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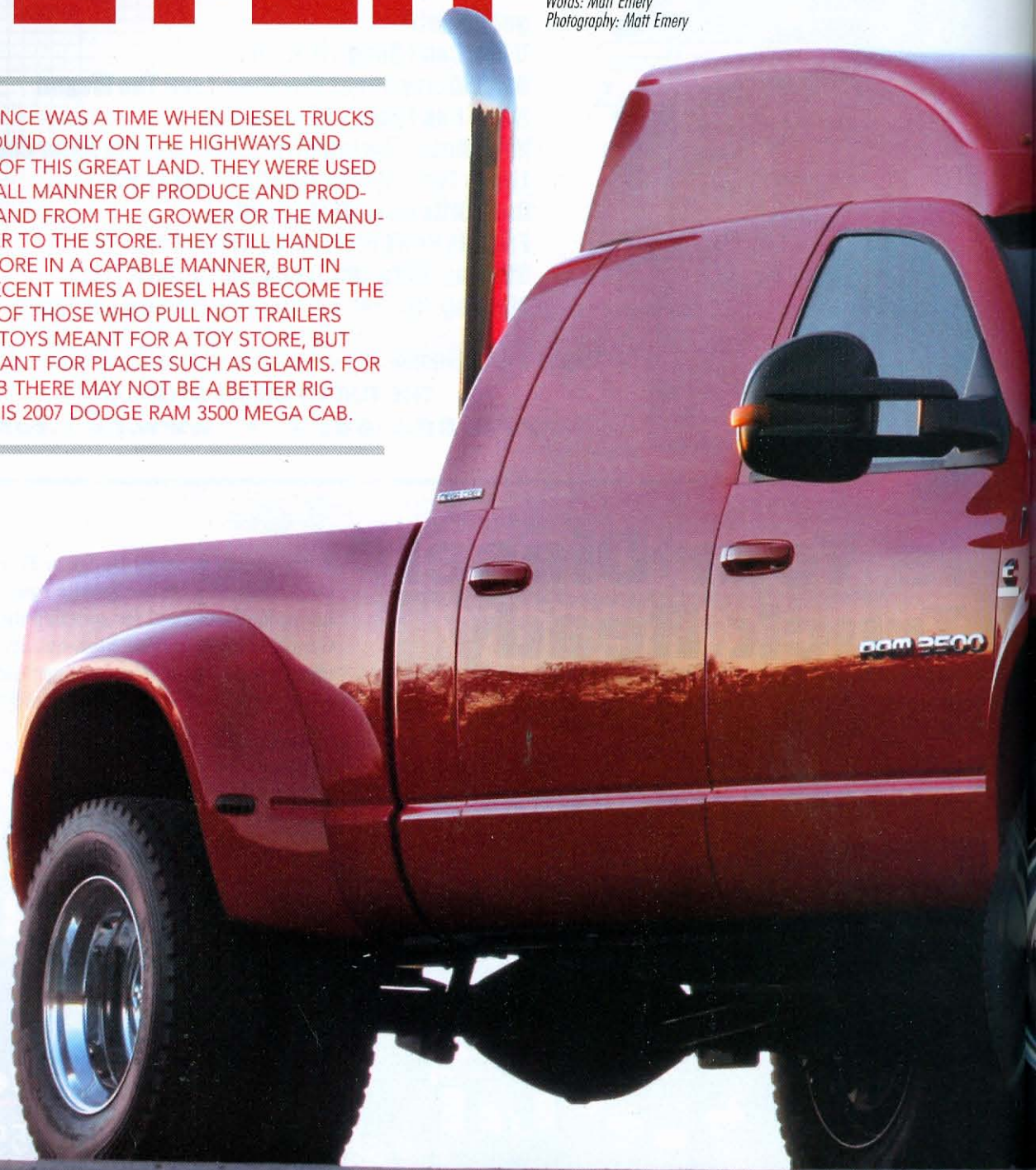
WHITE LINE

FLYER

THIS DODGE IS IN IT
FOR THE LONG HAUL

Words: Matt Emery
Photography: Matt Emery

THERE ONCE WAS A TIME WHEN DIESEL TRUCKS WERE FOUND ONLY ON THE HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS OF THIS GREAT LAND. THEY WERE USED TO GET ALL MANNER OF PRODUCE AND PRODUCT TO AND FROM THE GROWER OR THE MANUFACTURER TO THE STORE. THEY STILL HANDLE THAT CHORE IN A CAPABLE MANNER, BUT IN MORE RECENT TIMES A DIESEL HAS BECOME THE CHOICE OF THOSE WHO PULL NOT TRAILERS FULL OF TOYS MEANT FOR A TOY STORE, BUT TOYS MEANT FOR PLACES SUCH AS GLAMIS. FOR THAT JOB THERE MAY NOT BE A BETTER RIG THAN THIS 2007 DODGE RAM 3500 MEGA CAB.





Built by Larry Wiener of the Performance West Group and dubbed "Interstate Rated," the truck is based on the new 2007 Dodge Ram 3500 Mega Cab one-ton dually 4x4. There is little doubt that the Dodge is tough enough to get the job done, and with its venerable Cummins engine generating the grunt there are not too

many obstacles that will cause it pause.

A long-haul rig is only as good as its engine, and when that engine is a Cummins there's absolutely no reason to believe this truck won't be anything but great on those long hauls. The Cummins 610 turbodiesel in the Ram 3500 Interstate Rated produces a full 325 horsepower and 610 lb-ft of torque, all the while





Plush is paramount on the road, and the Katzkin leather seat covers are plush as well as great looking. Note the cool embroidery in the back of each seat.

8 SPEED GEAR VENDORS

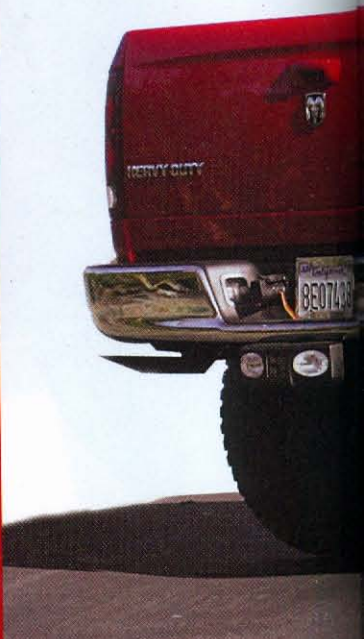
(LEFT) An SRT-8 hood and a B-Cool Billets grille are all a hot rod lover could ask for.

(BOTTOM LEFT) Giving the Dodge the ability to tow the big haulers is a Valley Hitch underbed fifth-wheel system, while the rubber Mopar bed mat gives sure footing even when the going gets wet.

(BELOW) Style and substance are embodied in the 19.5-inch forged Rickson truck wheels equipped with 70-series Yokohama tires

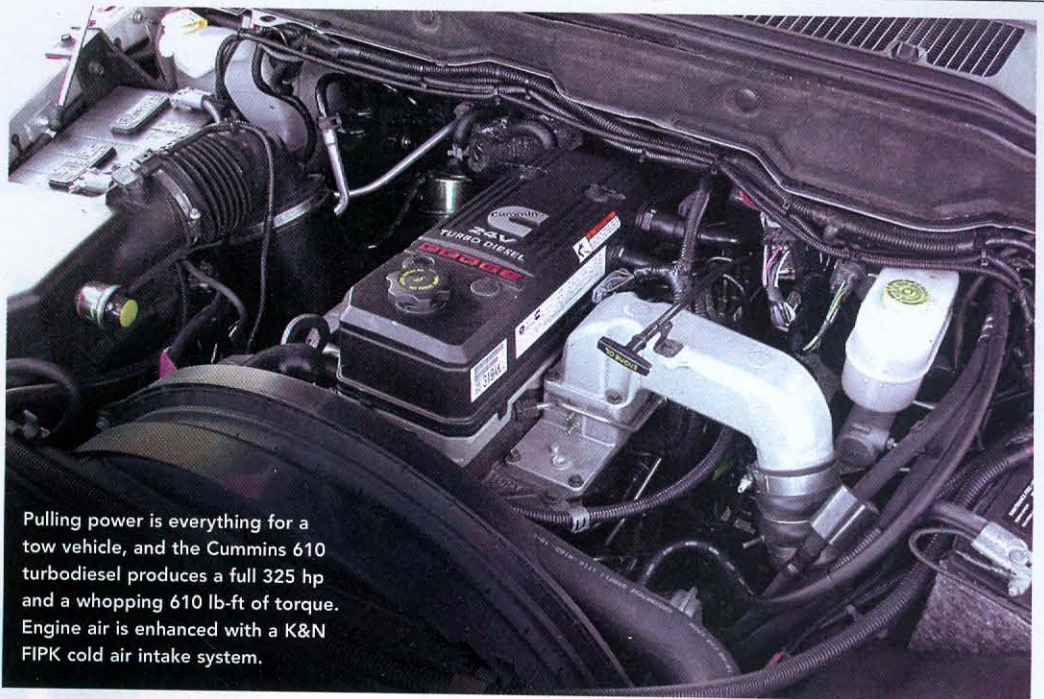
turning at just 1,600 rpm. That translates to big pulling power, plenty enough to pull the largest hauler both into, as well as out of, the deepest desert sands. The throbbing pulse of the Cummins reverberates through massive 5-inch-diameter, chrome-plated dual exhausts that, just like a big rig's, are mounted vertically behind the cab. The air entering the engine is cleaned via a K&N FIPK cool air intake system, while a full complement of Royal Purple lubricants ensures that the long road doesn't take its toll on the engine.

One of the most overlooked aspects of the typical big rig is the transmission, which has multiple gears to ensure that the engine is always in the "sweet spot"—and the Interstate Rated is no exception. The stock six-speed manual transmission has been enhanced with a Gear Vendors under/overdrive unit that splits the shift points of five of the six forward gears to better maximize engine torque and power. Not simply an overdrive unit, the Gear Vendors unit actually "splits" the gear that the manual trans is in, and it does this by attaching to the rear of the transmission case. When activated it doubles the gear selection input. This means



there is a gear between the stock manual transmission gears, and that provides perfect rpm when pulling up a long grade, as there isn't a dead spot anywhere in the power range. With a Gear Vendors unit splitting the gears you have double the choices, and that makes for a comfortable pull at a speed that best matches the grade and the power output.

One piece not usually seen—but heard—is the Jake brake. If you have ever been sleeping peacefully in your tent and a logging truck went whistling by with its Jake brake on as the big rig “backed” down an incline, then you know what it is to “awakened.” Actually, the correct name for this is the Jacobs Engine Brake, and it basically uses engine compression to back down the engine. If you are thinking that you want one on your Cummins, they are available from Mopar



Pulling power is everything for a tow vehicle, and the Cummins 610 turbodiesel produces a full 325 hp and a whopping 610 lb-ft of torque. Engine air is enhanced with a K&N FIPK cold air intake system.

Accessories.

Subtle is not what comes to mind when looking at this Dodge. Wiener definitely wanted to make a statement with the

Ram, so he installed pieces not normally seen on a pickup. For starters there's the El Kapitan-made Aero Roof, giving the Dodge the extra room as well as that “sleeper cab” look. The Aero Roof provides both form and function to the Dodge.

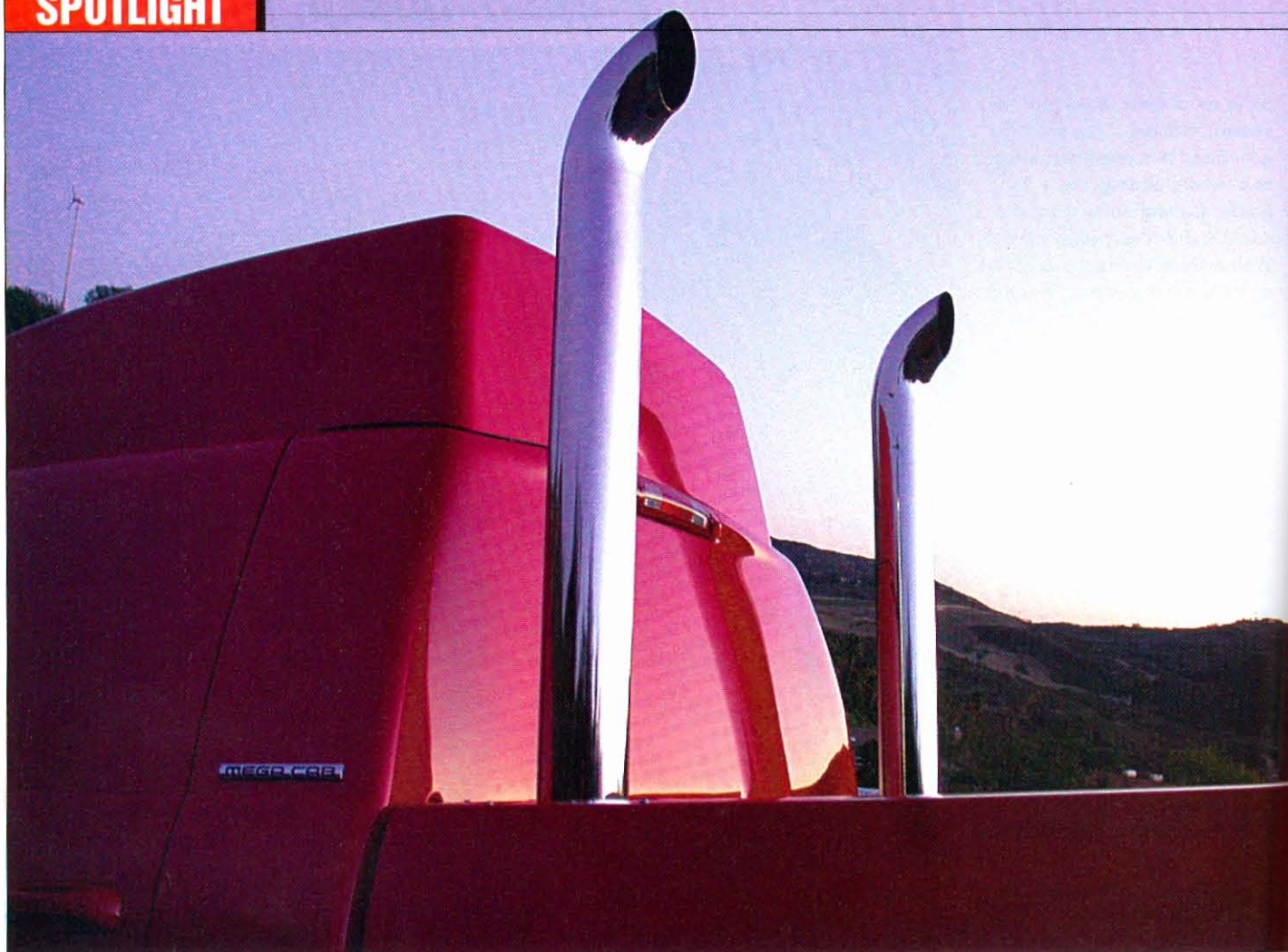
Amplifying the big rig flavor is the elimination of the rear

door glass, creating a sleeper cab appearance while retaining full use of the Mega Cab's rear doors. Also providing those big rig attributes are items such as the B-Cool Billets grille that features the trademark Dodge crosshairs and is accented by polished vertical billet bars.

The aggressive stance of the Ram has been augmented with Xenon custom front fender flares that match the factory rear flares, while the Dodge SRT-8 hood adds to the performance look of the rig. With the AMP Research Power Steps and

n e w





BedStep, getting into the tall rig is no problem, even for the most height challenged among us. The rig is designed to pull, so taking up residence in the bed is a Valley Hitch's underbed fifth-wheel system. Conventional bracing for fifth wheels traditionally render the bed nearly unusable, but with the Valley Hitch system, the bracing has been moved underneath to the frame, leaving the cargo area completely empty when the fifth wheel is removed. Well, not completely empty, as a rubber Mopar bed mat provides protection for the floor and ensures a slip-free surface, and the Warner's Performance 5-inch dual vertical stacks do reside inside as well.

As if the Dodge needed any more visual appeal, the Sherwin-Williams Planet Colors custom Road Warrior Red paint was added by Mike Face of Mike Face Custom Paint in San

Bernardino, California.

While rigs of the past were not exactly occupant friendly, the rigs of today have all the accouterments of a five-star hotel. The glove-soft Katzkin Tuscany leather-covered seats feature heaters for cold days, coolers for hot days and even built-in massagers for those long hours behind the wheel. A Woodview satin nickel dash works perfectly with the designer mat floor mats to give the rig additional flair, while the Mopar Navus navigation system gives the driver the quickest route home.

With the Quiet Ride Solutions insulation giving the Dodge a tomblake feel, all that is needed is a killer entertainment system to fill it back up. A comprehensive audio system complemented by a Jensen 22-inch, flat-panel, digital LCD video screen, which is mounted in the raised

roof over the reclining second row of seating, creates a theater-like environment.

Battling the road environment is everything, even for a first-rate tow vehicle, but the Dodge has been upgraded to make sure that the road won't take its toll. In addition to the heavy-duty shocks, a set of SSBC disc brakes gives the Ram great road manners. Giving it both style and strength is the set of 19.5-inch forged Rickson truck wheels equipped with 70-series Yokohama tires

Life on the road is never easy. For those who make a living pushing their rigs coast to coast, it is a struggle to keep moving on. But with a rig like this 2007 Dodge Ram 3500 Interstate Rated, getting to the river or the desert may be as much fun as actually being there. **DB**

WHAT IS A BIG RIG WITHOUT STACKS? THE WARNER'S PERFORMANCE 5-INCH DUAL VERTICAL STACKS GIVE THE DODGE THAT ALL-IMPORTANT LOOK.