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CALLING



CARD

Mike McGaughy Found a Very Cool Way to Attract Customers

BY DAMON LEE



Owning your own automotive aftermarket business isn't all fun and games, you know. More often than not it involves long hours of manufacturing and product development, weekends spent hawking parts at events and swap meets, and countless phone conversations answering customer questions. Many of the entrepreneurs we know bemoan the fact that there's little time left for the fun things that got 'em into hot rodding in the first place.

All is not lost, though, because even the busiest of business owners can usually dedicate a little time on his or her shop truck. After all, having a shop truck in good working order is vital to the success of the business, right? It's even better if that truck has enough visual appeal to bring in a few extra customers. In fact, we'd argue that building a cool classic hauler is "just part of getting the job done" for almost any hot rod parts manufacturer. Besides that, it's tax deductible!

CALLING CARD



Okay, so we've made the case for Mike McGaughy building this '72 Chevy to promote his business, Mike McGaughy's Classic Chevy. Fact is, he probably could've done the job with a simple resto-style cruiser built using the dropped spindles, disc brakes, custom springs, C-notch kit, and other parts his company makes and sells for Chevy trucks. But anyone who knows Mike will tell you that he never does anything halfway. So when he decided to give the 1/2-ton short-bed a facelift he went all-out, crafting a first-rate showpiece that would flaunt his parts in style!

The first thing to grab your eye is the brilliant custom-mixed candy red paint with blue flames, expertly applied by Custom Concepts. As the color draws you in, you start noticing all the trick little mods performed before any paint was sprayed. The cab alone sports shaved rain gutters, filled seams, and a smooth cowl panel. Then there are the doors, which have one-piece glass and window frames that have been moved out flush with the edge of the cab. Such mods require a ton of work and the overall effect is pretty subtle, but almost any '67-72 Chevy owner will agree they make the cab look much cleaner.

Speaking of clean, the rest of the body is void of trim, and the inside of the bed is as slick and shiny as the rest of the pickup. Late-model Cadillac taillights, a smooth tailgate, and a roll pan work together to give the back end a distinctive appearance. The front is equally tidy with its



smoothed-and-painted bumper and owner-built aluminum grille hiding the headlights. Billet Specialties wheels and Nitto rubber contribute to the sharp exterior appearance.

Mechanically, Mike has thrown just about every product in his catalog at the Chevy. This includes his dropped spindles, disc brakes, lowered springs (both fore and aft), and a C-notch kit and adjustable track bar out back. The '95 LT1 V-8 and 4L60E transmission remain basically stock, although there's a hefty amount of chrome and polished aluminum dolling up the engine.

More billet brightwork adorns the interior, where Mike's gauge panel (filled with VDO instruments) and aluminum pedals are shown off. There's also a polished ididit tilt column, Billet Specialties wheel, and custom aluminum vents for the Vintage Air system. Nearly everything else on the interior—the bench seat, headliner, door panels, rear cab cover, and so on—has been stitched in cream-colored leather by Gabe Lopez at Gabe's Street Rod Custom Upholstery. Mercedes carpet covers the floor.

Okay, so the pickup is well beyond "shop truck" status and more in the ranks of a high-end display case for McGaughy's products. That's fine with Mike, because now he doesn't have to use and abuse the Chevy by running day-to-day errands for the business. Instead he can reserve it for relaxing country-road cruises to help him unwind after a long day in the shop. **CT**



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