

# Passionate About Patina

## Vintage Exterior Hides a Contemporary Build

Feature Story / By Joe Greeves

**G**avin Broome and Matt Verzi are great friends and the driving force behind StreetHeat in West Melbourne, Florida. Both men were active in the automotive repair business working for someone else and decided that opening their own business was the best way to redefine their future. With 30 years of combined experience, they started out doing minor auto repairs but soon realized that concentrating on one vehicle until it was finished was a better solution. Gavin says “We decided to eliminate outside work and just focus on building one nice, quality vehicle.” Matt adds, “Our goal is to create a high-quality truck that you can drive anywhere, anytime, and will turn heads at any show.” And, they practice what they preach. In the half-dozen years that they’ve been together, they have dozens of vehicles to their credit and have achieved a worldwide reputation thanks to the Internet, with their work shipped around the country and around the world. In fact, this truck, designed and built in Melbourne, Florida, has already been shipped to its new owner in Melbourne, Australia!





CHEVROLET APACHE

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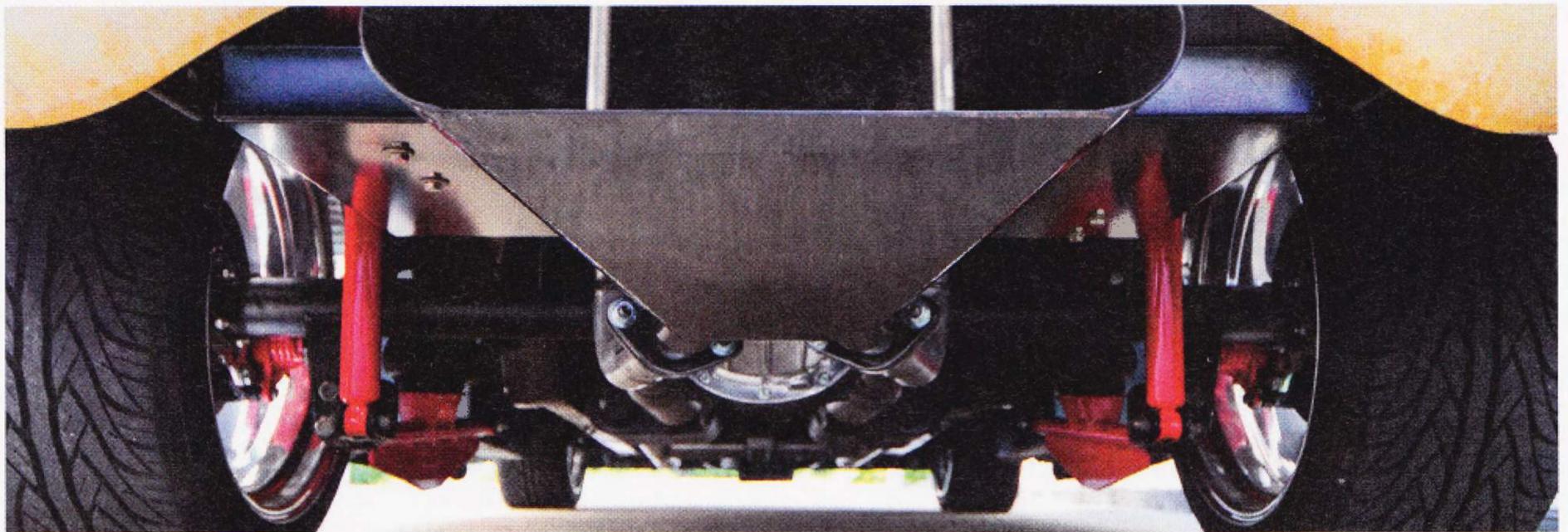
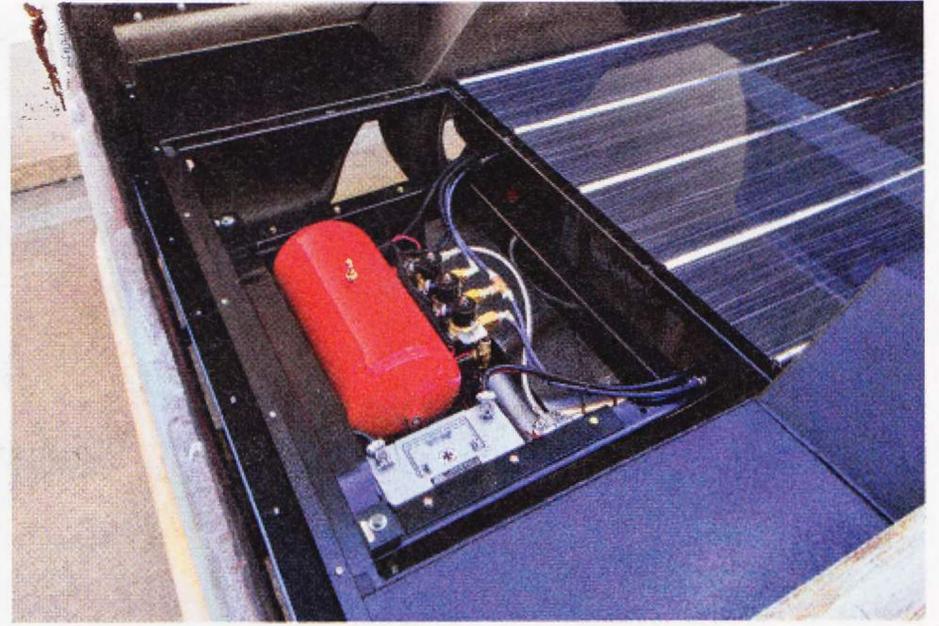
How did this '59 get started? They had just completed a similar '55 Chevy Apache patina truck and needed a usable Chevy cab to get the next project started. Driving one afternoon out in the middle of nowhere and miles from anywhere you would expect to be successful, Gavin spotted the roof of a truck in a field. It turned out to be a big back window '59 Chevy cab and chassis, just what they were looking for! Unfortunately, it was behind a locked gate but when they returned later, fortunately the gate was open and the owner was there. A short discussion accompanied by an exchange of cash and the cab was soon back in their shop. Since the rest of the body parts had already been sourced from other vehicles the build could now begin in earnest.

The boxed frame was hand-built with a Camaro

front clip that was Z-d 4 inches and strengthened with new tubular crossmembers. A Chassis Engineering four-link with custom-made lower trailing arms holds the 8.5-inch Camaro rear, running 3.73 gears and a Yukon Posi. Since a slammed stance was an essential part of the project, the air suspension began with Chassis Tech 2,500-pound bags filled by a ViAir 480C compressor, along with a 5-gallon reserve tank and AirMaxx valves that use  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch lines. QA1 shocks and Corvette 13-inch disc brakes were fitted to all four wheels and the chassis rolls on a combination of U.S. Mag's Standard rims, 20x8.5 up front and 20x10 in the rear. Lexani 35-series rubber (245 front and 275 rear) puts down a sticky contact patch and guarantees autocross-level handling.

The motor was a low-mileage, 5.3L fuel-injected





V-8 from a Tahoe that benefitted from a performance tune by their good friend Nick Lapinta. Pumping out approximately 330 hp, it was already quick enough without internal mods so the team concentrated on upgrades like the CPP stainless steel shorty headers, Flowmaster Super 44 mufflers, and eye-catching custom tip that fit perfectly into the inverted rear bumper. Keeping the V-8 cool is a Champion aluminum radiator and Tsunami electric fan with a hand-fabricated shroud. New Billet Specialties pulleys and a 100-amp GM alternator replaced the original components. The firewall was shaved and the motor was disassembled and detailed prior to installing it into the truck. Dozens of minor alterations were required to ensure that everything fit within the engine room, since major changes occur when the truck drops from ride height to the ground. Matt says, "Everything has its place on the truck and it's all designed to function without interference." As an example, the mandrel-bent exhaust, complete with an H-pipe and a center tip, is carefully routed

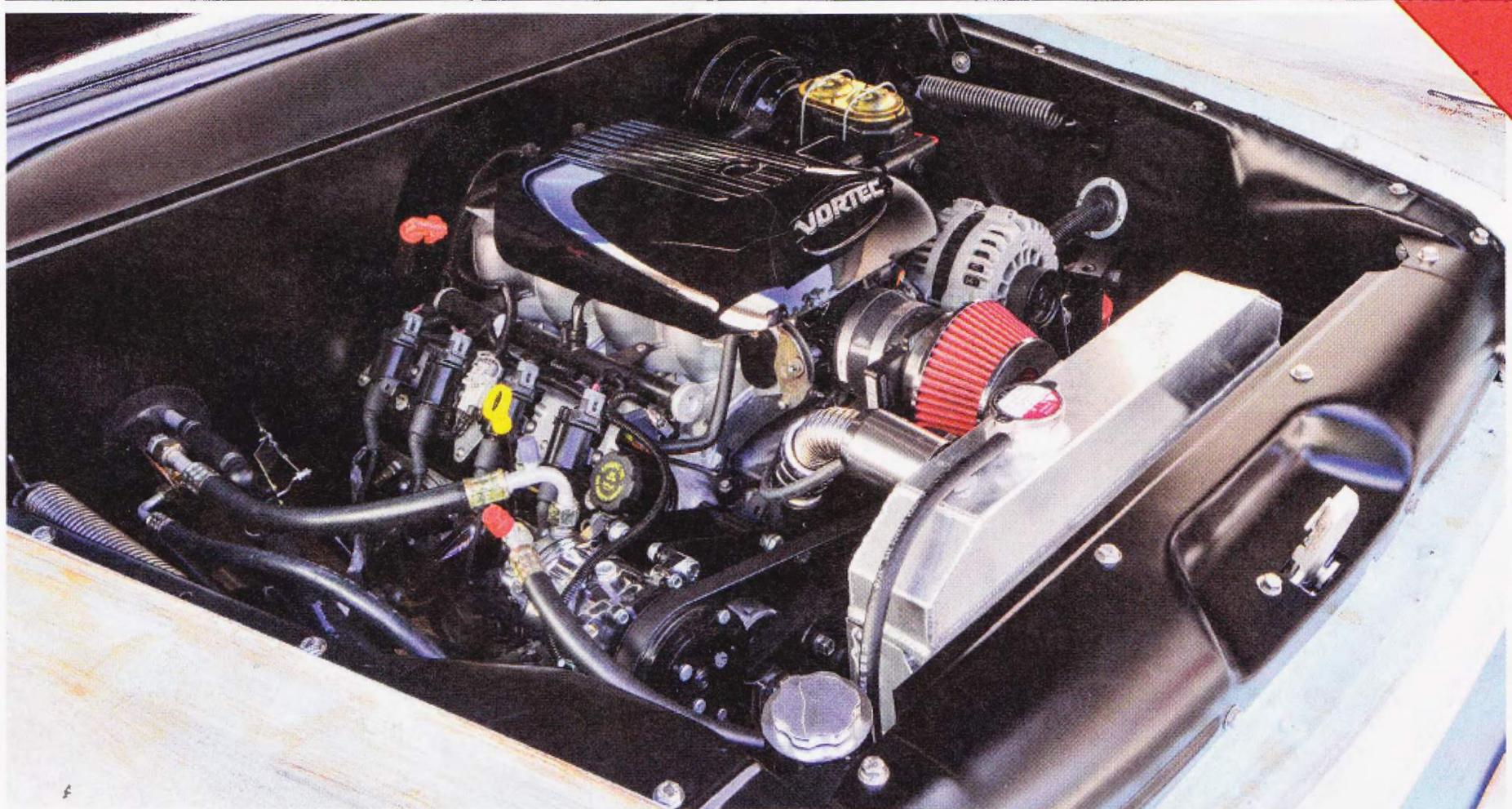
over the axle and between the four-link bars to ensure proper clearance when the truck is at full height or in the weeds. Another example of pre-planning, the team chose a two-piece driveshaft for the 4L60E automatic trans, eliminating the need for an oversized tunnel in the cab.

Moving inside, the elegant saddle/tan interior is a surprising contrast from the patina'd exterior. Changes began with Stinger Road Kill sound deadening to make the cab genuinely quiet. The dash was modified to accommodate the A/C vents, defroster vents, Dolphin electric gauges, and retro controls for the air conditioning and air suspension. The modern CPP tilt stainless steering column holds a beautifully refurbished '59 Impala steering wheel. Lokar pedals and tall shifter add to the fun while the Chocolate Brown loop carpet picks up the shades of brown and tan in the leather-grade, vinyl bench seat and door panels. A Kenwood stereo adds another level of entertainment, playing through 6.5-inch component sets in the doors. Everything inside is a careful blend of vintage looks with

underlying modern reliability.

Like many other contrasts found on the truck, the Fleetside bed uses a veneered floor with black zebrawood and five coats of urethane clearcoat, accented with stainless steel rails. It features a removable panel that allows easy access to the air ride controls and the AGM Gel-Cell battery. Raised 12 inches for suspension and exhaust clearance, the floor was sealed with Defender spray-in bed liner. The most noticeable feature on this head-swiveling custom truck was Matt and Gavin's unique patina paintjob, using Sherwin-Williams military-grade epoxy that was tinted baby blue, along with a discrete mixture of some genuine rust! Streaked in just the right areas to create a weathered look, the paintjob is guaranteed to develop even more character as time goes by.

The build was accomplished in a lightning-quick three months with Matt saying, "It was a real benefit jumping from the previous truck to this one with all the details fresh in our heads. The more of these we do, the more each one improves." The happy ending came when the truck



# 1959 CHEVY APACHE FLEETSIDE

**Matt Verzi and Gavin Broome**

## CHASSIS

**FRAME:** THE BOXED FRAME WAS HAND-BUILT

**REAR END / RATIO:** 8.5-INCH CAMARO REAR, RUNNING 3.73 GEARS AND A YUKON POSI

**REAR SUSPENSION:** CHASSIS ENGINEERING FOUR-LINK WITH CUSTOM-MADE LOWER TRAILING ARMS, CHASSIS TECH 2,500-POUND BAGS WITH QA1 SHOCKS, VIAIR 480C COMPRESSOR, 5-GALLON RESERVE TANK, AIRMAXX VALVES WITH 3/8-INCH LINES.

**REAR BRAKES:** CORVETTE 13-INCH DISC BRAKES

**FRONT SUSPENSION:** SECOND-GEN CAMARO SUBFRAME IN BOXED AND Z'D RAILS. CHASSIS TECH 2,500-POUND BAGS WITH QA1 SHOCKS

**FRONT BRAKES:** CORVETTE 13-INCH DISC BRAKES

**STEERING BOX:** CAMARO POWER STEERING

**FRONT WHEELS:** U.S. MAG'S STANDARD RIMS, 20X8.5

**REAR WHEELS:** U.S. MAG'S STANDARD RIMS, 20X10

**FRONT TIRES:** LEXANI 245/35-ZR20

**REAR TIRES:** LEXANI 275/35-ZR20

**GAS TANK:** 18-GALLONS

**ENGINE:** '01 5.3L VORTEC V-8 BUILT BY STREETHEAT

**HEADS:** FACTORY

**VALVE COVERS:** EXPOSED COIL PACKS

**MANIFOLD / INDUCTION:** FACTORY FUEL INJECTION WITH A CUSTOM PERFORMANCE TUNE BY NICK LAPINTA

**IGNITION:** FACTORY ELECTRONIC

**HEADERS:** CPP STAINLESS STEEL SHORTY HEADERS

**EXHAUST / MUFFLERS:** FLOWMASTER SUPER 44 MUFFLERS, H-PIPE, AWESOME CUSTOM TIP

**COOLING:** CHAMPION ALUMINUM TWO-CORE RADIATOR AND TSUNAMI ELECTRIC FAN WITH CUSTOM SHROUD

**TRANSMISSION:** '01 CHEVY 4L60E AUTOMATIC

**SHIFTER:** TALL LOKAR

## BODY

**STYLE:** BIG BACK WINDOW APACHE PICKUP

**MODIFICATIONS:** BODY IS FACTORY ORIGINAL

**BED:** THE FLOOR WAS RAISED 12 INCHES FOR SUSPENSION AND EXHAUST CLEARANCE AND USES VENEERED BLACK ZEBRAWOOD WITH FIVE COATS OF URETHANE CLEARCOAT AND ACCENTED WITH STAINLESS STEEL RAILS. IT FEATURES A REMOVABLE PANEL FOR ACCESS TO THE AIR RIDE CONTROLS AND THE BATTERY. THE BED WAS SEALED WITH DEFENDER SPRAY-IN BED LINER.

**BODYWORK AND PAINT BY:** STREETHEAT

**PAINT TYPE / COLOR:** SHERWIN-WILLIAMS MILITARY GRADE EPOXY, TINTED BABY BLUE, STREAKED TO CREATE A WEATHERED PATINA

**HEADLIGHTS / TAILLIGHTS:** FACTORY

**OUTSIDE MIRRORS:** FACTORY

**BUMPERS:** FACTORY

## INTERIOR

**DASHBOARD:** MODIFIED TO ACCOMMODATE THE A/C VENTS, DEFROSTER VENTS, GAUGES, AND CONTROLS FOR THE A/C AND AIR SUSPENSION

**GAUGES:** DOLPHIN ELECTRIC GAUGES

**STEREO:** KENWOOD STEREO WITH 6.5-INCH COMPONENT SETS IN THE DOORS

**STEERING WHEEL:** REFURBISHED '59 IMPALA STEERING WHEEL

**STEERING COLUMN:** CPP TILT STAINLESS STEERING COLUMN

**SEATS:** BENCH

**PEDALS:** LOKAR

**UPHOLSTERY BY:** STREETHEAT

**MATERIAL / COLOR:** BROWN AND TAN LEATHER-GRADE VINYL ON THE SEAT AND DOOR PANELS

**CARPET:** CHOCOLATE BROWN LOOP CARPET STINGER ROAD KILL SOUND DEADENING THROUGHOUT

sold in a quick seven days, heading to Melbourne, Australia, where we are sure it will turn as many heads Down Under as it does here in the States. Gavin and Matt already have another '58 Apache big back window slated for a similar build with a whole list of upgrades as a result of what they learned on this '59. Special thanks to Charlies Customs, Cruisin' Gold, Explicit Customs, Dan Hunger, and Nick Lapinta.