

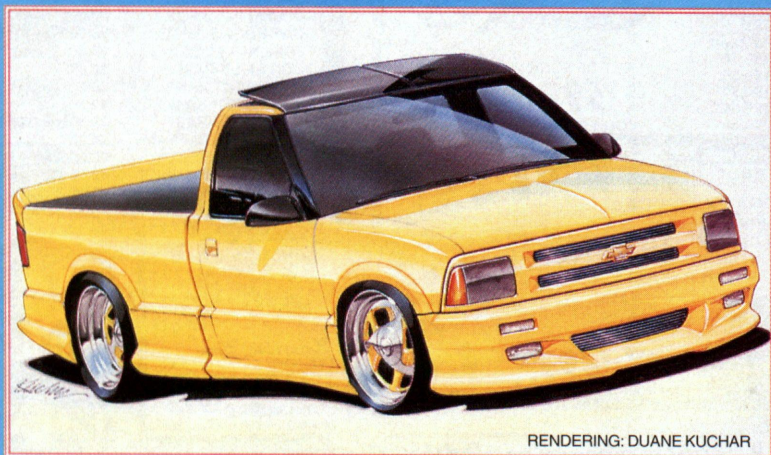
INSIDER TRUCKIN'

BY BILL BLANKENSHIP

TESTING! TESTING...

There's no mistaking, this S-10's message comes through loud and clear — *IT'S HOT!* Trucks West (a division of Wings West Group) got their hands on one of the first-available 1994 Chevrolet minis and locked it, their design staff and artist Duane Kuchar in a well-lit studio for some serious sketching. As image after image burned through Kuchar's brain, concepts were rejected, refined and finally realized in the rendering you see here.

Tooling for the awesome aero ground effects is now complete, and the first available-to-the-public components should be popping out of the molds as you read this. And while the new aerodynamic shape is the heart and soul of Trucks West's S-10, they've succeeded in adding the finishing touches that perfectly complete this little pearl yellow runner. Budnik's "Tusk" wheels were hit with the same yellow as the body, then all relief surfaces were stripped of paint and polished to a mirror brightness before 17-inch General Tire super-low profile meats were pulled on. Low stance is à la Bell Tech.



RENDERING: DUANE KUCHAR

A 21st-century version of the old T-top design caps this S-truck in space age style. Skylite Sunroofs & Motoring Accessories of Brighton, Michigan has come up with this "Gen II" variation that does not compromise the structural integrity of Chevrolet's design; factory door structure and seals remain intact in this installation, and the twin integrated sunshade panels can be removed or simply vented, as in the rendering. Under the hood breathes an L35 V-6, but its stock output of 195 horses is significantly enhanced by the addition of a Paxton supercharger.

Finishing touches include fog/driving lights by Blazer International, Katzkin leather interior, Pro Design billet grille, Budnik steering wheel and flush fitting tonneau cover by Sprint. Limo window tint came courtesy of Desi's Accessories, while the yellow pearl was pumped by Prukop Auto Body & Paint.

Mid-month will see the introduction of Trucks West's newest debute on the Southern California show circuit, and it should serve as a blueprint for years to come. Chevrolet has one hot compact truck on its hands, and Trucks West has turned it into a real scorcher. For info on any of their truly unique products, write to them at Trucks West, 925 W. 18th Street, Suite A, Dept. TR, Costa Mesa, CA 92627, call them at (714) 722-9995, or fax 'em at (714) 722-9997. Wonder what they've got in mind for the new S-Blazer!

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Deep Insider

○ **Ford** has delivered 81 Ecostar electric vans to utility and delivery companies in the Detroit area and five other cities. The Ecostar is based on Ford's small European Escort van.

○ Base models **Toyota** truck, T-100 and 4Runner all receive their newly developed 3RZ-FE inline four-cylinder engine, replacing the 22R-E. The new base truck block has larger displacement than the old 22-Series motors (2.7 liters over 2.3) and sports twin overhead cams and four valves per cylinder, upping horsepower output from 116 to 150.

○ The Associated Press reported first quarter production estimates show light trucks will account for 46 percent of vehicles built in America, the newest evidence that minivans, pickup trucks and sport utility vehicles will remain the auto industry's hot sellers. In 1989, light trucks made up just 38 percent of the mix.

○ It has been confirmed that **Oldsmobile** plans to introduce a new Bravada in the fall of 1995. The Bravada will share a new platform with **Chevrolet's** S-Blazer and **GMC's** Jimmy, and will have a V-8 engine for the first time. Oldsmobile General Manager John Rock plans to do battle in the luxury arena of the sport utility vehicle market where retail sales have almost doubled over the past three years.

○ The Automotive Journalists' Association of Canada named the **Chevrolet/GMC** S-series pickup as the best new truck for '94.

○ **Nissan Motor Corp.**, faced with a fourth recall of their late-1980s minivan, is offering owners of the C-22 van the opportunity to "sell" their vans back to Nissan, in lieu of going ahead with no-charge-to-the-customer upgrades of the cooling and electrical systems. Bottom line is, if a customer's van is in excellent condition, by all means go for the upgrades and repairs; if it's on its last legs, it may be in the owner's best interest to take the money and let Nissan send the van to the crusher. Nissan has conducted a no-holds-barred effort to contact all C-22 owners, sending them a video tape explaining the procedure. Dealerships we contacted were very helpful, and suggested that owners contact their nearest dealer for individual appraisal.

○ **General Motors** is conducting a voluntary safety-related recall on certain 1985-1991 **Chevrolet** Astro and **GMC** Truck Safari minivans and 1989-1990 Chevrolet and GMC Truck Suburbans with reclining front bucket seats. These vehicles could exhibit a condition where one of the bolts that attaches the seat recliner mechanism to the seat cushion frame becomes fatigued and breaks, allowing the seatback to suddenly recline. Chevrolet or GMC Truck dealers will remove material from the joint of the seat cushion frame and install new seat recliner bolts.

○ Japan's automobile exports plunged 25 percent last October, the biggest monthly decline since World War II, according to the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association.

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