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# BRINGING DOWN THE NEW SILVERADO OVER 22-INCH WHEELS AND BIG BRAKES FOR A PERFECT FIT



## A PERFECT BLEND

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY BRIAN MCCORMICK

**T**here was once a time when all custom trucks must be lowered. It is a widely held opinion that every vehicle looks better lowered, which is why suspension products have long been one of the most important aspects of the custom truck industry. But as larger diameter wheels became more and more popular, suitable fitment on a lowered truck has become an issue. It depends largely on the vehicle, but for the most part, wheels larger than 22 inches have limited vehicle applications. Simply put, if you want to have a trick truck that rolls on 22 or larger wheels and tires, most are under the impression that it can't be lowered. Nothing could be further from the truth!

In an attempt to show our readers exactly what can be done to make a late-model Silverado look trick as a complete package on big wheels, rather than a stock truck with big wheels, we have put together a package of modifications that can make your truck a true custom truck once again.

The first step is obvious: lower the truck! McGaughy's Suspension Parts has quickly become one of the leaders in suspension enhancing products. For this 2004 Chevy Silverado 1500 extended cab they recommended their 2- to 4-inch deluxe kit (P/N 99+-2/4Deluxe) which consists of 2-inch dropped spindles and new shackles and hangers to bring the rear down 4 inches without the need for a frame notch.

McGaughy's has two different spindles for this application depending on your wheel size. The 2003C spindle is for applications using 17-inch wheels or smaller, requiring the relocation of the ball joints. The 2003T is used on 4WD GM trucks and 2WD trucks using wheels larger than 17 inches. This spindle requires no ball joint relocation.

You might be wondering why merely a 2-4 kit? Our choice of wheels and tires for this truck not only was directed at providing style for a daily driver, but also gleaned precise quality from performance and visual aspects. Weld Wheel's new line of EVO wheels not only comes in a variety of cool styles, but the wheels are also a true one-piece forged item, making them not only more than twice as strong as a cast wheel, but also causing them weigh half as much. In this case, the 22 x 9.5-inch Weld EVO Velocity 6 wheels we selected for this installation weigh only 39 pounds each! Combine that with the Nitto 285/45-22 Extreme Force 404 tires and you have a wheel and tire combination that weighs only marginally more than the stock wheels and tires, as well as being the same diameter. This wheel and tire size combination is also well suited for a good look on a lowered late-model truck. In other words it's a matter of finding the right blend to put the custom back in your street truck.

But that is only the half of it. Most folks who installed larger diameter wheels and tires don't realize how much their brake performance will suffer until it is too late. Rotating mass of the wheel is multiplied times four for each wheel and tire. So if your combination weighs over 100 pounds each, the rolling mass becomes 400 pounds on each corner, 1,200 pounds total added weight you have to try and stop at freeway speeds. To improve your braking situation, Baer Brakes has developed a really trick new brake upgrade kit that not only will put the stopping power back into your truck, but actually make it a far cry better than it was when your truck was stock. Because Baer Brakes is a performance brake systems specialist, their products are designed to achieve the most brake performance they can, proving their designs under intense racing conditions. But what makes the new E-radiSpeed +1 brake upgrade so cool is that it is super easy to install. The kit includes new, cross-drilled and vented larger diameter rotors and new anchor brackets which allow you to retain your factory calipers. The combination means you can upgrade the brakes in a few easy steps without having to bleed the brakes. It should also be noted that each kit comes with instructions on how to "season" the rotors.

To put all these elements together and turn a truck with big wheels into a trick looking and performing custom truck, we visited the talented folks at So Cal SuperTrucks in San Bernardino, California. Yes, these are the same guys you





The first thing Carl, our So Cal SuperTrucks installer, did was to check the stock ride height measurements of the truck. More precisely, some trucks, especially the Silverados and Sierras have a nasty habit of being as much as 3/4-inch lower on the driver's side. This can be corrected later with a spring spacer on the driver's side.



With the truck up on a lift, Carl begins disassembling the stock front suspension. Both upper and lower ball joint nuts are loosened.



Before going any further, the brake line clamp on the upper control arm must be removed so the brake caliper can be unbolted and repositioned for the spindle swap.



The brake caliper bolts are removed and the caliper carefully secured with the commonly used caliper hanger placed on the frame.



The factory brake calipers are next to be removed.



With the rotor removed Carl then unbolts and removes the hub assembly from the factory spindle.



Hub assembly removed, the ball joint nuts are now removed, followed by the factory spindle.



On the left is the factory spindle and on the right is the new McGaughy's 2003T 2-inch dropped spindle. The manufacturer claims the new spindle is not only stronger than the stock spindle, but also retains full turning radius.



Time to prep the new spindle. First Carl installs the provided M12 threaded stud into the top front side of the spindle using Loctite to properly secure it.



Now the factory hub assembly is installed and bolted into the McGaughy's spindle using the two lower factory bolts.



Because of the positioning of the hub assembly in the new spindle, a provided nut is installed onto the previously installed threaded stud between the spindle and the hub assembly and then tightened.





13 Spindle assembly complete, the new spindle is installed onto the ball joints.



14 To further enhance the ride quality of our truck, we chose to remove the stock shocks, which will work with this kit, but the factory shocks are not as good as Bilstein's new BE52902-HO replacement shocks, which we chose to install.



15 Here is a better look at the new Bilstein shocks we selected for this installation. Bilstein is a trademark in shock technology and these replacements not only look good, but also give the truck greater ride quality and control.



16 The front shock is a direct replacement for the stock shock.



17 Now for the brake upgrade. Here is the Baer Brakes EradiSpeed +1 performance brake kit. The rotors are not only larger than stock, but also cross-drilled and vented. Each is directionally vented and labeled for installation on each side of the truck. The new caliper anchors are what make the kit easy to install because they use the factory mounting locations while moving the caliper outward to accept the larger performance rotor.



18 Here we see the factory rotor on the left compared to the EradiSpeed +1 rotor on the right. As you can see, the rotor is 1-inch larger than the stock rotor and greatly increases the overall braking surface.



19 The EradiSpeed rotor simply installs right onto the hub assembly just like the factory rotor.



20 Back over on the workbench Carl removes the factory pad shims from the factory anchors and installs them into the new Baer anchors.



21 The corresponding factory left and right brake pads are then installed into the new anchors, making sure not to damage the new dust seals.



22 Now the anchor is installed onto the spindles a bolted using the OEM bolts and torqued to 148 ft.-lbs.



23 The factory caliper is then installed into the anchor and secured.



24 When complete, the new front suspension looks cool thanks to new dropped spindles and seriously better brakes.





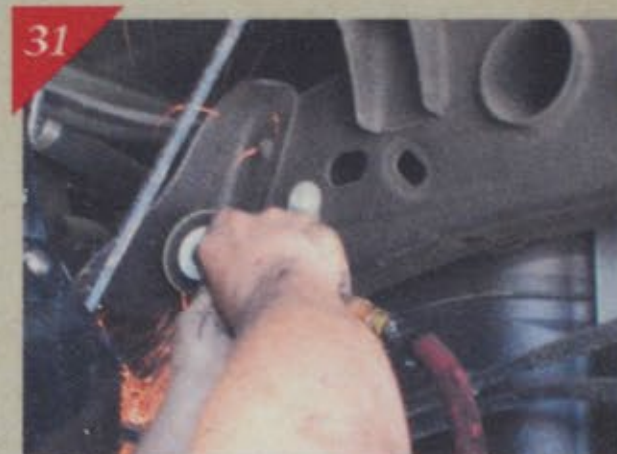
Wrapping up the front, Carl lifts the custom painted 22-inch Weld EVO wheels wrapped with Nitto 285/45 404 tires onto the truck and torque to OEM specifications. It is important to check all clearances once the wheel is installed.



Moving to the rear suspension, Carl begins by trimming off the excess stem on the front leaf spring hanger bolt as well as the rear shackle bolt.



Moving to the front hanger, the factory bolt is removed.



Then each factory rivet is cut through the center with a small cutting wheel, then removed using a pneumatic chisel or punch, allowing for the factory hanger to be completely removed from the frame.



The factory shackle is unbolted from frame hanger and spring and replaced with the new McGaughy's shackle. The shackle has two holes drilled in it to allow the owner to lower the rear of the truck either 3 or 4 inches.



The new McGaughy's front hanger is bolted up to the factory hanger mounting holes using provided Grade-8 hardware.



With the lowering kit installed, next came the removal of the stock shocks followed by installation of the new HO series Bilstein shocks.



Like the front, the rear EradiSpeed brake assembly installs in the same manner. But first the rear brake caliper assembly must be removed.





Here we see Carl installing the new dust seals onto the Baer anchors.



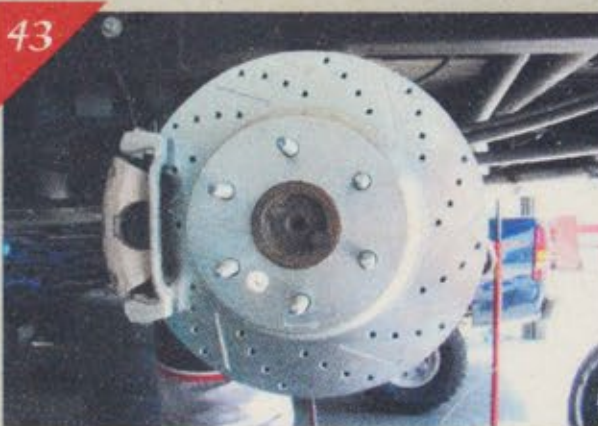
Like the front, the factory shims and pads are installed into the new anchors.



The factory rotor is removed from the axle followed by the installation of the new Baer performance rotor.



The anchor bolts to the axle housing using the factory holes and bolts followed by the installation of the factory caliper into the anchor and then securing it permanently.




Here's a look at the new rear EradiSpeed brake setup, which means the suspension and brake installations are complete.



But like with any suspension modifications, a good alignment is required before the test drive. The McGaughy's dropped spindles are constructed to include all of the factory geometry, which in turn makes aligning the suspension back to within factory specs a breeze.



have come to know for their extensive experience in the lifted truck market. But they do performance suspensions too, which you will see in the following installation steps.

For more information about any or all of the products in this installation, give them a call or check out their Web sites for more information or ordering procedures. 

## SOURCE

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