#GOALS

NOTHING LIKE A DEADLINE TO GET THINGS DONE!

Text by Mike Self
Photos by Luke Munnell
T'S NOT EVERY DAY that a first-timer gets the opportunity to build a truck for SEMA, but Denver Lawrence struck gold (or Medium Gold, as paint code WES180, which drapes the truck, is referred to) when it came to his ’70 Chevy.

Denver had always wanted something to cruise, but other priorities kept him from being able to devote much time to thinking about a project much less actually take one on. For most people with the typical 9-to-5 it probably wouldn’t be too much of an issue to fend off the desire to own and build a badass ride, but Denver’s job presented a unique problem.

He works at TMI Products. You know, those guys that make all those amazing custom interior products for classic rides. To make matters worse, he’s the company’s web designer, meaning that a good portion of his job entails staring at photos of awesome vehicles with excellent interiors. As you can imagine, the temptation was huge to put something cool in the garage.

In one of those “duh” moments, Denver eventually realized that the perfect project had been staring him in the face all along. His family had always had this ’70 Chevy C-20; it’d been sitting in their driveway for years. Denver recalls, “This truck has always been in my life. When I was little, it had a camper on the back, and it was the coolest rig down on the coast; it was a matching boat out back.” Of course, working at a place like TMI definitely has its perks, and a really big one presented itself when talks of the then-upcoming SEMA 2015
started filtering throughout the building. With his dad's C-20 in mind, Denver offered it up as a build to represent TM at the convention. To his surprise, he got the go-ahead. “TMI jumped onboard with the interior and said I could bring my truck to SEMA 2015, so I committed to getting her done in my driveway in the 110-degree California heat.” Denver lives in Corona, which loosely translated means “hell fire” or something to that effect.

It was time to dust the cobwebs off the ol’ truck, which had seen better days. With the help of his buddy, Frank Cambic, and a growing list of companies wanting to support a properly vetted TMI build, Denver immediately began stripping the truck down for a rebuild, which would obviously include many modifications along the way.

Knowing that the interior department was more than handed, Denver and
Frank focused on other areas, such as cutting the truck down to a short-bed, which of course also meant cutting the frame. The truck’s underpinnings were converted to a 1/2-ton five-lug setup with the help of a 12-bolt posi-traction rear end and Michigan Metal Works front-end components.

Then the truck was brought down to a new low. AirRex airbags were installed at all four corners, with a Porterbuilt cross member and Classic Performance Products drop spindles up front, and a Steinjager 4-link out back. Air volume is provided by a pair of VIAIR compressors. Topping off the new stance are US Mags Plain Jane wheels in 20x8.5 and 22x9-inch sizes, with Continental 40-series tires all around.

Denver didn’t want to go too crazy with the next stage, but we have to say that it’s impressive nonetheless. An essentially basic, mildly detailed Chevy 350 was massaged and bolted in, and features a Motorcar Parts alternator, Champion aluminum radiator, Spectre air cleaner, Hedman headers and a

Judging by the exterior, you might not expect an interior like this, but it definitely doesn’t look out of place. The TMI Products crew went wild with its catalog of C-10 goodies, and by the time they were done, it was like some crazy steampunk tailor had set up shop inside Denver’s truck.
Flowmaster 40 series exhaust. The transmission choice is a bit of an oddball for a lowered street truck, but we can dig it—a grannie-gared SM420 four-speed. Other upgrades include a Classic Performance Products brake booster/master assembly, a TANKS, Inc. fuel tank and an Optima Yellow Top battery with Chassis Unlimited battery mount.

Once everything was bolted in, quick work was made of installing a Painless Performance wiring kit, and Denver was ready to take the truck through TMI Products' roll-up door for an interior overhaul. TMI Sport X Pro-Classic bucket seats (in red vinyl with platinum mesh inserts) were bolted in over the matching TMI carpet; while a TMI dash kit surrounds the Dakota Digital gauge cluster. TMI also provided the steering wheel and door panels, and a RetroSound stereo head unit provides clean sound without being visually intrusive. Finally, an Old Air Products AC kit was installed as a reward well-earned for those sweltering days spent underneath the truck.

The result of Denver’s build is a truck that can be thoroughly enjoyed day in and day out, while still showcasing TMI’s perfect execution of its unique interior product line. Best of all, it does so without overpowering the overall look of the C-20. Of course, by meeting the SEMA deadline thousands of people got to enjoy Denver’s truck first-hand, and he can enjoy the old family hauler in a new way.

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