

# FJC Magazine

OCTOBER 2010 • VOLUME 3 • ISSUE 4

## FJ CRUISER HISTORY: *Exclusive Interview*

### FJ EVENTS:

THRILL on the Hill

ALL Cal 2010

FJ Summit #4



REAR



**BUMPER INSTALL!**

2011  
FJ PREVIEW

# FJJC Magazine

October 2010 • Volume 3 • Issue 4

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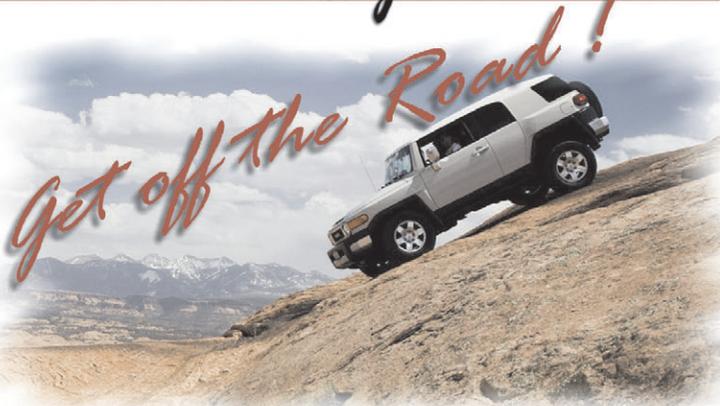
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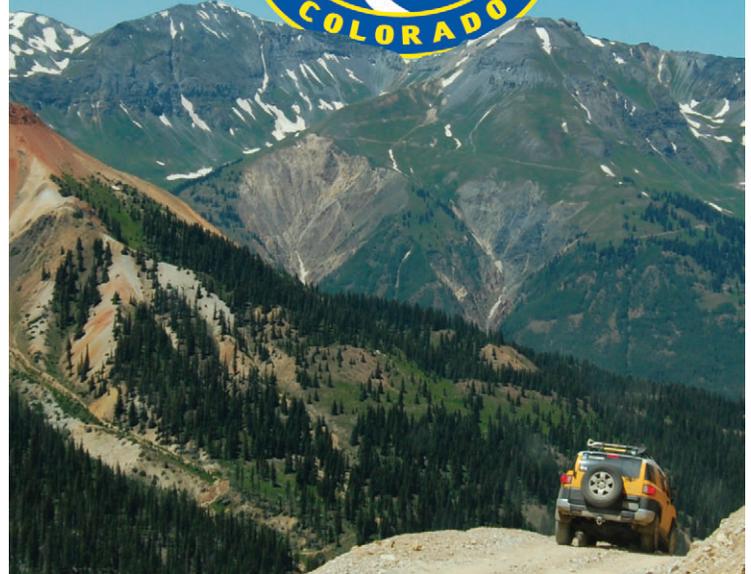


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**FROM THE STAFF** 2010 is almost over and we can't begin to tell you how excited we are for 2011. In addition to the FJ Cruiser heading down under, 2011 promises more events, more FJ Cruiser news, and possibly even a new model FJ Cruiser (see 2011 Preview, page 19).

In addition to the annual FJ Summit, we'll be covering 6 other FJ Cruiser events and several other Toyota events next year. Expect to see FJC Magazine Trail Team members at the FJ Northeasters Easter Event, Spring MudFling, Thrill on the Hill, and Sedona Fest, among others. Look for FJC Magazine issues jam packed with info from events around the country!

As we enter our 4th year of publication we'll be making a few changes as well. First we'd like to welcome Crystina Lawrence as our new Associate Creative Director. Starting with this issue Crystina will be helping create cutting edge layouts for some of our articles. She'll also be with us on photo shoots and events as well.

You may know Taft Babbit from FJCruiserForums.com (MountainMan) and from previous issues. Well, Taft has agreed to join the FJC Magazine staff as our contributor at large. He'll be covering several articles for us in the future so get ready for some awesome writing!

Finally we want to let you know that due to the amazing growth of Disabled Explorers, Lance Blair will no longer be the primary contributor for Expedition Wheeling articles. Lance is just so busy helping people with DE that we don't feel right about stealing his time for FJC Magazine. Don't

worry, Lance will still contribute to our publication on a regular basis so you won't miss his insightful thoughts on everything overland and expedition related.

Last, but certainly not least, is a little cross promotion for Zaxyn Media. Since FJC Magazine has been so well received, and after much thought and a little bit of arm twisting, we've decided to launch Tacoma Magazine. In case the name didn't give it away, TacomaMag will be dedicated to Toyota Tacoma Trucks.

We have a great staff already working on starting up this new effort! Jeff Blackwell will be the Editor In Chief and will be responsible for managing the entire publication. Jeff hails from Tennessee but he'll be moving to Colorado (to work at Keystone) this fall. He has an '05 Tacoma and is extremely knowledgeable about Tacoma Trucks. Our friend Russell Emenaker will serve as Creative Director for Tacoma Magazine, he's a Colorado Springs guy too. Russell has an early model Tacoma and a degree in film, so expect to see some sweet projects coming from the Tacoma Magazine side. While the first issue won't come out until February, you can subscribe (for free of course) over at [www.tacomamag.com](http://www.tacomamag.com). Look for a preview issue this fall as well!

Until next time, Tread Lightly, Stay the Trail, and have fun!  
--FJC Magazine



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## REAR BUMPER INSTALL

When it finally came time to select a rear bumper for our '07 TRD FJ Cruiser, we narrowed it down to the Expedition One and the LoD. We ultimately decided on the LoD, mainly because we haven't seen many of these on the road and thought it would be great for our readers to learn more about this option. LoD Off Road has been a top name in the world of Jeep aftermarket parts for years, but their rear bumper is the first product they've produced for the FJ Cruiser. Chris Leuch sent us a very well packaged bumper in early September so we could get her installed for the October issue.

Right off the bat, you can tell this is a quality product. I've never seen any product packaged as well as this bumper, right down to the wooden frame surrounding it. It seems as if LoD literally builds the box around the bumper, because it took about 20 minutes and more than one tap with the hammer to spring the steel from its container. We give them two thumbs up for making sure the bumper arrives as perfect as the day it was built.

A major feature that led us to choosing this bumper was the swing-out rear tire carrier. Unlike most other carriers, it's attached to the door so when

you open the door, the carrier swings with it. The carrier is beefy and well engineered to ensure a rattle free ride when on the trail. Installation time was a respectable 4.5 hours, with only a few minor issues that had to be figured out.

The instructions on the LoD website are very well constructed and easy to follow. While there are a few minor items missing in the instructions, overall they break down the install process very well. The provided high-resolution color photos definitely help (see the sidebar for a list of installation tips).

If you've never removed the stock rear bumper before, it can be a little intimidating. You have to tug quite hard to get the side plastic pieces off, so you may want to pop a screwdriver between the plastic and the truck to help you out. Once they're free you'll hear a distinct 'pop'. Once you get the sides popped out and the rest of the screws out, the rear bumper comes off very easily.

The most tricky part of this (and virtually every other FJ Cruiser rear bumper install), is cutting the stock plastic that will be

re-used. There is no good way to template what needs to be removed, so it's a bit of a guessing game. LoD includes several pictures and instructions that are as exact as possible to make sure you get it right, so read and re-read these steps as many times as you need. We ended up leaving on more plastic than needed and then trimming as re-



The bumper arrived very well packaged



quired just to make sure we didn't cut off too much.

After 45 minutes of measuring, looking, and cutting we were able to re-mount the plastic portion of the OEM bumper. Some don't like the fact that you retain this much plastic with a rear bumper, but I personally think it



Check & re-check your markings before cutting the plastic bumper.

helps to maintain the lines of the FJ better. There are a few bumpers available that don't re-use the rear plastic. See our rear bumper comparison (Jan 2011 issue) for details on all your bumper options.

The remainder of the install went fairly quick. The only task that took quite a bit of time was drilling through the frame. LoD specifies the holes to drill

(there are four total), so review the instructions and make sure you have new, high quality drill bits to do the job right. Remember the key to drilling the frame is to use slow speed and to keep the bit well cooled/lubricated.

The bumper is attached to the FJ Cruiser with 12 bolts total. There are four in the center where the receiver hitch attaches, two underneath into the frame on each side (4 total), and four that you drill/tap yourself (although we chose to drill straight through the frame and use carriage bolts for these four). There is no doubt that this bumper will handle anything you throw at it.

Some of the design features we really like about the LoD Rear Bumper include the sloped corners, integrated lights, and two



Grade 8 Hardware is included to attach the bumper



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## INSTALLATION TIPS

- Make sure you remove the stock tow point from the rear of the FJ. It's a no brainer, but since that step wasn't in the instructions our first attempt at sliding the bumper on was unsuccessful.
- While most of the bolts are metric, there are a few that are standard sizes so make sure you have both socket sets on hand.
- The instructions call for drilling and tapping a total of 4 holes in the frame for additional support. These holes are extremely difficult to line up with the bumper so we decided to drill through both sides of the frame and secure the bumper with carriage bolts.
- While a light kit is included with the bumper, there are no instructions or connections to hook into the backup light system. We'll be tackling this issue (and hooking them up to an override switch) in a future issue of FJC Magazine.
- A Zirk fitting is included in the mounting hardware and installs in the swingout pin for easy lubrication, but the instructions omit that step.



The tire mount is adjustable for different tires/rims and the linkage provides a rattle free mount.

Also Checkout the Install video @  
<http://YouTube.com/FJCMagazine>

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heavy duty recovery points. The receiver hitch doesn't take away too much clearance (we'll probably add an Outrider Bumper Saver for trail use), and the overall look compliments the FJ very well.

The swingout can support up to a 37" tire, and we'll be adding the jerry can mounts and cargo rack as soon as they come in. The adjustable linkage on the swingout also makes it easy to fine-tune how everything lines up, so it's easy to achieve a rattle free installation. We also really

like the Zirk fitting on the swingout pin to help keep it well lubricated.

We'll be hitting the trail a couple of times this fall to put this bumper through its paces. We'll be sure to test every aspect of it from recovery to performance on tight trails, so look for that full review in the January 2011 issue of FJC Magazine. **FJC**

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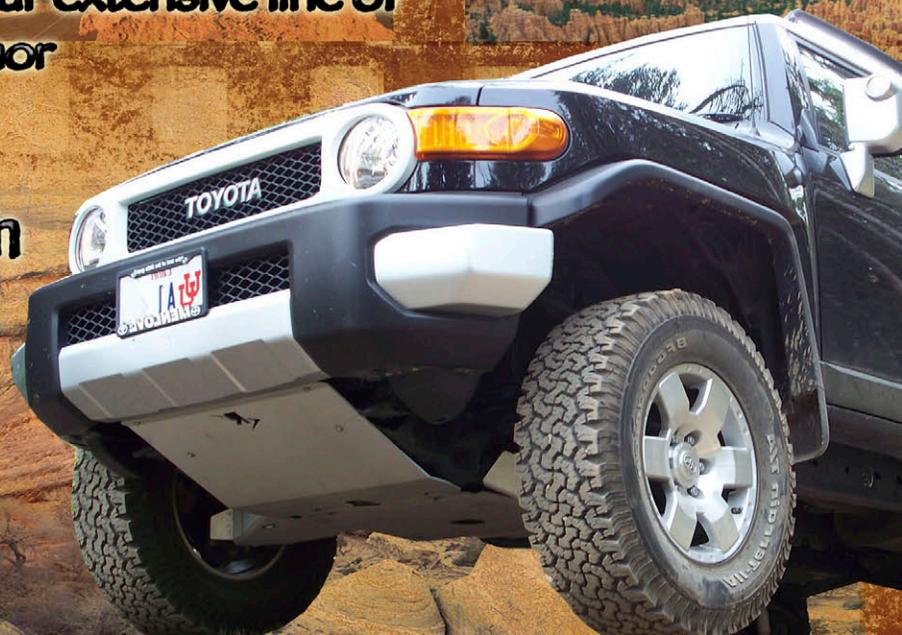
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# FJ CRUISER DEVELOPMENT



## A Special Interview with Joe Bacal Lead FJ Cruiser Development Test Driver

Last month we had the pleasure of sitting down with Mr. Joe Bacal. For those that aren't familiar with Mr. Bacal, he was Toyota's lead test driver for the FJ Cruiser during its development. In 2007 Joe beat cancer and now he races the Lexus LX 570 on the SCORE circuit. Joe's team has already secured the Stock Full Class championship for this year with the biggest race yet to come. In addition to racing, Joe runs an off road consulting and training business using former Toyota Trail Teams FJ Cruisers.

We asked Joe about his history with the FJ, his thoughts on some of the design and mechanical choices, and much more! We hope you enjoy the interview.

**FJC:** We all know the FJ Cruiser concept came out in 2003, when did you get involved with the project?

**JB:** At the time I worked at the proving ground for Toyota in Arizona, and I worked very closely with Japan and Nishimura-san as well as product planning at TMS (Toyota Motor Sales) in Torrance California at their corporate headquarters. So it really all ties together with me being the off road specialist at the time, I was the lead development driver working with the chief engineer and all the engineers and designers. We worked not only on the capability but also "what's the ultimate goal". That's really what it comes down to is product planning. The designers all sit together and they come up with a plan and a target, and that's the conception of the FJ Cruiser. It was really bringing back the FJ-40 heritage, that's really where it all started and it just kind of went from there.

**FJC:** When they first started working on the FJ, was there a specific target customer or target vehicle they wanted to compete with? Was there much discussion about hard-core off road capability?

**JB:** That's a good question and honestly I don't think there are many people that can answer that, except just a few of us that were involved. When you develop a vehicle the first thing you look for is a target. Where do you want to be? Where's the market, and can we meet that target? We actually didn't have an FJ Cruiser (obviously) for a long time. We used the Prado, which was our very first "Mule" prototype. Luckily at the time we always had a lot of target vehicles and benchmarking vehicles. The X-Terra, the Wrangler, there are a few different vehicles that we looked at. Basically anything that was off road capable was a baseline or target vehicle for some area or another. One of the things that's great about the way Toyota thinks (and I'm sure other manufacturers probably do the same thing) if they like the steering feel on a particular vehicle then they'll take that feeling objectively and subjectively and put it into a product of theirs. That's the cool thing of being on the early development side of the FJ Cruiser, the changes. I felt like I had a lot of input. At the time I was kind of speaking for the entire North American market. So when I'd sit down in meetings with the chief engineer

and other top level Toyota brass, they're looking at me like "why should we do this, why should we do that". That's where the questions like "why isn't there a solid (front) axle", and a million others originate.

**FJC:** On the subject of the solid axle, there was a discussion about the benefits of going that way?

**JB:** Basically there was plenty of discussion. You know the FJ is a pretty capable vehicle when you throw a solid axle on it, or if you put a diesel engine and drivetrain in it. That's what we were really shooting for. On the North American side we know Toyota has the ability to build pretty much anything they want. Part of what makes sense though is using parts that are currently being used on other platforms. The FJ Cruiser is an F2 platform so it shares parts with Tacoma as well as 4Runner, so you have to keep this in mind from a manufacturer's standpoint for cost. Also reliability and durability come in to play as well.

**FJC:** So they could've put a solid front axle in it but it would've cost more and maybe not made as much sense.

**JB:** Well there's even more to it than that actually. People say "why didn't they just throw in a solid axle, they have them all day long". Solid axles are really great off road, there's no doubt about it. However when you get a solid axle on the pavement you've got bump steer issues with it. You've also got ride and handling issues with a solid axle. It's heavy and the controllability isn't quite there. People want a nice vehicle that rides well and handles well on pavement but also performs off road.

So you have to ask yourself is the solid axle the best choice, due to cost and accessibility and things like that. That's essentially one of the reasons they went towards the coil over/independent. I'm not speaking for Toyota anymore because obviously I own my own company now, but I don't believe these are secrets.

**FJC:** You know, I use my FJ as a daily driver and for our readers (probably 85% of them) it's their daily driver as well. While the solid axle would be great off-road, for most people I think the benefits of the IFS probably outweigh the benefits of a solid axle.

**JB:** And that's exactly why we all decided at that point that this is the best direction. Also you just can't change a lot of information that comes from the top at Toyota. As much as we want to say "Hey this is a North American niche vehicle we should have a lot of input, and in fact this is what we think the north American people want out of it". There's still that point where we can only get so far. There's always that discussion, you have to explain what you really want and it has to make sense.

**FJC:** In previous discussions you told us a little bit about taking the prototype FJC on the Rubicon with Bill Burke, what is that story like?

**JB:** Well, let me back up a little bit. When it comes to development on that vehicle, there is a lot of payment work that has to be done first. People think "Oh, it's an off road truck that should be tested off road and call it a day", but honestly there's a lot more pavement work that needs to get tested from a ride & handling standpoint, steering feel, impact shock, and all the other things that go into it. The first really early mule prototype that I recall (and there are some pictures out there somewhere) was a white Prado body which had some extensions here and there, but really was the FJ Cruiser underneath. I remember testing a lot up in Big Bear because it was very similar to Rubicon. We also did a lot of testing in the sand dunes in Glamis as well. We tried to keep it fairly close our proving ground because that's where we worked out of. We did go back & forth to Japan on occasion, like at Nara prefecture which has incredible off road areas. It's unbelievable terrain that makes us look silly over here in a way. That's where it all started.

Photo courtesy of Toyota Motor Sales | Photographer Craig Cameron Olsen/Saatchi and Saatchi



Prototype vehicles go in stages, so the next vehicle we got was that much closer to what was going to be the FJ Cruiser. The design was so different though that I didn't see the first pre-production FJ Cruiser until it was a 1A type of vehicle. It was very close to production at that point, and it was late in the game, so it was tough to validate the truck as off road capable. It was validated before, but we changed it so much on the cosmetic side of it that there were a lot of things that had to be retested.

It's a great story because no one would know about it except the people involved. I pitched the fact (to the TMS top guys) that we've got two FJ Cruiser prototypes in the country (they're going to Auto Shows, and this and that) and they should be tested. We had no extra parts, but I wanted to take one of them to the Rubicon trail and validate it. My job was to make sure it performs off Road and I don't want to get caught off guard. I think it's important that Toyota says "Hey, this is an off road capable truck and we can back it up". TMS basically said we'd love to but we just can't afford it (it was a \$250K prototype) we can't afford any damage. I said I get that, but I persevered. At the time I was doing a lot of training with Bill Burke all over the country. I spent weeks and weeks and weeks with Bill & he taught me so much over the years. I've been to Tellico and Rubicon, and Paragon, I mean I hit everywhere you can possibly think of over a couple year period. Our last training was going to be at the Rubicon so I was like well, let's just take the FJ. TMS can bring their film crew, and they can get some great documentation and we can test at the

same time as it goes to production and we'll call it a day.

That's really what it came down to, it was definitely touch and go. Honestly I put my name on the line because I felt so passionate about making sure it was tested in a difficult area, and it was bone stock. The only thing I said I needed to change was the tires from the rugged trail to the all terrain and that was it. The same size, I just wanted a little bit more bite out of the tires. I'm glad I did because there were some areas where we would have definitely gotten damage if I didn't change them. I just didn't feel as confident with the Rugged Trail, but the BFG All Terrain KO is the same tire that's on the TRD package, so it wasn't too far off.

So, TMS motorsports had their semis that said Toyota Motor Sports on the side. They drove the trucks up to Tahoe, and in this crazy hotel parking lot, they unload this brand new FJ Cruiser with no body masking or anything. Just like it is now. Remember this was six months before they were sold at dealers.

**FJC:** So this would've been in mid 2005, somewhere in there?

**JB:** Yeah, absolutely, it was early, and it's funny because that's the first time I saw it honestly. Bill and I are like great, it looks awesome but I hope I don't get a scratch on it. Unfortunately it came in with the wrong tire and I wasn't sure what we were going to do, so I called everybody in the area and there was one set of All Terrain tires that would fit on that truck. So we drove it down the street and people are literally crashing into each other (it was the Voodoo Blue Color), so they're just like "oh my god". We pull this thing into this tire shop and they couldn't believe it. So we got the right tire on it and we were on our way. We had Saatchi & Saatchi bring the film crew. Basically the first brochure that you saw, that came out with the FJ Cruiser, I think I'm driving in almost every picture in that truck. From the sand dunes to the Rubicon, they wouldn't allow anyone else to drive it. I even said to some of the engineers on the trip "you guys want to drive it?" they're like NO, we don't even want to be responsible for what happens to it. There are a few pictures of me at 30 plus degrees, with a big boulder next to the door, and no damage. It was risky but the truck is phenomenal and it literally didn't get any marks at all, no body damage at all. Just a little bit underneath and that was it.

**FJC:** So you ran the Rubicon with no skid plates?

**JB:** Yep, everything on that truck was bone stock except the tires. When we loaded up the trailer after we were done, we had a LC 100 series and a couple of other vehicles that were support vehicles that were just torn up from the other guys driving with us. But the nice blue FJC was spotless, it was cool.

**FJC:** That's amazing.

**JB:** Yeah, Bill Burke and I have a great relationship, and he's a mentor of mine, I look up to him. I think he was literally testing me for two years. He'd throw me in situations where I'm just like wholly mackerell! In a manual Tacoma, sliding down waterfalls and just doing insane stuff. I think that last trip really honestly was the conception of the trail teams. That's really where it started from.

**FJC:** Wow, you're leading in to my next question perfectly. That's actually next on the list is how the trail team concept came to be.

**JB:** When we got back, people looked at the footage and were like oh my God! Paul Czaplicki was the lead guy for TMS (I've known him for years, great guy) on this. He pretty much just took that and ran with it. I wasn't a trail team instructor at that point because they were all on a contract basis. I was a factory driver so I couldn't really be a trail team member at that time, but I was on the board of directors I guess you would call it. We made decisions on how to modify the truck. We worked with TLC and Jonathan Ward to make these trail teams trucks capable. That's kind of where I came in for that as well. Then later on when I left Toyota and I actually was hired to build the courses and fly in and be an instructor at a lot of the events.

**FJC:** Very very cool. I guess many of us hope that someday the trail teams will come back, but the way the economy is and the way sales are going I guess you just never know.

**JB:** The closest to the trail teams right now is my company, JT Grey. I've got three FJ Cruisers all tricked out (they're former Trail Teams vehicles believe it or not) from Toyota. I think people are much more willing to take their vehicles through areas where they know the instructor can get them through without any damage for the most part. It is too bad, they had a great thing



**JB:** We did some testing in Glamis and I actually jumped the truck, literally, off of a dune. It was ridiculous footage and a perfectly smooth landing. They never used it because of liability I think, but there are some shots. A full on, straight up, wheelie in an FJ, it's the coolest thing. What I'm getting at is that we did a lot of testing with the full time vs. part time. Any one that knows Glamis knows Oldsmobile Hill is a pretty tough hill in a stock vehicle. We just climbed up that thing all day long in the FJ.

**FJC:** I'm sure you have some amazing insider stories about the development, anything else you'd like to share?

**JB:** Like I said I can tell you stuff that nobody knows, and it's nothing secret anymore because the truck is out. If you don't mind I'll just throw a few other things that I think the people would love to hear about.

When the colors came out, we were like what? We liked the colors because they match the old FJ-40 type of look, but some of the colors (such as the black metallic) what is that all about? Actually, there was talk about, and they almost did it, they were going to do satin finish colors. We thought it was the coolest idea, we were discussing forest green and some other really cool colors including beige, but they just didn't make it happen. Now, forest green is out, the beige is out, they're not satin but it's funny how that was early-early on.



I remember sitting at my desk at the test track and product planning guy (Bruce Hunt ) came up to me and said we're thinking about doing a special edition TRD version and I was actually the one that helped tune the suspension (the TRD shocks) for that truck and also worked with BFG on the tires. TRD said we want this truck to be an off road desert truck not a rock crawler. So I took the Bilstein guy & BFG Guy in the truck, and we're going 70-80mph through the desert just throwing that thing into corners, hitting bumps, and the truck was brilliant, it was awesome. I actually bought that truck afterwards because I liked it so much. That's one vehicle that the tuning is definitely different than any other FJ out there, the black TRD FJ. No one would ever really know that unless they were involved, but that is setup for more high speed desert type of driving. The next year they came out with the white special edition trail teams truck, and we tuned that one more for the rocks. It was funny because like I said I'm sitting at my desk and Bruce came up to me and said we're thinking about doing an all white truck with black grill and this and that. What do you think of that? I'm like huh, that's a pretty good idea I guess, and then it came out. So, it's neat to see stuff and work on it, and be a part of it and then boom, there it is.

**FJC:** This might be very difficult question to answer, but what is/are your favorite feature or features of the FJC? If you had to pick the one or two things about the FJ that you love the most?

**JB:** I think styling is definitely there, but as a driver, I'm very impressed with A-Trac. What I like about having the A-Trac system and a diff lock is that I've got tools in the box and I can use whatever tool I want. The interesting thing about when I ran the Rubicon was, there were areas where I'm on a side slope and I need to hold my line. I don't want to track down into a rock. I need to hold my line and the only way I could do that as with A-Trac, As soon as I hit that diff lock it would track me right into a rock. So I go back and forth, and that's actually where we found that the A-Trac and Diff lock worked together, on that trip. That's where there was a running change and they went ahead and fixed it, so now you can push them both and they work together. So the front acts like a limited slip essentially and the rear is locked.



going and they really built a lot of press, a lot of people really love the trail teams. Hopefully they can bring it back.

**FJC:** Definitely, we'd love to see it again someday. So here's a personal preference question for you. Do you prefer the auto or manual FJ Cruiser?

**JB:** Well you're talking to a driver, but honestly, I love them both. I get lazy in the auto, but that's what I have. The manual is just really a lot of fun. It's gearing is a little lower (it's 3.91 vs a 3.73 if I'm not mistaken) regardless

though, I like left foot braking, I like driving the truck, and I like to almost come to a stall and blip the throttle. That's how I like to drive, it's definitely more of a driver's off-roader. When it comes to driving on pavement I'd almost rather have the auto & part time 4WD just for fuel economy & stuff. So it's hard to say.

**FJC:** Yeah, the fuel economy is definitely an issue. Our first FJ was an auto and when we got the TRD we went to the manual (mainly due to gearing). I'm sure there were probably a lot of discussions on 4wd vs the part time.

**FJC:** That's awesome. Are there any other tidbits about the development & production, any other anecdotes that you can think of off the top of your head that our readers may be interested in?

**JB:** I'd like to touch on the little lights on the mirrors. People always ask what is that all about? Originally Nishimura-san I think wanted those to be usable working spot lights, but you've got department of transportation rules and it just wouldn't fly.

Like I said I could just talk all day long about different things and that's why I think it'd be fun to do an event here or there and just talk about the development because I spent a lot of time in Japan working on the systems, working on a lot of different vehicles. I've driven all the different very difficult off road courses in Japan that Toyota uses. It's just fun for people that are really strong enthusiasts with the FJ I think to just throw stuff at me and wow, that's really neat and why did they do that. You know, I don't have all the answers but I have a pretty good idea of why things went a certain way and why they didn't.

**FJC:** I definitely want to get you in touch with the FJ Summit guys for next years event. Anything that I can do to help get you out to Ouray next year for the FJ Summit #5, I think that'd be a really good treat to have you out.

Kind of my last question. You're aware that the FJ is going to Australia, but every other week there are discussions about the future of the FJ. There have been rumors of cancelling the FJ since 2009. What's your feeling on that, obviously you can't know for sure since you don't work for Toyota any more, but what's your feeling now that it is going to Australia. Do you see it as something that they would maybe just have in Australia and get rid of the North American market, or do you see it around for a few more years.

**JB:** Well, I can tell you with the early conception of the vehicle I think it was always a niche vehicle. I don't think it was something they were going to keep for a long time. I think it took off so well that it may have changed some minds. I don't know for sure, I just know that it really was considered a niche vehicle. When it comes to Australia, that's a good thing. If they're building vehicles for Australia they're having to change the steering wheel over, that's a big job. I know there's a huge market for them over there and Toyota does a lot of testing in Australia for the North American market. So I'm not surprised by that. I hope they do keep the FJ around, I guess we'll wait & see. But if they're building vehicles for Australia I'd have a hard time believing they're going to stop production.

**FJC:** So tell us a little bit about what you're doing now besides racing for



Lexus. We look forward to following you guys at the 1000 in November. **NOTE: Since we did the interview Joe won the Primm 300 SCORE Race and the Stock Full Championship.**

**JB:** The 1000 is going to be great, like

I said we've got factory backed support which is huge. Going in to next year it's going to be even better, we're actually heading down to the Baja 1000 with the 4Runner again. The 4Runner and my team are teaming up with TMS and we'll be heading down together as a team for factory Toyota & factory Lexus, trying to get a stock mini & stock full win.

Of course I don't have all my eggs in one basket. Unfortunately I was diagnosed with cancer (Hodgkins Lymphoma) back in 2007. I went through 7 months of treatment and after dealing with that it was just time for a change, so I left corporate Toyota. I opened up my company, it's called **JTGrey Performance Driving** and what I offer is stunt driving, commercials, print,

videos, a lot of press events, consulting, suspension tuning for companies, tire development, as well as off road training. I have these three FJ Cruisers that people can check out on my website ([jtgrey.com](http://jtgrey.com)), they're great. I'm bringing everything I've learned over the last 20 years to my customers. All the Bill Burke experience and all the Ivan Stewart experience that I've learned from them. I just want to share it with people that are willing to learn, willing to listen. In 1 day of my training I can't tell you how much you're going to get out of it. It's a lot of fun, you can drive my vehicles. I do it locally here in Phoenix but I also can travel anywhere in the world. If someone wants to go to Brazil to teach a group of people then I can do that as well. I'm not



limited in any way, all for a very low price. Jump in my trucks and I'll teach you how to winch, strap, get stuck, get unstuck, and more. Driving techniques, left foot braking, when to use diff locks, when not to, I go through so much. I do a one hour powerpoint before we even get on the trail to make sure everyone's on the same page and they understand what the expectations are and what I'm going to teach them for the day, it's a good deal. So I hope we can get more people signed up. You can go to my website and sign up for that.

**FJC:** We'll definitely check that out! I really appreciate you spending a little time with us & discussing the development of the FJC. As you know us enthusiasts just love every tidbit of information we can get.

**JB:** It's my pleasure Shane, I love talking about FJ Cruisers.

**FJC:** We look forward to talking with you more Joe, maybe we can meet up on the trail some time! **FJC**

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In July, Ouray was again filled with FJ Cruisers from around the country for the 5th Annual FJ Summit. If you haven't been, we highly recommend making the trek to "Switzerland of America" for next year's event. The mountains are beautiful, the people are wonderful, and I believe this is one of the best off road events in the country.

Since this is our 5th year in Ouray for the Summit, we'll refrain from the normal narrative on how beautiful and awe inspiring the trail runs were. Instead, we'd like to treat you to a few select pics from FJC Magazine Trail Team Members from the event. We do, however, want to share one anecdote.



When Angie and I arrived late Wednesday evening the rain was pounding Ouray quite heavily, and had been for hours. If you're not familiar with the arid climate in Colorado, hard rain storms in July can have major consequences in the mountains.

The next morning there was still quite a bit of drizzle coming down when I met up with the early morning Black Bear Pass group. I asked our trail leader, Chris Hatfield from TLCA, how he felt about Black Bear Pass in the rain and he didn't have any concerns. We were all experienced drivers and the trail is not terribly difficult (just intimidating). I agreed and we headed up to the trailhead.

The rain was slowing down by the time we began airing down at the trailhead, but it was still sprinkling. I jumped ahead of the group to setup for video and still shots. Although I was in CB range, I tuned to the HAM channel we agreed upon to monitor their progress. It's there that I learned Chris Davis from Rising Sun 4x4 would be the "Drop Off" spotter for the day. We chatted a little on HAM as we headed up the trail.

By the time our group had reached the summit of Black Bear (after an AWESOME optional 'waterfall' obstacle), Chris D. had run into



**Top & Above: FJ's on Imogene Pass**  
**| Photo by Brett Smith**

**Right: "The Waterfall" On Black Bear Pass**  
**| Photo by Shane Williams**

a problem. Not long after starting downhill from the summit, he discovered a giant 2-3 ton boulder blocking the trail. Chris H. and I left the group up top and headed down to see if we could get the boulder off the shelf of the trail. About an hour later, after trying many different methods to move the rock, we were able to guide Chris's Sandstorm FJ over it. From there it was just a matter of pulling it out of the way, which required Chris H.'s V8 equipped FJ-80 to finish.

We called back to the group at the summit and continued down the trail.

For about 1/2 mile.

I guess we should've scouted a little further ahead before bringing all those FJ's down the shelf road, because we were once again blocked. This time, there was no way we were moving the obstacle: an entire hillside had slid down to cover the trail. The rain took its toll on the loose rock and caused a mushy slide of rocks and mud to completely wipe out the trail for at least 30 yards. As off road types, our first thought was to crawl over it, but one step into the mush and we knew we weren't going anywhere. All that rain made the slide a muddy mess that sunk down 4-5 inches when walking on it.

So now we practice the art of backing up a one way trail. We had about 10 trucks that had to back up 50-100 yards to a suitable turn around spot. I had the honor of spotting everyone to help get the group turned around, and after about 20 minutes or so we were on our way back.

We were able to notify FJ Summit HQ of the issue and they notified the county officials to get the mess cleaned up. The trail was open by later that day, but unfortunately we weren't able to complete Black Bear Pass at this year's Summit. But luckily, there's always next year :)



**Above: Chris Davis thinking about the best way to move a boulder off the trail.**

**Below: The slide covering the trail.**



**A VooDoo Blue FJ Cruiser makes its way to the summit of Black Bear Pass  
|Photos by Shane Williams**

Left: FJ's heading up Mineral Creek  
| Photo by Shane Williams

Below: Bob's FJ on Imogene Pass  
| Photo by Brett Smith



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Left: FJ's just past the summit of Black Bear Pass, heading toward the switchbacks  
| Photo by Brett Smith



Right: Heading down Imogene Pass  
| Photo by Brett Smith

Below Right: The view from near the summit of Imogene Pass  
| Photo by Angie Williams

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# EXPEDITION WHEELING: THREE YEARS OF AMAZING ADVICE

Since our very first issue in January 2008, Lance Blair has taken us through everything you need to know about creating the perfect Expedition Ready FJ Cruiser. As we close out our third year of publications, we want to take the opportunity to reflect on the lessons learned from one of our most talented contributors. This is a great chance to review everything from the basics all the way to using your expedition ready truck in a time of crisis. We hope you enjoy this review of past articles!

What it means to build an Expedition Ready Rig January 2008 [Download](#)  
“When I tell people my FJ Cruiser is an expedition style 4x4, they often ask “Exactly what does ‘expedition style’ mean?” “Expedition style is the idea of multi-day, off-highway, destination-bound, vehicle-dependent travel.” I know your scrabble boards and crossword puzzles are packed away, and I shouldn’t have jammed all that into one phrase, but that encompasses our purpose. Maybe it would be easier to tell you what expedition style 4x4 is NOT and work backwards from there.”

Expedition Planning April 2008 [Download](#)  
“Racing legend Rod Millen has said “Preparation is key, the event is just a formality.” This holds true for a race, a job, or a long distance trip. Another great anonymous quote is “There are no big problems in life, just small ones that didn’t get dealt with”. I am quickly learning the difference between a week-long, free spirited, camping trip and an expedition that is time-line dependent, goal oriented, and multi-vehicle. Jump in the passenger seat and come along for the ride!”

Expedition Comfort July 2008 [Download](#)  
“When the word expedition is used, many people think of grueling treks across the barren Sahara or the wild harshness of the Outback. In reality, overlanding is usually as comfortable as a picnic in your backyard. You have a crisp salad, a cold beverage, a comfy bed, and plenty of time to relax around the fire at night. ”

A Trip, Adventure, or Expedition? October 2008 [Download](#)  
“We each take a trip when we pull out of the driveway, and those trips sometimes become adventures, but what does it mean to embark on a true expedition? While it’s fun to use the term ‘expedition’ to give our trips or adventures a cool sound, it’s important to know the difference and understand why overlanding is gaining in popularity.”

Overlanding Habits January 2009 [Download](#)  
“Those of you who have followed my “Expedition Wheeling” articles know that I have tried to lay out the contrast between overlanding and recreational 4wd use. There is one area that really illustrates those differences. Believe it or not, it has nothing to do with snorkels, fridges or even a roof top tent. The simple daily routines of vehicle dependent overlanding that sets it apart is the discipline to record your route log, backup the camera memory, charge

the batteries for tomorrow, look over that rig and fix the little things and most importantly assessing your plan that keeps the “expedition” from falling apart.”.

Expedition Economics April 2009 [Download](#)  
“From the TV news to the radio talk shows and even the guys at the bar, everyone says times are tough and the economy is in the tank. Well, from the expedition travel standpoint things are as good as they have been in a long time, and they just keep getting better. Simply put: for a family of four, overlanding is a great way to save money while packing in a tremendous amount of history, scenery and experiences.”.

Expedition Medic July 2009 [Download](#)  
“I see that gleam in your eye, that desire to read about how to stab a ball point pen into someone’s chest to save their life or how to use your Hi-Lift jack handle to splint that broken leg as the helicopter descends in a whirlwind of dust and noise. But before we get to those juicy details, and trust me we will, I want you to go practice the single most important bit of back country medicine (and front country for that matter) there is. Please go wash your hands, right now, yes I said wash your hands! Those things are stomach churning, infection imparting, death dealing monsters!”.

Expedition Families October 2009 [Download](#)  
“When it comes to expedition style travel many of us have that classic image of the solo explorer traversing dissolute dunes or fighting through dense jungle. In reality, it is more likely to be that other classic scene with dad screaming “don’t make me pull this truck over” while the wife sits with her arms crossed and the kids in the back pinch and punch each other. Well truth be told, with a little pre-planning, some habit changes and a bit of post trip debriefing your family will transform into a laughing, talking memory making machine.”

Expedition Sponsorship January 2010 [Download](#)  
“We all have that image of a dream rig covered in stickers, out on some epic adventure, writing our magazine articles or filming our TV show and not a penny came out of our pockets. Or maybe you have heard one of the thousands of people say something like “well I hit tons of trails and do cool stuff, company X should give me some gear”. Well what if I told you that hour for hour you will work harder when sponsored than if you just paid for things yourself? Follow along and you will see why.”

Escape Pods April 2010 [Download](#)  
““The Zombies are coming!” someone yells, or maybe it is the heat of a raging wildfire, or even the roar of the flood waters breaking over a dike wall, but whatever the reason you need to hightail it out of town and now. How will you deal with fallen trees, deep water or worse, TEOTWAWKI (The End of The World As We Know It)? I know as an expedition style traveler, I am more than prepared to run the zombies into the ground.”

Ditch Bags July 2010 [Download](#)  
“Pilots & boaters call them Ditch Bags, survivalist might call them Flee Bags, and those of us who are all about being prepared call them Bug Out Bags. No matter what you call them the name is both the definition of why you need it and an explanation of what it is. Something very bad has happened and you have to ditch, flee or bug out from your vehicle and whatever is in your grab bag is all you have until help arrives.”.





# UPDATE

By Taft Babbit

I've been running the Baja Rack for a year on my FJ Cruiser and it has held up as quality equipment should. I have had it loaded with 200 lbs. multiple times and the rack handles the weight without issue. The black powder coat finish looks as good as the day I installed the rack. There has been no noticeable increase in wind noise and from time to time I check the mounts to ensure they have not loosened due to vibration and normal wear and tear. To date the mounts have not loosened at all and still maintain a firm lock on the stock rack. People have commented many times about my "custom rack" and are surprised when I point out that I am still using the stock rack and have simply added the Baja Rack for added capability and improved looks.

conditions. Since that first experience in the cold I haven't had any other hooks break. There are multiple hooks on the netting so even though I had a couple break initially there are plenty of hooks remaining to secure the load on the rack.

In summary, a year later and the rack is performing like the first day I mounted it, and looks just as new. I'd recommend this rack to anyone that wants to increase the functionality and looks of their FJ without breaking the bank for a complete replacement rack.

As stated in my previous initial write-up about this rack, the netting that comes with the rack does a superb job at keeping down the items you chose to mount up top. When I first got the rack and used it in the winter I did break a couple of the plastic hooks that secure the netting to the rack due to them becoming a little brittle in the cold. For this reason I suggest storing the netting (and attached hooks) in a warm place when not using. This will allow the hooks to remain more pliable and have less chance of breaking due to cold



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able and have less chance of breaking due to cold

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The coming year offers some very interesting changes for the FJ Cruiser. First, and perhaps most important, is that early in 2011 the FJ Cruiser will make its debut in the land down under. In case you haven't heard yet, Australia will get the FJ Cruiser! We're hoping this means other right hand drive countries like Japan and New Zealand will get the FJ as well, but if not it's still some of the biggest FJ Cruiser news in years.

Toyota also recently announced details for the North American FJ Cruiser for 2011. On the top of the list is the Trail Teams Special Edition FJ Cruiser in monochrom Army Green. The new TT also features blacked out external parts (just like previous versions) and green fabric seat inserts. It also includes the Off Road package standard including TRD wheels & BFGA/T tires and other standard upgrades.

Other FJ Cruiser changes for the new model year include two new colors: Calvary Blue (which is similar to but different than Voodoo Blue), which replaces Sun Fusion and the yet to be photographed "Quicksand" (see below for our guess) that replaces Sandstorm. An all new au-



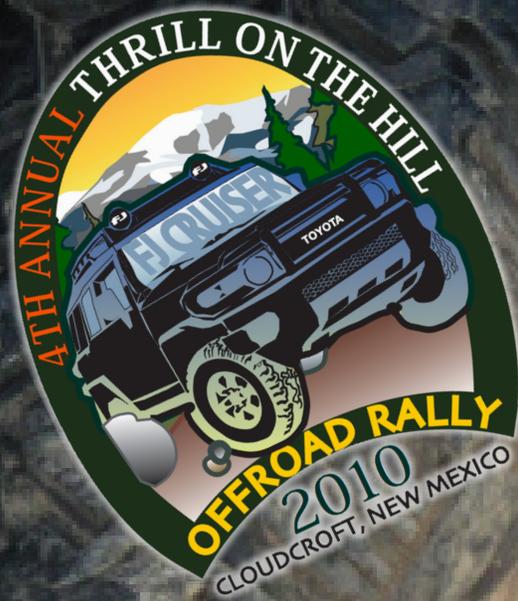
dio system with Bluetooth and USB/iPod integration comes standard, and there are new upgrades available to the audio system including a new subwoofer.

Another big change that is sure to result in controversy are the new alloy wheels. They look like the same wheels that are available for the 2010 4Runner, and we've already heard very mixed thoughts on them. We think they're a good update from the original spoked aluminum wheels and have a more cutting edge look.

Overall we're very excited about the 2011 FJ Cruiser and can't wait to take one for a spin. We'll be watching the dealers and as soon as one hits Colorado we'll check it out and report back on these and other changes.



***This Just In: A well placed source has tipped us that Toyota will be coming out with a soft top FJ Cruiser. While we're not sure when this model will debut (or if it ever will for sure), we're excited about the possibility. While a removable hard top may make more sense in some ways, a convertible FJ of any type would be very exciting. We'll keep an eye out for any more information and report back. Join our [Facebook Page](#) for the latest news including anything we hear about the soft top FJ.***



# Thrill on the Hill - 2010

by Paul Bearce

They say that the first scratch is always the hardest. I am not sure who “they” are, but I found out the hard way that “they” were right. I have been off-roading for a little more than four years and the first time I put some trail scratches on my precious FJC, I thought I was going to puke. So participating in this year’s Thrill on the Hill and taking the chance of damage on a very technical obstacle didn’t cause me to flinch. When I crunched my right rear wheel on a rock during the first day of trail runs I took it in stride. But I’m getting ahead of myself, first, a little bit of history.

After I purchased my FJC from Brandon Burling at Desert Sun Motors in Alamogordo, NM, he mentioned to me that he was in the process of planning an off-roading event in the southern part of the state and that I should plan on attending. The first annual Thrill on the Hill was scheduled for Memorial Day weekend of 2007, so I jumped at the chance to test the capabilities of the Cruiser. My son and I loaded up the camping equipment and hit the road.



Photo By Paul Bearce

#### Fast forward a few years.

Due to my off road adventures, my rig has since seen the addition of custom bumpers (because I had ripped off the plastic bumper wings on the stock bumper), upgraded lower control arms (because I had pretzeled my original ones), full armor plating (because the original tin plate was bent in half), and a suspension lift. Oh yes, and some beautiful Dick Cepek wheels.

The fourth annual Thrill on the Hill was held on Labor Day weekend near Cloudcroft, NM and Brandon had promised a few “more technical” runs for those who were seeking an adrenalin rush and to truly test the capabilities of their machines. After arriving at the camp ground, we quickly got reacquainted with old friends; Fatbob and Patty, Sean and Sarah, Jessica, Dan and Dan, Rick, George and Kirk. We all signed up for the first day of runs and noted the line-up times. We spent the evening telling stories and wishing Sean a happy birthday over a roaring campfire. Several adult beverages were consumed, although they were hidden in the sweetness of a fruit punch.

Saturday's run started out with about 15 FJ Cruisers and an 80-series rig heading down a forest road, splashing through mud puddles and talking smack over the CB radio. Vendor sponsor and off-road guru Jason Demello was among the drivers in our group. After a few scenic stops along the way, Brandon led us to a dry creek bed where we all exited our vehicles and followed him on a hike up the arroyo to a series of boulder-strewn stair-step rises. It looked impossible to negotiate, but after the group packed a few loose rocks in the large holes, Jason stepped up to the plate and easily crawled his way up the first, then second obstacle.

Brandon then asked if anyone else was going to attempt it. The only thing you could hear was crickets. I felt bad for Brandon as he was so proud that he found a very technical run to please the more adventurous crowd, and nobody was taking it on. Then Bob leaned over to me and said “George would do it!” That was enough to send me to get my rig, shift into 4-low and head for the creek. I asked Jason and Jeff to spot my run and they agreed.

As I maneuvered the FJC up the rocks, I could hear them crunching against the Bud Built skids. Then Jeff asked me to give it a little bit of gas to get over a rock, and I guess I didn't hear the “little bit” part and I goosed it – the FJC began to hop and the rear end went sideways. There was a large-pointy rock aimed right at my rear wheel. Amazingly enough – it fit perfectly inside the dish of the wheel. Now, remember, the wheel was spinning – I think you can see a mental picture of what happened next. The sound of grinding metal was awful and I think I peed a little bit! I then heard the sound of air rushing from the tire.

The valve stem had been ripped off and my Dick Cepek wheel had a new design engraved in it. We were able to back the rig down, used the hi-lift to change the wheel, and tire and headed up the rocks again. This time I was a bit more careful on the skinny pedal and had a successful run. My heart rate slowed a bit and I headed for the second obstacle. It was there that I became high-centered on the rear pumpkin and we had to break-out the winch line to get over that one.

A few others came up behind me with equal results. Another FJC also lost a valve stem and the 80-series suffered a bit of body damage. Everyone knew the risks we were taking, and gladly put our vehicles on the brink for a thrill. After all – that is the name of the event! I look at the positives, I feel a sense of accomplishment, and got a chance to use the hi-lift and the winch. I also got to change into clean underwear. Not a bad day after all.

We got back to camp, cleaned up and headed for the cookout and raffle. I had a lot of people ask questions about my run and the damages. After winning a nice prize in the raffle, the damage seemed lessened somehow. We had a great time, listened to a wonderful band, and laughed a lot.

The Thrill continues to be a great family-oriented event where FJC owners get together for friendship and camaraderie. Although I suffered a little bit of trail damage this year, it was certainly not the first time I have “scratched” my Cruiser. So, it was pretty easy this time around. I got the first scratch out of the way years ago.



Jason Demello from Demello Offroad negotiates up a stream bed during Saturday's run to Burnt Canyon during the 4th Annual Thrill on the Hill near Cloudcroft, NM



Photos by Paul Bearce

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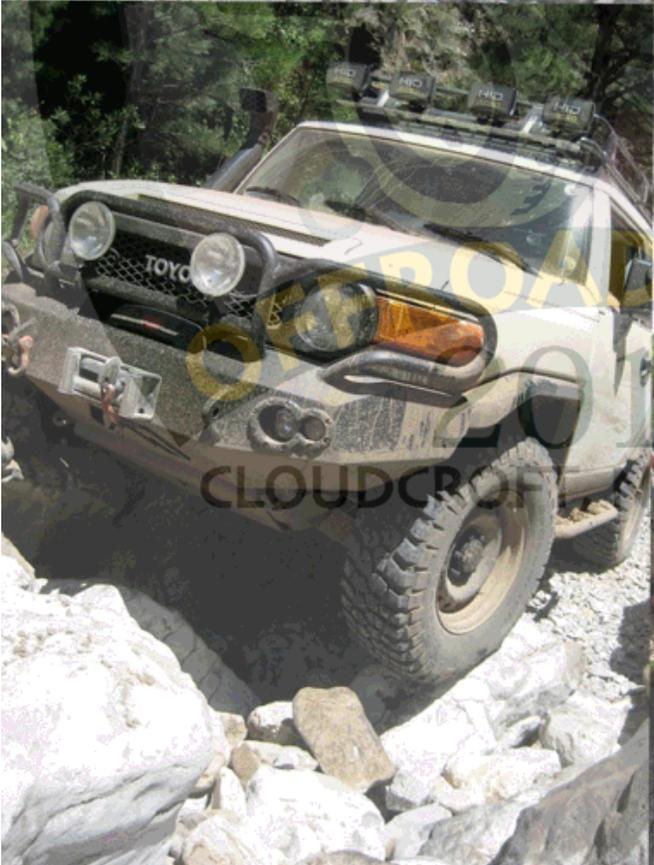
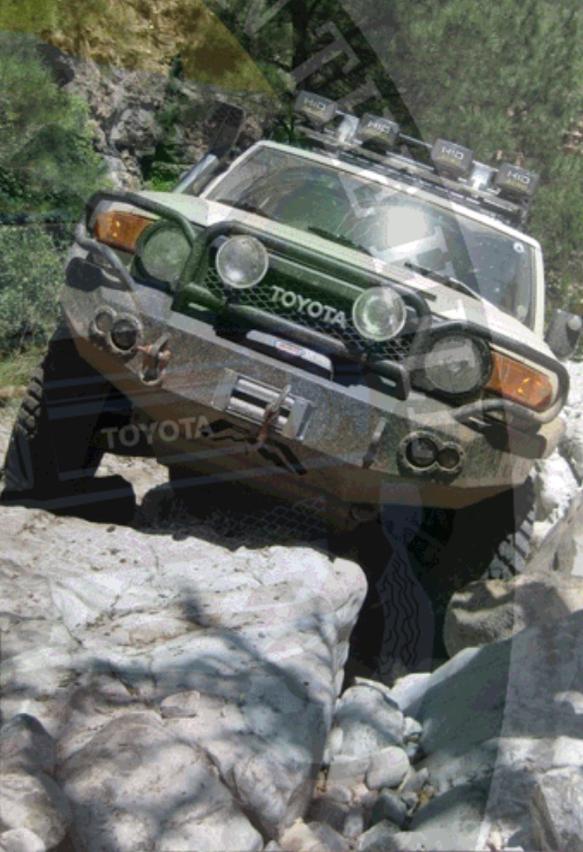


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Photos by: (top left) Kirk Isaacson, (top right) Ryan Puryear, (mid row) Ryan Puryear, (bottom left) Ryan Puryear, (bottom right) Kirk Isaacson.



# Thrill on the Hill - 2010

# All Cal 2010

by Stephen M. Dozen

When people think of Northern and Southern California, it usually conjures up images of Giants vs. Dodgers, forest to desert, Hollywood to Silicon Valley, and fog to smog. However, when FJ Cruiser owners from NorCal and SoCal get together, a temporary phenomenon occurs. That entity is known as the AllCal Republic and their annual event: AllCal.

AllCal was first held in Southern California when SoCal resident, Tony Wu, proposed on the national FJ Cruiser forum a meet & greet at Hungry Valley SVRA in Gorman, CA.

What was going to be an event of about 50 FJ Cruisers turned out to attract over 90, including many from Northern California. That event signified the official birth of the AllCal event.

Now in its second year, AllCal 2010 was held at Hollister Hills SVRA in the rolling hills of Hollister, CA. The event attracted over 90 trucks from six different states and more than 20 event sponsors for the 3-day extravaganza.

Hollister Hills provided the perfect backdrop for all levels of drivers from advanced to first-timers. In a departure from most beginner trail runs, organizers created what were known as “level up” trail runs that gradually challenged new drivers with increasingly difficult trails and obstacles. After conducting a thorough briefing before the run, skilled drivers shadowed the newbies wherever the trails led them. Brian Landers was one of the drivers who benefited from the guidance. “They really went above and beyond to make sure that all my questions and concerns were addressed before we headed up the ridge.”

Other newbies not only enjoyed the confidence-building experience, but found that it was a good way to familiarize their significant others with the sport as well. “It’s a great way to introduce that reluctant/nervous spouse to wheelin. By the end of the run my wife was a convert, and now she wants to go down every dirt road she sees!” stated Ken Sickels.

Those with more seat time were provided with a playground scenario consisting of challenging trails and obstacle courses. One of the most challenging trails at Hollister is the ever-forsboding Truck Hill. The steep climb is not for the faint of heart – one wrong move could prove catastrophic. Yet a few brave souls mustered

up enough courage to tame Truck Hill, including Sang Nam. “When our group showed up to the bottom of Truck Hill, my jaw just dropped,” stated the Southern Californian. “After a few butterflies in the

stomach, I decided to try it since this hill was one of the main reasons I came to Hollister Hills.” Nam succeeded in his quest to conquer Truck Hill, but not everyone was as fortunate. Truck Hill managed to claim the inner and outer tie rod ends of one unlucky FJer the next day.



For some drivers, AllCal 2010 proved to be the grand finale in a feat that was given the moniker, The Trifecta. The Trifecta consisted of three FJ Cruiser events, including FJ Summit, DVIFFTC Moab and AllCal 2010. Two weeks of fun, friends and FJs – what more could one ask for? Leonie Bowers of BozTec began spreading the word of The Trifecta at the FJ Summit in Ouray, CO and managed to wrangle five other trucks to join her. “A couple of the FJ owners were old friends of NorCal, so there was a little incentive to attend the final leg of The Trifecta,” said Bowers. “Everyone soon became new friends of



Saturday Night BBQ | Photo by Ken Sickels

some chaos' after the wheeling day was over! We had lots of laughs; I met a lot of new wheeling friends."

AllCal 2010 also served as the proving grounds for a new ICON Vehicle Dynamics product and marked the debut of newly-formed, Red Eye Fabrication. "Being a new company and first time sponsor of any event, I really didn't know what to expect," said Mark Nisbeth, owner of Red Eye Fab. "I was impressed by the sense of camaraderie amongst the FJers and am happy to be a part of that community."

In a departure from the norm, AllCal 2010 also welcomed various agencies such as California State Parks and Tread Lightly! as

well as recreation and consumer companies Insight Systems Exchange, Cobb Grill, Maui Jim Sunglasses and American Licorice, who provided tubs of Red Vines.

AllCal. It was a great way to end an epic trip with new friends and ol' comrades back home."

**"Since this was the bringing together of FJCs, it seemed only right that we cook and serve the food ourselves."**

**Tony Bosso, Master Tread Trainer, Tread Lightly!**

And when they returned home, they were treated to an event with a sponsor lineup like no other. All the big names in the FJC community, such as ICON Vehicle Dynamics,

All-Pro Off Road, Metal Tech, DeMello Offroad and Total Chaos among others, were represented in one form or another and generously contributed to the prize drawing. All the attendees enjoyed time on the trails and mingling with sponsors, like Nicole Pitell of Total Chaos. "I had an opportunity to meet and wheel with FJ owners from all over the west coast," stated the enthusiastic marketing director. "The campfires raged, the trails and weather were awesome and the attendees knew how to 'cause

FJ Cruisers lined up at base camp  
Photo courtesy of Scott Malandrone, Manland North! Images



Happy Chefs, Tony Bosso and Marc Powers, prepare the Saturday Night Feast  
Photo courtesy of Cha Vang

And while on the topic of food, what would an event be without a



Windshield Decal  
Photo courtesy of Scott  
Malandrone, Manland  
North! Images

group barbecue? Saturday night's BBQ, sponsored by BozTec, featured tri-tip, drumsticks, vegetable skewers and tasty adult beverages provided by Lucky 13 Alameda.

The organizers opted against having the event catered and instead enlisted volunteers to help prep, barbeque and serve the meals to further build the spirit of camaraderie and friendship. "Since this was the bringing together of FJCs, it seemed

**"I was impressed by the sense of camaraderie amongst the FJers and am happy to be a part of that community."**  
**Mark Nisbeth, owner, Red Eye Fabrication**

only right that we cook and serve the food ourselves," said Tony Bosso, Master Tread Trainer for Tread Lightly! and head of BBQ Operations. "Of course, a by-product of this was getting to meet everyone who came. It was a great way to see old faces and make new friends."

And so was the theme for AllCal 2010. Friendship and camaraderie. Who would have ever thought NorCalers and SoCalers would get along so well? What next? Dogs and cats living together? Mass hysteria? **FJC**



## Dreaming of your next adventure?



### We sure are.

The Toyota Land Cruiser Association is a club dedicated to bringing Toyota 4-Wheel Drive enthusiasts together. Visit us at [www.tlca.org](http://www.tlca.org) to learn more.



TLCA membership includes a subscription to **Toyota Trails** magazine, featuring in-depth tech and trail articles, event listings, TLCA merchandise and Land Cruiser classifieds.

**Toyota Land Cruiser Association**  
P.O. Box 230, Verona, KY, 41092  
(800) 655-3810 • [www.tlca.org](http://www.tlca.org)



(Left): Mike McCambridge tackling the tire obstacle  
Photo courtesy of Cha Vang



(Right): FJ Cruiser awaits its turn on Truck Hill  
Photo courtesy of Scott Malandrone, Manland North! Images

**"When our group showed up to the bottom of Truck Hill, my jaw just dropped."  
Sang Nam**

**"It was a great way to end an epic trip with new friends and ol' comrades back home."  
Leonie Bowers, BozTec**



The BOZTEC FJ overcomes an obstacle | Photo by John Shaghafi

# NEW PRODUCTS!

A newcomer to the off road trailer market, Chris Dickerson from Sierra 4x4 Trailers is no stranger to building high quality products. Chris started his career by building some of the coolest high performance racing aircraft on the circuit, so he knows a thing or two about design and engineering.

These trailers are meant to be very similar to M416 Military "Jeep" trailers, but are custom built to order by Sierra 4x4 Trailers in Garderville, Nevada. All trailer components are sourced locally in Nevada and no portion of production is outsourced or 'made in China'.

The base trailer includes a powder coated black 2 x 3 frame (a 2" X 4" frame is optional), a painted tub in standard colors, powder coated black fenders, a bed mat, 5 x 4.5 lug pattern hubs, and standard wheels & tires (see below for the perfect FJ Ready trailer). These trailers are 61" wide fender to fender (but the track after adding Toyota wheels/tires is ~65", a perfect match for the FJ Cruiser). While the standard trailer is 120" long, most FJ owners will want to add the Expedition Length option, which extends the tongue 12" so your rear door can open all the way while towing the trailer. With standard wheels and tires the trailer weighs in at a svelt 640lbs, add a little more for the lid. The Gross Vehicle Weight is 1500lbs but that can be upped to 3500lbs with the optional brakes.

box is bolted to the frame in 8 locations. For cargo room, the standard trailer is very similar to the classic M416 with 35 cubic feet of storage. The floor is 41" wide and 72" long, while the top is flared out to 49" wide. The standard trailer is 19" deep, but Sierra is considering raising that to 21" to accommodate most slide out fridge/freezer setups. The trailer stands 42" high on standard tires, but it will be a little higher for an FJ Ready version with the lid. Both ends of the trailer include 2 1/2" receiver tubes for flexibility in towing, recovery and additional accessories.

Axle clearance on the standard configuration is 12" (so add a little more for the FJ Ready version) and frame clearance is 19". While the standard axle includes 3000lb springs, many FJ owners will want to add full length leaf springs with shocks for \$275. Sierra also offers an air bag trailing arm suspension for extreme off road use, which is a \$995 option. There are also several options for tail lights, ranging from standard lights to integrated LED lights depending on your preference and budget. Other upgrades like diamond plate tongue deck and bed floor are also available. You can actually customize nearly any aspect of your build to your exact specifications. Features like a 2000lb swivel jack, many coupler options, and 20 tie down hooks are also included or are available as options.

While it's possible to find an old M416 Military trailer online for less than a Sierra 4x4 Trailer, we've estimated that by the time you include all the upgrades, modifications, and maintenance most of those trailers need, your build can easily hit the \$4,000 mark. If you include the time you'll spend on the trailer instead of enjoying the outdoors then the true costs can total much more. We've literally looked at every trailer manufacturer Google will show us and (so far) Sierra is one of the best options available.

With our growing family and our desire to spend more time off the pavement, we're planning on outfitting our own off road trailer in early 2011. At this point a Sierra 4x4 Trailer is on the top of a very short list of possibilities. We'll keep you updated as we decide which trailer to go with and how we'll be outfitting it for years of family fun in the woods.

**SOURCE:**  
**Sierra 4x4 Trailers**  
**Phone: (775) 783-0700**  
**Web: <http://www.sierra4x4trailers.com>**

The bed, body, and fenders are made of 14GA MIG welded steel and the

## BUILDING AN "FJ READY" SIERRA 4X4 TRAILER

Base Trailer: .....	\$3,495
Toyota Hubs: .....	\$40
BFG A/T Tires 265-70-R17 on steel wheels: .....	\$200
Hard Top: .....	\$750
Tail Gate: .....	\$275
12" Longer Expedition Frame: .....	\$100
Max Coupler: .....	\$225

**Total for a basic "FJ Ready" Trailer: .....\$5,085\***

\*Price is an estimate only, contact vendor for an exact quote

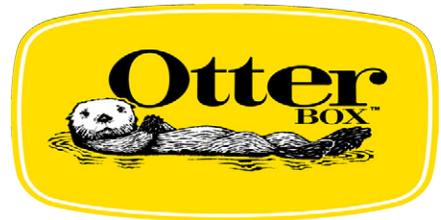


Base trailer with steel wheels, 265-70-R16 BFG AT tires and other options



This photo does not represent the exact features of the FJ Ready trailer

I think it's no big secret that FJC Magazine runs on Macintosh and the iOS platform. We've had every iPhone that's been released and absolutely LOVE the iPad. In fact, a device like the iPad is what we were thinking of when we launched our first issue in 2008. Well our love for Apple technology is overshadowed by our love for the outdoors. So when we first learned of Otterbox cases a couple of years ago at the FJ Summit, we knew they would be our solution for protecting our devices from then on. When the iPhone 4 was released we had to wait a month for the Otterbox cases to be ready, and the entire time I was worried about ruining my phone. Luckily I was able to pick up the Defender Series case for iPhone 4 in Ouray and I've been well protected since.



#### Defender Series for iPhone 4

This is the case you want when you're bouncing through down the trail, or hitting the slopes, or in the mud. The Defender Series case will protect your phone from just about anything. While it's not water-proof, it's as close as you'll get with a great looking case. Luckily for me it is drop proof, since I tend to drop my phone out of the FJ onto the concrete way more often than I should. It also holds up well to baby drool :). The only issue I've noticed with this case is that since it protects your phone so well, it also can cause your phone to overheat more easily, so be careful not to leave the phone in direct sunlight.



#### Commuter Series for iPhone 4

For everyday protection from minor drops, a few sprinkles, and a 7 month old; the Commuter Series is the way to go. More sleek and user friendly than the Defender Series, this case is what's on my phone all the time (unless I'm heading to the woods). It includes three layers of protection to guard against impact and is still slim enough to easily slide in my pocket. Otterbox has addressed some minor issues with the previous version & this case is as good as they come.

#### Commuter Series for iPad

While the iPad is an amazing device for reading your favorite FJ Cruiser publication, checking e-mail, trolling the forums, and playing games – in stock form it is simply too fragile. The larger size of the device means it's easier to drop, and drops can be much more serious with the iPad than with a phone. Luckily Otterbox was able to solve this problem as well with their Commuter Series case for iPad. It provides the same levels of protection as the iPhone cases so your device will be OK in the event of a minor drop. When you order your Commuter Series

case make sure you order an additional screen protector, it's very difficult to get it on cleanly and lint free so it may take a couple of tries. The rear access panel for the dock connector also takes some getting used to, so practice with it a few times & you'll get the hang of it.



**FJ Cruiser  
Roll-top Console Cover**

**PARAMINT** - brushed black aluminum door (pictured)

**BORREGO** - satin silver aluminum door

**URBAN** - ABS plastic door

Stainless Steel Locking Option Available on all models

**Industrial Forming**  
805-658-3350

[www.roll-topcover.com](http://www.roll-topcover.com)

**SOURCE**  
<http://www.otterbox.com>

# UPDATE: **FUEL** MAGAZINE PROJECT FI

-Photos and Text by FUEL Staff.

## CUSTOM LIGHTING

### OFF-ROAD LIGHTING

The first order of business was off-road lighting. For this we chose the ORACLE Solid-State; High Powered off-road lights. A total of 5 of these 12" lights, each containing 18 High-Output LED bulbs. Besides being insanely bright, these lights are nearly indestructible, consume very little power, and, well, they look neat!



Next, the crew at AAC added a custom SMD Halo Kit to the truck. We had white (on road) and green (show only) halos installed. Custom LED footwell lighting was installed as was a bank of flush switches to control the new lighting accessories. For better visibility a bi-xenon projector retrofit was fabbed into the existing headlight housings.

### HALO HEADLIGHTS

### CUSTOM RETROFIT

Perhaps the most unique mod is the custom mirror lighting. The factory mirror spotlights are useless, AAC installed these amazing high-powered LEDs that act as foglights and can actually outshine the Xenon HID Headlights! The boring parking lights were replaced with their "concept" SMD strips that look like a pair of intensely-lit lines.



DEMO VIDEO UPLOADED TO: 

**WANT TO SEE MORE?**

[WWW.FUEL-MAG.COM](http://WWW.FUEL-MAG.COM)

We had some other cool accessories installed like the custom halo tail lights and LED Interior bulb replacements. Unfortunately we could not show it all in just one page. We added a video to our youtube channel showing some of the installation process. To find out more about the lighting services offered by AAC visit [www.AACstyle.com](http://www.AACstyle.com)



# FJ Cruiser Events

Southern Cruiser Crawl  
Dates: October 7-10, 2010  
Location: Hot Springs, AR  
Contact: Cottonland Cruisers

9th Annual Surf N Turf  
Dates: November 5-7, 2010  
Location: Pismo Beach, CA  
Contact: Surf N Turf Website

Lone Star Toyota Jamboree  
Dates: January 15-17, 2011  
Location: Gilmer, Tx  
Contact: Lone Star Jamboree Website

**2011 FJ Northeasters Easter Event**  
Dates: April 22-24, 2011  
Location: Rausch Creek ORP, PA  
Contact: FJ Northeasters Website

2011 Cruise Moab  
Dates: April 27-May 1, 2011  
Location: Moab, Ut  
Contact: Cruise Moab Website

**2011 Spring Mud Fling**  
Dates: May 27-30, 2011 (Tentative)  
Location: Winchester, VA  
Contact: FJ Bruisers Website

**2011 SedonaFest**  
Dates: June 3-5, 2011 (Tentative)  
Location: Sedona, AZ  
Contact: SedonaFest Website

23rd Annual Rubithon  
Dates: June 14-19, 2011 (Tentative)  
Location: Moab, Ut  
Contact: Rubithon Website

**2011 FJ Summit**  
Dates: July 2011  
Location: Ouray, CO  
Contact: FJ Summit Website

**3rd Annual All Cal**  
Dates: July-August 2011  
Location: Northern California  
Contact: All Cal Website

**Thrill on the Hill 2011**  
Dates: Labor Day 2011  
Location: Cloudcroft, NM  
Contact: Thrill on the Hill Website

**For the latest event news  
& coverage, visit  
FJC-Mag.com and click  
on Event Calendar**



## CLUBS & GROUPS

**702 FJ Crew**  
<http://702fjcrew.net>

**ATL FJ's**  
<http://www.atlfjc.com>

**AZ FJ's**  
<http://www.azfj.org>

**Aloha FJ's**  
<http://s6.invisionfree.com>

**Colorado FJ's**  
<http://www.coloradofjs.com>

**SoCAL FJ's**  
<http://www.socalfjcruisers.com>

**UAE FJ Group**  
<http://www.uae-fj.com>

**FJ Bruisers**  
<http://www.fjbruisers.org>

**Sin City Wicked FJ's**  
<http://www.sincitywickedfjs.com>

**FJ's Ontario**  
<http://www.fjcruisersontario.com>

**FJ's Quebec**  
<http://www.fjcruiserquebec.com>

**NWFJCC**  
<http://www.nwfjcc.com>

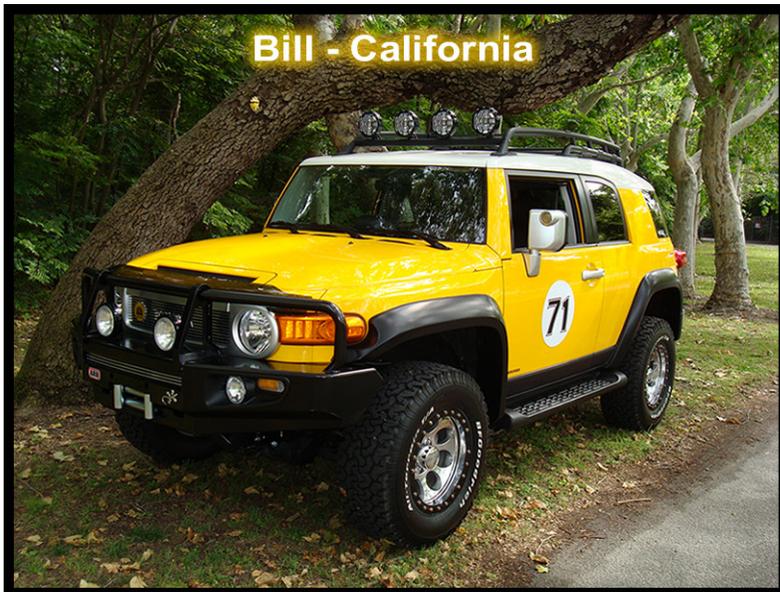
**FJ Northeasters**  
<http://www.fjnortheasters.org>

**NorCal FJ's**  
<http://norcalfjs.ning.com>

# FJ Nation



Bob - Utah (@ FJ Summit)



Bill - California

*Have a great pic of your FJ?  
E-mail a high-res version to [pics@fjc-mag.com](mailto:pics@fjc-mag.com)*



Shane (Colorado) & Ken (Kansas)  
@ The FJ Summit