

The Practical & Economical Hunting Jeep: Part 2

In "Part 1" that chronicled my restoration team of Wayne Cronin, owner of Pronto Muffler Center in Houston, and his associate wizard, Carl Faust, had my project Jeep fully checked out, minor repairs and running. Before tackling rough country improvements and accessories Wayne suggested we take it to the country and run the heck out of it. As previously mentioned be prepared for some surprises, and the major money pit is under the hood.

After an hour of abuse the engine started running on seven cylinders. I immediately shut it down and Wayne took the Jeep to his emergency room. An intake valve had bent as a consequence of too many years of sleeping in the barn. As long as one head had to be removed Wayne wisely took off both heads and did a complete valve job. Fortunately, no collateral damage had occurred, and to our surprise the innards of the engine were in great shape. After re-assembly more hard testing was applied without a hiccup.

The first new accessory was a set of Firestone Destination M/T Tires from Bridgestone/Firestone. They feature deep skid lugs, 3 body ply construction, a rugged over-the-shoulder tread/lug design and their special Rim Guard Off-Road Protector Rib designed for off-road all-terrain driving. The cleaning had exposed some decent after market wheels and



Project Jeep complete and looking good in just primer.

mounting was no problem.

When mounting the tires we treated them with LiquiTube Tire Sealant purchased at Tractor Supply. This stuff creates a liquid inner tube that coats the surfaces of the tire and rims to prevent air loss and can seal punctures up to ¼ or ¾ of an inch depending on how heavy the ply is of the tire. That is a very impressive claim. It is much better to apply this product at the outset rather than wishing you had a can of flat fixer later.

The required gun rack was next. There are several types available at better outdoors retailers or online. A simple two

rifle rack was selected that is adjustable fore and aft, and bolted to the floor space between the front seats.

For the last two items I went to Mopar since they are ground zero for Jeep accessories. Off-road lighting has come a long way and the new LED versions are amazing. You can never burn them out and they use very little electricity which is easy on your car's battery.

The two front facing lights feature six LED's each and shoot out an impressive 3500 lumens. The rear facing lights dispense 2500 lumens from four LED's in each unit. This setup offers outstanding



Impressive power for LED floodlights.

forward night vision and plenty in the rear for loading/unloading, trailer hookup, etc. Plus, thoughts of varmint hunting possibilities came to mind.

A good winch can get you out of a number of awkward situations. Winches from Warn are the gold standard. An 8000 pound winch with 100 feet of cable was chosen. This provides more than enough power to pull the Jeep out of trouble or to hoist any number of heavy objects.

As this Jeep was not meant to be street legal some money was saved as expenses

were not necessary to pass an inspection. If you need to transport your hunt buggy, an inexpensive tow bar from Harbor Freight is just the ticket. Then the Jeep can double as a trailer for hauling gear.

Flat towing means you simply hook up the tow bar, put the transmission and transfer case in neutral, and go down the road. Before attempting this, get the manufacturers information off the plates on the transmission and transfer case and contact Jeep or a dealer to make sure it is O.K. With some models you will need to drop the drive shaft for towing or use a trailer to keep from burning out the transfer case.

Whether you park your project at home or at your hunting grounds a couple of things will save you some future grief. While storing, disconnect the battery

Jeep Restoration Resources:

Pronto Muffler Center, Houston,
Texas (281) 445-1251
www.jeep.com
www.mopar.com
www.firestonetire.com
www.knfilters.com
www.liquitube.net ★

cables and attach one of the many economical solar units on the market to the terminals. You want a trickle type charging unit to maintain the battery.

Also, fire up the engine at least once a month and run it for a few minutes after it has heated up to circulated fluids and burn off condensation. Driving around a bit is good for the drive train. Storing stationary for months is a whole other story.

This project was indeed practical, economical and a lot of fun. Have fun with yours. My gratitude to the team at Pronto Muffler Center and a special thanks to Jim Morrison, Director of Jeep Product Marketing, and his enthusiastic group for their invaluable information and assistance. ★★