



Feature Story

Fun Never Done

Gary Cooper Can't Stop Wrenching On His '72 Chevy Cheyenne

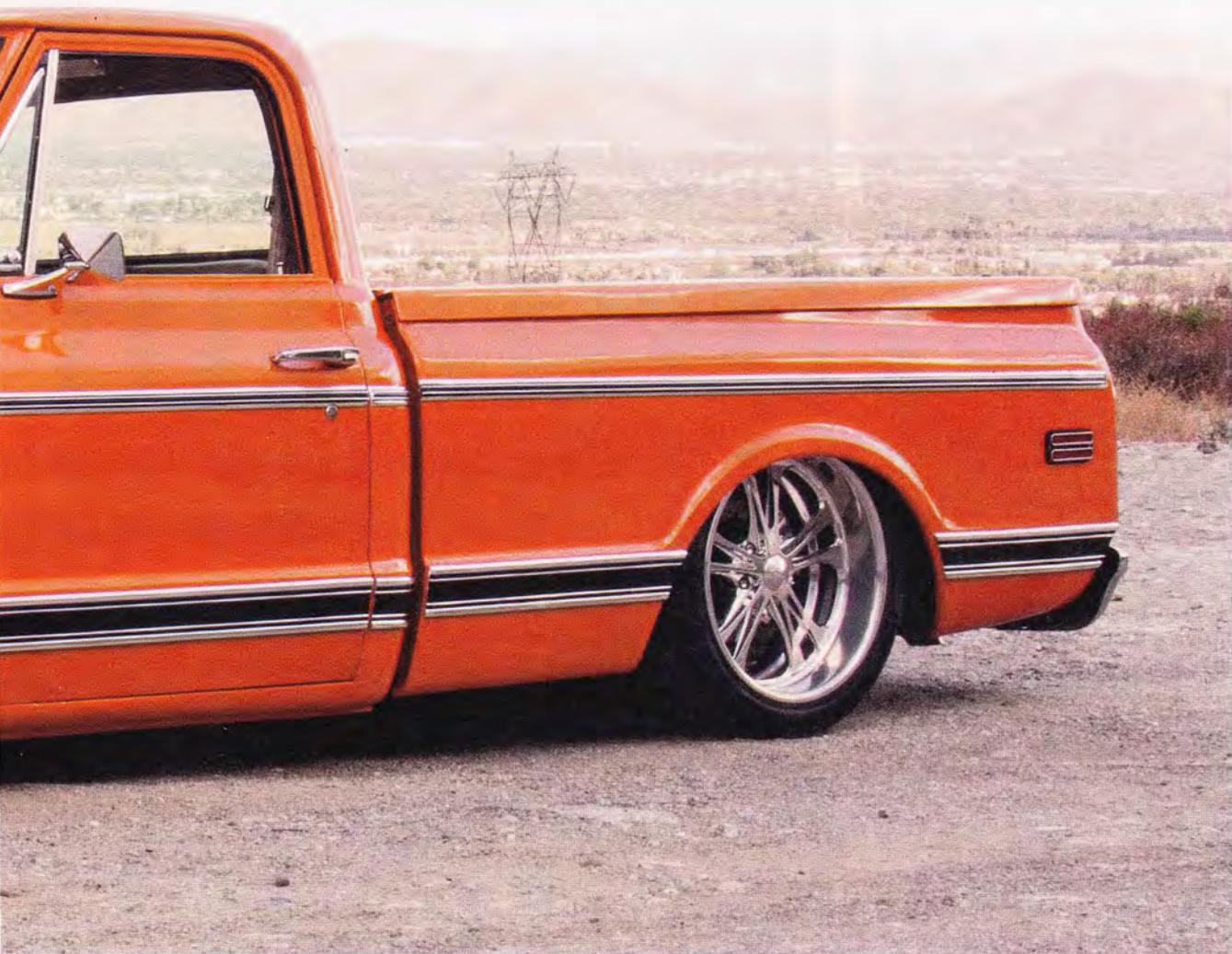
By Tim Bernsau

Wrenches don't get much rest in Gary Cooper's garage. After meeting him, we learned that the owner of this beautiful '72 Chevy Cheyenne loves to spend his free time putting those wrenches and other tools to work building hot rods and classic trucks. At that point we thought we had Gary's story figured out—hot rodder since before he could drive, first project in early teens, cool cars and trucks throughout his life—but we figured wrong. Gary has always enjoyed cars but didn't make them a hobby until recently.

"I had retired a little while ago, had a little bit of money, and was looking for a hobby. After watching Chip Foose on TV I got interested in building something." In a relatively short period of time, he's been through several project vehicles—a '72 Chevelle, a '72 Nova, and a '51 Chevy pickup.

The Cheyenne turned up for sale on eBay. It was located about 100 miles away in the San Diego area and belonged to a guy who collects and restores Chevy trucks on his property. Gary took a look and liked it, and the owner delivered the truck to Gary's home in La Verne, California. It was in good condition, with a 350 small-block and Turbo 400 transmission to move it along, and some juicy orange paint to dress it up—in other words, a good start.

Gary does as much work as he



can in his home garage and relies on nearby shops for the bigger jobs he knows they can do better. For the chassis, he turned to Chassis by Aaron Iha in Covina, California. Dropping classic trucks is all in a day's work at this shop, as Gary's Cheyenne proves. The factory chassis was disassembled and rebuilt, adding a CNC cut and boxed rear subframe to with a triangulated four-link, plus custom control arms in front. QA1 shocks and Firestone airbags let Gary drop the truck as low as he wants when he's at a show or a magazine photo shoot.

The intention for Gary was to maintain the exterior's stock look. The sheetmetal was straight and the handles, emblems, mirrors, and trim were kept in place. Gary bought and installed new molding. The hood, honeycomb grille, headlights, bumpers, glass, and bed are stock





pieces. The taillights were replaced with up-to-date LED lights from Brothers Truck Parts, reducing the likelihood of unwanted attention from any vehicles following on the street. The bed floor was built at Chassis by Aaron Iha, and is modified with tubs for the rear rolling stock, a hump for the frame, and a box to hold the battery, air compressor, and air tank. The lid is from Gaylord's Truck Tops in Santa Fe Springs, California. The orange paint that came with the truck was fresh enough to keep, and a little bit of that orange ended up on the

grille's Bow Tie emblem—a neat detail.

Chip Foose's inspiration for the truck is apparent in every wheelwell, where Gary mounted 18- and 20-inch Monterey series wheels from Foose Custom Wheels. Hankook Ventus V-12 Evo tires, measuring 255/45ZR18 and 275/40ZR20, provide good performance and proportions, plus a nice fat footprint. Wilwood disc brakes at every corner feature six-piston calipers and 13-inch rotors in front with four pistons and 12-inches in the back.

The orange finish changes to gloss

black in the engine compartment and the Chevy 350 that used to occupy that spot has been replaced with a 6.2L Chevy LS3. Don Lee Auto Service in Rancho Cucamonga, California, did the build on the engine. A custom air intake tube and a pair of Eddie Motorsports valve covers brighten thing up under the hood. A set of Doug Thorley short-tube headers direct the exhaust to 3-inch pipes with Flowmaster mufflers providing some ear candy. A 4L65E transmission with a TCI 2,400-rpm stall converter spins a shortened driveshaft backed by the





stock 3.73-geared Posi rearend.

The cab has been completely refinished. Gary faces a Chicayne steering wheel from Billet Specialties mounted on an ididit tilt shifter column. The dash was modified with a six-gauge replacement panel from Classic Dash, housing a full set of Auto Meter Sport-Comp II gauges. Tunes are provided via a combination of Alpine and Kenwood audio components. Vintage Air provided the A/C system, including a stock-style '67-'72 Chevy truck control panel. Wiring was handled by Chassis by Aaron Iha using a Keep It Clean wiring system. When the interior was ready for upholstery, Gary delivered the truck to Mark Lopez and the crew at Elegance Auto Interiors in Upland, California, and told them "you do your thing." Building from a Glide Engineering frame, Elegance chose a design and colors to complement

the paint. The result is a tri-tone combination of shale, orange, and light mocha Katzkin leather. The bed was finished as nice as the cab, right down to the German square-weave carpet.

Gary is having a good time driving his Cheyenne and displaying it at local hot rod and truck shows. Since these photos were taken last fall, he has installed a new polished throttle body for some more underhood visual impact and swapped the shorty headers for long-tube versions. He says now he has to work on the stereo because he can't hear it over the headers. And he's already busy on his next project—a '72 Blazer that he'll be converting to two-wheel drive, lowering, packing with an LS engine, and painting to match his Harley-Davidson Fat Boy. What'd we tell you? Wrenches don't get much rest in Gary's garage.

1972 CHEVY CHEYENNE

Gary Cooper

CHASSIS

- ▶ **FRAME:** '72 CHEVY FRAME WITH CHASSIS BY AARON IHA BOXED SUBFRAME
- ▶ **REAREND / RATIO:** STOCK CHEVY WITH LIMITED SLIP / 3.73:1
- ▶ **REAR SUSPENSION:** TRIANGULATED FOUR-LINK, FIRESTONE AIRBAGS, QA1 SHOCKS
- ▶ **REAR BRAKES:** WILWOOD 12-INCH DISCS, FOUR-PISTON CALIPERS
- ▶ **FRONT SUSPENSION:** CHASSIS BY AARON IHA CUSTOM CONTROL ARMS, CPP SPINDLES, FIRESTONE AIRBAGS, QA1 SHOCKS
- ▶ **STEERING:** POWER BOX
- ▶ **FRONT BRAKES:** WILWOOD 13-INCH DISCS, SIX-PISTON CALIPERS, WILWOOD MASTER CYLINDER
- ▶ **FRONT WHEELS:** FOOSE CUSTOM WHEELS MONTEREY SERIES 18-INCH
- ▶ **REAR WHEELS:** FOOSE CUSTOM WHEELS MONTEREY SERIES 20-INCH
- ▶ **FRONT TIRES:** HANKOOK VENTUS V-12 EVO 255/45ZR18
- ▶ **REAR TIRES:** HANKOOK VENTUS V-12 EVO 275/40ZR20

DRIVETRAIN

- ▶ **ENGINE:** '10 6.2L CHEVY LS3, BUILT BY DON LEE AUTO SERVICE
- ▶ **COMPRESSION:** 10.5:1
- ▶ **HEADS:** STOCK
- ▶ **VALVE COVERS:** EDDIE MOTORSPORTS
- ▶ **INTAKE:** CUSTOM WITH SPECTRE AIR INBOX
- ▶ **IGNITION:** STOCK GM
- ▶ **RADIATOR:** ALUMINUM FAN, ELECTRIC
- ▶ **HEADERS:** DOUG THORLEY
- ▶ **EXHAUST / MUFFLERS:** CUSTOM 3-INCH / FLOWMASTER
- ▶ **TRANSMISSION:** GM 4L65E
- ▶ **TORQUE CONVERTER:** TCI 2,400-RPM STALL SHIFTER, IDIDIT COLUMN SHIFT

BODY

- ▶ **STYLE:** '72 CHEVY CHEYENNE PICKUP
 - ▶ **HOOD:** ORIGINAL
 - ▶ **GRILLE:** ORIGINAL
 - ▶ **BED FLOOR:** CUSTOM-BUILT BY CHASSIS BY AARON IHA, WHEEL TUBS, FRAME HUMP, CUSTOM BOX
 - ▶ **BED TOP:** GAYLORD'S TRUCK TOPS
 - ▶ **HEADLIGHTS / TAILLIGHTS:** ORIGINAL / TRUCK-LITE LED / BROTHERS TRUCK PARTS LED
 - ▶ **DOOR HANDLES:** STOCK
 - ▶ **BUMPERS:** STOCK
 - ▶ **GLASS:** ORIGINAL
 - ▶ **MOLDING:** REPLACEMENT
 - ▶ **PAINT TYPE / COLOR:** PPG ORANGE
- ### INTERIOR
- ▶ **DASHBOARD:** FACTORY, CLASSIC DASH '67-'72 CHEVY/GMC TRUCK SIX-GAUGE PANEL
 - ▶ **GAUGES:** AUTO METER SPORT-COMP II
 - ▶ **STEERING WHEEL:** BILLET SPECIALTIES CHICAYNE
 - ▶ **STEERING COLUMN:** IDIDIT TILT SHIFTER
 - ▶ **SEATS:** GLIDE ENGINEERING FRAME, BENCH BOTTOM, SPLIT BACKS, ARMREST
 - ▶ **UPHOLSTERY:** ELEGANCE AUTO INTERIORS
 - ▶ **MATERIAL / COLOR:** KATZKIN LEATHER / SHALE, ORANGE, LIGHT MOCHA
 - ▶ **CARPET / COLOR:** GERMAN SQUARE WEAVE / BROWN
 - ▶ **SOUND SYSTEM:** ALPINE CDE-123 KENWOOD SPEAKERS
 - ▶ **AIR CONDITIONING:** VINTAGE AIR
 - ▶ **WIRING:** KEEP IT CLEAN