUV with a tough-guy costume; it looked like something engineered with dirt in mind.

The Lexus LX 700h Overtrail didn't abandon its Land Cruiser DNA; it leaned into it. Locking differentials, proper, adjustable ground clearance, and real underbody protection. It wasn't trying to cosplay as an overlander. It actually had the hardware.

So no, Toyota didn't stiff us. They just handed the full-size Land Cruiser platform to Lexus and said, "Go build the nicest, most overqualified trail rig in the Whole Foods parking lot." And somehow, against all odds, it works.

This winter, Lexus USA tossed us the keys to the LX 700h Overtrail and told us to give it the full SHIFT treatment. I'll keep it simple; I wasn't



disappointed.

Visually, the Overtrail is the spec to have. The blacked-out trim completely changes the vibe, especially against the Earth Tan paint. It's clean, modern, and purposeful without being flashy. You notice the sculpted lines and the stance, not a bunch of chrome trying to prove a point.



Where a standard LX might feel dressed for valet duty, the Overtrail looks ready for a trailhead. Subtle, confident, and way cooler because of it.

Then you climb inside, and you're immediately reminded, oh yeah, this is still a Lexus. And I mean that in the best way possible.

Premium materials? Check. A healthy spread of screens? Check. Real leather on the seats and trim? Absolutely.

Lexus didn't dial back the luxury just because this is the off-road-focused variant. The Overtrail may look ready to hit a trail, but inside it still delivers the quiet, refined, properly upscale cabin you expect from an LX. It's a tough truck in theory, but it feels first-class from behind the wheel.

Inside, you're met with the tech and comfort you'd expect from Lexus: a cooled center console, multiple USB-C ports, a couple of 120V AC outlets, and large dual screens handling most vehicle functions. Don't worry, though, physical buttons and knobs are still present, striking a smart balance between modern and intuitive. Premium

materials and a clean layout seal the deal, reminding you this is every bit a flagship luxury SUV.

Passenger space is genuinely cavernous, with enough room for five full-size adults to ride in comfort. The Overtrail skips the third row entirely, swapping extra seats for more cargo space, which, obviously, is reserved for the important stuff like traction boards you'll never use and a Yeti cooler to hold exactly seven sparkling waters. Sorry, kids, payload is payload.

One of the two 120V AC outlets is located in the cargo area, which came in handy while making a pot of coffee on location for both of our photo shoot days.

From behind the wheel, the LX feels every bit like the full-size SUV it is. Fortunately, tight parking lots are far less intimidating thanks to a slick surround-view camera system, a surprisingly tight turning radius, and steering that's pleasantly light at low speeds.

Out on the open road, the 457-hp 3.4-liter twin-turbo V6 hybrid moves with surprising urgency. The electric motor delivers an immediate shove off the line, and once the turbos wake up, the big Lexus gathers speed in a way that makes it easy to forget you're piloting a 6,200-pound behemoth.

The Active Height Control® suspension offers four ride-height settings, each with noticeably different road manners. Most of the time, I kept it in the neutral setting,

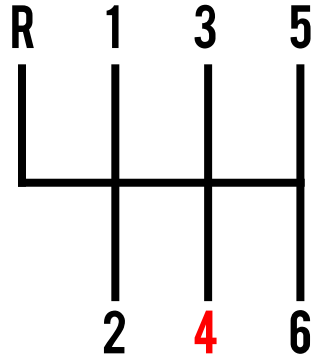


# SHIFT|COLORADO

which provides 8.1 inches of ground clearance and the best balance of comfort and on-road composure. Crank it all the way up to Hi2, though, and the LX lifts itself to an impressive 10.5 inches of clearance, once again reminding you that this luxury barge still has serious off-road chops.

During my time with the rig, I used it the way most buyers likely will: as a daily driver around town. In that role, the LX genuinely impressed me. It's incredibly comfortable, surprisingly fun to drive, and big enough to haul all my junk (and then some) while still feeling manageable in the tight urban

environment where I live and work. Best of all, it carries the kind of capability that makes you feel like you could point it toward just about anywhere in Colorado and get there without much fuss. 🏆



# HORSEPOWER *Heroines*



Auto Broker and Automotive Advocate 2016-now

*Honoring the women behind the wheel, under the hood, and leading the charge in Colorado's motoring community.*

Interviewer: **Tish Gance** Photography: **Tali Levin**

## Meet Tali...

**Who or what got you interested in cars/bikes/motors?**

*I was once a single teenaged mom with a broken car, and when I took it into a shop, I was treated like a dumb blonde. I didn't know enough at the time to challenge what I was being told, and that feeling of vulnerability and frustration lit a fire in me.*

*That decision changed the trajectory of my life. I went on to build a career helping women navigate the intimidating automotive landscape in every capacity. I graduated Automotive College as an ASE Certified Technician, then moved into parts, service, sales, finance, and eventually became self-employed as a broker for over a decade. I still have that business, aptly named,*

### **Automotive Advocates.**

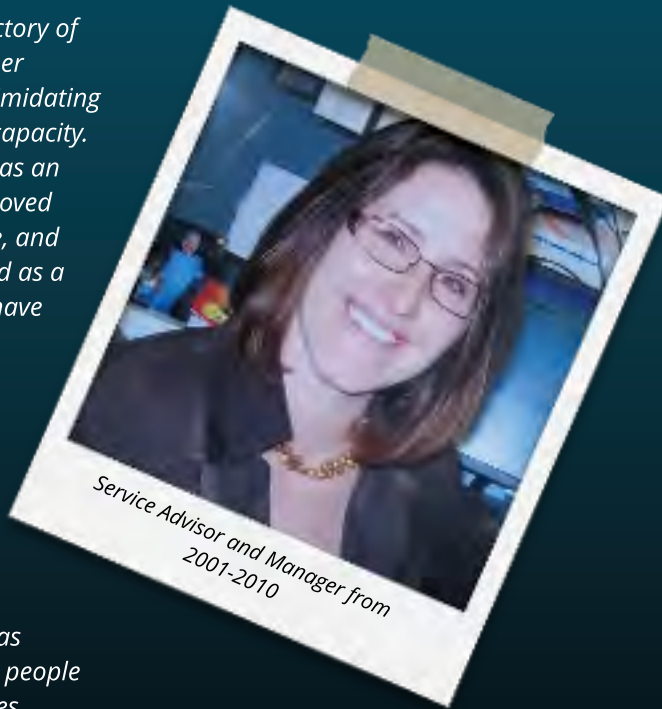
*From there, leveling up into business brokerage was a natural progression. I was already helping people make high-stakes decisions, understand complex numbers, and advocate for themselves, just on a much bigger stage.*

*At its core, my work has always been about empowerment, education, and helping people make confident decisions in spaces that weren't built to welcome them.*



19 yrs old in 1993 while in Automotive College

*So I enrolled in automotive college to learn how cars actually work. I decided I would never be taken advantage of, or made to feel small, in that space again.*



Service Advisor and Manager from 2001-2010

### **What keeps you passionate about your motor work/hobby?**

*I still experience misogyny in the automotive industry today, and I know firsthand that it's a space that's often filled with smoke and mirrors. That hasn't changed nearly as much as it should have.*

*That's why I'm so passionate about helping women navigate this*



Journeyman Parts Counterman  
from 94-2000

**I make money to support my habit by:**

As a business broker at Transworld Business Advisors, I help people navigate the often intimidating world of business transactions. I work primarily with small business owners, helping them value their companies and use that information to make smart decisions about their next steps, whether that's growth, strategic changes, or

planning an exit.

[tworld.com/agents/talilevin](http://tworld.com/agents/talilevin)

I guide clients to make informed, intelligent decisions around some of the biggest sales and purchases of their lives. As a Licensed Auto Broker, Real Estate Broker, and Business Broker, I bring a strategic mindset to every situation, thinking outside the box while also having the licenses and resources to execute on those ideas.

As both a Certified Business Intermediary and a Certified Exit Planning Advisor, I collaborate closely with business owners and their advisors, CPAs, attorneys, and

financial planners, to build a clear path forward and ensure every option is carefully considered.

**Tell us one short, fun, hobby related story:**

When I had my '71 Formula 400, I needed a parts car. One day, while I was working on the parts counter, I saw a tow truck drive by carrying a ratty black '71. Without thinking, I ran off the counter, jumped in my car, and flagged the driver down to ask where he was taking it.

I ended up buying the car on the spot and had him drop it right in my driveway. It was chaotic, impulsive, and hella funny, exactly the kind of crazy shit that got me hooked on cars in the first place.

**Anything else to share?**

I love to see and encourage young women coming up in the automotive space!

landscape with clarity and transparency, so they can feel informed and confident when making decisions about their cars, instead of intimidated or taken advantage of.

This work has never just been a job for me. It's personal, and it matters.

**My daily driver is a:**

2006 Audi A4 Avant wagon

**If money were no object, I would have:**

A new Audi S4 Avant Right off the factory line in Germany.

**When not playing with cars/bikes/etc, I am:**

Elbow deep in my saltwater reef aquarium , baking yummy bread, traveling and scuba diving or playing in my stained glass studio.



**Know a wrench-turning, rubber-burning woman who deserves the spotlight?**

**We want to meet her!**

Email [Tish@ColoradoCarAds.com](mailto:Tish@ColoradoCarAds.com) and nominate your favorite gearhead!

## 1SLOWMK.7 {JOHN BARRY}

EURO+



## COLORADO CONTENT CREATOR

Story: John Barry, Marty Kier

Photography: John Barry, Shannon Smith, Justin Wong

I got connected with Euro Plus shortly after they opened in 2023, and I immediately knew that Justin and Gabe, the owners of Euro Plus, had something special going on with their shop. They have also used my digital marketing services since then. I started noticing that they were posting some super high-quality videos on their social media, and I asked, "Who is doing this for you?" They said, "Oh, that's John! He is great!" Turns out, John handles a lot of the client communication, part orders, and of course, the social media posts for Euro Plus. I had the pleasure of meeting John after a short meeting with Gabe and Justin in December, and then again when I brought my Toyota Century in for service. Once the car was getting close to completion, I asked John via text if he would be interested in getting featured as our Colorado Content Creator, and he

said absolutely. We set a day and time for me and 3 other SHIFT Colorado photographers to head on down to Euro Plus to get an interview with John. Here is how it went:

**SHIFT:** Introduce yourself, and where can readers find you?

**John:** My name is John Barry with Euro Plus. I am the lead advisor here over at the shop. I also go by @1SLOWMK.7 on my social media as well.

**SHIFT:** What got you hooked on cars?

**John:** What got me hooked on cars was my grandparents' passion for Mercedes-Benz and older German cars. It is something that has always stuck with me in memory of my family. So I

continued that passion throughout my entire life.

**SHIFT:** Are there any misconceptions that people have about car creators? Particularly on TikTok?



John Barry

**John:** There is quite a bit of controversy with a lot of TikTok content creators, especially when it comes to drama or being negative towards others. I think the misconception is that we are all doing something we love, and we are super passionate about it. So I do not think it is worth bringing people down when they are just posting the same way we do as well.

**SHIFT:** What type of camera equipment do you currently use?

**John:** I use my HERO Black 12 with the content creator pack. I use my iPhone, and then I pair that with an iPad with Lightroom as well.

**SHIFT:** What makes your video style different compared to other digital creators?

**John:** I think what makes my content a little different is that mine is raw footage. I am trying to put you in my perspective of looking at the car while I shoot it on my phone. So it is a lot of highly unedited photos, or slightly edited. I like to make sure the audience feels like they are at the shop looking at



the car, or even my car on my personal pages.

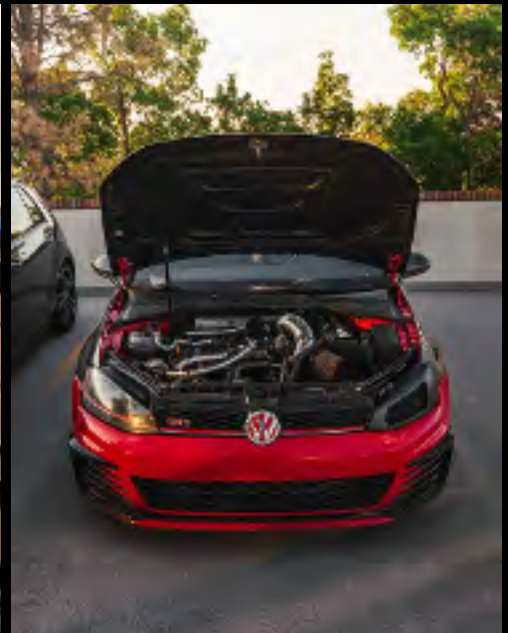
**SHIFT:** Do you use any tools or software to help your process?

**John:** Lightroom is a big one. I go back to that all the time. It is worth the monthly

subscription. I use it 24/7, especially with the shop, when it comes to slightly editing lighting or even audio as well.

**SHIFT:** Tell me about your Mk 7. Where did you purchase it? Have you always been a VW guy?





**John:** I actually purchased it from Copart. I knew the past owner. I bought it for like two and a half grand, and I had a good team of guys around me right away that helped me get to where I am today. Shout out to Turbo Parts Canada and SLOWMQB for getting the car to where it is right now.

**SHIFT:** How long have you had it? Future plans?

**John:** I have had my MK7 for about a year and a half. Not a super long journey so far, but very eventful. I have gone all over the country with it. I have done track events with it, and I have met a lot of really awesome people because of it, too.

Right now, it has one of six in the world

A2B four port head, paired with 2200cc injectors on a custom Deep Motors manifold. The goal for when the car is done is about 800 to 850 plus at elevation. We are doing an All Wheel Drive conversion on it from a Golf R as well. Shout out to SLOWMQB for that swap, and shout out to Turbo Parts Canada for the full frame 6466 going on it. I am looking to have it done by at least the start of summer next season.

**SHIFT:** Have you always been a VW enthusiast?

**John:** I have always been a Volkswagen enthusiast. All I have ever owned are Volkswagen and Audi products. I went out of my comfort zone once and instantly went back into a Volkswagen a couple of weeks later.

**SHIFT:** Do you ever get burnt out on making videos?

**John:** I do not really get burnt out, just because I have multiple different forms of content I can do. I come to the shop, it is part of my daily tasks. I make content for the shop, and then I can go home and shoot a whole different style of content for my own personal build.

**SHIFT:** What are your general thoughts on the Colorado car scene?

**John:** I think it is beautiful. It gets a lot of hate from the outside world, but I do not think people realize that we have stuff that is just as fast as C level cars, touching the moon. I feel like everyone has so many different personalities that they clash together perfectly, and I feel





like the scene out here is one of the top three in the country.

**SHIFT:** If you could collaborate with any creator, driver, team, or brand, who is on the list and why?

**John:** Humble Mechanic is a Volkswagen content creator that I have been watching the last five or six years. I have learned quite a bit from him. A big part of the reason why I am doing the swap is because he has the all wheel drive RS3 swapped Golf R.

**SHIFT:** How do you treat making content for Euro Plus differently than your personal accounts?

**John:** I honestly view both as a hobby. I do not view my job as a job. I come in and I put in the same effort I do on a customer's car as I would my personal car, if not more. I like to keep in contact with my customers and show them how I am making the content as well. It gets them excited, which makes me a different form of excited compared to shooting my own car.

**SHIFT:** Is there anyone you would like to thank?

**John:** I would like to thank my team here at Euro Plus, Gabe and Justin, for taking me on and teaching me everything that I know today. I would like to give a shout out to all my sponsors that have made everything possible for me as well. And I would like to give a shout out to the customers and clients here of the shop, as they are very supportive, they are really easy to work with, and they make life here fun.

Thank you again to John for being game to get interviewed, and thanks to Euro Plus for letting us conveniently take photos and get video during this time on a Friday evening. If you ever need your enthusiast car serviced, take it into the Euro Plus team. You won't be disappointed! 🍷

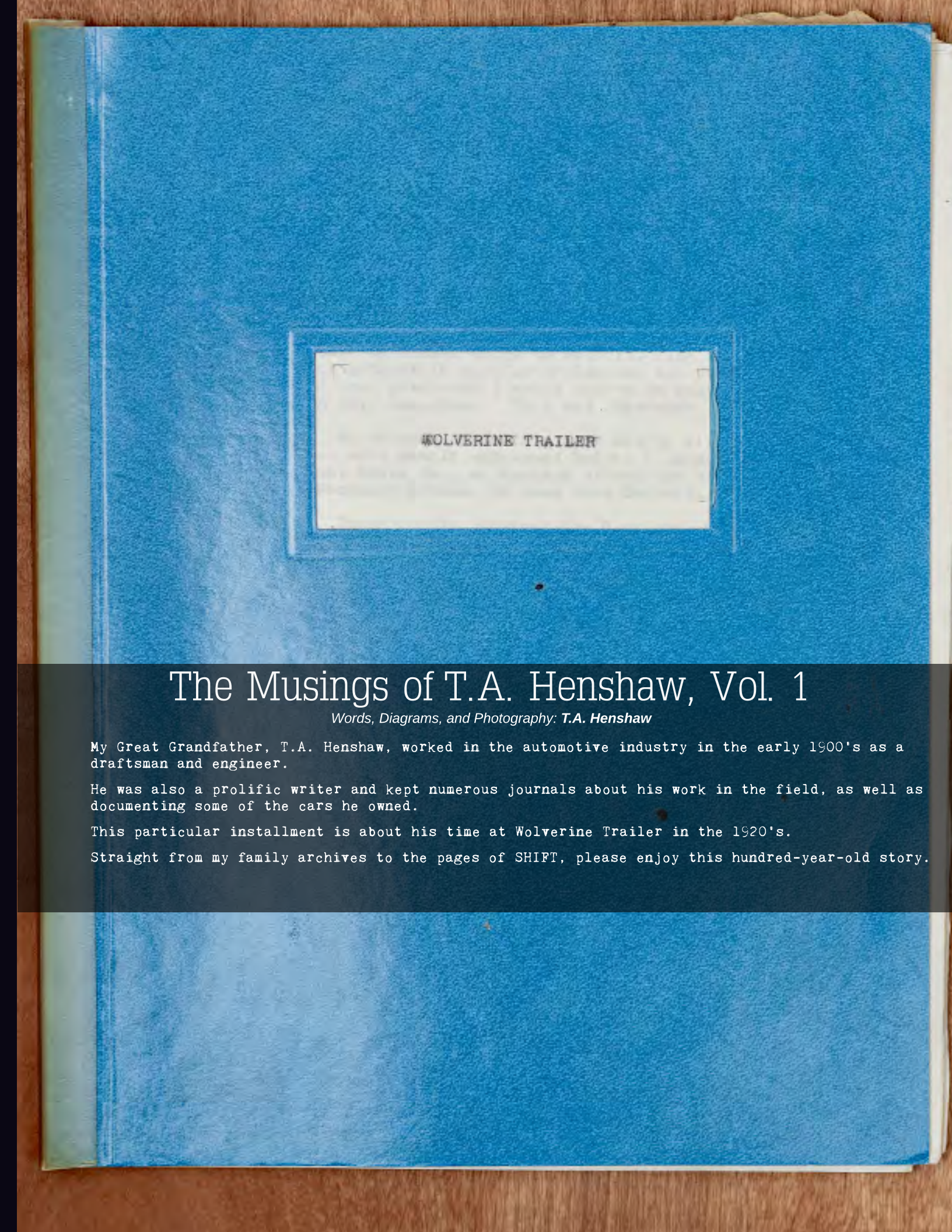


 @1slowmk.7

 @1slowmk.7

 Euro Plus

 Watch The Full Video



WOLVERINE TRAILER

# The Musings of T.A. Henshaw, Vol. 1

*Words, Diagrams, and Photography: T.A. Henshaw*

My Great Grandfather, T.A. Henshaw, worked in the automotive industry in the early 1900's as a draftsman and engineer.

He was also a prolific writer and kept numerous journals about his work in the field, as well as documenting some of the cars he owned.

This particular installment is about his time at Wolverine Trailer in the 1920's.

Straight from my family archives to the pages of SHIFT, please enjoy this hundred-year-old story.

## WOLVERINE TRUCK AND TRAILER CO.

The depression which occurred at the close of World War 1, caused The Stewart Motor Co., of Buffalo, N. Y. to curtail it's operations and this made it imperative for me to obtain employment elsewhere.

I decided to locate in Detroit where a certain young lady lived.

My friends, not knowing about this young lady, told me it would be insane to go to Detroit. The Automobile Center of automobile manufacturing was hit particularly hard and they predicted I would starve to death looking for a job in this location. This was November 1920.

My friends in Buffalo were nearly right - My resources were nearly exhausted before I landed a job with The Simons Sales Co., on Hancock street two blocks West of Famous Woodward Avenue, in down town Detroit.

These people serviced the Overland and Willys Knight Automobiles. My job was to jump up and open the garage doors when customers drove up and sounded their horn.

Salesmen would interview the owners - make a hand written order describing faults and work to be done. I then made three typewritten copies for shop and office.

Service was just as bad then as it is to-day. I had to question the salesmen when they specified a valve grind for a knight motor. (The Knight engine had sleeve valves) I had to be at work by 7:30 in the morning - bad.

This position lasted from December 2nd. to the 15th. at which time I obtained the position of ~~Chief~~ Chief Engineer for The Wolverine Truck and Trailer Co., which at this time was located on Greeley Ave., in Detroit - near Denby Truck Co.

I obtained this position by answering an Ad in the Help-Wanted column of a news paper. I was told that over 200 letters had been received in answer to their Ad.

Upon resigning from The Simons Sales Co. they wanted to know why. I was able to tell them I now had a position as a chief engineer for a company which made Semi-Trailers similar to those made by the Fruehauf Trailer Co. .

I remained with this company designing trailers until August, 1923.

My experiences while working for this company, were most interesting. A Mr. Benjamin Cutting was President and J. K. Thompson was General Manager. I cannot speak too highly of the friendship and co-operation these two men gave me. The Shop Superintendent, Mr. Flannigan was not so co-operative - our ways of stress analysis differed.

A Mr. De Mitti had been responsible for their engineering before I entered the scene. He was considered to be a "Mechanical Genius" - and He was pretty good.

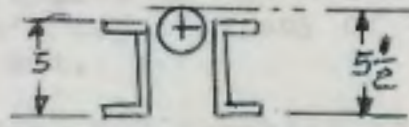
J. K. Thompson was a shop man, who had worked for Timken Detroit Axle Co. and now operated a machine shop on Temple Avenue, in down town Detroit. He knew "what it was all about" when it came to manufacturing. Mr. Cutting was a Super Salesman - believe you me.

A number of times the company ran short of money. Then Mr. Cutting would get busy and acquire the necessary working capital.

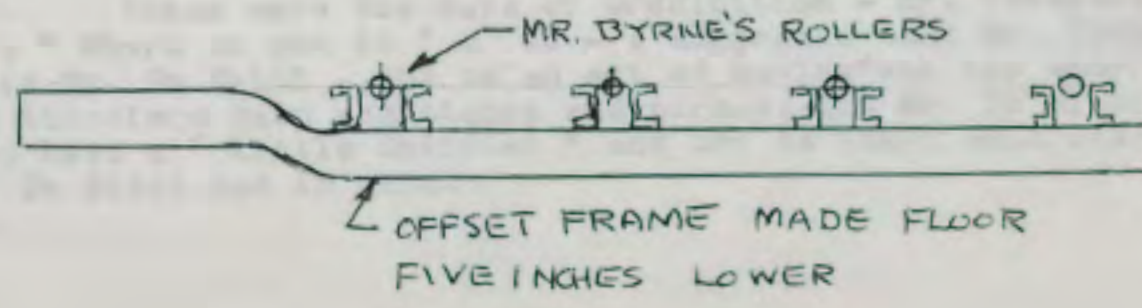
His last maneuver brought the John M. Byrne Lumber Co. onto the scene.

Ben met John in Kansas City. Lumber companies were our best customers. Mr. Byrne had patented a Roller Assembly which was installed in the floor of Lumber Hauling equipment. Lumber was loaded onto these rollers and when unloading, these were unlocked and the load rolled off.

These rollers look like this



A principal objection to the Semi-Trailer at this period, ~~XXXX~~ was the height from the ground to the floor of the trailer. To overcome this objection I had designed the Wolverine Trailers with an off-set frame which looked like this



This illustration shows my off-set frame with Mr. Byrne's rollers installed upon it.

This is probably the first use of off-set frames on Semi-Trailers and the dimension I choose was just perfect for Mr. Byrne's Rollers.

The Byrne Lumber Co. was well-to-do and when Mr. Cutting had money in sight He became enthusiastic and in this instance made some rash promises.

The Lapeer Trailer Co. had recently developed brakes for their trailer which applied themselves automatically when the hauling unit was stopped. Mr. Byrne had heard of this and when He mentioned this feature to Mr. Cutting, Mr. Cutting told him we could also furnish automatic brakes on our trailers.

As our off-set frame was a natural for Mr. Byrne's rollers and because Mr. Cutting said we could furnish our trailers with the automatic brakes, Mr. Byrne gave us an order for ~~three~~<sup>two</sup> six ton and one 3 1/3 ton trailer - IF - we would have them on R.R.Cars ready for shipment in 30 days.

Mr. Byrne said if we could fill that order on time, He would invest money in The Wolverine Truck and Trailer Co., and Mr. Cutting returned as fast as he could, to get me going on the job. Mr. Cutting had no idea of what it meant to develop these automatically operating brakes for our trailers.

I wasted eight or ten days sketching ways and means of applying such brakes to our trailers. Several might have worked but I didn't consider any of them good enough - and time was running out.

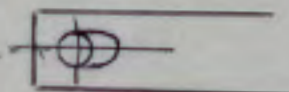
Mr. Cutting had reverted to Mr. De Mitti to help me out and had engaged him to install such brakes on one of our trailers - BUT - Mr. De Mitti being a mechanical Genius had to be handled with gloves on. He stipulated his own terms which put no time limit on the job and prohibited any of us from visiting his shop and seeing what He was doing.

These were the days of prohibition - Mr. Thompson knew "Where to get it" . So - I suggested that Mr. Thompson visit Mr. De Mitti - put on an act of having "one too many" and therefore gain admittance and perhaps get Mr. De Mitti to also have a " Little Sniffler " and try to learn what design Mr. De Mitti had in mind.





Mr. Thompson was successful in gaining admittance to Mr. De Mitti's ~~XXXX~~ but was not allowed to see his work. However - He did manage to obtain a sketch from Mr. De Mitti, which looked like this -



When Mr. Thompson appeared next morning with only this sketch He was very much discouraged - said it didn't mean anything to him but it was all He could get out of De Mitti.

However - I was delighted - meager as this sketch was, to me " It was the answer to "The Maiden's Prayer ". It gave me the practical idea I was looking for.

The circle in the sketch represented the Draw Bar in our trailers and I interpreted the oval as a slot which would allow this draw bar to move backward and forward in it's mounting bracket.

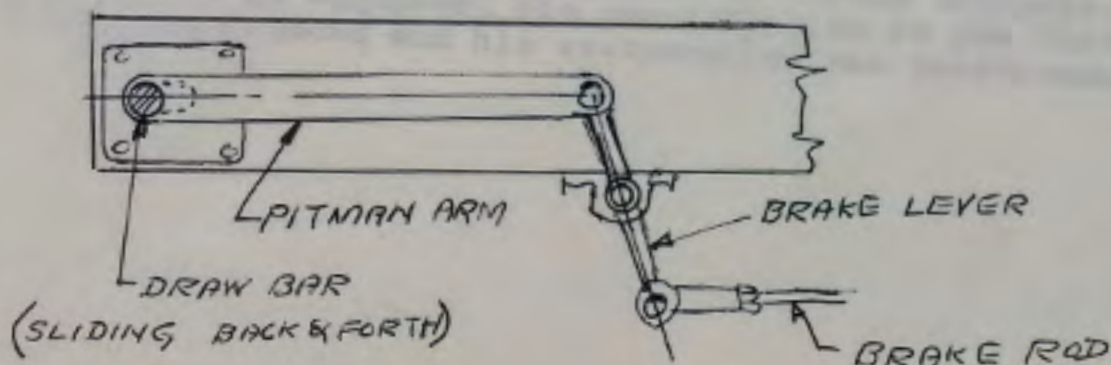
This draw bar is locked into the fifth wheel connecton on the hauling unit. Thus if brakes on hauling unit were applied the hauling unit would stop immediately but the trailer would tend to keep right on moving. This action would push the draw bar back in it's mounting and I would thus have energy to apply brakes on the trailer.

<sup>ATTACHED</sup>  
I ~~placed~~ pitman arms to the draw bar and extended them back to a brake lever and "I was in business"

Here is an illustration showing the normal connection of Trailer to hauling unit.



Here is an illustration of moveable draw bar - pitman arm and brake lever.



A hand lever, shown in the photograph of the cover of the catalogue included herewith, was used to engage a stop to prevent applying the brakes to the trailer in backing up.

All parts were of simple, rugged design which made it possible to obtain patterns for them quickly.

My assistant, Raymond Hoban, was an expeditor. He rushed the patterns to the Swedish Crucible Steel Foundry in Hamtramck for casting. A minimum of machining was required and the three trailers were built.

As we didn't know yet how well these automatic brakes would work so - when the first of the three trailers was finished William Peck - our expert driver for demonstrations, made a test in the street in front of our building. We watched from across the street. Peck applied the brakes on the hauling unit to skid the wheels on the pavement - as far as we could see, the wheels on the trailer skidded at exactly the same instant.

We completed the other two trailers and I helped load them on the Rail Road car for shipment. Altho we were a bit over the 30 day time limit for shipment, Mr. Byrne was satisfied and these trailers worked out so well that He invested money in the business. I never knew how much He put into the Wolverine Trailer project but would guess it must have been at least \$250,000 before the business was discontinued.

With this new capital available, the factory was moved from Greehey and Holbrook streets to 419-429 Rowena street. Mr. R. S. Walton came from Kansas City to represent Mr. Byrne's interest and became General Manager of the company.

When engaging Raymond Hoban for my assistant, which at that time amounted to little more than errand boy, I insisted that He promise to continue looking for a better position. Our interview disclosed Raymond to be an expert efficiency engineer. Altho inexperienced He had made an extensive study in that field and had completed the several courses of study which were available at this period.

It was He who planned the floor arrangement in the factory when we moved to Rowena street.

Mr. Flanigan was shop superintendent - a good blacksmith and a fair machinist but very poor at stress analysis. When I was hired as engineer, his participation in the field of design was reduced and his co-operation was questionable.



Raymond Hoban and I figured our new factory arrangement should make it possible to produce one or more 6 Ton trailers a day. Mr. Flannigan never attained this goal.

One time Mr. Flannigan became ill. In such events I was in charge of the shop. I persuaded Mr. Cutting to let us build 6 trailers, while Mr. Flannigan was away - At the end of 5 days, Mr. Cutting stepped into the shop to see how we were progressing and was astonished to see paint being applied to the six finished trailers.

Mr. Cutting must have sensed Mr. Flannigan's antagonism for He came into my combined office and drafting room twitching his long slender nose with his index finger and said to me - " Where there is smoke there must be fire."

Business did not improve as anticipated. Fruehauf was our principal competitor. They were an old company in the trailer business and well established with the trade. Wolverine were having a difficult time.

At this time a Mr. Byron, an old trailer engineer became available. Mr. Byron was well known in the industry and held several patents on trailers. It was thought sales would improve if He were " Chief Engineer" instead of me. I was little known in the industry and it was not possible to keep us both on the Wolverine payroll.

Mr. Cutting, ( the President ) was always most kind and congenial with me - He was particularly so in advising me of their decision to make this change. When He told me of this in June of 1923 I told him I appreciated his position but that " I will Get even with you " He was taken aback and asked what I meant. I laughed and said I wanted to borrow \$ 300.00 from him. The pressure was off - He smiled and asked " When do you want it ?"

Mr. Cutting loaned me this \$300.00 and it was used as the down payment on a garage house I purchased at 10508 Bryden Avenue, out Grand River Avenue, in Detroit.

I was kept on the Wolverine payroll until the middle of August and on September 1st. became an employee of the Maxwell Motor Car Company, at Oakland Avenue in Highland Park.

# Peak Subaru

on America's Mountain



The Funkiest Forester is Subaru's Case Study in the Whole Being Greater Than the Sum of its Parts

Story and Photography: Ryan Bahrke



**Behold the 2026 Subaru Forester Wilderness. Like the mythical squonk of the Steely Dan-o-sphere, it's a construct that looks a little awkward from every angle.** Raised six-tenths of an inch over lesser Foresters, the wheels don't quite fill their wells. The body cladding meant to butch it up feels more tacked-on than thought-out. And, resplendent in the Autumn Green Metallic of my presser, it looked even more the part of an inelegant forest dweller than it otherwise would. This is a vehicle seemingly destined to live a life in the shadows, yet here in Colorado, you see them everywhere.

**Then you step into the refreshed, sixth-gen Forester's interior, and the first thing that hits you is all the**

**glass.** I can't remember the last time I drove a new car that felt so airy. The view out is incredible; a reminder of just how limited visibility has become in most modern vehicles. An unobstructed view is a deeply underrated safety feature, and I'll take a wide field of vision over sensors and beeps any day.

**The Subie's individual components are a mixed bag of the familiar and the frustrating. There's a proper shifter, dammit, right where your hand falls and right where god intended.** In fact, it's probably the same shifter you would've found in a Forester twenty years ago. Subaru's ubiquitous center infotainment stack is here too, though it's sometimes slow to respond, and the rearview camera

quality isn't great. The Harmon Kardon audio system was disappointing; while it sounded decent at lower volumes, it quickly fell apart as soon as you turned the dial to the right. And I'm no fan of CVT transmissions, but Subaru's is certainly one of the better ones.

The seats are comfortable. The floor mats are rubber, as you'd expect. There is a large panoramic sunroof, but there doesn't appear to be much of a tint, and when the sun is overhead, you feel it. Interestingly, the sunroof shade is a completely manual affair, and to open or close it fully, you need a go-go-Gadget arm—or a little help from the folks in the back seat.

The ride is quite good too. Aided, no doubt, by the larger, higher-sidewall

tires; the car laughs off small potholes and speed bumps. And that plastic cladding will probably deflect wayward shopping carts in Target parking lots not currently patrolled by the Cart Narc.

**But, with just 180 horsepower and 178 lb-ft of torque, there simply isn't enough grunt for the Forester Wilderness' 3,700 lbs.** The hybrid system available on other Forester trims would likely help a little, but, it's not offered on the Wilderness. As it sits, this is a vehicle that takes eight-and-a-half seconds to reach 60 from a standstill and does the quarter-mile in 17. The Forester Wilderness is frustratingly slow, by anyone's standards. Its gas mileage isn't all that great either, at a rated 26 mpg, combined. Truth be told, I struggled to hit 20 during the week I had it.

This is a car that's been thoroughly reviewed here and elsewhere. What I really wanted to know was how the car would handle Colorado's Pikes Peak. In winter. Because Subaru's Symmetrical AWD system might be the best in the business. And, because I wanted to kick up some rooster tails on America's Mountain™. The Pikes Peak Highway is a toll road, with a toll house. And, while there are no cookies at the start, there are donuts at the end... at least in theory. After forking over my ten bucks, I was on my way, headed up the same mountain that's seen competitors like Al Unser, Michèle Mouton, and pal Jonny Lieberman.

**If you thought the Forester was underpowered at the**



**base of the mountain, wait until you're halfway up.** But that's okay, as your hillclimb fanboy fantasies are quickly tamped down by the posted 30 mph speed limit. This is no Volkswagen I.D. R, and I'm no Romain Dumas.

And just over halfway is as far as I made it, because at about 12,000 feet—just past what's known as Glen Cove—I was greeted by a Pikes Peak ranger truck blocking further progress. Despite unseasonably warm temps in the 60s at the mountain's base, there

was still a good amount of snow closer to the peak, and the last couple of thousand feet were deemed too dangerous to continue.

I was disappointed. Not only because I wouldn't enjoy the famous Pikes Peak



Summit House donuts, but also because I know the Subaru could've made it all the way up the mountain—and through the snow—without breaking a sweat.

Side note: Subaru, if you're reading this (and I bet you are), you should know that all the Pikes Peak employees I met that day drive Subarus themselves, and unofficially, they'd love to have Subarus as their work vehicles, too.

Subaru: the Official Vehicle of


America's Mountain, certainly has a nice ring to it.

Sometimes I ask myself who a car like the 2026 Subaru Forester Wilderness is for. It's not pretty. And it's not quick. But, like the squonk, it's a beast that knows exactly what it is. And Subaru is a company that knows exactly who its customers are.

**Forty-two grand—while not nothing—seems like a fair price for what you get.** And what you get is something that's much greater than

the sum of its parts. There's more here than meets the eye, and there's a beauty in its authenticity, warts and all.

The people on the street have all seen better times, but the 2026 Subaru Forester Wilderness is, at this moment, the perfect little monster for most of them. 🚩

 **That Car Show Podcast**

 **Ryan Bahrke**







# 100,000 Miles Later

Story & Photography: **Chris Colten**

**I've been seeing a trend on social media lately that encourages people in their 20s to buy an old 4x4. I couldn't agree more. Having a fun project car during this period of time is very important.**

When I picked up my 1997 Lexus LX450 in 2019, I had no idea just how much a vehicle could transform my existence. I would even argue that it's the best car I've ever owned. It's been my faithful companion on



countless adventures over the past 100,000 miles, safely carrying me through some of the most remote places I could locate

The whole thing started when I realized that my fleet of Mazdas would be woefully inadequate for the camping I

between Colorado and California. It even survived an excursion through the concrete jungle known as "Chicago".



wanted to do. Both my Mazdaspeed 3 and NA Miata were simply too low and wrong-wheel-drive to be useful on rough forest service roads.

I traded in my hatchback at a buy here/pay here lot for a seemingly pristine example of an LX450, sitting at a mere 169,000 miles and change. It was love at first test drive. It was slow, but I didn't care. This SUV felt special.

It only took me a week to give it some trail rash - my first time out, still rocking the temp tags, I stuffed the front passenger corner into a deep mud hole and slightly altered the shape of the front bumper. With the first little bit of damage out of the way, I continued to wheel it with the confidence that I no longer had a pavement princess.

Over the course of the next few years, I slowly worked towards the vision I initially had for the LX450. I wanted the perfect vehicle for exploring the wilderness with some Aussie touring flair. I fitted it with an ARB bumper, Warn winch, Old Man Emu suspension, locally made rock sliders, a shelf platform for the trunk, and eventually a roof tent. I also felt the need to add some dangly mud-flaps.



This was purely an aesthetic choice.

The LX also allowed me to deepen my understanding of how to spin wrenches. Contrary to popular belief, Toyotas are not invincible and do require preventative maintenance. Right out of

the gate, it needed a new radiator and a short length of coolant line, known as the "pesky heater hose" in the 80 Series community. **This job sucks.** Shortly thereafter, I got to rebuild the steering knuckles, a regular part of the maintenance schedule. Scooping grease and "birf soup", a mixture of gear oil and moly grease, out of the axle by hand was a real highlight.

The only thing that ever truly wore out and quit on me was the starter motor, which was a very easy replacement. The exhaust has also been repaired numerous times, thanks to repeatedly smashing it on rocks.





Despite my best efforts, I still managed to get it stuck, incurred additional trail damage, and absolutely trashed the paint.

Countless memories and adventures later, the time has come for me to start looking into the next camping vehicle, a 4x4 van for even longer and more remote trips. To make this happen, the LX450 has to go. This pains me deeply, but sometimes we must part with a beloved vehicle to step into the next chapter of our lives.



But it's a tough act to follow. **I don't think I'll ever own another vehicle like my LX450.**

The simplicity, ruggedness, and classic styling are unmatched.



My parting thoughts are this: It doesn't need to be an offroader, but if you are in your 20's and are looking for a reason to dive into a vehicular project, here's your sign. Get the car you wanted when you were younger, fix it up, and **rack up as many miles as you can.** 🏠



Working on the LX wasn't the only learning experience that came from owning such a vehicle. Improving my off-roading skills was a core component of my time with the rig. I had previously received some training in this type of driving in the form of coaching from a former Camel Trophy participant. "As slow as possible, as fast as necessary" was the mantra that I kept in my mind every time I hit a trail.



EXPERIENCES & LIFESTYLE

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# TRUCKS & HUGS

## SPIRIT OF 1876 RIGS AND COFFEE MEET



Story: Marty Kier Photography: Marty Kier, Chris Colten, Justin Wong

What better way to spend Valentine's Day morning than hanging out with a bunch of dudes and trucks? On the morning of February 14, I hopped in my Century, which had a dying battery, and made the easy, comfy drive down to Castle Rock. I knew it was a questionable choice the second I turned the key. After all, why not take the Century to a truck meet?

I was joined by Justin Wong, one of our new photographers and videographers, who rolled in with his Subaru WRX STI. Co-editor Chris Colten was there too, and in classic fashion, he brought his legendary LX450. It did not take long for him to make friends with another Land Cruiser from the same era, which felt like the most natural thing that could happen at an event like this. Some people show up and immediately find their corner. Chris shows up, and the corner finds him.

For anyone who hasn't been to Spirit of 1876, they are an overlanding shop that mostly specializes in rooftop tents

and camping applications. They are located in an industrial area, which sounds ordinary until you see how well it works for an event like Trucks & Hugs. Participants could park wherever they liked between the garages and neighboring businesses. It gave the whole morning a relaxed, almost private feel. We basically had the place to ourselves, and that made it feel extra special.

From a photo and video standpoint, that layout matters a lot. At a standard

Cars and Coffee style event, it can be tough to get clean shots without crowds in the background, or without having to wait for a gap that never really opens up. Not the case here. Most attendees were hanging out around their own rigs, talking with whoever wandered over, so there was room to move. You could actually line up a frame, step back, and let the vehicle sit in its space without the background turning into visual noise. It made the whole morning feel more





focused, like the vehicles were the main characters instead of props in a busy parking lot.

A couple of notable vehicles, at least in my opinion, included a friggen 1995 Toyota HiAce 4WD diesel fire truck, which immediately caught my attention because these are way bigger in person than you may think. I chatted with the owner for a while, exploring all of the quirks and features. There was also an off-road Tiganu that immediately caught my

attention, because it is not the platform most people picture when they think of overlanding. The Timber and Track Overland new generation Tacoma was another standout, along with a 90s era Tundra wearing retro graphics that hit the perfect throwback note. A newer Tacoma showed up with a nineties paper cup graphic wrap, which somehow made it feel both nostalgic and totally current at the same time. Rounding it out, there was a modern Ranger that fit right into the mix.

This is definitely not a hint that the imported RHD fire truck and Tiganu will show up in a future article. What I will say is that the whole event felt like a genuinely nice, low-pressure morning, with plenty of enthusiasts who were happy to chat about their projects without the usual rush. If you have not checked out Spirit of 1876 and their events, I highly recommend it, especially if you are a fan of off-roading and overlanding, but if you aren't and that's not your crowd, I'd still suggest going!



# LATE NIGHT OR BUST

Column by: Danielle Badler

Here's an answer to a problem you probably never thought of. What? Stay with me. What to do about the potential demise of late-night TV talk shows.

Why, you ask? Well, I happen to like a drole monologue, some wacko news clips, a little "schtick." I find it works wonders to clear my brain and settle into never-never land. Most nights, I can hardly get past "Meanwhile," which is just fine with me.

But the fabled time slot, the ghost of Paar and Carson and Leno, is being racked and ravaged. Colbert is canceled. Kimmel went dark, came back and ... who knows what's next.

Well, here's a proposition for the producers. An outline for a complete rethink. It's a proposal. A treatment. A look at how the late-night concept could recapture its glory. Here's the idea; go vertical, on a rotating basis, based on broad-based themes.

Like cars, theater, film, sports, fashion ... for the whole show. Oh sure, they could still touch on the day's headlines, in the traditional monologue. But the whole warmed-over guest at the desk thing, and the featured musical act, would be totally rethought, along the lines of the theme for the evening.

I'm focusing first on Kimmel. The plan would be to move the show from LA to Vegas, the entertainment capital of the world. And ... where ... Jimmy's ... from! I know, right? And, to kick off the reboot, they would launch the concept around the Las Vegas Grand Prix.

Can you see Max, and Lewis, and Lando, and Oscar on the couch? Yucking it up with Jimmy?

I can hear the dialog now. "Who actually drinks the most champagne

on the podium?" "Do any of you guys ever exceed the posted limit, when you're not racing?" "By how much?" "Who actually brakes the latest, and does this comport with any other performance abilities?" "What kind of life insurance do you carry?"

One idea would be to resurrect the goofy driving course that Leno had, when he did that ill-fated one-hour pre-late news show. Remember that fling, and that track? It looked like a pre-teen obstacle course for go-karts with governors. They even had balloons marking the turn-in points.

This time around, Guillermo would hop into the latest vehicle of choice, supplied by an advertiser ... like ... wait for it ... Cadillac! Think about it - with their F1 car making its debut this year, what better way for GM to show its mettle. I bet Mary Barra would be willing to drive it on-stage. And then, if Guillermo can see out of the car, without a booster seat, he'd set the time to beat.

And, you guessed it, for the following show, Audi would be the featured advertiser, and F1 car. Followed by Ferrari. And Aston Martin.

Now, if this isn't a compelling reason for Porsche, and BMW, to enter the fray, what is? First the Kimmel show, next the world.

You want audience participation? How about "guess the horsepower at idle of a '26 F1 car?" "What's the downforce at 200 mph?" "In the wet?" "How do you find reverse?" "Does every F1 'pilot' (said with a French accent) fly their own private plane?" "When you're watching an F1 race on TV, what do you say, when your family asks you to change the channel?" "At a pit stop, would you rather be a tire-changer, a

lug-nut wrencher or the guy who lifts up the front of the car with that metal contraption?"

For winning, the audience member would get to BE the child seat for Guillermo - Guillermo would sit on the winner's lap, so he can actually see out of the race car.

And, think about this, they could highlight the next season of "Drive to Survive!" I'm sure Netflix would swoon at the opportunity. Invite on a producer, who brings with him clips from the new season. You know the routine, he sets it up, sits back and ... we watch snippets of the production.

It's brilliant. Because then, we don't need to sit through each episode of the whole series, the incessant team orders to "push, push," the rivalries, the wins, the losses ... all from last season. Because we already know the outcome - it's from last season! We just get the best parts.

And what happens to the live studio band? Replaced by audio clips, of a V-8 engine, a V-10, a V-12, revving up to redline. Earphones would be optional.

Oh, I'm in. For this show, I might even stay up, beyond the monologue. Hey, late night, let's do it. 🏁



About Danielle

# MR KIERIOSITY

## ***SOME COMMENTS FROM SHIFT COLORADO'S CO EDITOR AND YOUTUBER: MARTY KIER***



Story and Photography: *Marty Kier*

Hey there! Thanks for reading this issue of SHIFT Colorado Magazine. My name is Marty and I perform a variety of tasks for SHIFT such as designing articles, editing, website management, and blogging. **I also release YouTube videos every single Sunday on my channel @MrKieriosity.** Many of the videos show behind the scenes of SHIFT Colorado's great articles. Other videos just show me wrenching on cars or going to other car events in Colorado!

This time in Issue 15, **I was able to record quite a few behind the scenes style videos.** These articles take a TON of work and the SHIFT team is highly skilled. **If you want to see what it's like during our roller days where we get epic photos of the cars and people you see in SHIFT Colorado Magazine, I invite you to**



**subscribe!** I also release videos on the SHIFT Colorado Magazine's official YouTube channel, which I recommend you subscribe to as well to see plenty of photos and hear new story details that might not be mentioned in print! **Thanks so much for taking an interest and I hope to see you at upcoming events!** 🍷



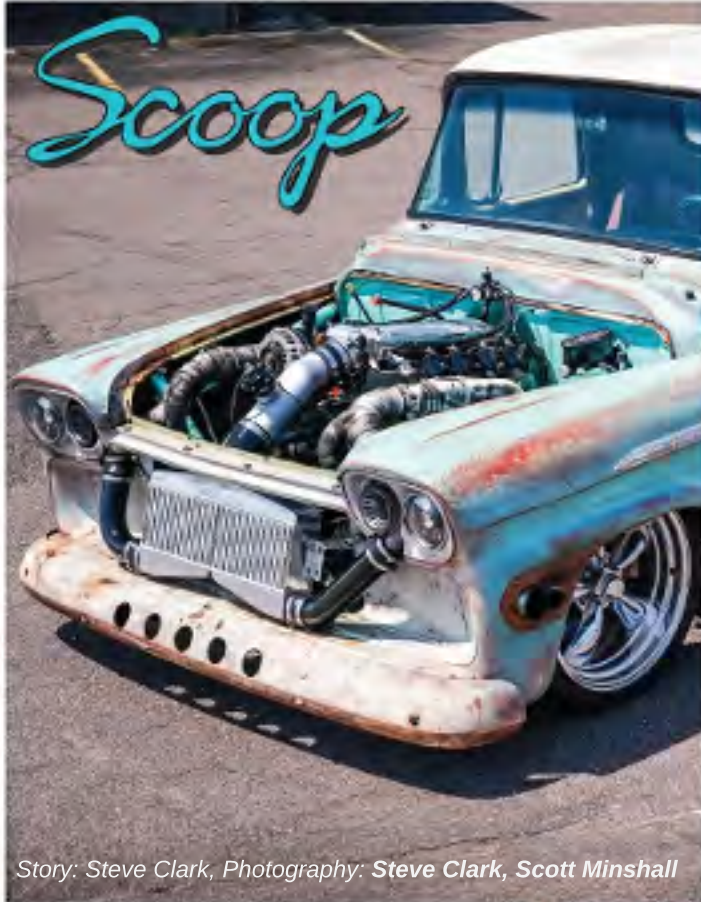
**Subscribe to Mr. Kieriosity on Youtube!**



**Subscribe to SHIFT Colorado on YouTube!**

# DOG LEG DREAMIN'

## A NEW ADVENTURE BEGINS



March/April 2026



My wife (Miriam) and I are pleased to announce that as of January 1, 2026, we have officially assumed ownership of [Scoop Auto Events](#). Scoop Auto Events is your car event source for the Rocky Mountain and Southwest states covering the states of Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming.

After 35 years of exceptional leadership, Tracey Ellis reached out to us last summer to discuss the future of Scoop. We are honored to carry Tracey's legacy forward while integrating Scoop into our established media ecosystem of Colorado Cars & Coffee. Colorado Cars & Coffee is the largest Colorado based car events portal, and publishes a biweekly listing of local car events and also SHIFT Colorado.

Our goal is to honor Scoop's regional focus, modernize it, and

increase value for advertisers, car clubs and readers. It aligns perfectly with what we do with COC&C, so we think it will slot in well. Check out the [March/April 2026 issue](#) on our website, and get signed up for our [email](#) to receive Scoop for free.

One last plug for our [automotive program scholarship](#), through the awesome sponsors and donations of C&C members, CO C&C is offering NINE scholarships for \$1000 each. Applications close end of March 2026, so please share with students and loved ones. Get the [application](#) and apply today! 🚩

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# WE WANT YOU!

Shameless Cry For Help: **Brendan Garst**



You made it to the back of the magazine, we are impressed! We are so thrilled you gave us a read. While making a magazine is exhilarating, and difficult, finding out the people are reading and enjoying it is very rewarding!



**Marty and Jake wandered off with the LX700 and we haven't heard from them since, Brendan made a new friend pretending to be a car salesman, and Brandon Day has had to step up to boss us around. We always need help!**

How can you help?

- Do you have a cool car we can write about? Cool is subjective, we can find plenty to say about most cars!
- Are you hosting an event that should be covered? We have a team of writers and photographers who can do that and are happy to work with you to get them onsite for your event!
- Do you do other cool stuff that doesn't fit the previous categories? Racing or race team? Vehicle exhibition or museum?
- Are you a local or national business in a vehicle related field?
- Do you have or want to learn skills in Journalism, photography, writing, graphic design, layout design or multiple of the above?
- Do you know of anything else car tangential we can cover?

If the answer to any of the above was yes, drop us a line! We are always looking for new things to cover, and new team members to join us in covering it! 🍷

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