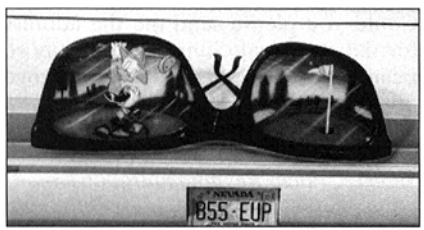
One Sunroof Center, Southgate, MI 48195, 313/285-4911. Have fun in the sun with your new roof, Stuart.

Graphically Speaking

This is our '93 Chevy Silverado that we had lowered by Mike Gardner at Total FX down in Las Vegas, Nevada. The graphics are the special part, and they were done by Russ Gerner from Gerner Design, also in Las Vegas.



My wife and I really like your magazine and thank you for a fine publication.
Brad & June Fields, Las Vegas, Nevada

Those certainly are some interesting graphics on your truck, and we can only assume that one—or both—of you are golf fans. Keep working on your truck and soon it will be the par*fect sport truck....*

Lightning Quick

I am writing in regard to the article about your project Ford Flareside ("White Lightning," June '94). I am new to your magazine, but I feel that a correction needs to be made.

I own a small performance shop here in Westland, Michigan, called CMI Motorsports, and trucks are one of my specialties. I drive a '93 Ford F-150 Lightning, and I read with horror that the Lightning I-beams were not interchangeable with the standard F-150. Since I had ordered a Bell Tech 3/4 lowering kit for the truck, this was bad news. I didn't know what I was going to do, so I called Ford Motorsports, Ford SVT and Bell Tech and found out that yes, the frame is a modified 4x4 frame, but the I-beams are the same design as the lesser F-150s.

However, the rear frame is also different, and you can't use the C-notch kit with the Lightning. But as long as the rear drop doesn't necessitate the use of the C-notch, you can lower away. I hope this information is helpful to other Lightning owners.

Also, I was wondering why you used the Paxton supercharger in the article "High-Voltage Lightning" (June '94). The Vortech unit is available for less money, and it's better—I sell them for $2895. And besides, I know of Lightnings with Vortech blowers, fuel pumps, shift kits and mass air conversions that run 12.9 on street tires and get 15 mpg in the city.

I am currently lowering mine with a 3/4 drop, adding a roll pan, tinting the windows, adding a flush-mount hard tonneau with a wing and removing all the factory badges. My Lightning has a 360-watt Alpine/Kenwood/MB Quartz CD/stereo system, and next in line for it are TFS heads, mass air, an 11-psi Vortech supercharger, a full exhaust system and trans mods, with the hope of running 12.7s on the street and 12.2s at the track. I drive it daily and pull my '91 Mustang race/show car, so it will remain very driveable.

Keep up the good work!
Chuck Palfi, Westland, MI

Thanks for the info—it was obviously an oversight in our article (we knew that!), and you've got a good eye for catching the details! As for the Paxton supercharger, we like it fine. We also like the Vortech, but since you're a dealer and sell it at a better price, we're sure you're a little biased. They're both great superchargers. The Lightning just happened to get a Paxton. Your Lightning sounds waynice, but why the heck are you trying to get 12.7s on the street? Don't you people in Westland have law enforcement? Maybe we should move there....

Quiet, Please

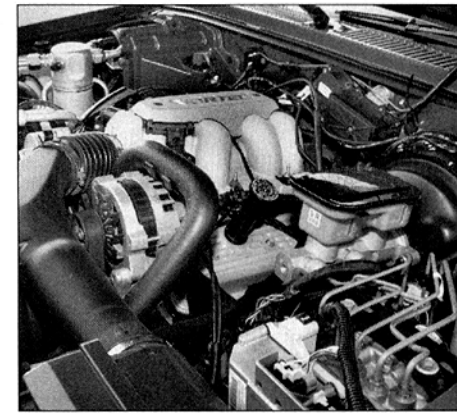
I have a '93 S-10 4.3-liter V6, and I'm interested in basic modifications to increase throttle response. So far I've installed a K&N filter, a Hypertech Thermomaster chip and a set of SplitFires. I've avoided changes to the stock exhaust system because I cringe at the thought of my truck sounding like a Harley every time I step on the gas. Do you know of a manufacturer that makes a decent performance muffler/exhaust system without the annoying "performance" sound?
Donna Alexander, Johnstown, PA

Yes, we do—Walker Manufacturing has the Dynomax Performance Exhaust, and it's probably just what you're looking for—a performance system without the roar. You can contact Walker at Dept. ST09, 1201 Michigan Blvd., Racine, WI 53402, 800/767-DYNO.

Just The Facts...

I am a current subscriber to *Sport Truck*, and I recently bought a new '92 GMC Sonoma GT that's equipped with a 4.3-liter high-output Vortech engine. It's totally loaded from a Corvette-styled shifter to a Sunbird instrument panel. I'd like to know if *Sport Truck* has written an article about this truck? If so, could you please give me the issue date and tell me where I could buy the magazine? I want to know because I don't know much about my truck, including horsepower, quarter-mile speed and so on.
Kevin Rothbauer, Pine City, MN

March was the month, 1992 was the year and "Sibling Rivalry" was the name of the road test on the GMC Sonoma GT. To get a copy, just give our editorial assistant, Mark Erikson, a call at 213/782-2203, and he'll dig one up for you. By the way, to answer your specific questions, the horsepower is rated at 195 at 4500 rpm and the quarter-mile time is 16.12 seconds at 84 mph.



Sport Truck welcomes letters to the editor. Letters must include an address or phone number so the signature can be verified. Upon verification, names may be withheld at your request. Letters published in this magazine reflect the opinions of the writers, and we reserve the right to edit the letters for clarity, brevity or other purposes. Because of our large volume of mail, we regret that we can't return photos. Write Editor, *Sport Truck*, 6420 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90048-5515.

V8 AWD S-Blazer

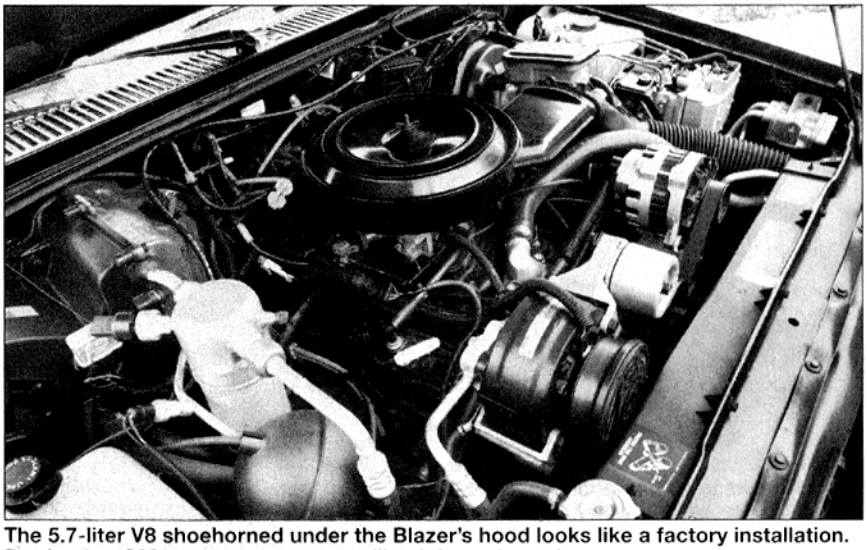
This 350ci Blazer is Our Kind of Test Mule

Project number 11315 *sounded* logical on paper. With the details neatly mapped out in a project report from TDM Technologies of Livonia, Michigan, it appeared to be a standard technical engineering study. But after sampling the finished product, project 11315 seems less standard, more impulsive. A test mule strikes a nerve in the heart of the sport truck movement.

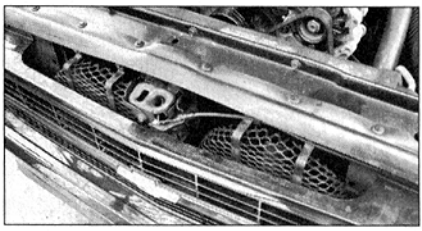
It started when Chevrolet contacted TDM to package an S-Blazer with a V8 that supplies power to GM's current all-wheel-drive systems. Chevy's objective was to test the durability of the driveline components when subjected to the increased horsepower and torque loads of the V8 while under real-world conditions. The work order included a directive to use existing GM components and hardware with as little modification as possible.

Chevy delivered a two-door, late-model 4WD S-10 Blazer with a 4.3-liter TBI V6 and automatic transmission to TDM to get the project rolling. For power, a 5.7-liter 350ci TBI V8 and 700-R4 four-speed OD automatic transmission with lockup torque converter were pirated from a fullsize Blazer. Following the in-house parts directive, TDM obtained a Bravada viscous torque-splitting AWD transfer case and other miscellaneous hardware to complete the package.

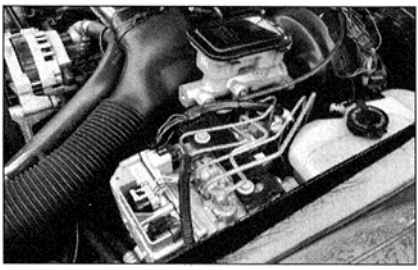
As with any engine swap, the conversion wasn't a direct drop-in replacement. TDM's first task was to yank the O.E. 4.3 from the Blazer and transfer



The 5.7-liter V8 shoehorned under the Blazer's hood looks like a factory installation. Production GM components were utilized throughout the swap.



This pair of 454 SS electric pusher fans is used in the front of the radiatorto free up a few more inches inside the engine compartment.



Four-wheel ABS gives the Blazer sure-footed stops regardless of road conditions.

the front accessory drive assembly to the V8. Dealing with the added length of two additional cylinders was simplified by the elimination of the mechanical cooling fan in favor of a pair of 454 SS electric pusher fans mounted in front of the stock radiator.

TDM modified the 4.3-liter engine mounts to work with the new location of the 5.7. A mock-up engine was used during this fabrication and engineering phase, with the final hardware transfered to the actual engine just prior to installation. Careful attention was paid to maintaining proper driveline angles with the modified brackets. Achieving O.E. drive angles would eliminate one potential problem area when evaluating durability.

Since this was a GM engineering project, TDM took special precautions to make sure the finished conversion looked like a factory installation. The V8 swap required modifications to most of the underhood plumbing, which was carefully trimmed or lengthened to work with the new engine and location.

On the induction side, the V8 fuel-injector assembly was transfered to the 4.3 throttle body to simplify linkage connections. The original V6 air cleaner was also retained, although the induction tube was slightly modified. To ensure the thirsty V8 had plenty of fuel, the in-tank electric pump was transfered from the fullsize V8 Blazer to the S-Blazer's tank. Exhaust is scavenged by a pair of V8 tubular GM truck manifolds that were modified to accept the original V6 crossover pipe. The rest of the exhaust system is from a GMC Typhoon. Since the Typhoon was also

based on two-door S-Blazer/Jimmy, the exhaust fit with minimal modification.

Installing the Bravada viscous drive transfer case into the two-door Blazer required dimpling the floor pan for clearance. A Bravada crossmember and brace were used to locate and secure the transfer case. The front prop shaft is Bravada; the rear prop shaft is a Typhoon part. A locking pin was fabricated and installed into the Blazer's front differential so that it would work with the full-time AWD system.

With the major mechanical hardware handled, attention turned to upgrading the Blazer's interior to match its stout new powertrain. The stock Blazer seats were replaced with deeply padded front buckets treated to black leather upholstery. The O.E. instrument panel was then replaced with a more informative Syclone/Typhoon-style rounded gauge panel without the boost gauge.

The exterior of the Blazer was intentionally kept subtle. From the rear, the dual exhaust tips and integrated rear spoiler are the only clues that this isn't a run-of-the-mill S-Blazer. Along the

Factory-issued rubber is easy to outdrive when you push the Blazer on a twisty road. A tasteful V8 AWD logo in the lower beltline is the only giveaway of the Blazer's true character.

Plush front buckets and the rear bench seat are trimmed in rich black leather to give the Blazer a one-of-a-kind luxurious feel.

At the limit, it's easy to induce understeer. With a little suspension tuning and more aggressive tires, the V8 AWD Blazer should handle like a slot car.

truck's lower beltline is a V8 AWD ID band—the only giveaway.

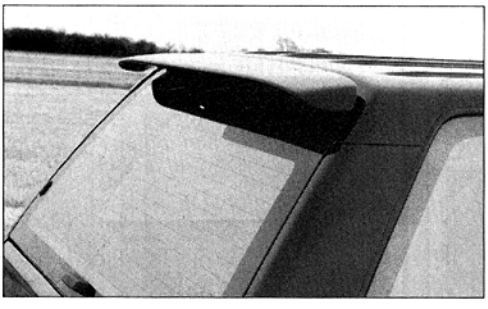
Once TDM completed the project, GM engineers put the Blazer through extensive durability tests. By the time we got our hands on the beast, it was obvious that the Blazer had been anything but pampered. The truck, although worn around the edges, still performed like a factory-built Blazer. It fired up immediately, ran quiet and cool and transported us with minimal fuss.

But don't let these sedate manners fool you. The V8 AWD Blazer rockets off the line with authority. The acceleration is a bit misleading—you expect a lot more commotion. There is no hesitation or tire spin, even when you load up the torque converter by power braking—it simply digs in and goes. Passing maneuvers are a simple matter of standing on the gas and steering. As you might expect, this truck is a real sleeper on the boulevard. We were able to catch more than one high-dollar sports car by surprise.

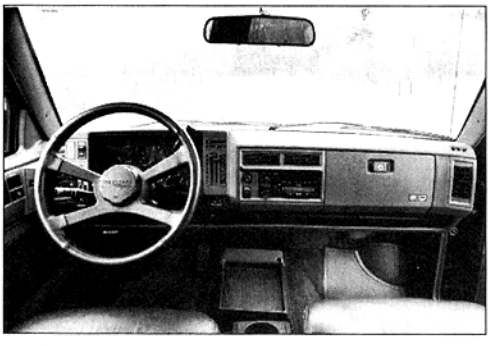
The V8 AWD Blazer isn't all straight-line acceleration—it stops well, too, thanks to the addition of four-wheel antilock brakes. We drove the Blazer on wet pavement and loose-surface backroads and found the braking performance to be exceptional.

When you lean on the Blazer hard during cornering exercises it's easy to outdrive the standard issue O.E. rubber. Understeer is pronounced, regardless of throttle input. Since this truck was built to test drivetrain durability, we didn't expect it to handle like a Corvette. With more-aggressive performance radials and a bit of suspension tuning, the V8 AWD Blazer could be transformed into quite a canyon racer.

Sources at GM gave no indication that a V8 is in the cards for the new-generation S-truck line. With engineering toys like the V8 AWD Blazer around, you have to wonder what powertrain surprises GM has up its sleeve. Perhaps a second-generation Syclone/Typhoon-style street truck? Stay tuned—*Sport Truck* will keep you informed of the latest industry developments. ■



We're not sure where this spoiler/air deflector ame from, but it sure looks great on the trailing edge of a Blazer.



With the exception of the new instrument panel, the dash layout looks like every other late-model S-truck.