

FJc MAGAZINE



JANUARY 2012 • VOLUME 5 • ISSUE 1



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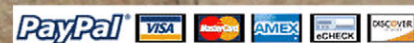


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FROM THE PUBLISHER

As I write this, we've just returned from an epic adventure around New Zealand (and WAY too much walking in Sydney, Australia). During the 40 or so hours in aircraft of various sizes flying halfway around the world and back, I've had plenty of time to reflect on (among other things) the first four years of FJC Magazine.

What started as a 'healthy way to deal with my addiction' to FJ Cruisers has turned in to much more than a hobby. While niche magazine publishing doesn't add much to the Williams family bottom line (yet), it provides me, my lovely wife and favorite editor Angie, and even Brenden with a great way to explore the world around us. Sharing our adventures, and those of FJC lovers around the world, is really what keeps us going issue after issue.

We have a great following that's continuously expanding and is now truly worldwide. We have subscribers from dozens of countries and with the FJ Cruiser becoming more popular (albeit in smaller numbers) around the globe, we're stoked to share stories from each and every country that FJ Cruisers roll through.

With that in mind, I have a request for our faithful readers: Send us your stuff! Photos, videos, reports, and stories are always welcome in my inbox: shane@fjc-mag.com. As a digital publication, we always have room for your content. So don't be shy and SHARE! We can only exist with your help :)

We really hope you enjoy this issue of FJC Magazine!

Until next time, Tread Lightly, Stay The Trail, and HAVE FUN!



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For FJ Cruiser Owners & Enthusiasts
Colorado Springs, CO 80923

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New & Noteworthy

ANZO LED PARKING/TAIL LIGHTS

Anzo USA has been making OEM lighting products for nearly 30 years, so they were one of the top booths we wanted to visit at SEMA 2011.

We're very glad we did! The team at the booth was very knowledgeable and gave us a sneak peak at their all

new LED tail light and parking light products for the FJ. These are so new that we couldn't get pics, and pricing isn't yet available. We're hoping to see these in

the wild in the next couple of months so we can get a closer look!



WWW.ANZOUSA.COM

VIAAIR Super Duty Dual Pump OBA



Viair had plenty of great on-board air systems on display at the SEMA show this year. We really liked the dual compressor super duty setup they had installed in a Jeep JK.

The two compressors and 2 gallon air tank can fill up a 35" tire from 15psi to 30psi in just over 2 minutes. While still not as fast as most CO2 solutions, this is a great option for multiple fill ups so you don't have to worry about running out of air. The 10008 Super Duty system retails for \$499, and the staff from Viair mentioned they were working on an FJ Cruiser specific installation kit.

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EVENTS

2012 Toyota Jamboree

Dates: April 19-22, 2012

Location: TBD

Contact: <http://www.facebook.com/ToyotaJamboree>

Cruise Moab 2012

Dates: May 2-5, 2012

Location: Moab, UT

Contact: <http://www.cruisemoab.com>

2012 Overland Expo

Dates: May 18-20, 2012

Location: Flagstaff, AZ

Contact: <http://www.overlandexpo.com>

2012 Rubithon

Dates: July 2012

Location: Rubicon Trail, CA

Contact: <http://www.facebook.com/ToyotaJamboree>

2012 FJ Summit

Dates: July 18-22 2012

Location: Ouray, CO

Contact: <http://www.fjsummit.org>

2012 SedonaFest

Dates: August 2012

Location: Sedona, AZ

Contact: <http://www.sedonafest.com/>

2012 Thrill on the Hill

Dates: Labor Day Weekend, 2012

Location: Cloudcroft, NM

Contact: <http://www.nmfjrally.com>

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& coverage, visit
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on Event Calendar**

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SEMA 2011

By Shane Williams
Photos by Jim Akers

From when I first I pondered starting a magazine for FJ Cruisers 2007), I knew the Specialty Equipment Marketing Association (SEMA) Show was the place to be for the latest product information for FJs, and of course the automotive industry as a whole. It took four years to finally make the trek to Las Vegas, but Jim & I were very excited to take the late flight out of Denver on Wednesday night to cover the show.

Going back to the 2007 SEMA Show: When the FJ Cruiser was the new kid on the block in the offroad world, the show floor was filled with them. From the drop top to the custom "FJ Runner" (a hybrid FJ/4Runner), coverage from that show oozed FJC and helped drive my desire to start this publication.

Well, as anyone who's familiar with the show knows, SEMA is all about what's hot and new. Even though we adore our trucks and love to see them in all forms, the show this year was not a popular place for FJ Cruisers (luckily there will be hundreds in Ouray next July). We managed to find a few FJs on the floor





01

One of only two FJs we could find on the floor, the Warrior Products truck is sporting a new skin this year.

02

ASFIR 4x4 brought plenty of bumpers, but the FJC bumper didn't make the trip. It's similar to these though.

03

The custom paint and lights on this Tundra were amazing, but apparently not easy to take care of so we'll keep dreaming of a custom finish like this for our FJ.

04

TJM is an Australian overland supply company that has recently re-introduced its products to North America. So far they have shocks & springs for the FJ, plus plenty of general off road gear.



The Maxtrax RC FJ is TOO COOL!



We caught up with Joe Bacal about two minutes before he had to get his Lexus race truck on the trailer for the Baja 1000.



A new take on yanker ropes: Bubba Rope is coated to stand up to years of abuse.



VPR 4x4 is a new manufacturer that makes bumpers & more for the FJ.



The new Icon Early Bronco is a great take on the classic 4x4. Only about \$100k plus or minus.



Paul May (from Equipt Expedition Outfitters) had his great rig on display outside the convention center.

05

This great looking FJ was the fourth that we saw on the show grounds.

06

Like the Bronco, we LOVE the Icon FJ-40.

07

As we were walking out of the show, Jim snapped a pic of this beauty in the parking lot. That made 5 :)



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THRILL ON THE HILL 2011

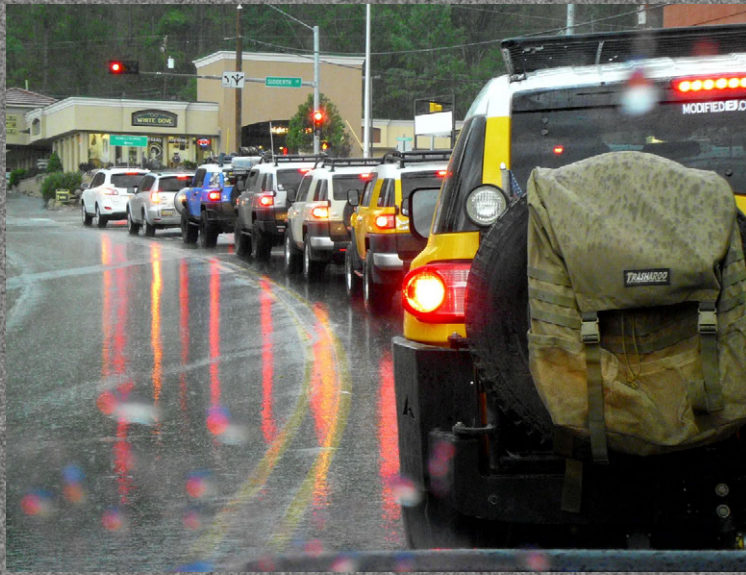
By AbbyTheFJ
(Amanda & Brett Bruner)

Of course you've heard of Thrill On The Hill (TOTH), the annual off road rally held in Cloudcroft New Mexico over the Labor Day weekend. It's a family oriented event offering four wheeling opportunities for people of all skill levels, and you can't forget great evenings full of Barbeque, a live band, and the occasional adult beverage.

As new comers to the FJ Cruiser community we were full of excitement, anticipation, uncertainty, and even a little hesitation to be heading to our first FJ Cruiser off road Rally. Luckily the anticipation of four wheeling and exploring one of New Mexico's pioneer town's soon pushed aside any concerns. We are so new to the FJ world we didn't even know about the event until just five days before it started. Thankfully Brandon Burling and Rachael Lucero were great at getting us registered and were be able to get us in contact with Camp of the Tall Pines for lodging. So the rush of just a few days planning with their help worked out flawless,

and just as efficiently as a well thought out trip.

We decided it would be more fun to find a few other FJ's to convoy to the event with so I searched the forums and found Bob, Patricia, Rick, and Kelly and they were kind enough to allow us to tag along. They were reassuring that our mostly stock FJ Cruiser would fit right in and that there would be plenty for us to do out on the trails and they were an inviting and lively group. We had no way of knowing at the time, but they are the TOTH 'celebrities' if you will. So much so that Bob even has an Alien groupie that shows up year after year. What does any of this have to do with a FJ trip report? Well more often than not, Rallies and gatherings are a place to convene and a chance for us to share a sport and camaraderie for a vehicle we have come to respect and love. Though sometimes we may choose to show it by tearing it to pieces on a big rock, or in a little hole the size of Rhode Island, it is still a vehicle we all love.



helping out with such a great event.

Sunday took us to Valve Stem Alley, a fun trip close to camp by the town of Mayhill. The trail leading in graced us with beautiful views and fun mountain roads. A night of rain increased the level of difficulty for the drivers attempting the challenging section and made for an eventful show for the watchers. With patience, guidance, and skill, (some did have more grace then others) all who attempted it made it over the rocks then into and out of the hole.

Sunday night was again filled with great food and new friends. We came into TOTH new to the FJC world & people, and left with many good friends and a real love for this vehicle. Everyone was willing to help if needed, even if it meant taking parts off your rig to help another off the trail. After our first FJ event it was easy to see that people went for the 4 wheeling because of their FJ's, but everyone was there because of the friendships. We are already looking forward to next years event and we will be there in Abby the FJ.

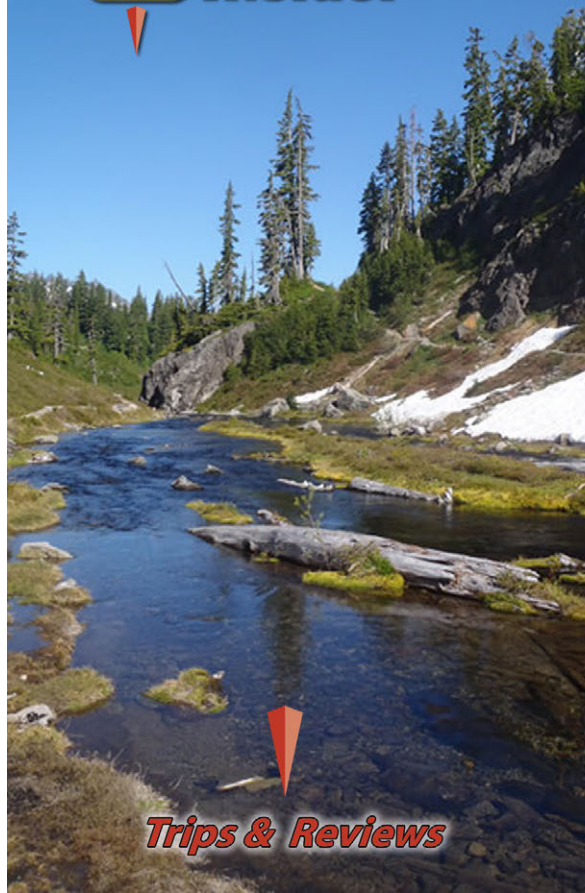
We arrived at the Camp of the Tall Pines on Friday, checked in, and started getting to know people at camp. There was the customary group photo and

“The trail even included the spot where Billy the Kid’s boss, John Henry Tunstall, was killed; which started the Lincoln County War in 1878.”

a drivers meeting to go over the following days trails. We decided that our first trail would be a mild scenic plus historic tour of the area lead by Chris Adams. This was an all day trip that took us through the beautiful towns of Mayhill, Cloudcroft, Mescalero, Ruidoso and Fort Stanton. All in the search of local history and historic sights few will ever find without a mountain goat and GPS. The trail even included the spot where Billy the Kid’s boss, John Henry Tunstall, was killed; which started the Lincoln County War in 1878. After an adventurous day we arrived back at the camp just in time for the fantastic barbeque, live music, and raffle. You’ve got to love the sponsors for

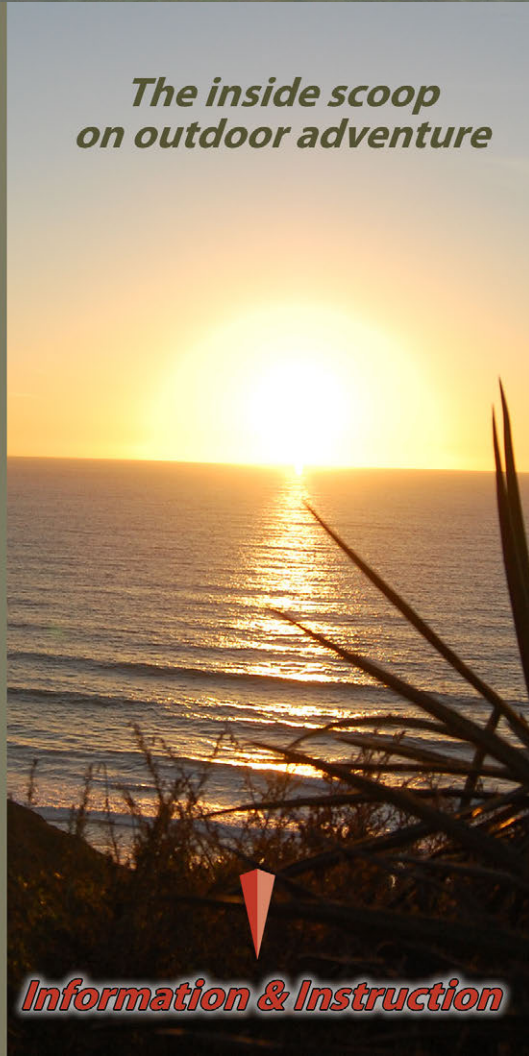
Brett and Amanda are new to the FJ Cruiser world but avid 4x4 enthusiasts. Aside from their day jobs, Amanda and Brett also manage a FJ Cruiser enthusiast blog. Abbythefj.com was started in August of 2011 as a way for Brett and Amanda to show their love of the FJ Cruiser, and for other FJ owners to show off their trucks.





Trips & Reviews

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on outdoor adventure*



Information & Instruction



adventureinsider.com

LED Light Options

T
E
C
H

FJ Cruisers are very well engineered trucks in every aspect. From the interior to mechanical components, and even the electrical system, the legendary Toyota quality shines through. However, once modifications begin the OEM systems can become overworked and stressed. This is quickly evident in the electrical system once aftermarket accessories such as radios, lights, winches, amps, and other devices are installed.

Looking at the numbers, the FJ electrical system can become overloaded if you're not careful. The OEM alternator produces 90Amps, and although there are higher-capacity aftermarket options, they can be expensive and

you never know how long they'll hold up. Much of the available 90Amps can quickly be eaten up by the many devices we add to the system:

4X 100W Halogen Lights: 35.2 Amps
2X 100W Bumper Lights: 17.6 Amps
CB Radio: 4 Amps
Ham Radio: 8.3 Amps
Audio Amp: 6 Amps
Total: 67 Amps

When you add that total to the current your FJ needs to operate, the options start to dwindle quickly. The standard fix is to install a second battery, and that's a very good option regardless of how many electronic devices you're running. Even with that backup, you can quickly drain your batteries if you're using multiple devices at the same time.

This is the primary reason we've been working on transitioning as much of our lighting as possible to LED. LED lights draw less current (amperage) than traditional incandescent lights, and they also last longer. The light most LEDs emit is 'whiter' than standard lights, which give a more natural illumination and (in our opinion) make object easier to see in the dark.

Our transition really began when we replaced our 4 100W halogen lights with a 20" LED Lightbar from Rigid Industries. That change saved us over 30 Amps and is probably the most drastic change we could have done. The JW Speaker TS 3000 LED lights we just installed (Page 22) brought our bumper lights from 17.6 Amps down to about 6 Amps, so that helps out as well.



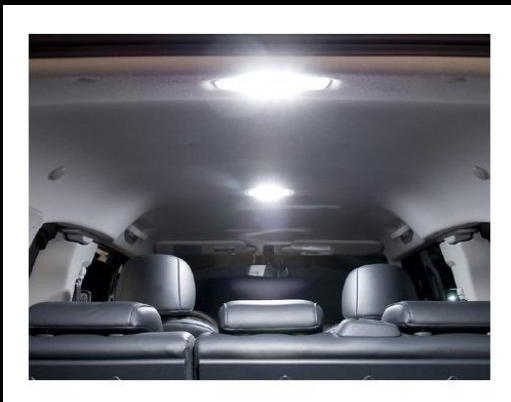
Left: A 3" LED flood from JW Speaker may be a solution for the rear bumper



Right: The Putco third brake light LED



Left: Ozium 1W LED for the side mirrors - a custom install will be required



Right: Putco LED dome lights

On our list for future replacement are:

Interior Lights – Both Putco and Ozium make great LED replacements for the dome. We're also considering LED lights for the floor area.

Parking Lights & Tail Lights – while the options have been limited and not of great quality in the past, the new Anzo USA (See New & Noteworthy, page 4) lights look promising.

Rear brake light – Putco makes a bolt in replacement.

Rear bumper lights – We're still looking at options for this. We haven't seen round 4" lights yet, but 3" square lights may fit the bill.

Mirror lights – This will be a custom install in order to with a bright LED. There are drop in replacements but we're interested in significantly increasing the brightness.

One item you'll notice is missing in the headlights. After much discussion (especially with several vendors at SEMA show), we've decided to go with standard projector lights instead of trying an LED option. The main reason is that the options for LED headlights are very new and would require a massive effort in custom fabrication. That's not something most of our readers are interested in. As soon as a more 'plug and play' solution is available, we'll look into covering it.

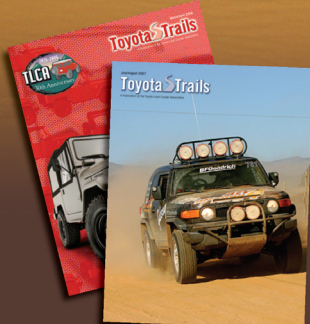
We're very interested in hearing about how you've upgraded the lighting on your FJ Cruiser. If you'd like to share your story with us, e-mail shane@fjc-mag.com or post on our Facebook Page. We'll be covering the options and installs of many of these light upgrades in future issues of FJC Magazine.

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Vision X makes a 4" high power LED that may work for the rear bumper

FIRST LOOK: General Armor Rear LCAs

Photography by Jim Akers



Rear Lower Control Arms (LCAs) are one of the most vulnerable parts of the FJ Cruiser suspension. The OEM parts are made of thin metal that's fine for road driving, but not suited to take the abuses of rocks, shelves, and other off road obstacles. While our previous aftermarket LCAs have worked fine, the Kevlar lined heim joints had a tendency to squeak and clunk when off road. When General Armor asked us to take a look at their new product, we were excited for the opportunity.

The first thing you notice about a General Armor LCA is that it's constructed of square tube vs. round. This provides a smoother surface to slide on should you need it, but it also spreads the load over a wider area and more steel (1.5" X 1/4" wall), which results in

Detailed Specs:

1. The Rear Lower Control Arms are constructed of 1/4"-wall steel square tube, 1.5" on a side.
2. The bushing casings are constructed of 3/8"-wall, 2.75"-outer-diameter steel DOM tube.
3. Parts are unitized using a reinforced (proprietary) TIG weld.
4. An emergency brake hanger mount is included, which reuses the Toyota stock hanger and fastener.
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less stress on your LCA and the FJ. The bushing casings are attached to the links via a proprietary TIG weld, which is where the additional strength comes from. You can really see the difference in the cross section photo.

Since these LCAs use the bombproof stock bushings (which General Armor can easily press out of the old links), no special hardware is needed for the install. Since the heavy duty casings hang below the mount, LCA mount armor may not be needed.

After a lengthy discussion with Antonio about the massive amount of testing he's done on these links, we're confident



Bushing hangs below mount

that we won't have to worry about this part of our suspension. He even showed us several 'U-shaped' stock links he's abused during his testing. Antonio keeps a stock link on one side of his truck to show how his LCAs hold up to the abuse.

General Armor is currently working on setting up distribution with several FJC Vendors, so stay tuned to <http://www.generalarmor.com/> for the latest updates on pricing & availability. We've been told that these links will be very competitively priced and will be shipping very soon!

SOURCE: GeneralArmor.com



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GENEVA CREEK WITH THE COLORADO FJ'S

By Shane Williams

Photography by Jim Akers



A gorgeous Saturday morning greeted our fairly large group of FJ Cruisers in Bailey, Colorado. The goal for the day: the top of Geneva Creek. While this particular trail wouldn't challenge a stock FJ Cruiser under normal circumstances, the end of October means cold temperatures and the chance of significant snow drifts in the Colorado high country.

The beginning of Geneva Creek trail is about 18 miles from our meeting point in Bailey, so we were on the road before 9:30. Heading down 285 toward Fairplay, we turned right at Grant onto County

Road 62, the turnoff for Guanella Pass (which leads to Georgetown, CO). There we picked up another FJ as we zoomed past him at the turn. Mikes '07 Black Diamond FJC was the eighth in the group, and since more FJs are always better, we knew we'd have a great day.

As we made our way up the dirt road we could tell by the muddy roads that there would be at least some snow on the ground. We found a pull out just big enough for our group at a picnic ground that made a great spot to air down, which also meant our first chance to chat about the plan.

There was some debate on whether we'd be able to make it to the top of the trail, which ends at about 12,000 feet. Although it was late in the season, the sun was shining and I felt pretty confident we'd make it most of the way, if not all the way to the top. "It would all depend on how big the drifts were on the shelf road" was my response when asked again on the ham radio.

The turnoff for Geneva Creek should have been a no-brainer, but since I lent both of my GPS Data Cards from FunTreats out for testing, I chose the wrong fork and took half the group down the wrong



near 12,000 feet





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Voodoo "breaking through"



Colorado FJs



the ride down



posing shot

trail. Luckily I realized the error quickly and we were able to get turned around. Once on the proper trail, we immediately had fun bashing through the 4"-6" of snow on the ground.

As we moved up the trail and gained elevation the snow began to get a little deeper, but still less than the 10" or 12" limit for mountain driving in our modified FJ Cruisers. About halfway up the trail (as shown in the FunTreks book) it begins to climb via a narrow road through the trees. At this point we were just past 10,000 feet in elevation, and since the slope faces south the snow was still very manageable even in the areas shaded by trees. We were able to get some really cool video of trailblazing this area of snow and we pushed up the trail.

[See the Geneva Creek video here](#)

Just past the last fork in the road, we continued uphill to the right and our entire group made it to the final area of trees near the top of the trail. We stopped here

for lunch and a few brave souls hiked up a some of the very steep hills for a better view. There was barely a cloud in the sky and at around 11,500 feet we were just about at tree line. We could see the trail continuing in two different directions from here.

"That lasted about 200 yards before I hit a major drift, at least 18" deep and about 10 feet long."

The fork to the west was clearly covered in deep snow as it climbed past the trees to about 11,800 feet. To the right, we saw the faint outline of a trail covered in snow, and since this wasn't a steep trail for about ¼ mile we decided to give it a go. I asked everyone that was interested in pushing a little higher to follow me, and every FJ did. That lasted about 200 yards before I hit a major drift, at least 18" deep and about 10 feet long. After several unsuccessful attempts at pushing through it, I backed out and let a couple of other FJ's try. Eventually, after

about 10 tries, Antonio in his VooDoo Blue FJC with 35" tires managed to break through this last drift and we were well on the way again.

Our day ended just shy of 12,000 feet at the beginning of the final switchbacks on the Geneva Creek Trail. All eight trucks made it to the final spot, but we decided that attempting the switchbacks in the cold and snow wouldn't be the best idea. We were able to position all the FJs for a great photo op, and remarked on how few people ever get to see Colorado from this viewpoint, especially in the snow.

The ride down was fairly uneventful as we all took our time crawling back through the slippery snow. While climbing up is fun, descending takes great care to ensure you don't slide and go sideways. Everything ended out great though, and a few of us remained at the junction with 285 to get aired up. Overall it was another amazing day on the trail with the Colorado FJs.

INSTALL

As part of our effort to transition to as many LED lights on the FJ as possible (See LED Light Options, page 14), we wanted to replace the aging and cracked halogen lights in our Aluminess bumper with something brighter, more sturdy, and LED if possible.

We test fitted a set of square 3" LED lights when we were doing our LED Lightbar Comparison in 2011, but they didn't look very good and barely produced more light than the halogens. We ended up not using them and the search continued.



About two months ago we saw a Facebook post from High Country 4x4 about a new set of JW Speaker lights they



were carrying. The TS3000 driving lights are oval lights, 6.55" wide by 6.30" tall and include four high power LED lights. The lenses are made of a durable glass, and they include polycarbonate lens covers to keep rocks off the lights when not in use. At just over 4" deep, we knew these lights would fit well into the bumper.

We made contact with JW Speaker to see about a test set of the TS3000 lights. We're excited to replace as much halogen as possible in order to be more power efficient, so these lights seemed like the best fit. At a current of only 3.25 Amps @ 12VDC, they draw just below half the power of halogen lights (about 8.33 Amps on average). So other

than the oval shape in our round bumper light mount, these sounded like the perfect fit.

The lights arrived very nicely packaged and included a removable wire connector for easy installation.



The existing wiring harness, relay, and switch were used so the install was really quick. So quick that we didn't take any photos, but we've covered light installs in-depth in previous issues.

On our first wheeling trip with these lights (Geneva Creek, page 18), we lost one of the bolts that controls the adjustment. We didn't put thread locker on the bolt so it managed to

rattle loose. A replacement was easy to find and we re-adjusted both lights and included thread locker this time.

We haven't had a chance to use these lights other than to adjust their height, but we have a winter night run planned in January so we'll give them a good shakedown then. So far they look like they'll be a great addition to our LED light transformation, we'll report back on how they perform on the trail.

SOURCE: JWSpeaker.com

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Red rock camping ~ Photo by BenEdmonson.com for Equipt Expedition Outfitters (Equipt1.com)

In The News

Team FJ Takes 2nd Overall in Qatar Baja

From DesertFJ.com:

In an event which highlighted the need for strong navigation and good teamwork between driver & co-driver, Team FJ finished the 340km event just over 30 minutes behind the Dakar champion Nasser Al-Attiyah in the factory prepared SAM 35 race car.

The Baja was run over varied terrain ranging from sand tracks, gravel tracks and challenging rock sections. Commencing with a 6km prologue stage on Friday afternoon Team FJ moved up the rankings from their seeded position of number 26 to 11th position for the start of the main event on Saturday morning.

Saturday's 340km course was split over two stages separated by a 30 minute service period, the first 240km section was extremely difficult to navigate as GPS navigation points were only provided for the 4 passage control points, the rest of the route was only identifiable from the organizers road book and trip meter distances. Arriving at the service park as car number 7 Team FJ changed out a spare tire (following an earlier puncture) and took on some fuel before commencing the final 100km stage.

The last section led along the scenic coast of Qatar past the inland sea and eventually ended up at the Sealine resort which marked the finish of the event. Once the car was safely back in parc ferme, there was a long wait for the Team as the remaining competitors battled their way through the stage to finish line, once all the competitors were back, the Team attended the press conference and the podium ceremony where they were awarded trophies for 2nd overall and 2nd in class.



David & Xavier
Team FJ.
www.desertfj.com





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— Tim Cahill



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Manufacturer Profile

If you've met Digger Digg from Outrider Off Road, you already know what I'm about to impart. He's a salt of the earth, no nonsense fabricator with a great head for engineering and a huge heart. While in the Dallas area for training I was lucky enough to catch up with Digger for a few minutes late one evening to check out his fabrication and product development operation, in an aircraft hangar.

Digger loves off road and creating super tough works of art for our FJs, and he also loves flying. As a partner in Flying Cowboys, he has secured a nice little piece of an aircraft hangar at Hicks Airfield, just northwest of Ft. Worth, Texas. Nestled among

piston airplane engines, various bits of welding side-work, and of course a gutted Huey (UH-1) helicopter, I found an efficient operation that centers around Diggers newest toy: the plasma cutter.

Outrider Off Road, and Digger Digg, is known as one of the top producers of essential armor for the dedicated FJC off roader. His shock mount armor, lower control arm armor, and of course rear differential skid are as tough as they come. His designs are well thought out, almost over engineered, and are virtually bombproof. It's almost hard to believe all this great armor comes from one man, working in the back corner of the hangar.



Like many small operations, in the past Digger had to outsource the fabrication of his prototypes and production runs to shops in order to meet demand. This meant

Any changes would then cause another delay, so the building process was somewhat cumbersome. The plasma cutter changed all that!



now produce prototypes in hours instead of days. New ideas are easy to fabricate, test, revise, and produce in a fraction of the time. This means that in the future we can expect tweaks to already great products, and new FJ gear as well. Maybe even non-armor products (I promised Digger I wouldn't say more).

While the visit was short, it was really great to get a feel of how Outrider Off Road operates. Our entire team is really looking forward to what Digger has in store for us in the coming years!

waiting days and sometimes weeks to get prototypes back and tested.

With his new computer controlled system, Digger can

Visit:
<http://outrideroffroad.com>



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KIWI TOUR '11

A Great picnic area on Lake Wakatipu



Rees Valley near Queenstown

If you followed our Facebook Page or our mini-site for Kiwi Tour '11, you know what an epic adventure it was. We traveled over 1,400 miles during the 12 day trip (not nearly enough of them on dirt), and spent over 45 hours in the FJ Cruiser courtesy of Toyota of New Zealand. It was truly the trip of a lifetime, yet we can't wait to visit the South Island again.

We shot over 800 photos, but narrowed them down to around 700 that we'll archive. We managed to get about three hours of video, again not nearly enough off road, but we still managed some pretty interesting shots between the GoPro HD, Contour HD, and two iPhones.

As you read this, we're sorting, gathering, and reviewing our photos, notes, and video from the trip. A very special issue of FJC Magazine will be out soon covering the Kiwi Tour in great detail, so watch your inboxes and our Facebook page for the latest updates.

In the meantime, please enjoy this preview of our Kiwi Tour '11 Journey!

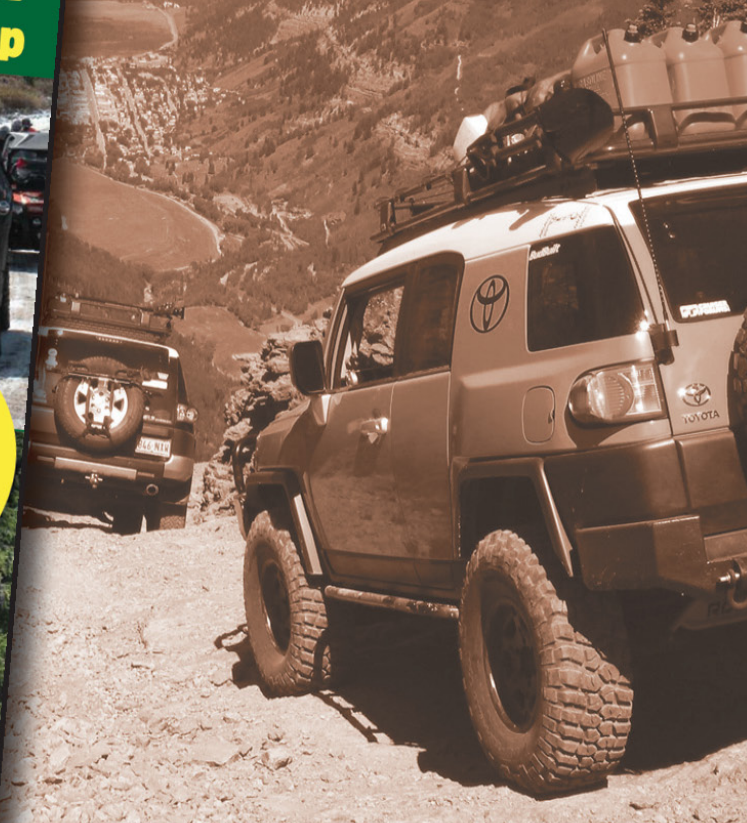
The Summit of Borland Road



The tree that stopped us from finishing Borland Road

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FJ's In Action

ANIELLOS' FJ NEAR ORIZABA PEAK, MX



ALL CAL 2011 BY GERMAN G



FRED ON CORSICA ISLAND FRANCE



RUBICON TRAIL BY JOHN P

Have a great pic of your FJ? E-mail a high-res version to pics@fjc-mag.com