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COVER TRUCK

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- WHEELS/TIRES
- SUSPENSION
- AUDIO
- ENGINE



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LOOK GOOD FOR LESS
SHOW-QUALITY PAINT
FOR LESS THAN \$2,400

BY DAN WARD ■ PHOTOGRAPHY DAN WARD

UNMISTAKABLE

**CLEAN-CUT
AND CLEARLY
VISIBLE**



We admit to being partially biased toward trucks with amazing graphics that pop out at you with such vigor that you're left with no choice but to pick up the magazine: a bias we feel was and still is fair, because a truck that catches your eye is exactly what a cover truck is supposed to do. However, this prejudice does exclude certain trucks from appearing on our front page. Fortunately, when we saw Mike Nittel's Chevy Silverado, there was no denying the clean yet superbly custom appeal of a truck laid out, cut to the doors, and featuring slick touches throughout. As the first one-color Chevy on the cover in three years, Mike's blue low-roller is completely unmistakable.

Everyone who sees the Corvette-blue Bow Tie has the same response: Wow! That is a clean truck built right. Mike left no stone unturned when creating the slammed extended cab, and yet subtlety is really this truck's largest attribute. Didn't notice the fully smoothed and painted frame? Or what about the body that is rock-solid and cut to the doors? Don't worry. We'll point out all of the slick details.





Inside the shaved doors, the dash was painted to match, the seats recovered in Enduratex vinyl, and every Empire Motorsports billet accessory was added.

Starting with how the truck sits so low, Mike and buddy Ron Hamblin swapped the rear back half in favor of a triangulated four-link with Firestone 2600 airbags on the lower bars and added a huge step notch for maximum axle clearance. Up front, Aaron Iha, from Chassis by Aaron in Covina, California, modified the lower control arms, installed the Firestone 'bags, and bolted up the Doetsch shocks. A Chevy Tahoe gas tank was also bolted up for better clearance. Twenty-two-inch Intro Pentia billet wheels are mounted under each fender with Nitto super-low-profile tires protecting each hoop. This truck was actually the first '88-'98 Chevy to be laid out on 22s all the way around, and most of the wheel-tucking comes courtesy of the body modifications.

Chopping up the Chevy the old-school way, Ron Hamblin body-dropped the truck a full 5 inches. Autobody Andy took over from there and shaved the door handles, tailgate handle, emblems, antenna, stake pockets, cab seams, firewall, cowl, gas door, and hood squirter. Not to be outdone, a gapless roll pan by Grant Kustoms was welded into place and cleans up the rear perfectly. After all of the extensive bodywork was taken care of, Andrew and Butch at Transformations Unlimited in Glendora, California, applied the beautiful paintjob to the smoothed metal. Now calling the Chevy home are several coats of '95 Corvette Blue (Dark Cloisonné Blue) with a clearcoat that makes the hue have added depth and protection. A smoothed and rechromed front bumper makes the front end look classy, along with a billet

grille and clear marker lights. As with any custom, Mike's Chevy has had several incidents with poor drivers and just plain bad luck. While parked in his garage, a piece of the ceiling fell down on the roof and dented it severely. Rather than trying to straighten and repaint the roof, Mike used this as an opportunity to install a 52x54-inch Street Beat ragtop. Marcel Venable at Line-X in Huntington Beach, California, sprayed the color-matched Line-X on the raised bed floor to complete the exterior modifications.

Moving inside the truck, a feat wherein the doors are literally hovering over the asphalt when opened, blue shag carpet looks up on chopped stock seats that were recovered in gray vinyl with blue flames by Steve Platt. A Colorado Custom Flame billet steering wheel is mounted to the painted column and matches all of the Empire Motorsports billet located on the smoothed and painted dash and door panels. A dove-gray suede headliner surrounds the ragtop and complements the gray seats. Tunes are supplied by an Alpine CD player, and frequencies can be heard from a team of Audiobahn mids and highs, with Clif Designs providing the bass. Four 12-inch Clif Designs subwoofers with chrome baskets are mounted inside the fiberglass enclosure built by James O'Neal of Audio Innovations in Glendora, California. Powering all of this ear pleasure is a total of three Clif Designs amplifiers juiced from a Clif Designs 30-farad capacitor, a 140-amp Powermaster alternator, and two YellowTop Optima batteries located underneath the bed.



Bass is supplied by four
Clif Designs subwoofers
powered by three Clif
Designs amplifiers. All of
the Audio is housed in a
fiberglass box built at
Audio Innovations



Tricks, like having the frame and suspension painted along with polished hard brake lines and billet accessories, really make an engine compartment stand out.





Out back, a fully shaved tailgate rests above the gapless roll pan by Grant Kustoms. Notice the license plate, which is the California vehicular code for having an altered suspension.



UNMIST

If you think your truck lays hard, you might want to use Mike's truck as a measuring point.



AKABILE



Under the hood, the trick theme was followed perfectly with an engine compartment clean enough to eat off of. Powering the Chevy is a throttle-body-injected 350ci V-8 with tons of billet and chrome added to dress it up. A modified Tahoe radiator and twin 14-inch Flex-a-Lite electric fans cool the 5.7L, while all of the computer wiring was relocated inside the cab for a clean appearance. Matching the smoothed and painted firewall, the engine block itself was painted gray, with every other accessory that couldn't be bought in billet receiving blue paint. Painted blue suspension components continue the good looks, while polished stainless brake lines do their part as well. Just like the rest of the truck, the engine bay was immaculately detailed from top to bottom.

Completing the overall package, Mike ordered a license plate reading VC 24008, which is the California state vehicular code for an altered suspension. He's such a nice guy, he made it that much easier for law enforcement to write him a ticket when he airs out the truck and lays the doors on the ground. Realizing how much work it takes to build a truck, Mike wanted to thank his mom, Dana, Chad, Bob, James, Marcel, Seth, Captain, Andrew, and Butch for all of their support and help. **Truckly**