

VOICE OF THE HOT ROD, RESTORATION & PERFORMANCE MARKETPLACE

HOTROD & RESTORATION

2007



Truck Cabs Beyond the Basics

They come with all the amenities you'd expect to find on a luxury car.

Descended from the cabriolet, a light closed carriage, or the cabin, the part of a locomotive that houses the engineer and controls, the truck cab is a small compartment that shelters the driver. Historically, the cab offered few creature comforts; after all, trucks were the original utility vehicles and not intended for first-class travel.



These days, truck cabs come in all shapes and sizes: regular, double, extended, crew, club, super, quad or forward. They also come with all the amenities you'd expect to find on a luxury car. It has been a slow evolution. "Trucks were considered work vehicles," declared Mike Rovillo, who does research for Mac's Antique Auto Parts in Lockport, New York.

"The problem is, they're beat up. Looks weren't an issue back then; as long as they ran, people kept them. Now they have dents, rust, patches... and all the upholstery needs replacing."

Despite the decrepitude of newly discovered old trucks, they're popular. "Trucks are cool now," Rovillo said, explaining the 10-year growth he's seen in

the truck market. Not only are they cool, they're also relatively affordable and simple to restore. Part of the reason for that is that cabs are considerably smaller than automobile interiors. But, as Rovillo points out, they often need a lot more work. "They're cheap, but they have a lot of damage usually," added Tim Cox of **Quiet Ride Solutions** in Stockton, California.

"The older pickups were used and abused. It's difficult to find parts for them, so builders are retro-fitting and upgrading," said Dick Spadaro of Early Ford Reproductions. Spadaro said they don't do a lot of truck business because it's difficult to find trucks in upstate New York. However, they do offer a cab for a 1940-47 Ford stake truck, which he said fits on a half-ton or passenger car frame and is popular in the rat rod market.

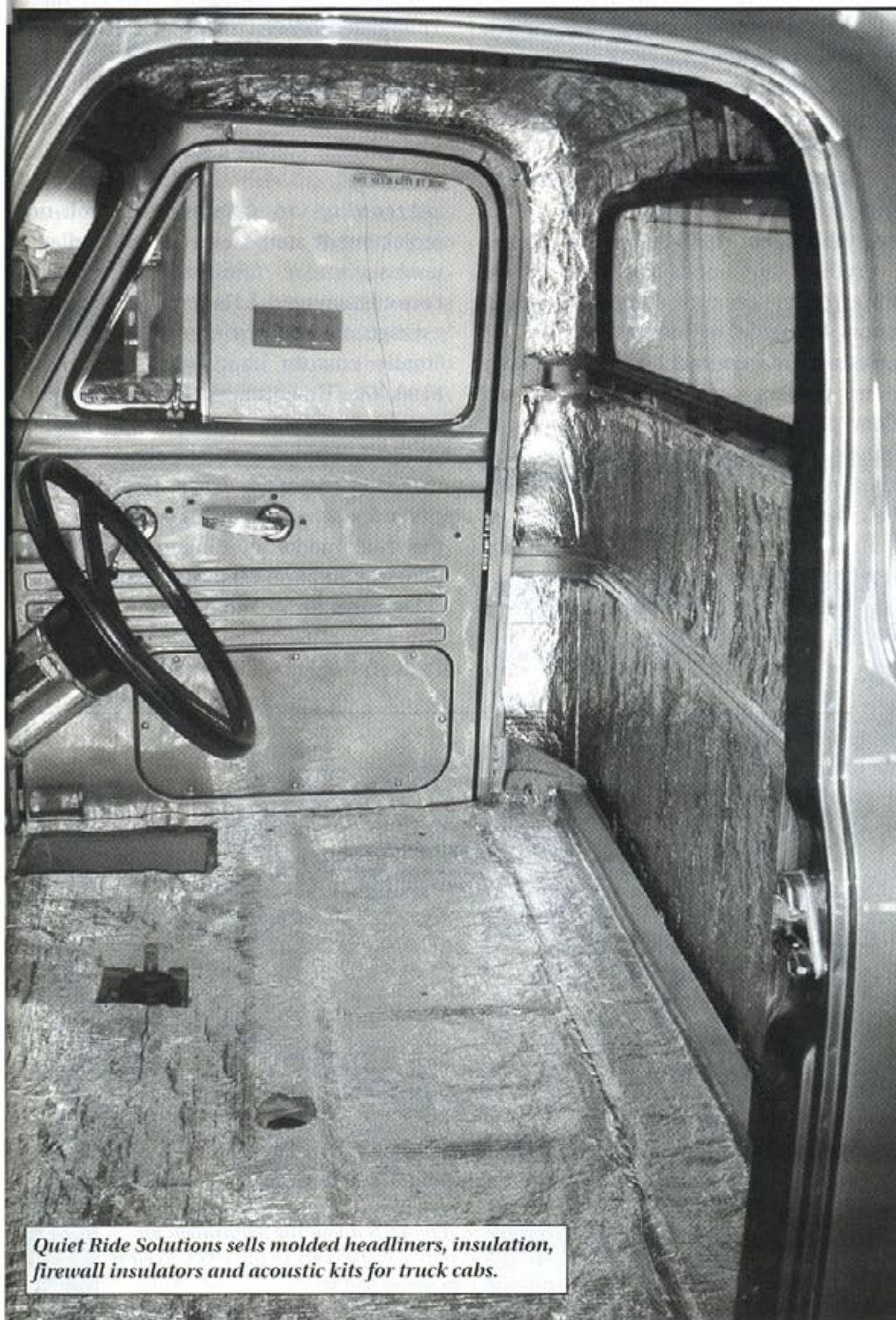
From the outside in

"There's quite a bit of sheet metal available," said Larry Charpentier, of Blue Oval Truck Parts in Anaheim, California. "More sheet metal means more people are restoring trucks."

Bruce Horkey, owner of Bruce Horkey's Wood & Parts in Windom, Minnesota, has noticed a lot of companies marketing new steel and fiberglass cabs. "People are starting to realize they should build what *they* want, and are planning their project and sticking to plan," he said.

For those who plan to go with fiberglass for their 1956 Ford, Be Bops Glass Works has what they're looking for. "We took every aspect of a metal cab and made it easier for the installer. For instance, our firewall hose has been sealed so you don't have to weld it when changing it," said vice president Teresa Witt.

The Athens, Tennessee, company offers a cab with either a small or large back window. Priced the same, the smaller window features glass, while the larger window wraps around the sides of the cab. Both are ready to set on the frame and prep for paint. "They save a lot of time and they don't rust!" said Witt. Once upon a time, she added, "you could buy everything brand-new except for the cab.



Quiet Ride Solutions sells molded headliners, insulation, firewall insulators and acoustic kits for truck cabs.