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Joe Gibbs' Silverado

Big Blower, Big Brakes, Big Performance
Illustrators: Andrew Schear

As we rolled into the SUPER CHEVY parking lot, our Joe Gibbs Performance Silverado was parked in a corner spot near the exit. As we walked up to the truck, a little voice said let's go burn some rubber. Despite our adult judgment, we gave in to our inner child and jumped into the black knight. As we each took turns behind the wheel stabbing the accelerator at every opportunity we soon realized that our pickup was no ordinary Chevy, mostly due to the whine resonating from under the hood.

The JGP Silverado was debuted to us at the 2003 SEMA show in Las Vegas, Nevada. While not quite in production, we made it clear to the folks at JGP that when the time was right, we would love to get our hands on a short bed 5.3 for long term testing. Five months later, here we are. For your enjoyment we've driven, towed, raced, washed and cruised every stretch of the imagination to learn the limits of our 1500 Chevrolet.

All JGP trucks begin their lives as stock vehicles that can be bought right off the showroom floor. Once in the capable hands of Gibbs engineers and installers, the custom interior, suspension, brakes, wheels, trim and blower are installed and tested. Our single-cab shortbed was outfitted with every conceivable option but power seats, which many of us prefer not to have in the first place. At this point you may be thinking that with a wad of cash an a bit of spare time you could build a truck like

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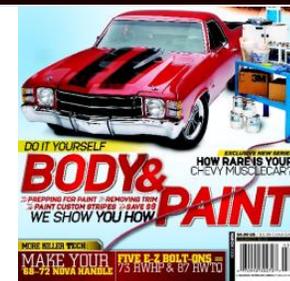
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this yourself! Well, you're right but yours wouldn't have the factory warranty anymore, as this one does. At first it seemed hard for us to believe, a supercharged Silverado with a warranty?

The aftermarket truck scene is filled with wannabes and goofs who care nothing for performance and only for looks. Gibbs set out to provide a machine that would appeal to the performance and the cosmetic. In essence, it's a Ford Lightning killer on a financial diet. On the other hand, if you're not aching for a blower you can order a naturally aspirated version at a decreased cost.

Enough with all these piddley details, let's get to the performance. While you all have been reading Super Chevy road tests for quite some time, you've yet to get some insight on a pickup. We thought it would be best to bring you a gorilla machine for our first feature truck test. The Silverado boasts well over 425 hp on the motor and has the tire to back it up. Our quarter-mile showed consistent passes just above 14 seconds. More than fast enough to roast your every day import tuner or kid with a noisy 5.0L. The braking numbers were actually lower than a stock '02 Z28 at an amazing 125 feet on a Baer brake-equipped vehicle such as ours.

The real fun began on the twisties of the Bondurant School of High Performance Driving road-race course, where we coaxed two instructors to take the JGP onto the small oval. As you can imagine, we use the word coax very loosely. More like we couldn't pry the keys from these speed-addicted drivers' hands. As can be seen by the photos, the term sideways tire smoke best explains the JGP Silverado on a road course.

By the time this article reaches print, we will have recovered from the depression of giving back our test machine. And knowing us, we'll be looking for the Tahoe!

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After having the truck a few short hours we made our way to Irwindale Speedway's 660 foot where we pulled a stock Lightning by two-tenths.



We just wanted to prove to you that a burnout is possible in a pickup.



Now we're all aware of the Japanese derived sport of drifting. This photo taken at the Bondurant School of High Performance Driving sheds a little light (and rubber) on what we think drifting should be.



The faces behind the smoke, (from the left) Les Betchner and Patrick Sallaway.

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