

Dec. '90), this truck attracted more attention than any truck we've tested recently.

The Street is usually heard before it is seen. With 460 cubes funneling through four SuperTrapp mufflers, this truck has a deep, throaty exhaust note that is easily recognized above other traffic sounds. Wrap it up and you can expect *everyone* to take notice.

Once this chopped, pearl pickup is noticed, you'd better be prepared to answer questions. It seems that everyone takes an immediate liking to this truck; all ages, all categories of car enthusiasts, even die-hard GM fans will give an approving grin. More than once we heard comments like "Nice truck . . . too bad it's a Ford," or "Now if Ford built a pickup like that, I'd get myself one."

Approval doesn't stop with first glances, either. The more people examine the Street, the more they seem to appreciate it. The bodywork features both wild and subtle custom touches. The interior is comfortable and well detailed with everything from exotic looking Lear HPS wingback buckets to an in-dash CD player. But if you really want to watch some jaws drop, just pop the hood. Once people lay their eyes on an engine bay packed full of fuel-injected big-block Ford, there is no turning back.

However, if we had to pick one of these two trucks for a long-term relationship, there is no question that the 454 SS would get the nod. As much fun as the Street is to tool around in, you wouldn't want to drive it on a daily basis. As a one-of-a-kind custom, rolling up a lot of miles would undoubtedly take its toll.

The 454 SS, on the contrary, is stone reliable and requires minimal maintenance to keep it looking and performing like new. The interior offers high-back buckets and all the creature comforts we've grown to love in Chevy's C/K full-size pickups. You could drive this truck to work on a daily basis and never give it a second thought.

The bottom line on both the 454 SS and the Street is fun. If you can't enjoy yourself behind the wheel of either, then it's time to turn in your *Sport Truck* subscription for three years of *Needlepoint Monthly*. Since fun is what the sport-truck movement is all about, we can't think of a more direct way to tap into the good times than to take a spin in either big-block brawler.

The easy way out of this "unfair" comparison is to say that there are no actual winners or losers, and that the sport-truck enthusiast has everything to gain.

One thing is for certain: If you want the performance that only a big-block V-8 can offer in a half-ton pickup, the Chevy 454 SS is currently the only game in town. Better still, the aftermarket-perfor-

mance industry is armed and ready to help you make the most of an already potent package. Several 454 SS project trucks are either in the works or already complete, and they illustrate the tremendous performance potential of this truck. For more information on boosting the 454's performance, see the articles "Big-Block Performance" and "Pump It Up!" in the November '90 issue of *Sport Truck*.

The Street, on the other hand, gives us a clue as to what a production F-150 muscle truck could be. It's a bold concept, and it shows a commitment from Ford to the high end of the sport-truck market. We can only keep our fingers crossed and hope that one day a true production competitor to the 454 SS comes out of Ford Motorsport. A little friendly competition is always welcome. ■

Syclone: Good Thing/Small Package

The idea that a muscle truck has to be a full-size pickup, with acres of cubic inches under the hood, is about to be blown away. The spoiler of this myth is GMC Truck, which will begin selling the power-packed Syclone about a month after you read this item. With an unlimited production run and a retail price of \$25,500, the Syclone is the performance bargain of the decade. And we're only in 1991.

If you're a regular reader, you've heard about the Syclone before. It's a variant of GMC's Sonoma compact pickup, with an incredibly potent power package under the all-black skin. GMC has added multiport fuel injection and an intercooled turbocharger to the stout 4.3-liter Vortec V-6. These changes, and other refinements, boost the Vortec's power output to 280 net horsepower at 4400 rpm and 350 lb-ft of net torque at 3600 rpm.

Bringing all that muscle to the ground is a four-speed automatic over-



drive transmission mated to an all-wheel-drive system and 3.42:1 gears front and rear (with a limited slip in back) that send power to all four P245/50VR16 tires.

Our initial tests of the Syclone gave us 4.8-second 0-60-mph times (nearly half the time the full-size muscle trucks needed) and quarter-mile runs of just over 13 seconds at over 100 mph. Kim Nielsen, the GMC Truck engineer primarily responsible for the Syclone project, has recorded quarter-mile runs of under 13 seconds. Even Chevrolet's ultimate Corvette, the ZR-1, doesn't run that fast.

Better still, the Syclone is not just a straight-line bullet. Its drive system and sticky tires make it handle, too. We haven't run skid-pad or slalom tests on the truck yet, but a day of thrashing it around Willow Springs International Raceway, here in California, has raised our expectations. It's certainly the best handling factory pickup we've ever driven. Is it as close to the sports cars on the skid pad as it is on the dragstrip? We'll see. We hope to complete a full road test of the Syclone for our April issue.

Meanwhile, Chevrolet and Ford (and anyone else intending to build a muscle-truck contender) had better watch their backs. There *is* a substitute for cubic inches. And it's spelled *S-y-c-l-o-n-e*.

—Drew Hardin