1995 CHEVY/BOYD BLAZER

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KEVIN & SHELLY LAWSON
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO
1951 CHEVY

PHOTOGRAPHY: BRIAN McCORMICK

Grandfather Would Certainly Approve...

BY KEVIN BOALES

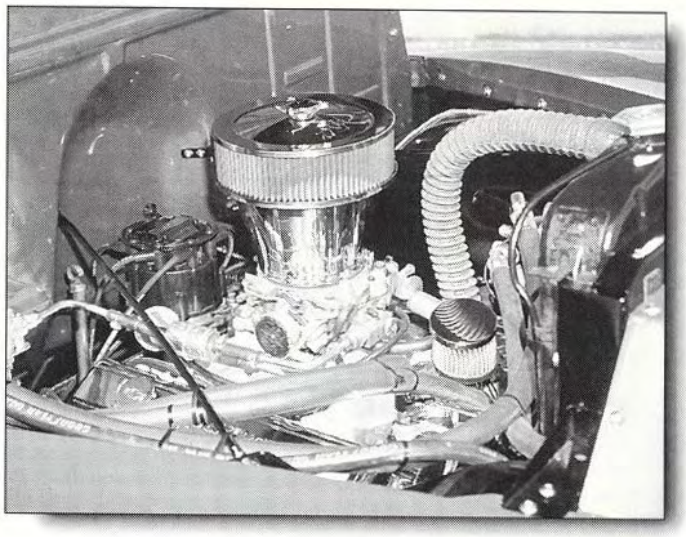
When Kevin Lawson's grandfather proudly brought this Chevy home in 1952, it would be another six years before Kevin would even be born. Kevin notes that he first fell in love with cars at the age of thirteen, which, unfortunately was about the same time his grandfather passed away. Gramps left behind the Chevy, which he had referred to as "The Jewel" for the entire time he owned it.

The Jewel lives on, thanks to Kevin's efforts. As you can see, it's been modernized from end to end, but Kevin says, "I'm sure he'd love to see her as a street rod. As it brought him great pleasure, it'll continue bringing the same to our kids in the future."

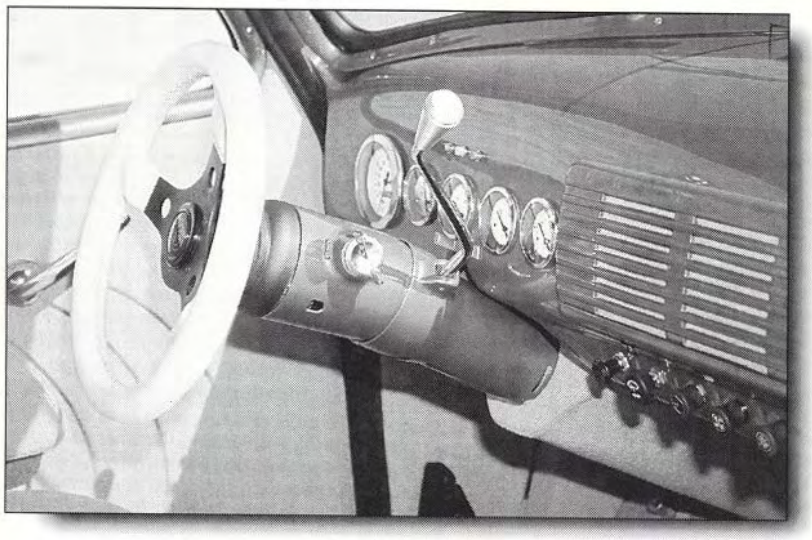
During the years between the passage of his grandfather and the time when Kevin finally received the keys to The Jewel, it had seen some rough times. It had sat unprotected for nearly sixteen years, and although the sheet metal was amazingly straight, the finish and interior were long-gone. Colorado winters are nothing if not brutally severe. When you compound that fact with the unfiltered UV irradiating the upholstery for sixteen summers, you can imagine what the truck looked like in 1987.

First stop for the new and improved Jewel was Ray's Street Rods, in Colorado Springs. There, the truck was stripped of all tired and ragged parts. A 1973 Camaro donor car was purchased and relieved of the front subframe, rear axle, and various other hardware. Those pieces were grafted to The Jewel, bringing the brakes up to modern standards and simplifying the engine swap that was planned. The steering was upgraded using a '76 Monte Carlo box and column, and a transplanted Fairmont master cylinder was plumbed to the Camaro's brake system.

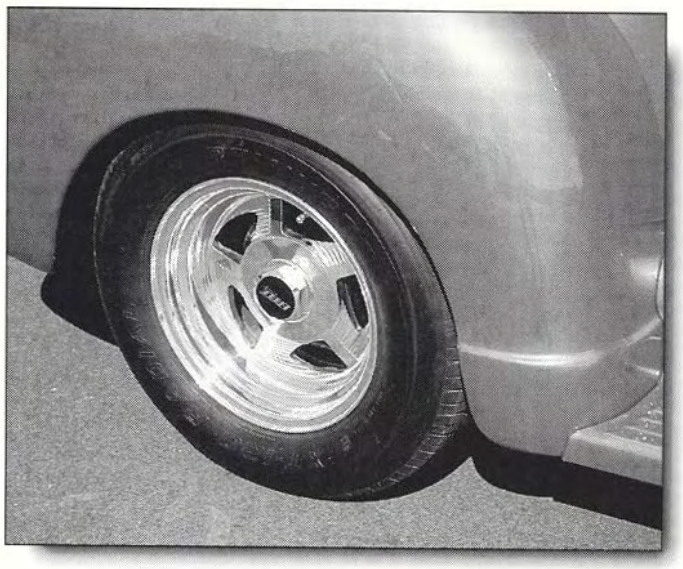
In the true spirit of modernization, a 1976 Corvette 350 was found and left in the capable hands of Colorado Springs' Ehnes-Rink Auto Supply. There, the engine was treated to a complete overhaul and blueprinting. The block was punched .020-inch over to fit a fresh set of GM 11.5:1 pistons, which would be almost unuseable on streets at lower altitudes, but are pretty normal in the thin air of the Rockies. The entire rotating assembly was balanced and reassembled using CL77 bearings. A General Kinetics split pattern hydraulic camshaft was installed and the long block was buttoned up with a Holley Street →



A Corvette 350 replaces the original six-holer installed by Chevrolet in 1951. This engine was rebuilt using high compression pistons to compensate for the high altitude in Colorado Springs.



A Grant steering wheel adorns the top of a swapped 1976 Monte Carlo steering column. The box was also swapped into the Camaro subframe grafted under the truck.



The rear of Kevin's truck rolls on a transplanted Camaro axle shod with 255/R15 Remington rubber on 15x10-inch American Eagle wheels.

Essentially stock body has been cleaned up somewhat with the blending of the hood centerline. Remington XT-120 tires surround American Eagle wheels.

FAMILY Jewel

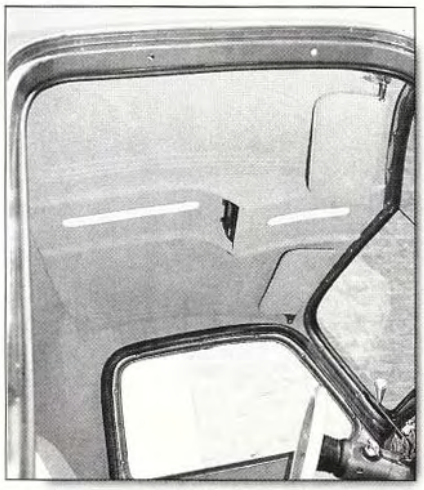
Dominator intake crowned with a new QuadraJet. A Chevy HEI distributor was recurved for the altitude, and Taylor cables link the distributor to the AC plugs.

The Corvette engine came with a TH350 automatic, which was treated to a performance shift kit and a new converter. A shortened driveshaft was prepared by Driveline Services in Colorado Springs. Along the way, the electrical system was converted to 12-volt operation, but the battery still resides under the floor as it always has. The fuel tank was moved to the back of the bed and a marine filler cap was installed for a smooth, unobtrusive look.

Inside, the instruments were swapped out for a set of Dino white-faced gauges ringed in brass to keep that nostalgic look about the interior. A Cheyenne 60/40 seat was swapped in after being reupholstered in grape tweed, balanced by gray carpeting. A Grant Formula steering wheel caps the Monte Carlo column, and Vintage Air handles the climate control inside the cab. Ray's prepared the 43-year-old body for paint and applied the 1993 Ford Iris Poly from the Ditzler/PPG Deltron line of acrylic urethane paint. As a final touch for the cab, the wind wings were removed and power windows were installed in the doors to bring them up to current standards.

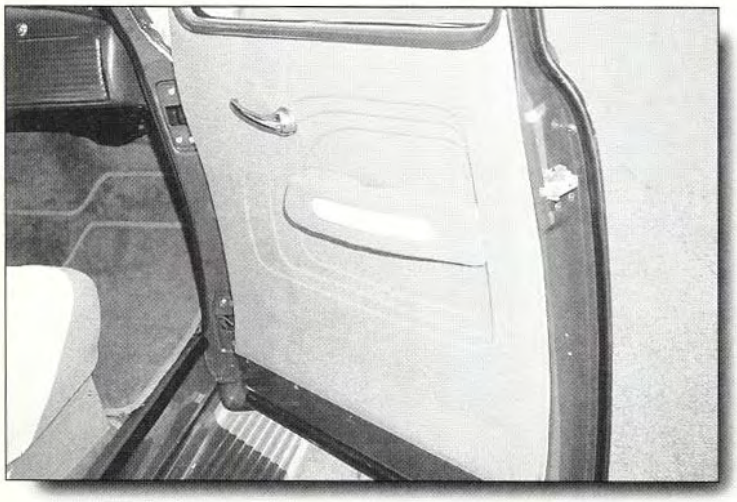
Kevin selected a big-n-little look for the tires, choosing 195/R15 Remingtons surrounding American Eagle wheels for the front, and 255/R15s on 15x10-inch wheels at the rear of the truck. **TR**

The '51 rear bumper was removed and replaced with a custom-built roll pan. Fresh bed lumber is the work of Ray's Street Rods in Colorado Springs.



More of Potestio's handiwork can be seen lining the roof of the resurrected Jewel. Note the overhead console and the detail reliefs in white.

A GM Cheyenne bench seat was reupholstered in grape fabric, balanced with gray carpeting. Notice the three seat belts; the middle one's for Rodder Junior — Kevin and Shelly's daughter Amanda.



All of the interior upholstery was crafted by Eddie Potestio, located in Pueblo, Colorado. He's known for his careful attention to details, a la the trick arm rests.