

Dakota Four-Banger BluesBlues

I (regretfully?) own an '89 Dodge Dakota. I have a desire to build up the four-cylinder engine to a high-performance level to match the truck's custom looks. So far all the companies and custom shops I've talked to from Michigan to California say nothing is available for this motor. I have only owned the truck for a year and will be making payments for three more years, so selling the truck is out of the question. Is it possible to swap in a better engine?

Dave Gall, Elyria, OH

Don't despair too much. The good news is you've got a super truck and a good basis to start with. The bad news is the four-banger has gotta go if you want serious motivation. You could always slip on a turbo or supercharger, but for the money you'll spend on either of those modifications, you could be halfway home in swapping in a V-8. Getting your hands on a late-model 318 makes the swap a drop-in using factory parts. Or for more moderate gains, a V-6 may be in order. We would opt for the V-8 since there's quite a few factory performance parts for that particular motor. The extra effort will be rewarded with serious power gains. However, check with local emissions laws on the swap. Since the truck is offered with a V-8, there shouldn't be a problem with smog certification.

Electrifying Results

I presently own a '90 Chevy half-ton with a 4.3 and automatic overdrive transmission that I have already started working on by lowering it and installing Rancho shocks and urethane bushings. My question is, why did you use a Jacobs ignition in your project truck instead of a performance chip? Can I use both of them in my truck and will this add more performance or am I spinning my wheels?

Bart Vandrell, Violet, LA

The Jacobs ignition system is a smog-legal upgrade over the stock HEI ignition and works well in Chevrolets. If your local laws permit, you can probably use a performance chip in conjunction with the Jacobs ignition, but give them a call to double check. Contact Jacobs Electronics at: 500 N. Baird St., Midland, TX 79701, 800/375-5226. You could also consider an exhaust upgrade with Edelbrock's tubular exhaust system as well as installing a K&N air filter.



For The Record

I work for Praco, the company that assists the Pikes Peak Hill Climb with advertising, public relations and printed materials such as the race program. Last week, I received a phone call from Glenn Harris, a former hill climb competitor. He took issue with the story that appeared in your November '91 issue, "Politics At The Peak." The second to last paragraph begins, "(Don) Adams would have made history by winning two divisions in the same race." According to the book, "Pikes Peak Is Unser Mountain" by Stanley L. DeGeer, Glenn Harris won both the Truck S and Group A Open Rally divisions in 1986. Unfortunately, the Group A Open Rally division was not included in the Pikes Peak Auto Hill Climb Champions listed in the '91 program, which could have confused the author.

Race categories at the event have changed from time to time and different categories have been added and dropped. Unfortunately, some of the divisions that no longer exist were dropped from the '91 program, and I apologize for the error. I'll be sure that complete winner statistics are included in the '92 version. I'm simply letting you know that Mr. Harris has a grievance and will let you decide from here what action, if any, you would like to take. I have written to him and explained the program error.
Amy Starks, Praco, Ltd., Colorado Springs, CO

Thanks for bringing this point to our attention—it obviously needs some clarification beyond what you state in your let-

ter. After checking a copy of DeGreer's book, "Pikes Peak Is Unser Mountain," we discovered that Mr. Harris is listed as winner of the Group A Rally Division in 1988, not 1986, as well as being listed at the Truck S class winner the same year, earning him the distinction of being a two-time winner in the same race. Don Adams, did in fact, nearly repeat that feat in 1990 by winning Division C for Production Class vehicles in an all-wheel-drive Eagle Talon, only to have his hopes for a win in Class F for trucks dashed by time penalties for starting out of line. According to the records, Adams did in fact run the hill quicker than eventual winner Jack Flannery timewise, but was assessed 40 seconds in penalties for starting out of position, because his helicopter ride from the top delayed his arrival at the starting line. An appeal of the penalty assessment was denied by the sanctioning body. In defense of our author, and citing your own point, the information on Mr. Harris' accomplishment was not included in the press materials and was subsequently left out of the story.

Parts Is Parts

In your January '92 issue I read something very interesting. The feature story "White Hot" is about a Chevy S-10 that has a set of Pinto spindles on the front. I want to know why this was done. Is this a cheaper way to lower an S-10? Do Pinto spindles make the front of the truck lighter for racing purposes?

Charles Zerbin, Sarasota, FL



The truck in question is a custom-built race piece, utilizing a tube frame and tubular A-arms. Use of the Pinto spindles is probably another weight-saving technique used by the builder. You'll also notice the story indicates use of a Pinto rack-and-pinion steering setup. The spindles were probably retained from the same donor Pinto. Also, a similar setup found in early Mustang IIs is popular among the street rod crowd for its simplicity. As for street S-10s, lowering is better accomplished with aftermarket.