



Finding Glory on the Open Road

By Richard Giordano



This 1990 Toyota Pickup was not in the best shape, but with some TLC, it became a very reliable trekking machine.

We did what you are *supposed* to do. Graduate high school, go to college, get a job, go to night school, get a second job (one we were passionate about this time), get married, and buy a home. Done. So now what? We weren't quite ready to settle down and produce offspring. What were we *supposed* to do next? Why did we feel unhappy and trapped in our seemingly successful lives?

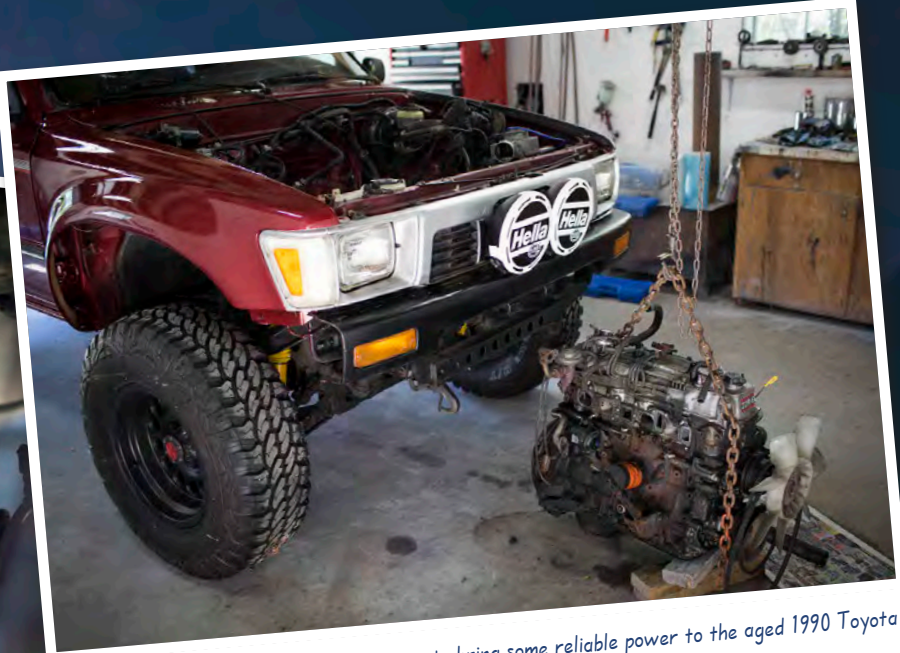
The catalyst for this trip was a text message from Ashley. "We need to have a life chat." Knowing that she probably didn't want a divorce or babies I was intrigued. We had been working at opposite ends of Vancouver so we met at a coffee shop somewhere in between, and made the decision to make a change. That change would be selling our belongings, renting out our condo, and moving into a 1990 Toyota Pickup for the next 8 months. We knew we wanted to travel and the normal 3-4 weeks wasn't going to cut it this time. We

yearned to see the world before running short on our 30,000 days on this Earth. A plan was hatched at the coffee shop and we had four months to prepare ourselves and our truck for a 20,000 km+ road trip into the depths of Central America.

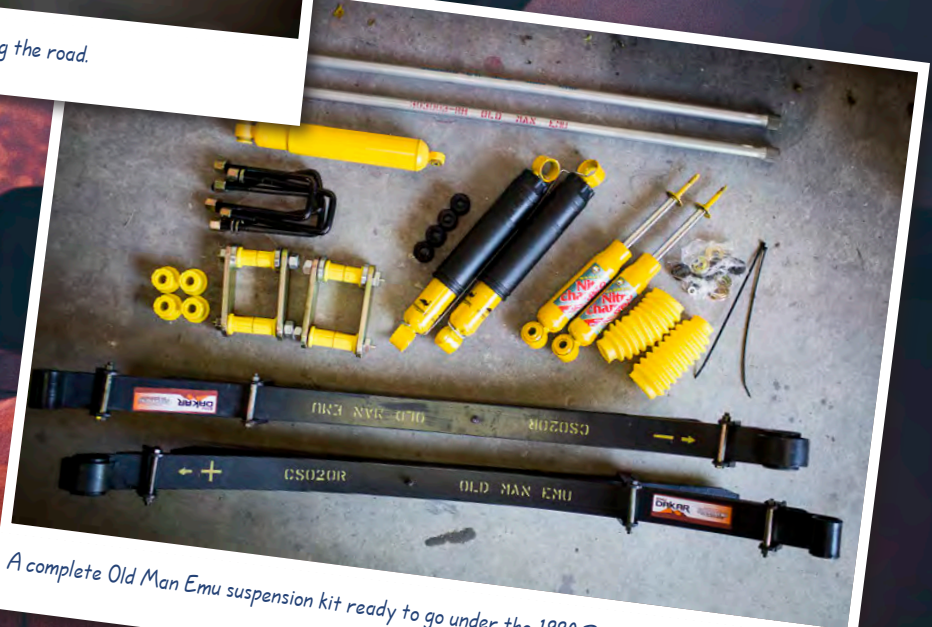
From day one many people looked at us like we were a little crazy, although slightly envious, when we told them what we were doing. The first question always was, "What are you driving?" When we told them it was an older Toyota Pickup with a 22RE they just smiled and said, "Okay, you'll be fine." These old pickups are confidence inspiring and known for their reliability. Many people we have encountered on the trip have a story about a Toyota they once had. Most of those experiences involved trucks with insane amounts of mileage on them that never stopped running. If that didn't convince us, the Top Gear episode where Jeremy Clarkson attempts to destroy



With new legs under the rig, they were one step closer to hitting the road.



The beginning of the two day engine swap to bring some reliable power to the aged 1990 Toyota Pickup.



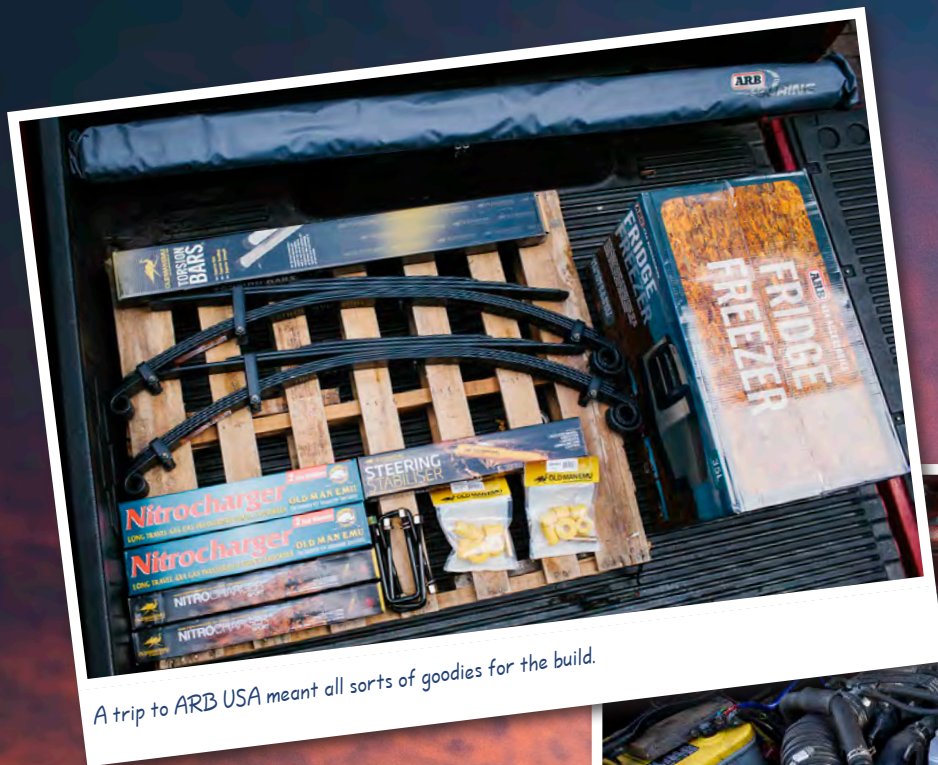
A complete Old Man Emu suspension kit ready to go under the 1990 Pickup.

a Toyota Pickup would. Perfect. Too bad ours was a freebie left for dead in a backyard in need of some serious TLC.

Overall the truck was in great shape for its age and a perfect starting point. We contacted a few reputable companies and were able to work with some great people throughout the build. First things first, a replacement for our 330,000km 22RE was built by Ryan Thom at Disturbed Industries in Abbotsford, BC. While this was in progress we replaced the suspension with a full kit from Old Man Emu. Since the only rust on the truck was on the fenders we replaced them with flared

fiberglass pieces from Toyota Fiberglass in Penticton, BC and painted them in the backyard. Brakes, exhaust, clutch, flywheel, ball joints, vital engine sensors and all fluids were replaced before heading out. All final prep was done by Disturbed Industries to make sure to minimize troubles on the road. Generally, anything marginal was replaced to avoid having to do it on the side of a dirt road in the middle of nowhere.

Once the truck was mechanically up to par we installed dual Optima Yellow Top batteries, an 85W solar kit from Samlex America, Blue Sea Systems battery isolator, a 37QT ARB Fridge/



A trip to ARB USA meant all sorts of goodies for the build.



The Disturbed Industries 22RE ready for a road trip.

Freezer, an ARB Awning, and a CVT Cascadia Vehicle Tents Mt. Bachelor roof top tent. With hours of research reading TCT Trucks, Overland Journal, and Expedition Portal I felt confident with these purchases. That was good, because our shake down run was non-existent. We started south immediately after breaking in the new 22RE. The first time we used any of this gear was the first night on the road. After almost 200 days of camping this setup has worked flawlessly.

In terms of planning, we rarely look more than a few days in advance and almost never know our route until the day we hit the road. As long as the truck is full of fuel with spares and tools on board, the fridge is full of food and drinks, and we've got both paper and digital maps, then we know we'll be fine whether we end up where we want to or not. Some of the best experiences have been unexpected detours we weren't afraid to take because we could.

The real question always is, "How?" How did we leave our secure jobs? How are we living on

the road without an income? The easy answer is that we chose to. We made the decision to leave, so we did. In four months at home we saved enough money to put us on the road in Central America for almost 8 months. We sold what we didn't need, sold some more, and did our best to reduce any payments we would need to make at home while we were away. A trip like this is not out of reach if you want it. For somewhere between \$1500–\$1800 per month you can head straight south and very comfortably live on the road. It's not hard to do, but it's really hard to start. Now that we've started though, it's going to be really hard to stop.

Richard Giordano
www.desktoglory.com

Richard and Ashley Giordano are from Vancouver, BC and are currently living in their 1990 Toyota Pickup somewhere in Central America. 📍



Ashley and Richard enjoying life away from the desk.



The completed 1990 Toyota Pickup at home in Baja, Mexico



1990 Toyota Pickup Details

Rebuilt 22RE by Disturbed Industries,
Abbotsford, BC

Old Man Emu Suspension System

Toyota Fiberglass Fenders (www.toyotafiberglass.com)

4Crawler 1" Body Lift

ProComp Xtreme M/T Tires 265/75R16

Eagle Alloys Series 100 16x8" Wheels

2x Hella Rallye 5000 Lights

Trail Gear Rear Bumper and Sliders

Dual Optima Yellowtop Batteries

Samlex America 85 Watt Solar Panel Kit

Samlex America 1000 Watt Pure Sine
Wave Inverter

Blue Sea Systems ACR Battery Isolator

ARB 37QT Fridge/Freezer

ARB Awning 2000

CVT Cascadia Vehicle Tent Mt. Bachelor
RTT

MAXTRAX Vehicle Extraction Devices