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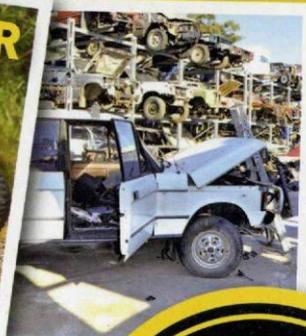
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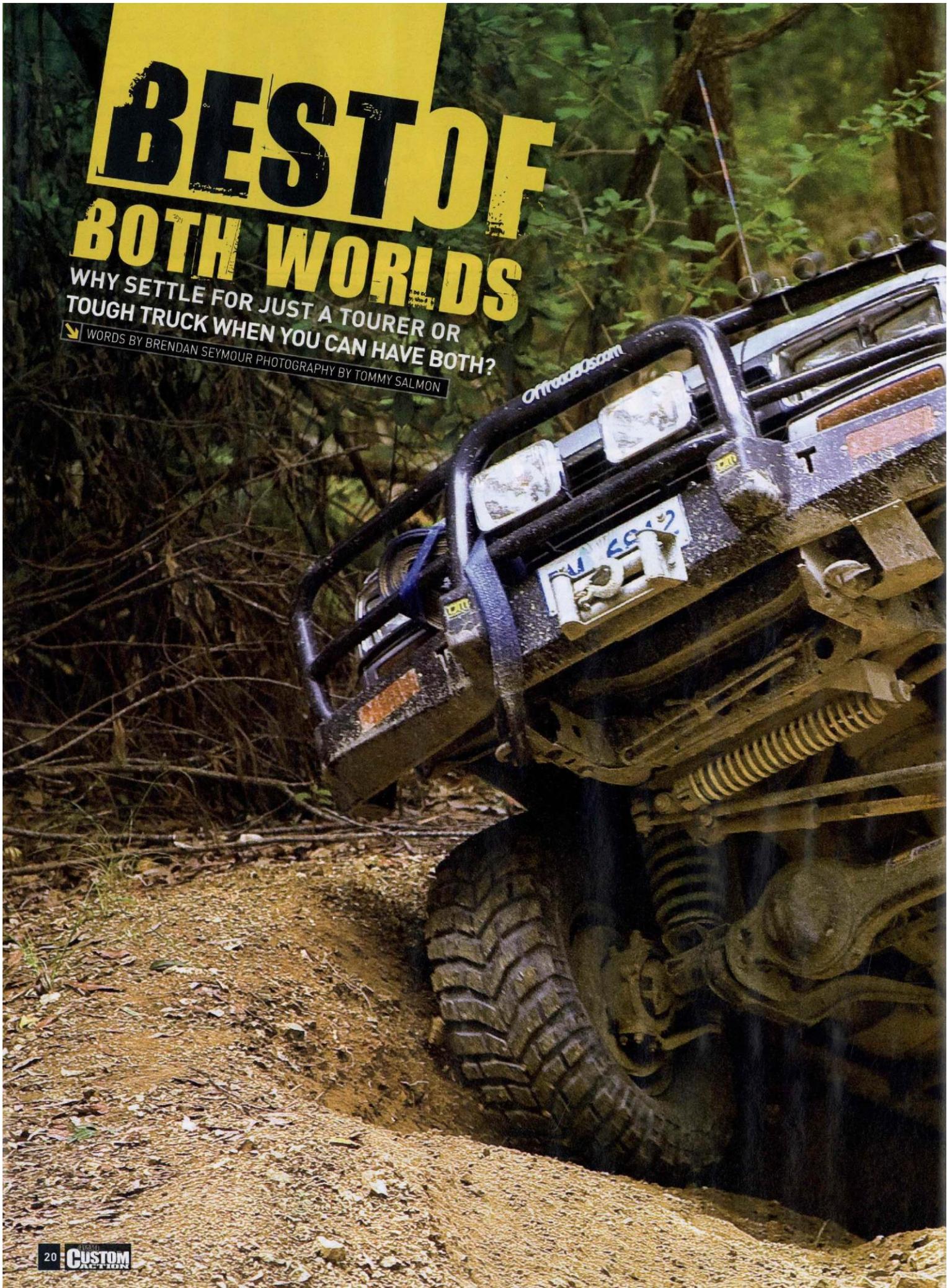


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# BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

WHY SETTLE FOR JUST A TOURER OR  
TOUGH TRUCK WHEN YOU CAN HAVE BOTH?

WORDS BY BRENDAN SEYMOUR PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOMMY SALMON

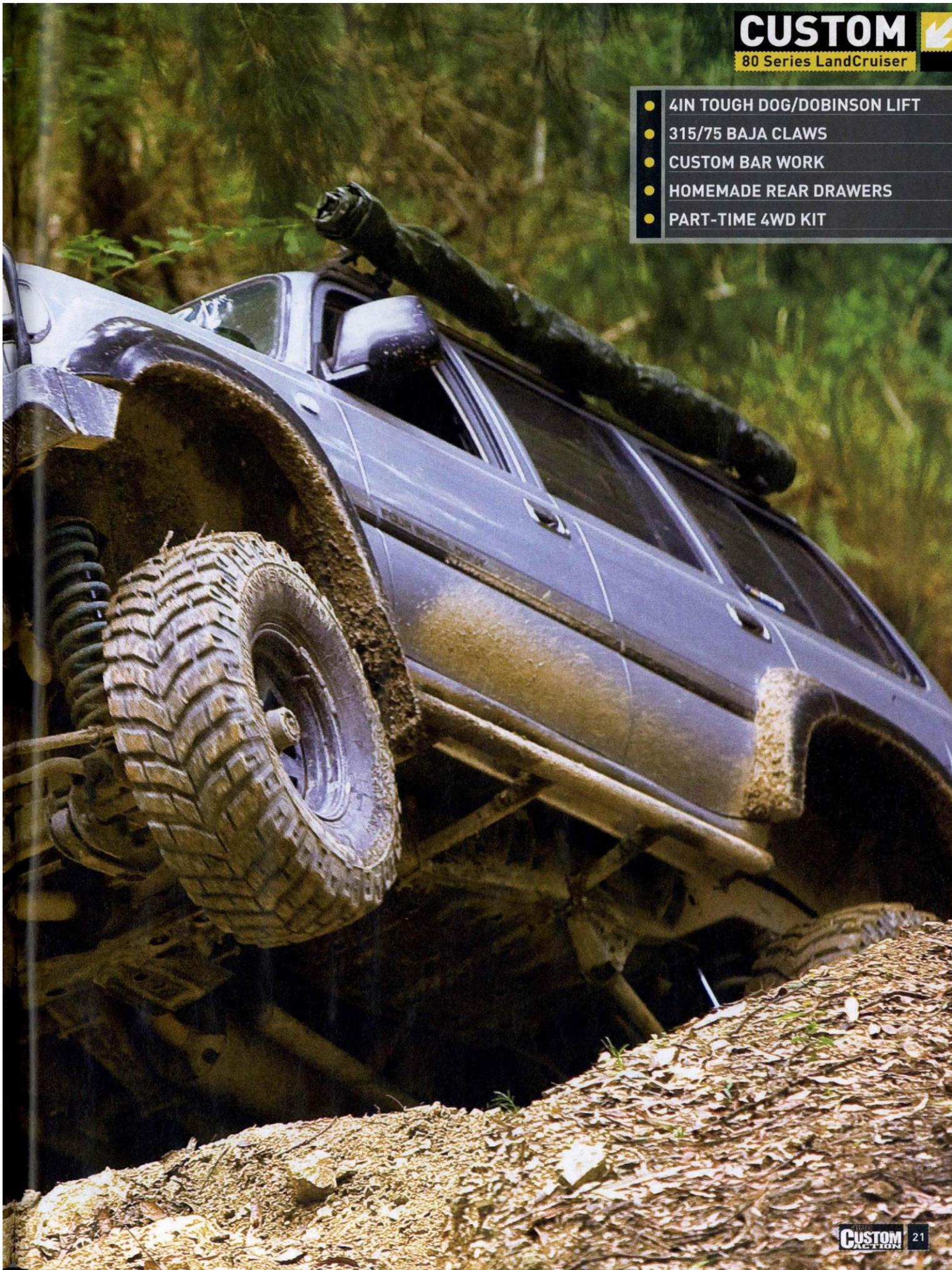


# CUSTOM

80 Series LandCruiser



- 4IN TOUGH DOG/DOBINSON LIFT
- 315/75 BAJA CLAWS
- CUSTOM BAR WORK
- HOMEMADE REAR DRAWERS
- PART-TIME 4WD KIT





**T**here's a good reason that the 80 Series 'Cruiser is a common sight on the tracks and off-road trails around Australia. As far as 4WDs go, the 80 is an absolute pearler. Solid axles at either end, coil springs suspending the body, a pair of lusty six-cylinder engines in your choice of fuel, and sedan style comfort make it an easy choice for whatever your purpose. The fact that 80s can be had for an absolute pittance these days makes them even more attractive.

After owning a couple of tough HiLuxes, Queenslanders Josh Simpson was certain that his allegiances lay with Toyota. The 'Luxes had been weapons - capable off-road with that legendary Toyota toughness and reliability. The problem was, the single-cabs just didn't have the room, and Josh had been eyeing off every 80 that drove past for a while.

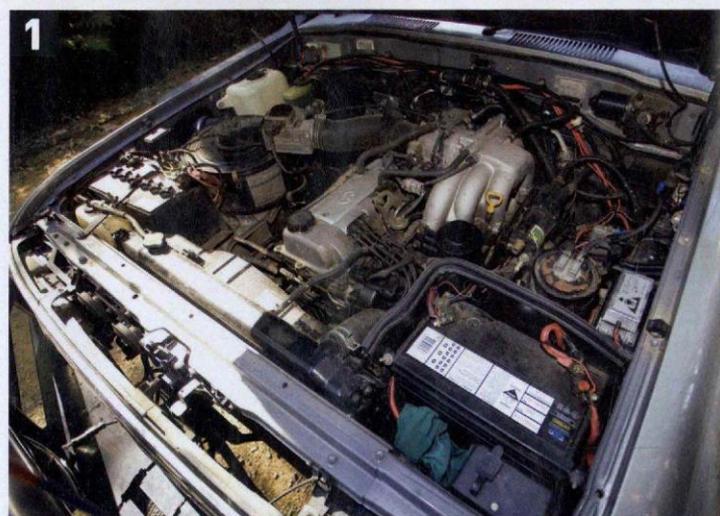
After checking out a few examples over a period of months, a very tidy and slightly

modified vehicle came up in the classifieds. Josh got out to check it over, realised what a bargain it was, and the rest as they say is history!

Josh found the 80 down in Tasmania, where he used to reside. The previous owner had kitted it out with a 4in lift, 35s and a bullbar, which turned a good 4WD into an absolute weapon. While buying a modified 4WD can sometimes be a risky proposition, it wasn't the case with the 80. The truck had been built to tackle the tough Tassie tracks, but had barely been off-road since the initial fit-out.

Few build-ups are ever truly complete, and this is true for Josh's 80. Future plans include a roof rack and rooftop tent for accommodation on trips away, and a bigger exhaust to get the 4.5L petrol revving harder.

Josh mentions that he wants to thank his partner Kayla for putting up with the countless hours in the shed tinkering away, and for not complaining about all the money he's sunk into it. Ah, sounds like true love to me... CUSTOM





1 - Powering the 80 is the trusty, if not a little thirsty, 1FZ-FE 4.5L straight-six petrol engine. With reliability in mind, Josh has left the engine largely alone, save for a Finer Filter air filter, and a timing advance of five degrees giving a bit more oomph. A Piranha dual-battery management system with a wet-cell 720CCA crank and deep-cycle 75Ah auxiliary battery round out the under-bonnet modifications

2 - Fitting larger tyres to a full-time 4WD like the GXL 80 is a recipe for worn components and increased servicing costs. Josh fitted a Marks Adaptors part-time 4WD kit with manual-locking hubs to get around this, allowing rear-wheel-drive when on-road to save driveline drag

3 - Diffs are the standard 4.1:1 ratio, and are now fitted front and rear with 4WD Systems Lokkas. What attracted Josh to the Lokkas was the ease of fitment, as well as the entry price. Josh reports that the diff locks are holding up perfectly to everything he's thrown at them

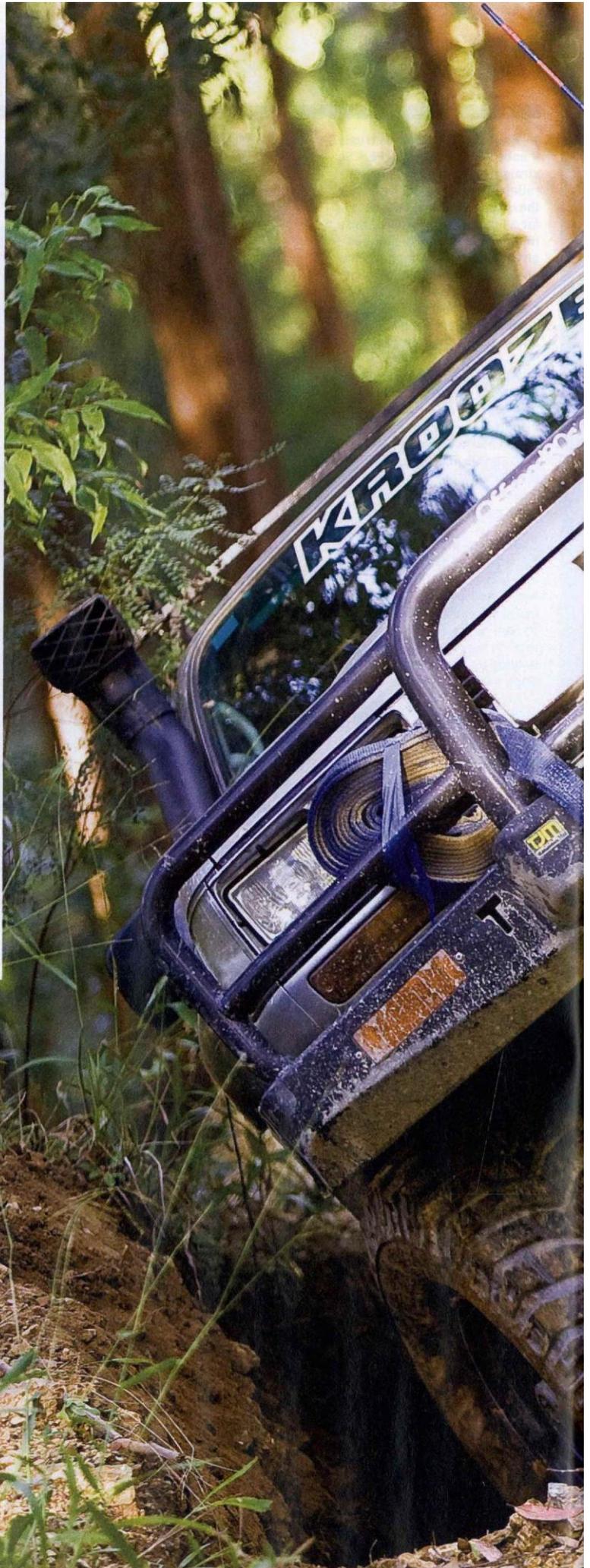
4 - Shocks at the moment are Tough Dog nine-way adjustable, which were part of the lift that was on the car when Josh bought it. Coils were Tough Dog originally, but eventually started to sag, and were swapped for Dobinsons with an extra inch of lift. Josh says as soon as funds permit, he'll be fitting some remote-canister Bilstein shocks for their extra damping effect

5 - Adjustable Panhard rods at either end were needed to keep the diffs located correctly; 5° castor correction plates and extended brake lines complete the lift. In an effort to get a little extra clearance under the guards, Josh gave the big 80 a 2in body lift, which was accomplished "over a weekend and a few beers"! The radiator, steering column and gearshift needed to be modified to suit the lift, and all the bar work's been made to line up with the new body height

6 - Josh has chosen to run a set of 16x8in steel rims for maximum strength in the bush. The steelies are shod in Mickey Thompson Baja Claws that measure in at 315/75R16

7 - The TJM steel winch bar handles front-end protection. There's a Terrain Tamer 9500lb electric winch fitted to aid self-recovery, which has been wired up to in-cab isolation and control switches for safety and ease of use. Spotlights on the bar are a pair of IPF 8000 Series - one spread and one pencil beam





8 - Josh fired up the welder and dusted off the pipe bender to build the rear bar. The tube used is 50mm OD with a wall thickness of 3mm, which means it is more than up to the task of holding the weight of the vehicle. Sill protectors are made of the same tube and are also Josh's handiwork

9 - The stock stereo has been upgraded with an Alpine head unit, four 6in split speakers and a 10in subwoofer with two-channel amp. Assuming it's not cranked too loud, Josh can communicate over the radio waves with the Uniden UHF. A lack of GPS is a deliberate move - Josh reckons getting lost is half the fun, and the more time spent in the bush the better! Centre console drink cooler has been retrofitted for easy access to coldies

10 - Rear storage is made from aluminium sheet frame, with timber slide-out drawers. The rear seat has been removed and a false floor installed at the same height as the drawers, which means that when the cargo barrier's not in place, the whole lot can be used as a double bed



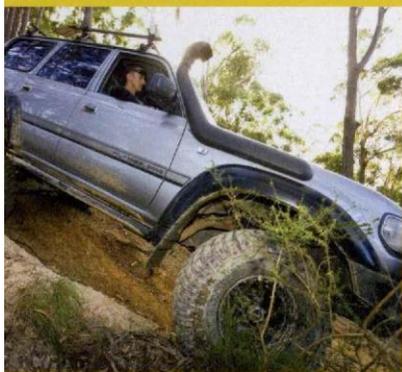


# CUSTOM

80 Series LandCruiser



AS FAR AS 4WDS GO,  
THE 80 IS AN  
ABSOLUTE PEARLER



## OWNER'S OPINION

"The 80's main purpose is to take myself and Kayla away touring. But I still want it to be able to do all the hardcore tracks along the way, as well as when I get to my destination. I've taken it up the west coast of Tasmania on an extended trip when I was living down there, which is where the modifications came in handy.

The diff locks turned up five days before we were set to leave Tassie to move north. Having never opened a diff before, I was a little nervous about diving into them, with so little time to have it off the road.

The rear went in without a drama, but when I pulled the front diff out, I had the little surprise of

two crown wheel teeth sitting in the bottom of the diff pumpkin. In a mad rush, I got a gear set sent over, but didn't get to change the ratios like I wanted. The plan was to fit 4.56:1 gears eventually, but with no time to redo the rear diff, I had to settle for standard 4.1:1s. There's always next time, I guess!

The automatic diff locks are great value for money, but the rear can be a little hard to live with first. However, you get used to it and adjust your driving style to suit.

As with any build-up, there have been lots of little problems along the way, especially with making the bar work and doing the body lift. But it was nothing a few beers and

some time on the *4WD Action* forums couldn't overcome.

I think if I was building it again, I'd reconsider doing the body lift. For the gain you get, I think cutting the guards would have been a better option. I'd like to remove it, but it's a lot of work, as all the bar work has been made to suit the body lift, as well as the radiator, steering and gear lever modifications that were done.

In terms of outright performance, the diff locks have got to be the best modification I've made. But the bar work is my favourite accessory, just for the satisfaction of having done it all myself."

## TECH SPECS

**VEHICLE:** 1994 80 Series LandCruiser

**ENGINE:** 4.5L straight petrol six-cylinder

**GEARBOX:** Toyota five-speed manual

**TRANSFER:** Standard Toyota 4WD ACTIVATION: Part-time, manual-locking hubs

**SUSPENSION:** Front - solid-axle, coil sprung, 4in lift, Tough Dog shocks, Dobinson coils. Rear - solid-axle, coil sprung, 4in lift, Tough Dog shocks, Dobinson coils

**WHEELS:** Steel Toyota 16x8in

**TYRES:** 315x75R16 Mickey Thompson Baja Claws

## CONTACTS

**4WD SYSTEMS**  
[www.4wdsystems.com.au](http://www.4wdsystems.com.au)

**DOBINSONS SPRINGS**  
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