

ket spindles, lowering coils or dropped A-arms which retain the standard Chevy bolt patterns. Leave the trick stuff to the racers.

## Dakota Versus Sonoma GT

Could you tell me the 0-60 times for the new small Dodge truck (Dakota) with a 318 magnum and an automatic transmission. Is it faster



than GMC's Sonoma GT (195 horsepower and 0-60 in 8.5)?

Louis Gaeding, Streamwood, IL

Being a dedicated Sport Truck reader, you've probably already read "Sibling Rivalry" in our January '92 issue spotlighting the Sonoma GT. The truck is fitted with GM's new L35 4.3-liter V-6 rated at 195 horsepower and 260 lb-ft of torque. It turned a respectable 16.12 seconds at the dragstrip, with an automatic. We are still awaiting the arrival of a '92 Dodge Dakota with the new 230-hp magnum 318. On paper, and considering the weight difference between the two trucks, we predict the numbers might be tilted in favor of the Dodge since our 185hp 1991 model with an automatic ran a 17.39 clocking fresh out of the box with no postraction. The new Dakota looks to be a real performer so stay tuned to find out the real story.

## Overdone Overdrive

I'm sorry, but I have got to correct you. In the January '92 issue, you showed "Technique Al Masterpiece" a very nice looking half-ton truck. What I would like to know is how this customer got the 4L80E transmission into this stock truck, since it is only available in over 8500 GVWR trucks (or 454 SS). Could it be that you might be talking about the 4L60 tranny, (700R4)?

Dean Kelndorfer, Killam, Alberta, Canada

Good question. There are two possibilities here. Either the truck's tech sheet was filled out incorrectly, listing the

4L80 as the tranny or one was really installed. Given the size of the truck and the relatively stock powerplant, we bet the unit in question is a standard 700R4.

## Epoxy Is Best

In the November '91 issue in the TDC column, the information regarding the bonding of fiberglass hood scoops to steel hoods needs to be more specific. I have been bonding fiberglass repair panels to Corvairs since 1983 and the word to remember is epoxy. Epoxy adhesives are the only ones I know of that will truly hold fiberglass to steel. Too often poor results, in the form of cracking, are achieved because fiberglass resins are used. These resins should only be used for fiberglass to fiberglass adhesion or fiberglass to wood adhesion (boat repair).

Ben Brown, Vairs, Ltd., N. Aurora, IL

Thanks for the tip! There are also a handful of readers wrestling with the fiberglass and metal-mating problem that will also thank you in the long run.

## Dakota Shopping

I'm in the market for a new truck. I've looked at the Ford Ranger and Chevy Sport. After reading your article on the Dodge Dakota I went out and test drove the V-6 and V-8 models. I have a question. What is available in the way of ground effects, rolled pans, sunvisors, tonneau covers and the like for the Dakota? When will you be testing the Dakota with the new engines? Please don't overlook the V-6 for the V-8, I'm sure more V-6s will be sold.

Roy Mosher, Corinth, NY

We hope you have been following the escapades of Project Dakota here in Sport Truck. In case you haven't, here's what you've missed. There is a growing demand for aftermarket parts for the Dakota, especially bolt-ons. In the November '91 issue, we outlined the installation of a Stylin' Concepts rolled pan for the Dakota. That would be a good place to start in your quest for parts. (Stylin' Concepts, Dept. ST04, 29919 Lorain Rd., North Olmsted, OH 44070, 800/562-2492 or 216/979-9601 [tech line]). Currently, we're awaiting delivery of a new magnum-motored Dakota fitted with the 230hp 318. In comparison, the new magnum V-6 from Dodge puts out roughly the same horsepower as our '91 318 V-8 (185 versus 180 for the new V-6). So you're right, there will be quite a few V-6 models sold

although true horsepower-heads will be leaning toward the V-8.

## More Dakota Pondering

I am writing in response to the Dakota suspension upgrade ("Suspension Solution," January '92). I own a '90 Dakota Sport Club Cab and found it refreshing to read about something other than a Chevy. I have some questions concerning the work done to your project truck. There seems to be very limited front suspension travel on my truck. How much was lost with the lowering performed on the truck? I use my truck as a truck and would hate to lose any towing or load capacity. Chrysler claims the Magnum 3.9 engine mods are not able to be retrofitted to earlier 3.9s. Is this just manufacturers hype? There are many Mopar performance parts available that would greatly enhance my 3.9, such as heads, headers and full TRW rebuild kits. My dilemma is can I get more power and still be California smog legal?

Jon Hambleton, Milpitas, CA

Glad to have some feedback from the Dakota crowd. The truck is rapidly gaining popularity among sport truck enthusiasts and with the new 230hp V-8 available in the '92 trucks, we suspect this popularity will continue to see an upward trend. As for the suspension modifications on our project Dakota, we didn't lose any suspension travel despite the lowering coils. We gained 40-percent more spring rate and combined with a



heavier sway bar, handling and ride control improved considerably. Suspension Techniques removed the load leaf to improve the ride in the rear, which also slightly reduces payload. If you're looking to haul more than 600 pounds or so, leave the load leaf in place but expect a slightly harsher ride out back. Overall, we're pleased with how the truck turned out. It's not in the weeds but looks lowered, and handles as if it's on rails. About the 3.9, Chrysler is correct in indicating there's no retro fitting of the new Magnum parts on the older engines. As for modifications to your engine, nearly all of the Chrysler Performance parts listed for the engine aren't consid-