

CONTENTS

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DIESEL WORLD • AUGUST 2012 • DIESEL WORLD • AUGUST 2012 • DIESEL WORLD • AUGUST 2012 • DIESEL WORLD • AUGUST 2012 • DIESEL WORLD • AUGUST 2012 • I

FEATURES

- 16 HYBRID HAULER**
A Cummins-Powered Super Duty
- 46 SIMPLISTIC**
Creating a Clean, Reliable Daily Driver
- 64 RED RAM**
A Ford Enthusiast Goes Dodge
- 74 FIRST LOOK: 2013 VW DIESELS**
- 90 FRANKENROVER**
The Monster Comes Alive

EVENTS

- 36 GOD BLESS TEXAS**
NHRDA's Texas Diesel Nationals
- 100 USDP DYNO DAY**
Rockin' the Rollers

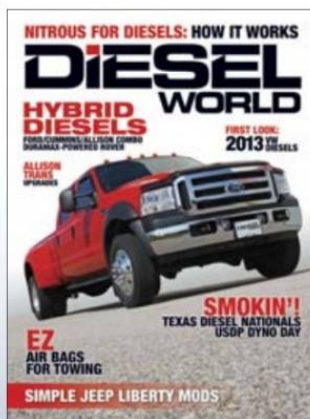
TECHNICAL

- 26 PROJECT 7.3**
Building a Bullet-Proof Trans
- 56 EVEN KEEL**
Leveling The Load With Air Bags
- 82 PROJECT LB7: PART FOUR**
Beefing Up the Allison 1000 Trans
- 106 JEEP CRD MODS**
EZ Upgrades for the Jeep Liberty
- 112 QUIET RIOT**
Making Power Without Noise
- 122 POWER IN A BOTTLE**
Ny-Trex Big Diesel Nitrous Oxide System



DEPARTMENTS

- 4 FULL BOOST**
Hybrid Diesels
- 5 FEEDBACK**
Letters From Our Readers
- 8 NEWS**
What's New in the Diesel World
- 12 NEW PRODUCTS**
Cool Stuff You Need
- 14 AS TESTED**
Actron AutoScanner Plus
- 134 TRACTOR TALK**
Breaking the 600-Horsepower Barrier
- 142 READERS' RIDES**
Find Your Truck Here
- 152 TECH Q&A**
Problems and Fixes



ON THE COVER: Chris Tobin is credited with his first cover shoot of the Watson family hybrid trickster—a Cummins-powered Super Duty with an Allison trans.

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FrankenRover

It's Alive!

BY KEVIN WILSON

PHOTOGRAPHY: KEVIN WILSON



The plot from the 1931 classic film, *Frankenstein*, involved the creation of a "human" by a mad scientist using body parts from other individuals. The end result was the monster, Frankenstein, named after his creator, Dr. Frankenstein (or Frankenstein—depending on which movie you watched!).

So, when Richard Gallagher and his team of automotive scientists put together a one-off, diesel-powered Range Rover Defender 110, they appropriately named it "FrankenRover," since it is the sum of a lot of other parts from donors. The build was not your typical junkyard mix-and-match deal, but a well-designed and -executed exercise in building a one-of-a-kind vehicle. Oh, and by the way, don't ask how much it cost.





An LBZ Duramax, complete with the Allison automatic, is shoehorned into the narrow confines of the Defender's engine bay. You can see the custom plumbing for the Ron Davis intercooler that sits directly in front of one of his custom radiators.

Gallagher originally purchased this 110 from Florida to use it as a marketing tool for Galco Gun Leather, a high-end leather holster manufacturer located in Phoenix, Arizona. The 110 came with a 3.9L Rover

engine with a five-speed transmission.

Once the 110 arrived in Phoenix and the restoration was started, a lot of problems were discovered. As a result, the project moved to the next level, dropping

in new axles, tires and a drivetrain consisting of an LS2 Corvette engine with 700R4 transmission with an Atlas four-speed transfer case.

However, even with the Corvette powerplant, the owner claimed the Rover didn't have enough power, so the project moved to Phase II. This consisted of fabricating a custom tubular frame, doing a 6-inch body stretch and adding a 5.9 Dodge Cummins engine with the NV4500 transmission. Believe it or not, the Cummins *still* didn't provide enough power, according to the owner, so FrankenRover is now fitted with a Duramax LBZ engine and Allison transmission.

Of course, the suspension setup for the ultimate off-road and expedition vehicle would consist of state-of-the-art King race-quality coilovers attached to Currie Dana 60 Rock Jock axles, both of which are fitted with 3:73 gears and locking hubs. Baer Brake six-piston, 14-inch disc brakes, actuated by a Vanco Hydro assist and GM 1-ton master cylinder, put the brakes on the huge, 37-inch rolling stock,





The engine breathes through a custom snorkel and air filter setup mounted on the outside of the rig.

which consists of 17x10-inch Hutchison Rock Crawler wheels wrapped with 12.50x17 BFGoodrich KM2 tires. Of course, all the steering and brakelines are custom made from braided steel lines.

Getting a 6.6L Duramax, complete with all the accessories (such as an intercooler, plumbing and wiring), into the Rover was no simple task. The engine is a stock 2006 LBZ Duramax that breathes through a custom external snorkel and air filter setup and pushes out exhaust gas via a custom, 40-inch exhaust that is Jet Hot coated. Sound-deadening comes from a single Flowmaster muffler.

And then there was the nightmare of all the wiring. Backing up the Duramax is the stock Allison six-speed automatic, which is now bolted to an Atlas II 4.3:1 ratio transfer case. Obviously, custom driveshafts connect the driveline.

The narrow nose of the Defender required Richard and his team, master mechanic Garnet Baril and project manager Tim Smith, to come up with a custom, large-capacity Ron Davis aluminum radiator and intercooler. And to clear the top of the engine and provide some heat relief, Tomb Enterprise's Matt fabbed up a custom aluminum cowl hood for the Rover.



Rolling stock consists of 37-inch BFG KM2s wrapped around 17x10-inch Hutchison Rock Crawler wheels. Each axle also has a set of Warn hubs.



The truck features a Trick race-quality King coilover. A remote reservoir suspension provides plenty of travel and great ride quality.

Visually, the attention to detail on the rig is absolutely flawless. No detail was overlooked, and the list of mods and custom work would fill this magazine. Matt is credited with a lot of the custom bodywork, including the dash, which is fitted with Auto Meter gauges, and overhead console, complete with map lights lifted from an F-16.

Up front is a custom bumper fitted with a 15,000-pound winch, Master Pull cable and PIAA running lights, along with carbon-fiber KS floodlights. There's also an air line hookup on the bumper, as well as two 30K swivel shackles. And a set of Bushwacker flares keeps the tires covered at each corner.

Did we mention the ultra-cool infrared night vision camera mounted in the nose? Additional lighting on the rig, mounted on the external roll cage assembly, comes from a 42-inch Vision X LED light bar, six 12-inch Vision X LED bars mounted in front, back and down the sides, and two more 6-inch Vision X HID lights.

Out back is a custom aluminum rear



Out back, there are two winches, including one for loading cargo up on the roof rack, a fold-down step, ladder, 10,000-pound winch in the bumper and a swing-out tire carrier that hides a land anchor and hand tools.



You can tell by the front end that this rig is all business. The steel bumper houses a 15,000-pound winch with Master Pull cable, PIAA running lights, carbon-fiber KC Hilites flood lights, an air hook-up and even an infrared night vision sensor inside the grille.

bumper fitted with a 10,000-pound winch, fold-down step, two 30K heavy-duty swivel shackles, another air line hookup, and a battery hook-up, along with an electric fuel pump drain. Behind the swing-out tire carrier is a land anchor for winches and an assortment of hand tools. The roof rack holds four gas/water cans, four aluminum ladders and two Pelican storage boxes.

The inside of the Rover is just as intricate. Matt is credited with most of the



Rear seating is just as impressive, with built-in cup holders in the seat mounts.



The handmade overhead console features LED lights and even red map light spots lifted from an F-16.



The Atlas transfer case allows for twin shifters, In and Out and High and Low Range actuators.



A full complement of Auto Meter Gauges is mounted in the custom dash. The Ranger Rover steering wheel came from England.



The cargo floor features a cool slide-out drawer that is usually found in police and fire department command vehicles.

interior mods, including the custom mounts, complete with cup holders for the four bucket seats, each of which features the FrankenRover logo embroidered in it. A custom Ranger Rover steering wheel is one of the few additions that look anything like the stocker. A full roll cage and five-point harnesses keep the occupants safe. A Pioneer 2,000-watt sound system

delivers power via Polk and JL speakers.

And then, there is the trailer. The body is made from a Land Rover Defender truck bed and sits on a custom 2x6-inch aluminum frame. The trailer carries 75 gallons of fuel, two Odyssey batteries, a power inverter and a Honda generator. The trailer also swivels on a special multi-axis couple

for complete 360 degrees of rotation.

FrankenRover is probably the most complete and intricate and most expensive diesel engine swap vehicle we've ever featured in *Diesel World*.

And much like the movie monster, it is made up of a lot of different components, all tied together by the "mad scientists" who created it. **DW**