



RIGHTFUL REWARD

WORKING 24-7 STILL GETS YOU SOMETHING



The entire lower section of the dash was removed and replaced with a custom piece that holds an Alpine controller and a pair of USD Waveguides in a position that's much higher and more forward than usual.

by Tim Kelly

PHOTOS BY ROB McPHERSON AND TIM KELLY

It's your first time at a show and you can't believe how many people compete in car stereo. This is just entertainment, right? Maybe. The other thing you can't believe is how much money some of the sound buffs put into their systems. If you include the installation bills, many top dog systems that win consistently often cost more than the vehicles they're in.

The more shows you go to the more enthusiastic you get about auto sound, and finally you decide that you need to compete. The bug's bit you and you're infected. The only cure is competition. But nobody's going to give you anything free—can you win?

That's the question which went through Randy Wilbur's mind when he first got started in auto sound. He knew that he had the ride: a new turbocharged GMC Syclone truck. He knew that he had the desire; and it was driving him nuts that he wasn't ready for any show. The bucks were already being stretched taut.

Here's where this man's total dedication to what he wanted would pay off. He worked his poor little can off seven days a week to get the money for equipment and major installation bills and then went home to work on little tweaks like Busbars, motor functions and sound. Sleep was not one of the big things on his list. In fact, when we caught up with him at the Eastern Regionals in Indianapolis, he had been

up for almost 30 hours getting ready—and everything still wasn't the way he wanted.

Randy is a perfectionist and it shows in the craftsmanship and ideas in his Syclone. The truck itself is pretty close to stock except for its Budnik Sprint SC wheels. Under the hood there's no real mods either. It's the hood that's modified with a cowl induction system. A Hypertech Stage III chip and 160 degree thermostat were also put in for a bit more performance. It's carrying all this stereo equipment, but there's no reason why it shouldn't still run 14s.

The first system in the truck was not a simple one; in fact, it included much of the fiberglass and vinyl work inside the cab and in the truck's bed, but it wasn't much compared to Randy's latest conception. Today there's a whole lot more going on, and it's all for the better because almost all the work went into improving the sound!

Here's basically what the system consists of: an Alpine controller and six-



ABOVE - The center console holds fuses for outboard electronics like D/A converters. The alpine controller motors back to hide in between the Waveguides, one of which has its grill off.



RIGHT - The system's second battery has half farad capacitors on either side connected with hand made Busbars constructed by owner Randy Wilbur.

VITALS

VEHICLE.....	1991 GMC Syclone
OWNER.....	Randy Wilbur of Toledo, OH
SHOP & INSTALLER.....	Bill Blythe of Canadian Audio & Radio
HEAD UNIT(S).....	Alpine
PROCESSOR(S).....	USD, Audio Alchemy, Valley Audio
AMPLIFIER(S).....	PPI
FRONT STAGE.....	USD, JL Audio
SUBS.....	JL Audio in sealed box
SECURITY.....	Alpine
SPECIAL.....	Head-up display, outboard D/A converters, pro sound equipment

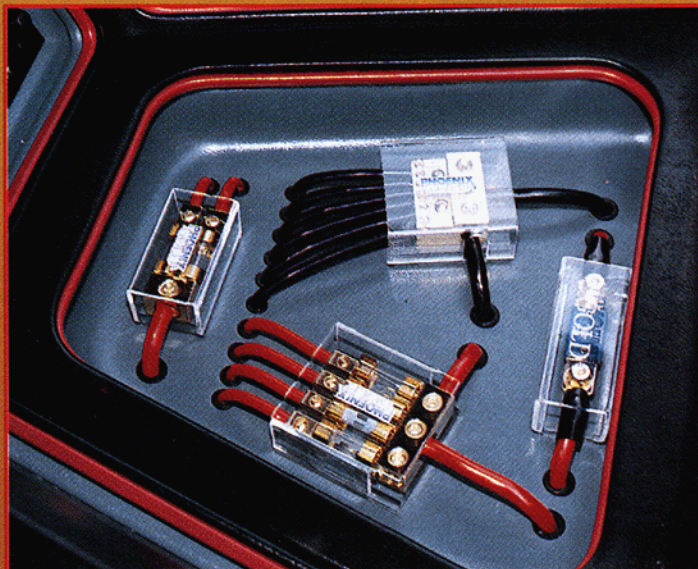
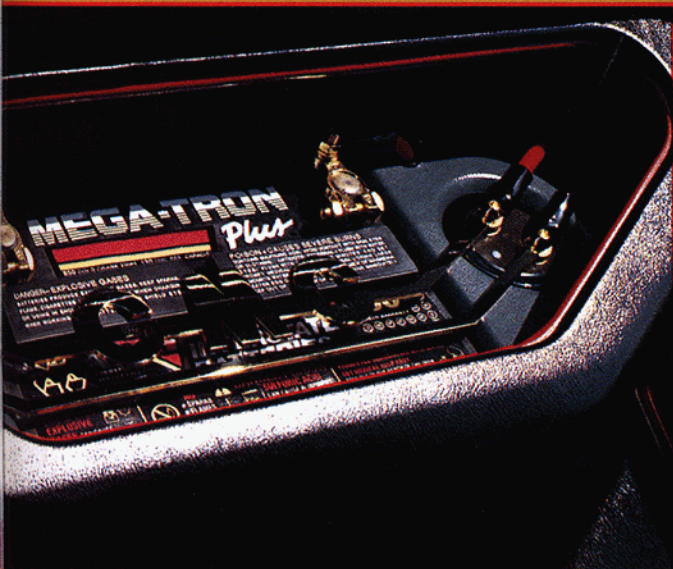
disc changer into an Audio Alchemy DTI and DDE, then to USD EQs and crossovers. Amplification comes from a pair of PPI amps on JL tens and five-and-a-quarters with USD Waveguides. Right off the bat you can tell that there's something more than the usual going on here, including a smorgasbord of home audio stuff modified to work in the 12 volt environment. In this install there's product quality; but it's the implementation that makes the critical difference.

Instead of putting the Alpine 5953 remote commander in the stock factory location, it was mounted in a totally custom panel that runs the length of the dash. At the touch of a button on the remote or in the truck, a panel motors down to about 45 degrees and reveals the commander. Since it's kind of low in the dash, a remote volume knob (yes, knobs are so much better than buttons) was mounted in the center console where your hand naturally falls. For easy visibility, a 5954 remote display unit was mounted in a motorized panel on the driver's side in the factory dash-speaker location. It just pops up out of there and works as kind of a head-up display.

In the stock dash location a Cyberdyne fluorescent vacuum tube display that tells the user amp voltages and temperatures was mounted behind a

RIGHT - An aluminum tonneau cover raises from the front to reveal thousands of dollars worth of electronics including Audio Alchemy DDE and DTI, USD and PPI.

BELOW RIGHT - At the center of the component well is the power distribution blocks and in-line fuses.



Behind each seat is a JL Audio ten in its own sealed enclosure. The custom vinyl work that surrounds it is first class.

piece of smoked glass. It looks like a shiny blank piece until it's turned on and then it just glows from behind the glass. The glove box was also reworked so that there's no longer a latch. Instead it's been motorized and works with a hidden switch, or the alarm remote.

The Alpine 5957 six-disc changer was mounted in the center console along with switches for the system's fans. At the other end of the console are fuses for all the extra electronics that run the system. Just above that is the commander in the custom piece that was constructed by actually cutting into the lower part of the dashboard. Another piece was constructed with fiberglass and matching factory vinyl to hold a pair of USD 6.0 Waveguides. Now the 'guides look like they were actually designed at the factory, and they get about an additional five inches of height that they wouldn't of had if they were just mounted below the dash (like everybody else does).

The factory doors, which have no speaker holes, were completely reworked on the bottom half to hold a



The stock doors were reworked to hold a pair of JL Audio 5.25s each. The Scorpion logo was also worked for looks.

BELOW - Center console holds an Alpine six-disc changer that sends its digital output to the Audio Alchemy jitter reduction machine and then the D/A converter.

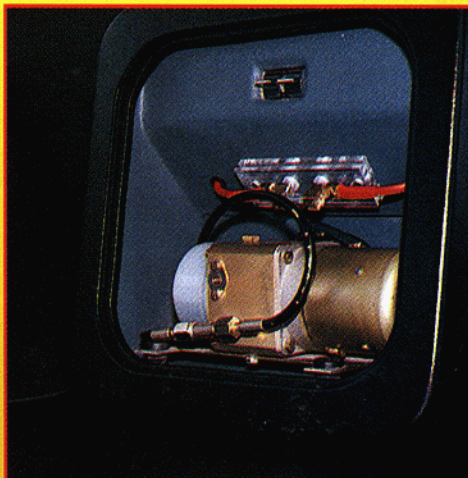


ABOVE - The driver's side speaker location is filled with a motorized Alpine remote display. At the touch of a button, you've got a head-up display. When it's off, the display motors down and there's nothing there.

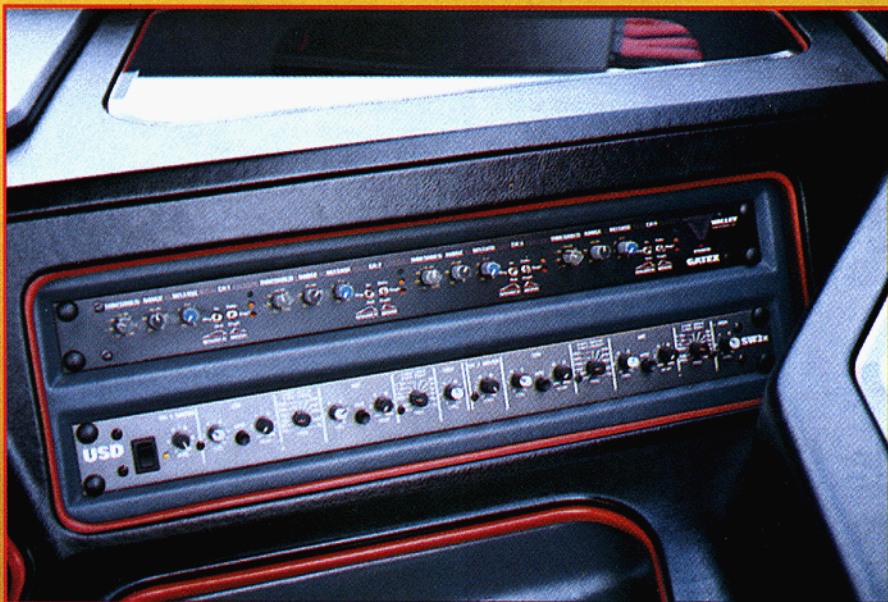
pair of JL Audio 5CW1s for duty as mid-bass units. From the USD electronic crossover they operate from 100 - 800Hz with 24dB slopes.

Behind the seats, on the outside of the separate sub enclosures there is some of the best work we've seen: An enclosure behind each seat holds a single JL Audio 10W1 woofer in a double walled fiberglass enclosure with an inner volume of .6 cubic feet. A beautiful single trim piece made of vinyl-cov-

In the back of the bed on the right is a dedicated pump for the hydraulics that operate the opening and closing of the tonneau cover and a tool kit on the left side.



BELOW - Two pro audio pieces, the Valley Audio Pro noise gate and USD SW3X electronic crossover, stacked on each other in the truck bed.



ered fiberglass runs the width of the cab in various flowing shapes that incorporate friction-fit grill covers. Even with all that there's still room to recline the seats. If the all the above was the full scoop on the vehicle, it would already be enough for one system. You can just sense all the time that went into completing the passenger compartment. A tonneau cover that has its hinges mounted on the tailgate silently motors up, and you have to hold your breath when you see what's inside.

Towards the front of the truck is a trapezoid shaped pit that has some kind of electronics on all four sides. At the front is the extra system battery flanked by a pair of half farad Lighting stiffening caps which are connected with polished brass Busbars with the GMC logo running through the middle.

Opposite that is the Audio Alchemy digital equipment. In case you're not familiar, Audio Alchemy is a home audio brand that some of the tweak specialty competitors have been porting over to the 12 volt arena. In

Randy's case he took a DTI jitter reduction engine and a DDE D/A converter and he uses them with a direct digital input right from the Alpine changer. The converters in the DDE are superior to most any that come inside a regular player, but the trick to using them is the new power supply they require to

An Audio Alchemy DTI jitter reduction unit and DDE, Digital Decoding Engine (D/A converter), which are home audio pieces, were converted for 12 volt use. Randy's installer Bill Blythe took no shortcuts when it came to good sound.

operate on 12 volts. Other than saying it was a pain in the ass, Randy and his tech smart installer, Bill Blythe of Canadian Audio, weren't saying much more.

The analog signal from the Audio Alchemy pieces then goes off to a pair of USD SW30 eighth octave EQs. A separate unit is used for the left and right channel. Next is a Valley Audio Pro noisegate to help keep system noise to a minimum when there's no signal. Finally is the USD SW3X three-way electronic crossover. All three of these pieces are converts from the home audio industry.

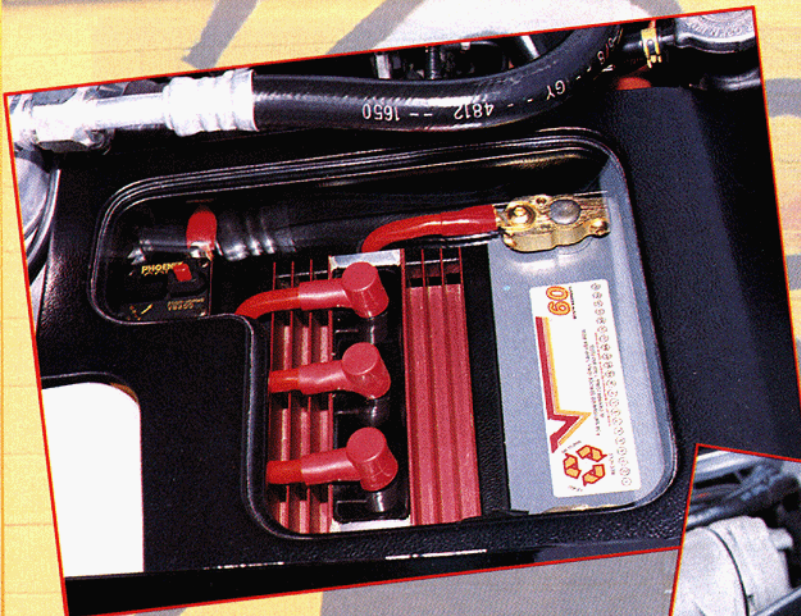
At the center of the well are the system's Phoenix Gold distribution blocks and wiring. Flanking the center well on each side are smaller wells that hold a PPI amplifier. A PPI A600 powers the system's JL subs and an AX404 uses two of its channels to drive the four midbass units and the other channels for the Waveguides. All three wells aren't covered in the usual Plexiglas; instead they're covered with half inch, hand cut and beveled, tempered glass. It definitely looks expensive and Randy will be the first to tell you it is.

Of course, the suicide tonneau cover



operates on hydraulics and has a dedicated pump and cylinders to work it by means of the Alpine 8070L alarm. The alarm also controls the commander, head-up display, glove box and, since that's what it's there for, arms/disarms the vehicle.

Randy had some electronics problems that relegated him to fifth place at the IASCA Eastern Regionals. Since he's used to placing first, it was a hard pill to swallow, especially after he'd done so much work. Regardless, he has enough points to qualify for the Finals in Dallas; and he's even going to have a few more upgrades which are up his sleeve. So for now I'm tight lipped (because he and installer Bill said they'd shoot me if I revealed their plans) but if you're going to be there this November, look for Randy, he's a contenda.



Under the hood a chromed Streetwires 140 amp alternator in a medium case fits because Randy made custom brackets. An isolator sits right next to the Interstate battery.

