

RETURN TO YESTERYEAR

■ Steve Richey's Custom-Built
'68 C-10 Short-Box

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EARNING A DRIVER'S LICENSE AND GETTING A FIRST TRUCK IS A RITE OF PASSAGE FOR MANY 16-YEAR-OLDS. A first truck isn't just any truck, either, it's special, and is often the truck by which all others are measured.

Steve Richey's dad, Jim, gave him his first truck when Steve was just 14. It was a '68 Chevrolet C-10 in need of attention. Along with the truck, Steve's dad presented him with a small Craftsman handheld toolbox filled with wrenches. Steve and Jim worked together for two years to get the truck ready for Steve's 16th birthday. "The truck had to be completely rebuilt to drive when I was 16," remembers Steve. "It was a great father/son project."

Steve drove that C-10 throughout high school, racking up the memories that make our first vehicles so important. Unfortunately, like most of us at that age, Steve was short of cash and was forced to sell it. But, he never forgot about that truck, or the good times he had building it with his dad.

Fast-forward to a couple of years ago. With several truck builds under his belt, Steve was on the lookout for a new project, so he picked up a '57 Chevy. But, he noticed that his

dad had a '68 C-10, and he got an idea. They decided to trade vehicles, and Steve came into possession of his next project. "Actually," says Steve, "I have owned this truck for 22 years. Originally, it was owned by a family friend and given to my dad in the late-'80s. It sat in his shop for several years. The day we hauled it home was the day I started working on it."

Steve and Jim wanted to build the new project just like they'd planned way back when the pair started out with





Steve's first truck when he was just 14. The first thing they did was remove the bed and chop the frame, and then, according to Steve, things really went wild. "It was going to be simple build. We were just going to lower it and add tires and wheels. It got out of hand when I changed it from a long-bed to a short-bed."

FRAME MODIFICATIONS

With a clean slate to work with, Steve started by removing the bed altogether, and discarding the frame from behind the cab. He constructed narrower frame rails with a hefty notch because he knew he wanted the truck to sit low on fat tires.

Once the frame was painted black, a Ford 9-inch rearend replaced the factory unit with a ladder-bar setup, and coil-overs were bolted on. The rearend packs a stout 4.56 gears and a mini spool.

STANCE AND LOOK

The front suspension system now includes control arms, a sway bar and airbags from RideTech. The truck was lowered using 2-inch drop spindles from Classic Performance Products (CPP), while the stopping power is delivered through matching 13-inch disc brakes up front, with slotted and drilled rotors and 12-inch samples in the rear, also from CPP.

The rubber meets the road via a quartet of Mickey Thompson SSR radials, 26x10-inch tires in the front and 31x18.5 inchers ride in the rear. The radials are wrapped around Legacy 2G wheels from Billet Specialties. They are powder-coated gray and feature a soft-lip barrel and spinner caps.

BODY CHANGES

With the chassis in its proper stance, Steve went to work on the body, paying special attention to getting the newly acquired short-bed molded into shape. Steve shaved off the door handles, trim, emblems and gas filler neck as well as the marker lights. He recessed the stock front bumper



TRUCK SPECS

OWNER
Steve Richey
Royse City, TX
1968 Chevrolet C-10

ENGINE

- 350-ci Chevrolet ZZ3 V-8
- GM crankshaft and roller hot cam
- GM pushrods and springs
- 9.8-1 compression ratio
- 202/194 valves
- Edelbrock aluminum water pump, 2x4 intake manifold, 550-cfm twin carburetors and valve covers
- K&N air filter
- Sanderson block-hugger headers
- Dual exhaust system with Flowmaster mufflers
- Stock radiator
- Powermaster alternator
- SPAL dual 12-inch cooling fans
- Billet Specialties TruTrac serpentine system
- GM stock wiring harness
- Chevrolet 700R4 auto transmission with 2,000-rpm stall torque converter
- Ford 9-inch rearend with 4.56 gears and mini spool
- Moser axles
- 4-inch driveshaft

- Tanks Inc. 18-gallon poly gas tank

CHASSIS & SUSPENSION

- CPP 13-inch front and 12-inch rear disc brakes (slotted and drilled rotors)
- CPP 8-inch booster and master cylinder
- CPP dropped spindles
- RideTech front airbags, control arms and sway bar
- ProStreet ladder bar rear suspension
- Narrowed frame rails
- Monroe rear coil-overs

WHEELS & TIRES

- 18x8 and 20x15 Legacy 2G by Billet Specialties on the front
- 26x10R18LT and 31x18.5R20LT SSR radials from Mickey Thompson

BODY & PAINT

- Paint applied by Greg McSwain
- Bodywork completed by Steve Richey
- PPG paint
- Trim and emblems airbrushed by Pat Maxwell
- Front bumper recessed 1-inch
- Shaved door handles,

- marker lines, trim, emblems and gas filler neck
- Stake pockets on the bed filled
- Custom Wheel tubs and notch cover
- Bruce Horkey white oak wood kit

INTERIOR & STEREO

- Interior crafted by Kyle Hix of Hix Designs
- Interior installed by Steve Richey
- Red Ultraleather
- Stock bench cut down and stock loop pile carpet
- Billet Specialties steering wheel
- Ididit steering column
- Clayton Machine Works door handles
- Vintage Air AC unit
- Original AM radio
- Dakota Digital VHX gauges

SPECIAL THANKS FROM THE OWNER: "I would like to thank Billy McSwain, Greg McSwain, Pat Maxwell and Kyle Hix for coming to my shop at home and helping me see my vision through. Mostly, I would like to thank my wife. She has stood by and dealt with all that goes into building a truck. I couldn't have done this without her."

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by 1 inch, and filled in the stake pockets on the bed rails. To make way for the wide rear wheels, the bed was tubbed and the gas filler was relocated to it.

Steve enlisted help from friend Greg McSwain to apply several coats of gloss black to the body. "I've always wanted a black hot rod," Steve remarks. "Black has always been a timeless color." To dress up the bed, he ordered a Show Deck wood kit in white oak from Bruce Horkey's Wood and Parts. It fits on top of the stock bed and comes with stainless strips. Pat Maxwell recreated the trim and marker lights with his airbrush.



CONTRASTING THE DEEP BLACK PAINT IS A HOT ROD STAPLE: A RED INTERIOR. THE ULTRALEATHER SEAT UPHOLSTERY BLENDS NICELY WITH THE DEEP PILE RED CARPET, BILLET DASH PANEL AND BLACK TRIM.

ON THE INSIDE

The interior is a swath of red leather. Steve enlisted the services of Kyle Hix of Hix Design in Norman, Oklahoma, for the job. To start, the factory bench seat was cut down 1 1/2 inches and covered in bright red Ultraleather. The old carpet was discarded in favor of a red replacement, and a headliner was fashioned out of the same red Ultraleather as the seat.

A Billet Specialties steering wheel was mounted at the head of a new column from ididit. A Dakota Digital VHX analog/digital system with carbon-fiber faces and red LED backlighting monitors the vital signs of the behemoth under the hood. A Vintage Air AC system keeps things cool.

POWER PLANT

Churning out the power up front is a beautiful 350-ci Chevy ZZ3 V-8 engine that claims to deliver 400 hp and 450 ft-lbs of torque. The aluminum heads were ported and polished, and air and gas is mixed in two Edelbrock 550-cfm carburetors. Exhausted gasses are then pumped into Sanderson block-



hugger headers and continue through a 3-inch dual exhaust system with Flowmaster mufflers.

The engine bay is a nice balance of polished metal and red-accented pieces. Billet Specialties provided a TruTrac Tru serpentine system to keep the engine accessories powered. K&N kept the air clean and cool, while Edelbrock covered the valves and provided the intake manifolds. Most of the engine's internal components remained stock. Power is transported to the rear tires through a 4-inch driveshaft, which is turned by a GearStar 700R4 automatic transmission.

FUTURE PLANS

Now that this one has started to pick up trophies at various truck shows in Texas and beyond, Steve had started another long-bed-to-short-bed C-10 truck build. This new one, also a '68, has a full Porterbuilt suspension, painted small-block, AccuAir and a restored interior. So far his plans are to leave the patina paint as is. Steve tells us, "Hopefully, I will have it complete by the end of the year. Maybe a future feature for you!"

THE WELL-APPOINTED AND DETAILED ENGINE IS A BEAUTIFUL BALANCE BETWEEN POLISHED ALUMINUM AND STAINLESS PIECES AS WELL AS RED ACCENTS THAT MATCH THE SIMPLE COLOR PALETTE OF THE TRUCK.

