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TEXAS TRUCKSTER

**WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT YOU COULD MAKE
A HOT ROD PICKUP OUT OF A '78 F-100?**

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY KEVIN AGUILAR



WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT HERE IS THE PRODUCT OF A WILD ARTIST'S RENDERING THAT WAS BROUGHT TO LIFE. If you are still scratching your head and wondering what the hell it is, then let's just put it this way: it all started when Dennis Overholser, executive vice president of Painless Performance Products, got a '52 Ford flathead V-8 engine and a cab from a '78 Ford F-100. When he saw some of the latest drawings that renowned hot rod artist Thom Taylor had come up with, Dennis started developing an idea about how to bring his parts together. While the concept was still fresh in his mind, Dennis had Thom sketch it to see how it could possibly look.

The rendering came out great and served as a blueprint for the build. One of the major components on the list was the Flathead engine. The previous owner had already bored the block .060 over, replaced the rotating assembly, and added a camshaft from Tatom Custom Engines. From there, Dennis had Jeff Abbott add new piston rings, valve springs, a Pertronix ignition and coil system, Taylor plug wires, R&M Specialties plug wire looms and brackets, Edelbrock heads, and a Hildebrandt oil filter system. For better cooling purposes for the temperamental Flathead, Dennis adapted an Edelbrock water pump

from a Ford 409-CID engine, modified a Walker radiator, and added a Cooling Components electric fan to help keep the fluid from getting hot.

To get an optimum air/fuel mixture to the engine and help it run efficiently, Dennis decided to engineer an EFI system for it. Since Flathead engines have become more popular in the hot rod scene of late, and there was no EFI system available for them, the one created on this engine serves as a prototype for a kit that will be available later from Painless Performance Products. What he developed was a computer and wire harness that are matched with a pair of specially made F&B Performance throttle bodies that are mounted on top of an Offenhauser dual 2-BBL intake manifold. To protect the engine from incoming debris, two O'Brien Truckers air scoops with cotton filters trap all particles and keep them from entering the combustion chambers. To let remnant gases out, a set of Sanderson Limefire headers flow air to the stainless exhaust system. Firing up the Flathead is an Odyssey battery connected to a Powermaster starter. Once the motor is running, a Powermaster 105-amp alternator takes over to power all of the electronics.

Transferring rotational force of the engine to the wheels is a '72 Ford C4 three-speed automatic transmission that was rebuilt by Phoenix

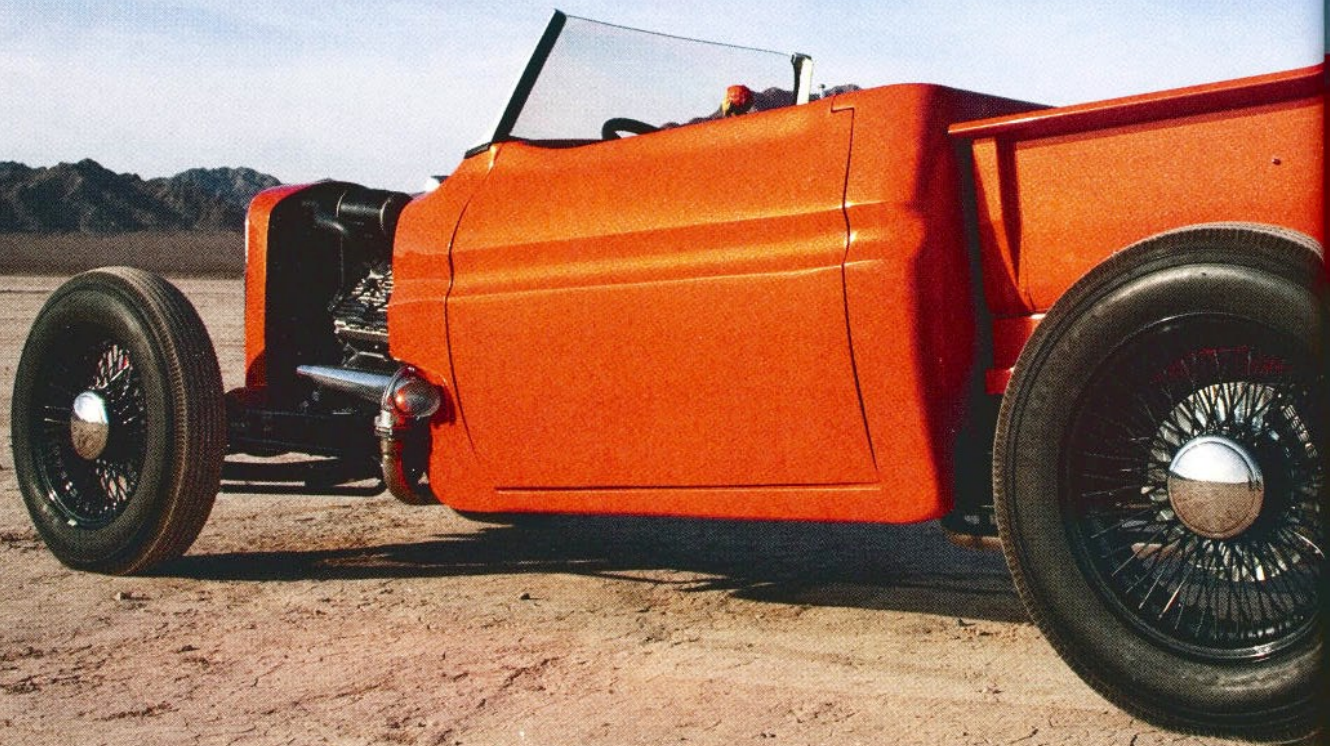
Street
trucks
DENNIS OVERHOLSER
1978 Ford F-100
Weatherford, TX

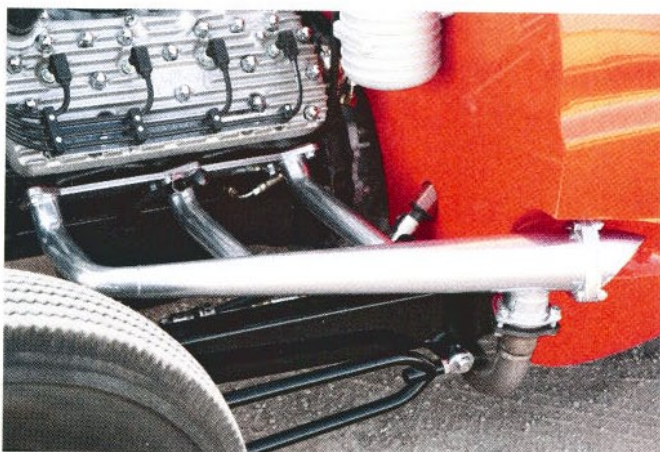


1. Since there are so many parts from different vehicles on this pickup, a custom frame had to be made to hold it all together. It was made from 2 x 4-inch rectangular tubing, and then Posies Rods and Customs' hot rod lowering suspension components were added to it.

2&3. Obviously there are no pre-made seats designed for a heavily modified '78 F-100, so these low-back-style seats were custom made by Eddie's Rods and Customs. For that real rustic and classic look, they were covered in King Ranch leather.

(Above Right) The style of running a Flathead Ford engine has really picked up of late. To modernize his, Dennis made a fuel injection system that is in the works at Painless Performance Products. It's wild to hear it because even though it's a vintage motor, it now runs flawlessly and is surprisingly quiet.





Transmission in Weatherford, Texas. It was then equipped with a Lokar Performance Products shifter. For the rear Dennis knew he wanted to use an 8-inch rearend from a Ford Granada because it was beefy and fit the dimensions. It was cleaned up and fitted with 3.55:1 Pro Gears he got from Speedway Motors. Making the connection between transmission and rearend is a custom-made driveshaft from Inland Empire Driveline.



Since this hot rod pickup is extremely custom with many different parts on it, the frame also had to be custom-made to fit everything to it. Dennis started with a few pieces of 2 x 4-inch rectangular steel and made his own set of rails for it. Then he made several cross members to keep it all together. For its suspension, Dennis used hairpin links from Posies Rods and Customs to hold the Granada rearend and 4-inch Super Bell Model-A Ford 4-inch dropped front axle in place. For a smooth ride and low stance, Posies Super Slide springs with "reverse eyes" were mounted between the suspension and frame. Dampening the bounce of the suspension is a set of shocks from Pete & Jake's. A set of 13-inch disc brakes from SSBC help stop the Truckster, and they are powered by a master cylinder that is mounted under the cab. Locking the rear disc while the pickup is stationary is a Lokar emergency brake system with floor-mount handbrake.

All of the parts that make up this truck are cool, but the thing that makes it the most unique is the body. That's because it started out as a '78 Ford F-100 cab, and it became a chopped up roadster version of its previous form. To sum it up, Dennis and Bob Burke got out the Sawz-all, cut off the roof, sectioned it 16 inches, and channeled it 8 inches. Then they made a new floor and firewall out of sheet metal. Eddie Potestio came in after that to roll the top edge of the cab and make a custom dash. As you can see, the windshield is something special as well. Dennis' friend, Glenn Clark, used the glass off a '76 MGB and cut it down and modified the frame to mount it to the roadster cab.

Out back, Dennis decided to give the pickup a real vintage look with the bed. In fact, he used a reproduction steel bed that he was able to get from the folks at Brookville Roadster. It even came complete with a wood bed floor that he and his neighbor, Ray Armand, were able to stain and varnish. On the inside of the bed is an

old school spun aluminum fuel tank from Speedway Motors. For the front, Dennis searched eBay for a '30s-style grille that would fit the bill, and he came across one from a '38 Dodge. It was modified to fit and shaved of its badges. In order to drive this thing at night, lights were necessary, so it was fitted with '37 Chevy headlights and '37 Ford taillights. When all the body pieces were ready, Jimmy Boudreaux of Perfection Autobody coated it all in three-stage Hot Wheels Orange from PPG's Vibrance Collection paints. Topping off the looks of the exterior is a custom set of 20 x 6 and 18 x 6 Dayton "lip lace" wire wheels that were powder coated and fitted on Firestone Deluxe Champion tires.

Inside the modified cab are only a few select, choice pieces to keep it all simple. On the mechanical side there is a Flaming River steering column with a Grant Products Performance stainless steel wheel. A nice little touch here is the bracket that holds the column in place because it is actually a connecting rod from an old 216-CID Chevy motor. Another big piece in there is the instrument cluster, which is actually a headlight from a '37 Chevy. Dennis took it to the folks at Classic Instruments and had them make the custom gauges for it. After all of the working parts were finished, Eddie Potestio of Eddie's Rods & Customs in Pueblo West, Colorado, took over on upholstery. First he made a custom set of low-back seats, door panels and a rear panel for the cab. Then it was all covered in King Ranch brown leather that was obtained from Bowen Foam & Fabric. Lastly, he carpeted the floor and made mats from a matching brown loop material. From there this hot rod pickup was taken to the 2009 SEMA show, where it debuted in the Painless booth in the Hotrod Alley. There it got a lot of attention because it is so unique, and we're sure it inspired others with new ideas on how to build a truck. ■

