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1953 Ford F-100 - High School Daze Crusin' Bellflower

By Chance Wentz
Photography by Dakota Wentz

All of us possess certain characteristics that make us who we are. Sometimes these are referred to as habits or, even, addictions. They can range from an unhealthy addiction to stamps or coins to harmless obsessions such our odd fascination with Dancing With The Stars. For most of us our obsession bypasses D-list celebrities prancing around a stage and lands in all that is automotive. Jon Wainright of Huntington Beach, California possesses an obsession that many of us can relate to.



Since a young age Jon has always found himself, as the TV show implies, "car crazy." For Jon, his addiction first appeared at the age of 10 in the form of model cars. Once that phase passed he upgraded to custom bicycles. Before too long Jon found himself hooked on customizing and fixing-up age driven transportation. Naturally cars and trucks were the next evolutionary step.

Jon's latest obsession is a 1953 Ford F-100. While visiting the good ol' Sooner State, aka Oklahoma, Jon came across the Ford, and was immediately reminded of what fueled his passion for custom creations. The truck possessed a certain cruiser look that reminded him of the rich custom culture he experienced growing up in Bellflower, California. Beyond that, this particular truck had a more personal connection. It reminded him of a '55 F-100 his high school shop teacher had, painted by custom car icon Larry Watson, Jon used to wax and shine before shows. With images of high school and clips from American Graffiti playing in his mind, the temptation was too much, and Jon decided he had to have it.



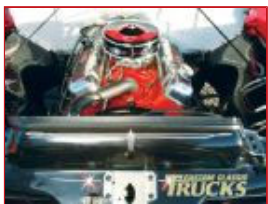
In Jon's words, "The truck was pretty much good to go as it stood, all around." Everything was dead on and on par to what he would have done to the '53 so he decided to keep the style of the truck intact. Although Jon doesn't know every little detail about the truck he relayed all that he could to us about what the previous builder had done. To achieve the cruiser stance a Mustang II suspension with 2-inch drop spindles and coil springs was installed up front. Out back things were kept basic and simple. The rear axle was flipped and a set of lowering blocks used. Instead of keeping things in the Blue Oval family a 396 big-block Chevy was positioned. The 396 even has a contemporary '60's look to it, being that it is Chevy orange with period correct Pro Comp valve covers and a mushroom top air cleaner. For performance, the motor is equipped with a Holley carburetor and a Comp Cams camshaft. Behind the 396 lies a Turbo 400 transmission.



What sucked Jon to the Ford like a tractor beam was its overall persona. Nearly all of the original trim, including the Ford emblems, were removed, giving the Ford a sleek custom appearance. Up front the builder also installed a '56 grille. Setting off the rear of the truck are several properly placed mild touches. For starters, a chain eliminator kit with hidden latches was installed on the tailgate. The tailgate also received a trip through the louver punch. Instead of keeping the stock taillights a pair of sweet-looking '36 Chevy bullet taillights were mounted on the side of each rear fender. Inside the bed the original wood setup was tossed for a metal floor, which has been sprayed with Line-X. A vibrant red paintjob sprayed over the Ford brings all of the custom touches together for the perfect look. Adding to the flavor of the truck is pinstriping, which is featured throughout the truck. Bringing even more personality to the '53 a set of Dodge Lancer hubcaps accent the BFGoodrich Silverton whitewall tires.



Inside the belly of the beast a Chevy van tilt-column was installed with a white Mooneyes steering wheel. Behind the wheel, nestled into the dash is a set of Stewart-Warner gauges. Really bringing the Ford back in time is the red and white tuck and roll stitch work with red and white teardrop dash knobs. Although the truck was pretty much finished, there was one thing left to do and that was the addition of a stereo system. Back in California Jon installed a Kenwood stereo underneath the dash. After a few other minor upgrades Jon's F-100 was right where he wanted it-back on the streets reminding Southern California what cruising is all about.



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