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TECH

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FORM AND

Robinson has his serious play truck rolling on a set of 37-inch tall BFGoodrich Mud Terrain ATKR tires wrapped around a set of 17-inch APP forged Thunder II wheels.



FUNCTION

TEXT & PHOTOS BY COURTNEY HALOWELL

CST PERFORMANCE SUSPENSION'S SILVERADO IS AN EXERCISE IN BOTH

Chris Robinson is one interesting guy. He is the owner of CST Performance Suspension in Riverside, California, a company that prides itself on building race-inspired off-road suspension components for trucks. And the main inspiration for constructing these tough as nails suspension components is due to the fact that Chris has about three decades of experience building ground breaking off-road race trucks for the likes of Walker Evans.





How would you like a set of one-off polished billet aluminum lower link arms for your truck? Well, you had better start saving your pennies because these suckers aren't cheap to build!





Is it considered showing off when you roll up to Glamis with a set of fully polished billet aluminum upper and lower control arms and proceed to pass everybody at some point during the weekend. Some might consider it showing off, while to others it is simply flexing a little engineering muscle.

So when Chris decided to design and build suspension systems for trucks that see as much time on the road as they do off the road, he left the off-road racing world with a pretty big pair of shoes to fill. But in doing so, Chris has built a reputation for himself in the truck accessory aftermarket that is rock solid. And after things at CST were up and running smoothly, Robinson decided that it was time to step back into the fabrication shop and build himself a toy. Something that would stop people in their tracks at the SEMA show, but that he could take out to



the desert and flog. A street legal truck that looks as good as it performs, and with Chris handling the construction himself, it was guaranteed to perform very well.

It all started when the truck was torn down to a large pile of parts sitting on the shop floor. Then a complete tubular chassis that starts at the front bumper and ends at the rear bumper was constructed that ties into the roll cage inside the cab (basically the roll cage is the center section of the chassis). Then the front section of the chassis houses the relative-



Check out where the crew at Wired for Sound decided to mount the Kicker amplifier in the CST Silverado, putting it in the center of the headliner was pretty unusual, but it looks really clean.

ly stock 5.3-liter Chevrolet V-8 engine and 4L60E transmission. The front of the tubular chassis is also where the pivots for the one-piece billet aluminum upper and lower control arms are located. The control arms are both connected to a custom-fabricated front spindle and ride on a single King 2.5-inch coil-over and a single King 2.5-inch triple bypass shock on each side. The suspension





system also features a custom heim steering conversion to ensure that there won't be any tierod end bind anywhere in the suspension's 22 inches of travel (that's right, 22 inches of front suspension travel). To finish things up out front, a set of Crown Industries brake lines along with

17 x 8 APP forged Thunder II wheels wrapped in 35 x 12.50 x 17 BFGoodrich Mud Terrain

ATKR tires were bolted up.

Out back, Robinson started with a Currie Enterprises Dana 60 rear end stuffed with



The factory fuel tank has been replaced with a steel encased fuel cell from the crew at Fuel Safe.

4.56:1 ring-and-pinion gears and a Detroit Locker for added traction. He engineered a link-style suspension system that features a pair of billet aluminum lower links in conjunction with a wishbone upper link. The rear suspension was further complicated when Chris decided to build a rocker arm system to allow the 2.5-inch King coil-over shocks and 2.5-inch King triple bypass shocks to be mounted behind the rear axle on both sides of the Fuel Safe racing fuel cell. This not only helped transfer some more of the



A set of Beard off-road racing seats and Crow five-point harnesses can be found in just about every serious race truck in the desert and Chris' Silverado is no exception.

weight to the rear of the truck, allowing the rear suspension to be tuned by adjusting the length of the push rods that run from the axle to the rocker arm, it gets the shocks up out of the way of rocks and debris. It looks cool too. This wicked looking, super technical rear suspension system also features a set of King pneumatic bump stops and allows for an effortless 26 inches of rear-wheel travel. The sus-



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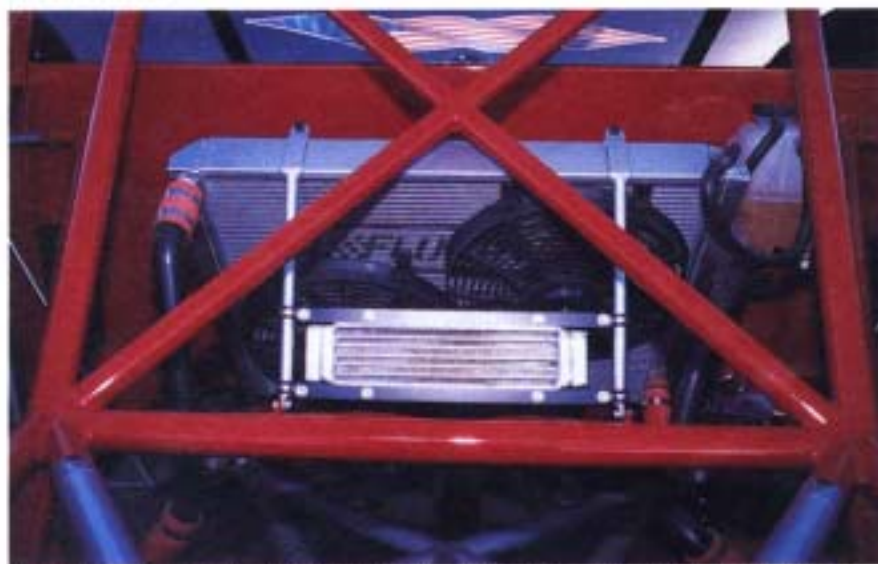
The rear suspension is unusual because it uses a push rod from the rear axle to apply pressure to one side of a rocker arm that in turn collapses the King coil-overs and bypass shocks. And you can find trick engineering like this on the entire truck.



Each of the four corners of the CST Silverado features a 2.5-inch King coil-over as well as a 2.5-inch King triple bypass shock. This setup allows for a nearly infinite combination of shock adjustment to get the suspension setup perfect.



The folks over at Currie Enterprises cleaned up a Dana 60 housing and filled it with new bearings, 4.56:1 ring and pinion gears and a Detroit Locker to ensure that traction would never be an issue for this Silverado.



While the new Fluidyne aluminum radiator has been relocated behind the cab, the Fluidyne transmission cooler remains up front on the tubular core support.

pension was buttoned up with the addition of Crown Industries brake lines and a pair of 17 x 9.5 APP forged Thunder II wheels wrapped in 35 x 14.50 x 17 BFGoodrich Mud Terrain ATKR tires. Just ahead of the rear axle, you'll notice that Chris mounted the Fluidyne High Performance aluminum radiator and Optima battery.

To get the truck looking like a truck again, a pair of Glasworks unlimited front fenders and bedsides, Street Scene mirrors and grille insert along with a hood headlights and clear corners from APC were added. And for good measure, a pair of PIAA headlight bulbs and wiper blades and a chrome grille and a set of 2003 taillight lenses were picked up from the folks over at Center Chevrolet. This is where things got interesting because the truck was pulled back apart and the crew over at Starbucks Customs in Riverside, California, were given the task of painting everything from the chassis and suspension to the inside of the cab. And while the majority of the truck was at the paint shop, all of the aluminum goodies were over at Empire Custom Polishing getting prettied-up. After the paint was complete, the truck had to be transported back to CST to be reassembled. During the reassembly process, Chris decided that the truck needed to get some extra power to the ground. So, a K&N FIPK kit, JBA plug wires and headers, Art Carr gate shifter and a custom exhaust system from Franks Muffler Systems were added.

The final hurdle to cross was the interior of the truck. It all started with the installation of a complete audio system. Every piece of the high-end system is from the folks at Kicker. The creative installation that found an amplifier mounted in the center of the headliner and completely custom door panels is the handwork of Wired for Sound Motorsports. Other interior features include a set of Beard seats, Crow Enterprises five-point harnesses, and MOMO steering wheel and pedals. The dash has been treated to a complete carbon fiber insert kit from Splash Works and an Escalade gauge cluster from the folks over at Center Chevrolet.

Chris and the CST Suspension crew had the truck finished in plenty of time to get it out to the SEMA show in 2002 where it drew a bigger crowd than a free beer stand at the monster truck races! After the CST Silverado completed all of its obligations—shows, photo shoots for magazines and such—they prepped it for its first desert trip and proved that the truck could indeed perform as fantastically as it looks. 