

Put to the Test

We Give Gilbert Contreras's '66 Chevy C10 An A+

By Tim Bernsau

“When I handed him the cash to buy the truck, he asked me where the trailer was that I was going to use to tow the truck back home. I told him there was no trailer. We were going to put the truck to the test.”

Gilbert Contreras has been involved with all kinds of cars since he was a kid. He'd always wanted a classic truck and decided a few years ago that the time had come to build one. He found what he was looking for in the Northern California City of Visalia—a '66 Chevy C10 in the early stages of waking up from hibernation. “The guy I bought the truck from had started trying to restore the truck, but was having hard times,” Gilbert says. “He had sprayed a flat black paintjob and did an engine swap. He had picked it up from a neighbor of his who had it sitting in a corner of his farm.”

The truck passed its first test with an A+ by finishing the 200-mile run from Visalia to Ontario, California, under its own power. Gilbert got a test of his own when he started tearing the truck apart for a complete rebuild. “When we pulled off the body from the frame, there was so much dry mud built up it was as hard as a rock.” When the last piece of mud had been cleaned, Gilbert could get busy with transforming the truck into what he had always wanted, with help along the way from his father, Joe, and a few professional shops.



Getting the sheetmetal to better-than-new condition was accomplished by Daniel Gonzalez at Daniels Kreations in Montclair, California. Since nothing radical is needed

to make a '66 C10 look good, nothing radical was done. Holes were filled, the front fender emblems were removed, the fuel filler neck was relocated to the bed, and hidden latches were added to the tailgate. The front bumper is stock, but the grille and rear bumper are replica replacements from Brothers Truck Parts. The Truck Shop in Orange, California, supplied the mirrors and glass. The oak bedwood is from Brothers, installed by Daniels Kreations. The PPG paint was mixed and sprayed by Daniel Gonzalez. The metalflake and pearl finishes change with the sunlight. Wild Bill, the well-known





Southern California pinstriper, loaded his brush to add some perfect traditional-style lines.

The C10 still rolls on the factory frame, but the suspension has undergone some well-done suspension upgrades. McGaughey's 2-inch dropped spindles and four-corner RideTech airbags, along with a C-notch in the rear 'rails, give Gilbert's truck its down-to-the-ground profile. Handling is improved with Classic Performance Products antisway bars and steering. Reliable braking is guaranteed with McGaughey's 12½-inch front discs paired with rear drums to make sure those 22-inch Vision six-spokes are brought to a quick stop. The wheels are rolled in 265/35R22 Lexani rubber.

On a classic truck like this one, the engine has two jobs—provide power and provide good looks. The '79 Chevy





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small-block wins in both categories. Don Veverka built the 350, topping it with an Edelbrock 600-cfm carburetor and manifold. The valve covers and air cleaner are also Edelbrock parts, along with the ignition. Exhaust is drawn by a set of BBK headers, with MagnaFlow mufflers to provide the perfect tone. The inner fenders and the firewall are painted to match the body, and the engine and accessories were dressed up with plenty of polished and chrome pieces to catch attention whenever Gilbert lifts the

hood. A column-shifted 700-R4 transmission sends power rearward to the Chevy 12-bolt with 3.73:1 gears.

When making plans for the interior, Gilbert decided he wanted the traditional style of a classic combined with the modern amenities on an up-do-date cruiser. The stock dash was shaved and modified with a Pioneer in-dash screen stereo receiver, and a custom billet aluminum instrument panel from Brothers filled with a set of gauges from Auto Meter's Arctic White series. An underdash panel was added





for the air suspension gauges. Wild Bill added a little more of his flawless pintripping to the glovebox door. A tilt steering column from ididit was topped with a billet steering wheel from CPP. Gilbert delivered the truck to Meda's Upholstery in Montclair, where Lupillo Meda covered the factory bench seat in brown and tan leather, and built a pair of custom kick panels. The cab is also equipped with a pair of Rockford Fosgate amps, three Image Dynamics subwoofers, and six Focal speakers to provide the sound track for every trip.

Those trips occur about twice a month or as often as



Gilbert gets a chance to drive the C10. The truck also makes plenty of appearances at Southern California shows, including the annual Brothers Truck Show 'n' Shine in Anaheim, where we ran into it.

"Most of the shows I go to have more of a lowrider style," Gilbert told us. "My family has been in the lowrider scene since the '70s, and that's how my family's cars are built. I just loved the look of a restomod and

chose to build my truck low rod style, but no matter where I go or what show I'm at, the truck always receives lots of attention."

1966 CHEVY C10

Gilbert Contreras

CHASSIS

- › **FRAME:** '66 CHEVY FRAME, C-NOTCHED
- › **REAR END / RATIO:** STOCK CHEVY 12-BOLT WITH LIMITED SLIP / 3.73:1
- › **REAR SUSPENSION:** RIDETECH AIRBAGS
- › **REAR BRAKES:** FACTORY DRUMS
- › **FRONT SUSPENSION:** RIDETECH AIRBAGS, MCGAUGHY'S 2-INCH DROPPED SPINDLES, CPP ANTISWAY BARS
- › **STEERING:** CLASSIC PERFORMANCE PRODUCTS BOX
- › **FRONT BRAKES:** MCGAUGHY'S 12½-INCH FRONT DISCS
- › **FRONT WHEELS:** VISION 142 LEGEND 6 SERIES 22-INCH
- › **REAR WHEELS:** VISION 142 LEGEND 6 SERIES 22-INCH

- › **FRONT TIRES:** VISION LX-NINE 265/35R22

- › **REAR TIRES:** VISION LX-NINE 265/35R22

DRIVETRAIN

- › **ENGINE:** '79 CHEVY 350, BUILT BY DON VEERKA
- › **HEADS:** STOCK
- › **VALVE COVERS:** EDELBROCK
- › **CARBURETOR:** EDELBROCK 600 CFM
- › **INTAKE:** EDELBROCK
- › **AIR CLEANER:** EDELBROCK
- › **IGNITION:** EDELBROCK 3674
- › **HEADERS:** BBK
- › **EXHAUST / MUFFLERS:** CUSTOM / MAGNAFLOW
- › **TRANSMISSION:** GM 700-R4

BODY

- › **STYLE:** '66 CHEVY C10 CUSTOM PICKUP

- › **MODIFICATIONS:** HOLES FILLED, HIDDEN TAILGATE LATCHES

- › **HOOD:** ORIGINAL
- › **GRILLE:** BROTHER TRUCK PARTS
- › **BED FLOOR:** BROTHER TRUCK PARTS, OAK
- › **HEADLIGHTS / TAILLIGHTS:** ORIGINAL / ORIGINAL
- › **DOOR HANDLES:** STOCK
- › **BUMPERS:** FRONT STOCK, REAR FROM BROTHERS TRUCK PARTS
- › **GLASS:** THE TRUCK SHOP
- › **MIRRORS:** THE TRUCK SHOP
- › **PAINT TYPE / COLOR:** PPG CUSTOM GREEN, CUSTOM CREAM, PAINTED BY DANIEL GONZALEZ AT DANIELS KREATIONS
- › **GRAPHICS:** PINSTRIPING BY WILD BILL

INTERIOR

- › **DASHBOARD:** FACTORY, SMOOTHED WITH BROTHERS SIX-GAUGE BILLET PANEL

- › **GAUGES:** AUTO METER'S ARCTIC WHITE

- › **STEERING WHEEL:** CLASSIC PERFORMANCE PRODUCTS
- › **STEERING COLUMN:** IDIDIT TILT SHIFTER
- › **SEATS:** FACTORY BENCH
- › **UPHOLSTERY:** MEDA'S UPHOLSTERY, LUPILLO MEDA
- › **MATERIAL / COLOR:** LEATHER / BROWN, TAN
- › **CARPET / COLOR:** LOOP STYLE / GRAY
- › **SOUND SYSTEM:** PIONEER IN-DASH SCREEN STEREO RECEIVER, ROCKFORD FOSGATE AMPS, IMAGE DYNAMICS SUBWOOFERS, FOCAL SPEAKERS
- › **WIRING:** PAINLESS PERFORMANCE PRODUCTS, INSTALLED BY AKRAM AUTO ELECTRIC