

HJ60
.com.au

BY RAY BARKER

EIGHT IS ENOUGH

HE'S SNUG and comfortable; the expensive radio-cassette is tucking the orchestra into the folds of the leather-bound and carpeted interior. Under the bonnet purrs a highly-refined twin cam – pushing the sleek coupe at an “acceptable” rate above the limit.

From this driver's seat, through tinted glass and Italian sunglasses, the world is in its place.

A deep blue spot appears on the inside mirror, growing quickly until it fills all three. Furrows form above the sunglasses as the driver's shoe adjusts to maintain the pace on the long climb looming ahead.

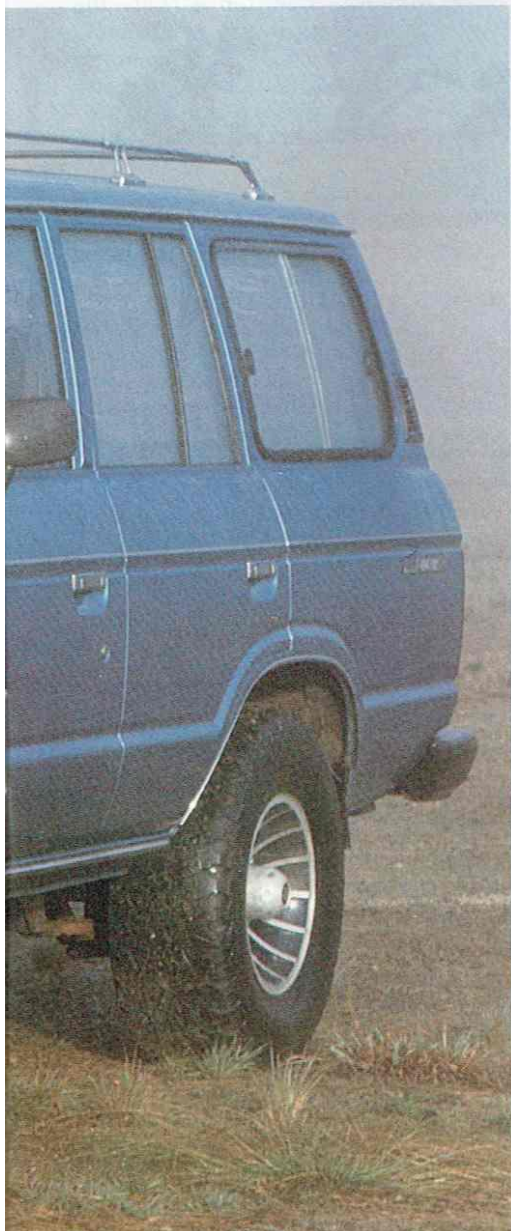
The word YOT flicks from the centre reflection to the driver's door. The view to the right is momentarily blocked by metallic paint and huge tyres. In seconds, the bulk of the invader decreases as it powers away – apparently oblivious to the bump in the earth's surface.

For the next hour, the forehead stays creased . . . a word niggles at the brain of the driver – subliminally implanted . . . “diesel”.



HJ60 .com.au

*Heavy-duty push bar protects 8000-lb
Thomas electric winch.
Low-key accessories belie the fact that
this Toy is a real powerhouse.
Front bumper has been fitted to the
rear, and number plate moved on to
the tailgate.*



Arthur Greig has always been fascinated by engines — particularly big engines, and preferably the eight-cylinder jobs from General Motors. So it was only natural that, when a Jeep-owning friend introduced him to the world of four-wheeling, Arthur decided immediately that whatever he bought just had to have additional power . . . lots.

Arthur's first off-roader was a new '72 Landcruiser Hardtop which came in one configuration — petrol six and three-speed, no-synchro-on-first gearbox. (Remember them?)

The six came out of the engine bay before the first oil change, and in its place Arthur transplanted a Chevrolet 327 V8 and mated it to the three-speed box.

In this form, the Toyota became a "personality" in the Sydney four-wheel-drive scene and at Toyota Landcruiser Club outings. Arthur served as president of the Landcruiser Club for a short time and, like most members, became "hooked" on the reliability and robustness of the Toyota product.

When Toyota released the beige version of the four-speeder, Arthur updated and went through the conversion process again — this time with a 350 V8, followed quickly by a 400 V8 and then a big-block 454 V8 . . . which goes to prove, despite what you may have learnt at school, that 327 will go into a 40. And easily. So will 350 and 400. And so will 454 if you really want a shoe-horn answer.

While all of this was going on, Arthur also had a couple of fully-imported

Continued on next page

EIGHT IS ENOUGH

Continued from previous page

Chevrolet Blazer Cheyennes which, while too bulky for serious club outings, were great transporters of family, friends and assorted cargo. The Blazers convinced the Greigs that what they really needed was a smaller Blazer or a larger FJ40 . . . so, the release of the more modern Landcruiser station wagon in 1980 was very welcome.

The initial shipments of the 60 Series wagons were all diesels — a fact which had absolutely no bearing on Arthur's decision to purchase the new model.

An oil-burner may be the ideal for some but, after a 454 short-wheelbase, driving the HJ60 felt more like rowing a boat against the wind.

Transplanting a 454 into the all-new wagon shape was surprisingly easy . . . well, easy if you have been through a similar process many times before.

Some years ago, Arthur was part-owner of a business that specialised in selling engine conversion kits. The kits were built by K & M Chassis and were (still are) regarded as the best available in Australia.

BUSHDRIVER advertiser Opposite Lock has recently become the new national distributor for the conversion kits which cover a wide range of vehicles. The most popular, though, are the ones which enable small-block Chevy V8s (327, 350, 400) to be installed into Landcruisers, and Holden six-cylinders into Land Rovers.

The Toyota's new heart features 9.5:1 forged pistons, High Torque camshafts, "fuel-injection" cylinder heads and a 750 4-barrel Holley carburettor. K & M provided the bellhousing-adaptor and new engine mounts for the HJ60. Arthur provided the money, the labour

and the ability to see around the problems that always pop up when you tackle a job like this for the first time.

The result is impressive. The big-block V8 sits in the engine bay snugly but still with enough room to carry out essential maintenance. Nowhere has the Toyota's bodywork been altered to accommodate the new powerplant — and that is important if you appreciate good engineering, and also want to satisfy the inspection requirements of the registration authorities.

Apart from the bellhousing and mounts from K & M, a new clutch-plate and heavy-duty pressure plate, minor changes to fuel lines, radiator hoses and electrics, the Toyota is still very much a Toyota.

An extra leaf has been added to the front springs, but this is to handle the weight of the Thomas 8000-lb electric winch and the solid custom-made front bumper/push-bar set-up which protrudes well out from the front of the vehicle.

Other additions to the wagon include dual exhausts, heavy-duty shock absorbers, 15 x 8 alloy wheels and Goodrich All-Terrain radials, Cibie driving lights, large-capacity fuel tank with protection plate, Frigidaire air-conditioning, Eurovox stereo cassette and waterproof speakers, electric aerial, chrome roof rack and tow bar. The bumper bar taken from the front has been chromed and moved to the rear, and the number plate moved to the centre of the lower tailgate.

The nicest thing about this Landcruiser is that it is not a "hot rod". Modifications to the exterior have been

Big-block Chevy is a snug fit under Toyota's hood. Surprisingly, access for maintenance purposes is quite good.

minimal, and there is no discernible difference between this Toyota and hundreds like it.

Driving the 60 is a rewarding experience. The big 454 is a real pussycat as long as you resist the temptation to plant the right foot. The vehicle will trickle around town quietly and completely free from fuss. Second-gear starts are the norm. Travel ten metres and drop it into fourth . . . as simple as that.

Fourth gear, which is top gear in this model, is virtually all you need for most situations. You can slow down for a city street corner and trundle around in top just as if you were driving an automatic!

If the wagon is in top and you want to overtake someone, say from 20 km/h, all that is necessary is to use the throttle. The engine will handle the rest. This vehicle will accelerate in fourth from almost a standstill up to 175 km/h so quickly that it takes most people's breath away. The "performance" is mind-boggling.

On the open road, top is really the only gear necessary — and Arthur reckons that, on a trip, 18 mpg is the norm. We believe him, for there is hardly any situation in which you really need to change back. This Toyota doesn't know what a hill is!

What the vehicle does need is either a 5-speed gearbox or an after-market overdrive. The 4-speed and standard 4.1 differentials are far too low-g geared for the engine. At 80 km/h, the V8 is doing 2,800 rpm, and just over 3,000 rpm at 110 km/h. An overdrive gear would be ideal, reducing engine noise and fuel consumption and making the wagon even more pleasant to drive than it already is.

Arthur uses the vehicle mostly for recreation. His home is close to the big sand dunes at Kurnell to the south of Sydney. Here Arthur's vehicle reigns supreme. We have never seen anything handle deep sand as easily. Huge dunes are child's play — as you can see by our Sand Driving article in BUSHDRIVER Vol. 7 No. 4.

Arthur's knowledge of the dunes, and his sand-driving skill, have earned him a reputation in the advertising and film-making industries. He is often called on for consultation, guidance and assistance when a commercial or film needs to be made in a sand location — and it is surprising to learn just how often that occurs.

When he's not out on the sand or away in the bush, Arthur and his family relax on a superb SeaRay sports cruiser. And I guess you wouldn't be surprised now if I were to tell you that it is the only SeaRay of its size in Australia, built from new with a Chevrolet 454 engine.

