

Part of what makes this obsession of ours so addicting is the infinite opportunity for creation. You can start off with something normal; like a bone stock Jeep YJ, then, over the course of a few months, have a cleanly built trail rig on one ton axles and an LS1. Well, that might not necessarily be the case for all of us, but there are some with the creative talent, and they keep this sport moving forward.

Words and photos by Tim Magee



Dave's boat side kit is a clean solution for rocker skirts.



Alan Springs and a Dave's Customs full width axle kit were an easy choice for the front end.

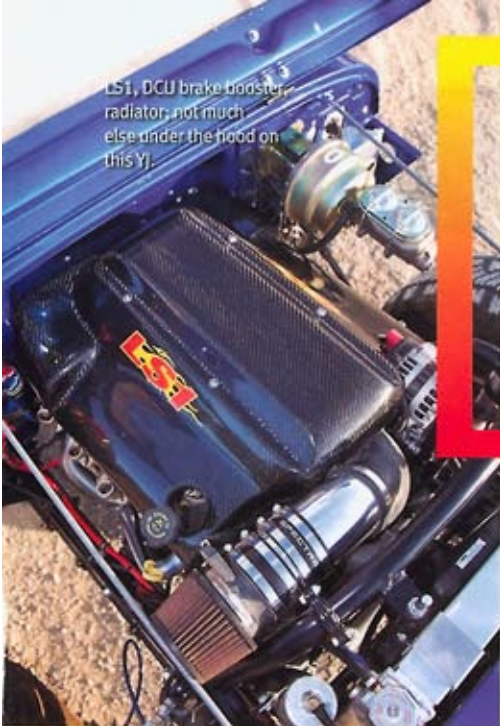
With a 105" wheelbase and 26.5" belly clearance, there's more than enough room to make it up the tallest ledges.



A true craftsman, Dave did all of the work on this Jeep...paint and all.



Dave built the dash right into the cage.



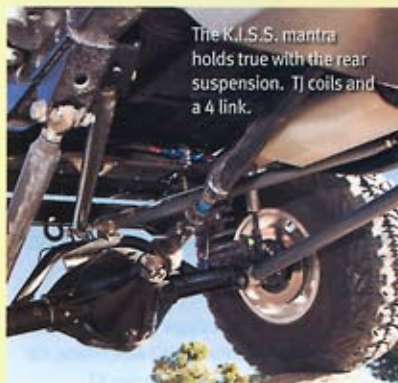
LS1, DCU brake booster, radiator; not much else under the hood on this YJ.

DAVE SEGER IS JUST SUCH an individual, and he's built his business around the creating. He's been in the industry as a technician for Chrysler, and as a rock crawling and desert racing competitor. In the late nineties, he started with something simple—brackets to locate a four-link suspension on the axles. With a huge movement to get rid of leaf springs in favor of the coil sprung four-link suspension, Dave built on his experience. Drawing on that, Dave spent the last ten years putting together custom builds and creating parts for both builder and fabricator.

Dave picked up this Jeep in December 2009 and got to work. A complete teardown of the YJ was necessary to equip it with some proper running gear. For a motor, Dave yanked the stocker in favor of a 5.7L LS1. Dave rebuilt a 3-speed Torqueflight 999 trans to make the connection between the robust 5.7L and a stout 4.3 Atlas II. By pairing all of that beef up with a Chevy Dana 60 and a Ford Dana 70U equipped with 5.13 gears on Detroit Lockers, Dave had a solid drivetrain. Add some chromo Dutchmen shafts and the axles can take a lickin'.

Putting all of that together is where things got easy for him. His company, Dave's Customs Unlimited in Fruita, CO manufactures an assortment of tabs for fabricators and builders. Every design started as a one-off for one of their many custom builds, has been used for years and is proven to fit. Thus cutting the time it took to put necessary brackets and tabs on things like the rear axle in half. Dropping the drums in favor of DCU disc brake conversion brackets was just as easy. It's the little things that are often overlooked when planning out a build project; when they are real world designed and proven, it makes a build go so much smoother.

Having brakes that can stop 40" tires is an issue that has plagued rock crawlers since day one. When Goodyear hit the nail on the



The K.I.S.S. mantra holds true with the rear suspension. TJ coils and a 4 link.

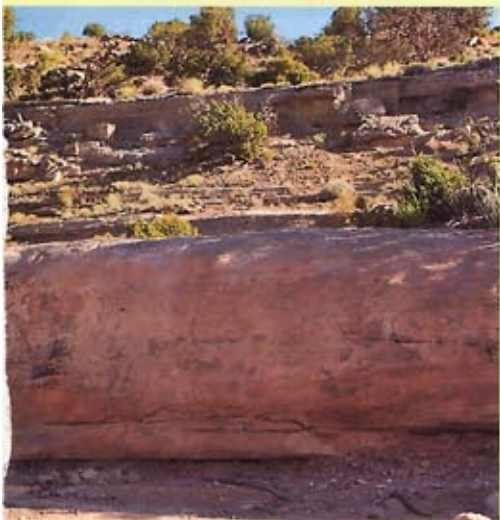
head with their MTR Kevlars, Dave realized it and opted for the 40x13.50R17 variety for his Jeep. Dave's solution to make sure his brakes would stop the big rubber, and an obvious choice for his own rig, was his heavy-duty power brake conversion kit. Less pedal pressure, more stopping power! Seriously.

Dave went with YJ coils with a DCU 4-link kit in the rear. Keeping things simple, Alcan leaf springs were paired with a DCU full width kit in the front. The utilitarian simplicity of the leaf springs make them a solid choice for his trail rig. With the wheelbase ending up at 105", this YJ is ready for just about anything Colorado or Utah can throw at it.

Dampening duties are taken care of by 2" Radflo's with remote reservoirs. Steering the big meats is a PSC ram assist, set up with DCU high steer arms and HD pitman arm. No full hydro for this Jeep, gotta' keep it legal and responsive on the street!

The body keeps with the simple, clean, effectiveness found throughout the rest of the rig. To start, Dave ditched the stock hood and fenders in favor of a Campbell Enterprises fiberglass hood. Not only did this drop gobs of weight, it helps with clearance. With the fenders gone, he put his fender filler pieces to use in their place. DCU boat sides keep the body out of the rocks while out on the trails near Fruita, CO. When the rocks get mean, they, along with the DCU comp cut corner guards, take the brunt of it with ease. The clean lines and quality of work on the cage and interior is hard to miss.

By February of 2010, this Jeep was done. Proper planning and knowledge can yield some incredibly fast results. Pair that with access to all of the small pieces and parts and you've got a recipe for success when working on a custom build. As I type this, I am sure Dave is creating his next masterpiece; all the while thinking of what could be done to improve upon any number of components. Always thinking and creating, it's these geniuses that keep things moving forward.



Dave Seger owns Dave's Customs Unlimited out of Fruita, CO.



Owner Dave Seger / Dave's Customs Unlimited (DCU)
Hometown Wittman, AZ and Fruita, CO
Vehicle Type 91 Jeep Wrangler YJ
Builder Dave Seger / Dave's Customs Unlimited (DCU)

CHASSIS

Frame / Chassis Design	Factory
Frame / Chassis Materials	Factory
Cage / Cage Material	DCU 1.75" x .120" wall DOM
Overall Wheelbase	105"
Overall Length	150"
Belly Pan Clearance	26.5"
Overall Height	84"
Wheel Track Width	66" flange to flange
Overall Weight	Unknown

POWERTRAIN

Engine Make	GM LS1
Engine Displacement	5.7 liters
Engine TQ	Unknown
Engine HP	400 estimated
Engine Induction	Normally aspirated with truck model intake for more torque
Engine Modifications	Exhaust headers, HO tune in computer, high flow MAF
Batteries	Odyssey mini
Radiator / Fans	Custom aluminum with Spal fan
Air Intake	Custom aluminum with K&N filter
Exhaust	3" single exhaust with Flowmaster muffler
Transmission Make	DCU built TorqueFlite 999
Transmission Adapters	Advance Adapters bellhousing adapter
Transmission Cooling System	B&M cooler
Torque Converter	T-Star low stall
Transmission Shifter	B&M Pro billet
Transfer Case(s)	Advance Adapters Atlas II 4.3
Fuel Containment	DCU 16 gallon fuel cell

BODY / INTERIOR

Body / Body Panels	OEM YJ body with DCU boat side rockers and corners
Body Modifications	Comp cut rear corners
Skid plate / Material	1/4" steel
Painter Name	Dave Seger
Hood / Grille	Campbell Enterprises fiberglass hood / OEM grille
Floors / Firewalls	OEM / smoothed firewall
Dash / Gauges / Switches	Custom aluminum dash with AutoMeter Pro-Comp gauges

DRIVETRAIN

Front Suspension / Type / Materials	Alcan spring with DCU full width kit
Front Sway Bar	N/A
Front Shocks	Radflo remote reservoir 2" body with 12" travel
Front Bump Stops	Shock shaft urethane
Front Axle Housing	Chevrolet Dana 60
Front Differential / Locker	Eaton Detroit Locker
Front Ring & Pinion / ratio	Sierra Gear 5.13:1
Front Differential Cover	DCU
Front Axle Shafts	Dutchman chrome moly
Front U-joints	Yukon Super Joints
Front Drive Flanges / Hubs	Poly Performance drive flanges
Front Brakes	Chevrolet 1 ton
Front Steering Setup	PSC ram assist with DCU high steer arms & HD Pitman arm
Front Driveshaft	Tom Wood's 1350
Rear Suspension / Type / Materials	DCU 4-link kit with TJ coils
Rear Sway bar	N/A
Rear Shocks	Radflo remote reservoir 2" body with 14" travel
Rear Bump Stops	DCU urethane bumpstops
Rear Axle Housing	Ford Dana 70U
Rear Differential / Locker	Eaton Detroit Locker
Rear Ring & Pinion / Ratio	Sierra Gear 5.13:1
Rear Differential Cover	DCU
Rear Axle Shafts	Dutchman chrome moly
Rear U-joints	N/A
Rear Drive Flanges	N/A
Rear Brakes	Chevrolet with DCU disc brake conversion brackets
Rear Driveshaft	Tom Wood's 1350
Rear Steering Setup	N/A
Tire Make / Size	Goodyear MT/R Kevlar 40x13.50R17
Wheel Make / Size / Bolt Pattern	Raceline 17" x 9" / 8 on 6.5"

BODY / INTERIOR

Steering Column / Wheel	Custom column and Speedway Racing wheel
Pedal Assembly / Cutting Brakes	OEM & CNC cutting brakes
Seats / Harnesses	PRP Comp highbacks, PRP rear, with CROW and PRP harnesses
Electronics	DCU and Howell wiring harnesses
Lights Interior / Exterior	LED tail lights
Safety - Fire Extinguisher	Yes
Winches - Front / Rear	Superwinch EPI 9000