

PROJECT

# Retro BRONCO UPDATE

## OUR BIG BRONCO GOES BLING

STORY AND PHOTOS BY >> CRAIG PERRONNE

**A**fter a long absence, it's nice to see our Project Retro Bronco making some solid progress. From its long journey through a couple different shady fabricators, it has finally landed at Speed Unlimited Motorsports where Ruben Arzate and his crew have been able to speed its construction along. In a couple short months, the Bronco has been transformed from a cage and a shell far from completion to a now-rolling chassis. We're as excited as Rosie O' Donnell at a free buffet—we can finally see the light at the end of what had been a long and dark tunnel.

The mission of the Bronco has also dramatically changed since its inception. What started out as a quick set of upgrades to an existing prerunner, has turned into an extensive buildup of an amazing full-tilt Bronco. Budgets and deadlines have been tossed out the window; the new-build philosophy has led to a major path change. The prerunner on the cheap is dead, and the new version of our Bronco looks like it should be hanging around Ludacris' neck. Follow along this month as the Speed Unlimited crew adds even more fabricating bling to our favorite steed.



The intricate single-swing steering for the Twin Traction Beam (TTB) front is finally complete. While it might seem an overly complex setup, it is absolutely necessary in long-travel TTB setups. The "swing" linkage allows the steering arms and TTB arms to travel in the same arc—eliminating bump steer. Without the longer steering arms, bump steer becomes a major issue. It is also a much stronger design over stock.



A massive upgrade in front brakes are these front Kartek 14-inch rotors. Speed Unlimited painstakingly machined their own hats to mate the rotors to the Ford hub assembly.



Clamping down on the 14-inch front rotors will be these powerful six-piston ProAm front calipers. With this much brake power, our Bronco will almost be able to do stoppies.



We spent a good chunk of time drooling over these custom knuckles fabricated by Speed Unlimited. While a ton of work, they allow for uniballs to be used instead of conventional ball joints, adding a great deal of strength to the front end. We will also never have to worry about snapping a front knuckle with the beef of these beauties.

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Another enhancement to the Bronco since our last checkup has been the addition of these super-stout, front shock mounts to the custom-fabbed Speed Unlimited TTB arms. The shock setup will be changed from a single coilover to a bypass shock and coil-slider for improved suspension control and tuning.



Even though the Speed Unlimited TTB arms were in place last time, we still can't help staring at them for hours every time we see them. The exquisitely fabbed units were time-consuming to build, but the result is simply amazing.

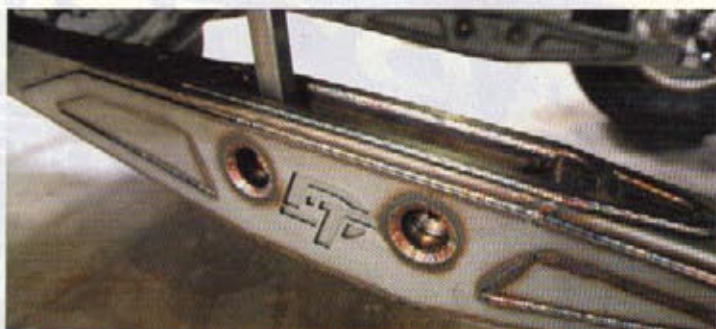
To give more room to the foot well and make hanging pedals easier, the original firewall was cut and a new one built. Now Retro-Bronco owner Ron DeWolf can stretch out in comfort without having his knees crammed against the steering wheel.



Moving to the rear of the Bronco and underneath it is this beautifully fabricated axle housing from Dirt-Tech. Made from 4130-chromoly, the housing is very stout and surprisingly affordable. Its build quality and fabrication is also top-notch, causing jaws to drop.



On the outer ends of the Dirt-Tech housing rests ProAm full floating hubs in the 5-on-5.5 pattern, adding even more strength to the already-beefy assembly. A similar brake setup to the front is also utilized with 14-inch Kartek rotors.



Dirt-Tech's rear trailing arms are just as impressive as the rear axle housing, with both showing high-quality fabrication. Constructed from 4130-chromoly, they are available in 55-, 59- and 65-inch lengths with custom lengths built to order. Combined with the rear axle, they add some major bling to the rear of our Bronco.

The rear suspension is a four-link that consists of Dirt-Tech Race Series lower arms and Speed Unlimited uppers. The steel rod is in lieu of the coilover shocks that have yet to be put into place. Total travel should cycle out to around 24 inches.



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Dirt-Tech also built the top mounts, for the four-link, onto the axle housing. It uses a 9-inch centersection that has yet to be built, and we haven't decided on final gearing.



The rear Dirt-Tech trailing arms use this pinch-bolt setup to retain the rear rod-end. It is said to be stronger than a jam-nut as it provides more leverage on the rod-end to keep it in its place. **ts**

#### SOURCES

Dirt-Tech  
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Kartek.com

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