

OFF-ROAD
prerunner/
racer

That's **RIGHT**



WHAT WILL GARY HOUGH DO NEXT?

BY JORDAN MAY | Photography: Jordan May

DO YOU REMEMBER THE COVER OF THE AUGUST '05 OFF-ROAD? THAT ISSUE, GARY HOUGH'S PREVIOUS PRERUNNER GRACED THE COVER IN A GREAT AIRBORNE SHOT BY RANDALL JACHMANN. FAST-FORWARD TO SEPTEMBER 2006 AND WITNESS GARY'S NEWEST DESERT DOMINATOR BUILT BY DIRT-TECH OF ESCONDIDO, CALIFORNIA. THIS TIME AROUND, GARY WANTED SOMETHING A LITTLE MORE UNIQUE — A TRUCK BUILT JUST THE WAY HE WANTED IT AND IN A SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME, AS HE DID NOT WANT TO

MISS THE '06 DESERT SEASON. THIS TRUCK WAS BUILT IN LESS THAN THREE MONTHS* TIME. NO, WE DIDN'T SAY THREE YEARS — THREE MONTHS. WITH THIS TRUCK NOW BEING GARY'S SECOND INCREDIBLE VEHICLE, WE CAN ONLY WONDER WHAT HIS THIRD WILL BE LIKE.

The first thing we noticed when walking around this beauty were the side mirrors, real headlamps, license plate, rear brake lights and turn signals. This truck even has a real vehicle identification number (VIN) from the original Ford F-150 that it once was. From front to back, the main chassis is built

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using 1.75-inch, 4130 chrome-moly tubing — nothing but the best from Dirt-Tech. Trailer Products produced a great set of rear fiberglass fenders and a custom-made one-piece front clip including fenders, a billet grille, and headlamp openings. A fresh coat of vibrant red paint was blasted over the body by E&R Paint in Vista, California, really making the truck stand out. On top of the cab, we recognized five Baja Designs SolteK off-road HID lights installed on a lightbar that is completely removable and remotely controlled in the cab using a linear actuator.

As we made our way under the hood, we found a Chevrolet small-block 418ci engine built to produce 620 rear-wheel horsepower and 580 lb-ft of torque by Dan Martin Engines. Keeping all those ponies cool is a Ron Davis radiator, a wet-sump oiling system, and a set of Spal fans. Richards Performance Muffler of San Diego, California, built Gary a set of 8-into-1 collector headers that sound like a rocket ship blasting off when Gary pushes his foot to the floor. Giving the engine life are a Chevrolet alternator, a Tilton starter, and a complete 8.8 MSD ignition system, spark plug wiring, and distributor. In order to get all that power to the rear, Gary called on an expert transmission builder in Steve Culhane. Steve built a Turbo 400 transmission for this truck using a TCS torque converter, dual Fluidyne transmission coolers to keep it cool, and a Winters race shifter to throw the gears. The front chrome bumper was also completed by Dirt-Tech as well as the aluminum name plaque that doubles as chassis support.

Climbing underneath and diving into



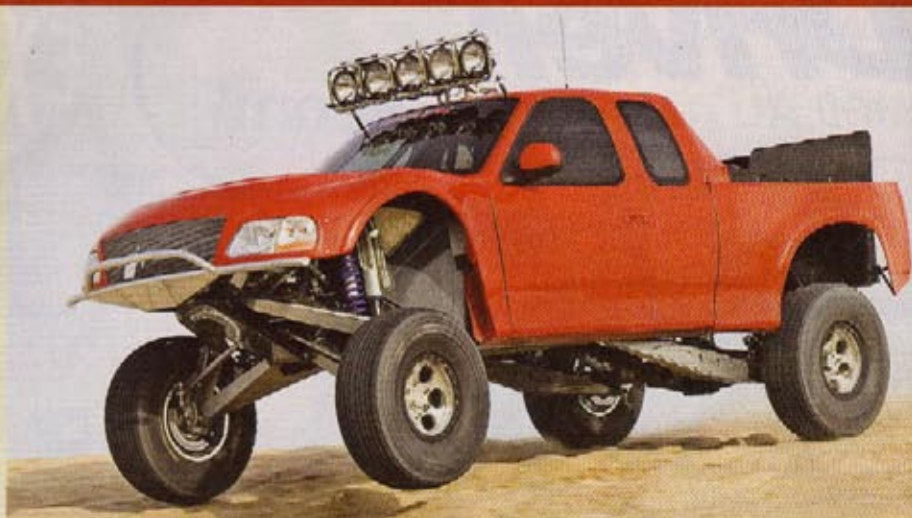
the rearend, we found a Chrisman rear axle custom-built for Gary's truck using a full spool to keep both tires turning at the same time, all the time. Inside the housing is a set of 40-spline Chrisman axleshafts with a gear ratio of 600. Carrying power to the rearend is a custom driveshaft provided by Oceanside

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Driveline of Oceanside, California. While laying in the dirt, we discovered a 60-gallon Fuel Safe fuel cell located just behind the rear which should allow more than enough run time between stops. A full lineup of custom Dirt-Tech skidplates was installed to keep the terrain from doing damage. They are made from 1/4-inch 6061 aluminum.

We now understand what's pushing the truck, but what stops it? CNC six-piston 14-inch front and rear disc brakes have been installed using a CNC master cylinder and Crown Industries brake lines. Gary chose a Howe Performance steering box and hydraulic assist to turn this beast with a custom steering column built by Dirt-Tech out of 3/4-inch 4130 chrome-moly tubing. Dirt-Tech also created a custom-length tie rod to help make sure the 37-inch BFGoodrich Project T/A tires running on Robby Gordon 17x8 beadlock wheels are in control.

The cab of this truck is like Christmas morning. Gary wanted something a little different and worked closely with Dirt-Tech on the design of the interior and dash. After going for a ride, we all decided that the cab most resembled the Batmobile. All of the upholstery was installed by V&J Upholstery of Vista, California, creating a beautiful leather-stitched interior covering the dash and 'cage work. Stack gauges are getting very popular in the desert because they encompass all of the information you need into one small well-lit package — a fact not lost on Gary. A Lowrance color GPS unit was placed in front of the passenger or navigator to keep the driver from getting lost while behind the wheel. In case you needed even more entertainment, there are JVC



television screens installed in both sunvisors so you can watch your favorite off-road movie, while off-roading. Three Premier Racing Products (PRP) seats are mounted securely to the chassis and feature Crow five-point racing harnesses. For communication needs, a Racer X race radio was installed

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along with three Racer X headsets. All wiring was done by Mark Wadell of Wire Fab in Ramona, California.

The storage compartments are really what we felt made this truck stand out. The compartments are located just behind the cab and are accessible not only from the outside but from the inside as well via two small doors inside the cab. The rear storage is completely surrounded in black, powdercoated aluminum and was built by Tom Bryant of Ramona, California. Tom is well known for doing all of Robby Gordon's aluminum work. This truck is going to do everything from prunning to chasing to playing in the dirt at Gary's desert home in Ocotillo Wells, California. Knowing this, Tom created an area that would be safe from not only the elements but protected from thieves as well. Inside is a fullsize spare tire, air tank, aluminum floor jack, and extra fluids. Check out the well-designed fuel mouth Dirt-Tech created for quick and easy fuel dumps.

The guys at Dirt-Tech know what they are doing when it comes to building a strong suspension system. Much of their experience comes from producing some of the better A-arm and link kits you see running on some of the top-dollar prunners and race trucks today. This front end is pushing 26 inches of wheel travel using Fox 2.5-inch four-tube bypass shocks, Fox 2.5-inch coilovers, and King bumpstops. The rear four-link suspension is pushing 32 inches of wheel travel and also uses Fox coilovers, Fox four-tube bypass shocks, and King bumpstops. **OR**

