

YOU CAN NEVER BE TOO PREPARED

DIRT-TECH HEATS UP OUR TUNDRA

BY JORDAN MAY
PHOTOGRAPHY: JORDAN MAY

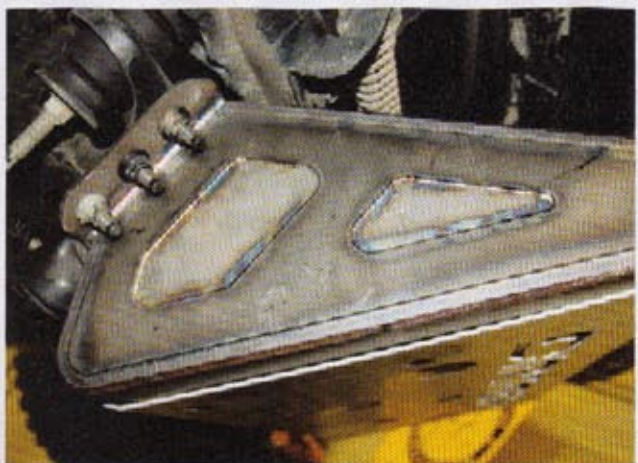
If you can pony up the cash and have an itch for owning an incredible custom-built desert vehicle, you may want to give Dirt-Tech in Escondido, California, a ring. Ryan Monfort has numerous years of experience building turnkey Trophy Truck prerunners, race vehicles, suspension systems, and he even owns a laser-cutting business. That sure comes in handy when it comes to custom fabrication.

If you are an avid *OFF-ROAD* magazine reader, then you probably already know how much we enjoy his work. His black Ford F-150 prerunner recently showed up on the cover of our Feb. '08 issue. Fortunately for us, Ryan showed interest in our Project Tundra and helped us take our mild-mannered truck and turn it into a chase/play-ready machine. Take a look into what happened next. **►**

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▲ It's not often anyone feels comfortable telling a shop to "go ahead and build what you think this truck needs." We said just that as we dropped off the keys. Ryan decided the rear of the truck needed to be prepared like a chase truck yet still have the look of a prerunner. To accomplish this, he decided to make the entire bedcage bolt-on. Since this vehicle is daily-driven, and we may need bed access here and there, having the entire bedcage be removable was a great idea. It also allowed the guys to weld completely around every corner of the cage, assuring no weak points.

▼ The entire rear bedcage and front bumper are constructed of 4130 chrome-moly tube and TIG-welded for superior strength. Look at the precision of this weld ... and this was still the first pass. Typically when TIG-welding, the welder runs a second pass over all seams. The majority of the bedcage is using 1-3/4-inch tube.



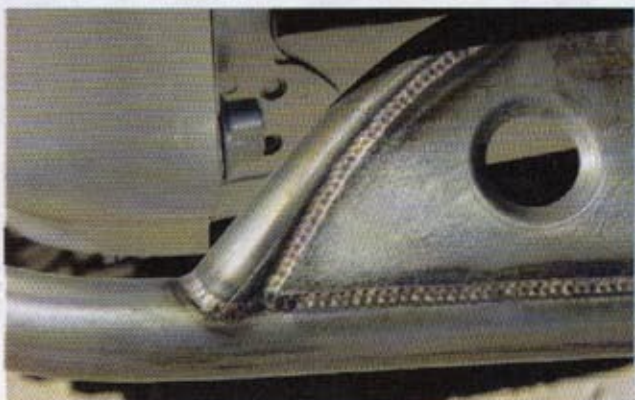
▲ The rear of the truck now looks like it should be permanently driven off-road. The bedcage holds two fullsize spare tires, a Baja Designs 8-inch lightbar running off a linear actuator, and our Power Tank. Off Road Warehouse in Escondido, California, provided us with the Y-harness straps keeping both tires locked down.

▲ Up front, 2-inch 4130 chrome-moly tube and plate were used. The front bumper is also completely bolt-on. Check out how beautiful that plate work and welding is

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▲ Here is a closer look at the lightbar mounting. The driver side of the lightbar is controlled with a linear actuator hooked to a switch in the cabin. The passenger side has a strut mounted to keep vibration down.

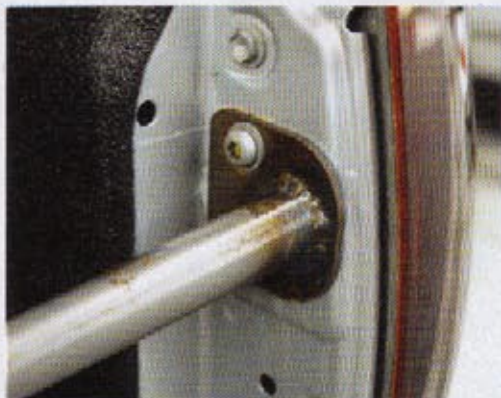


▲ This shot was snapped on the way to the SEMA Show in Las Vegas. During the show, we had several people come up to us and ask if a machine welded this.

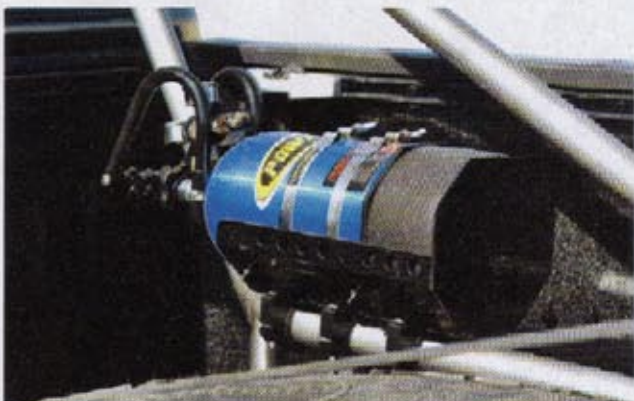
▶ As we mentioned, the entire bedcage can be easily removed. Although we did not reuse the factory bolts, the factory bolt-hole locations were used. The cage mounts securely to the bed, and Daystar provided us with some nice black tube caps to finish it off.



▶ The cage was also connected to each bedside to keep the bed from bowing outward.



▲ Dirt-Tech sells this handy aluminum floor-jack mount which can be mounted to any truck bed or custom-mounted if you choose. The jack slides in and locks itself in place. You may add a keylock if you are worried about theft. Having a fullsize jack is a must when owning a tall truck, unless you feel like calling AAA every time you get a flat. The stock jack just won't cut it.



▲ The guys over at Power Tank sent us a 10-pound blue tank as well as their billet tube mounts. With the tank full, we are able to refill our tires several times or run air tools. Very handy if you break down in the middle of the nowhere.

Sources

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