

FORD ANSWERS THE INDUSTRY

It seems that practically all truck manufacturers are offering V-6 model pickups. With the influx of increased performance trucks, Ford decided to answer the competition with a project truck which can blow the doors off the imports. It's called the SHO Ranger. Don't be misled by the name, this is no cheap imitation with fancy emblems, SHO is an abbreviation for super high output, which is just the case for this "sportscar with a bed."

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

When we first spoke with D.A.

"Woody" Haines, Assistant Manager of Ford Truck Public Affairs, we expected to view a sharp looking, factory white truck rolling out of a showroom floor, followed by a brief photo session. We were way off base in our preconceived notions. Woody met us with a warm handshake, handed the keys over and told us to have fun.

We went out to the parking lot and there it was. Wow! Quite a bit different than we had imagined. After the initial shock was over, we took it for a spin. At first, we weren't aware of what made this thing tick. Upon climbing into the cab, we took note of the extra instrumentation, then turned on the



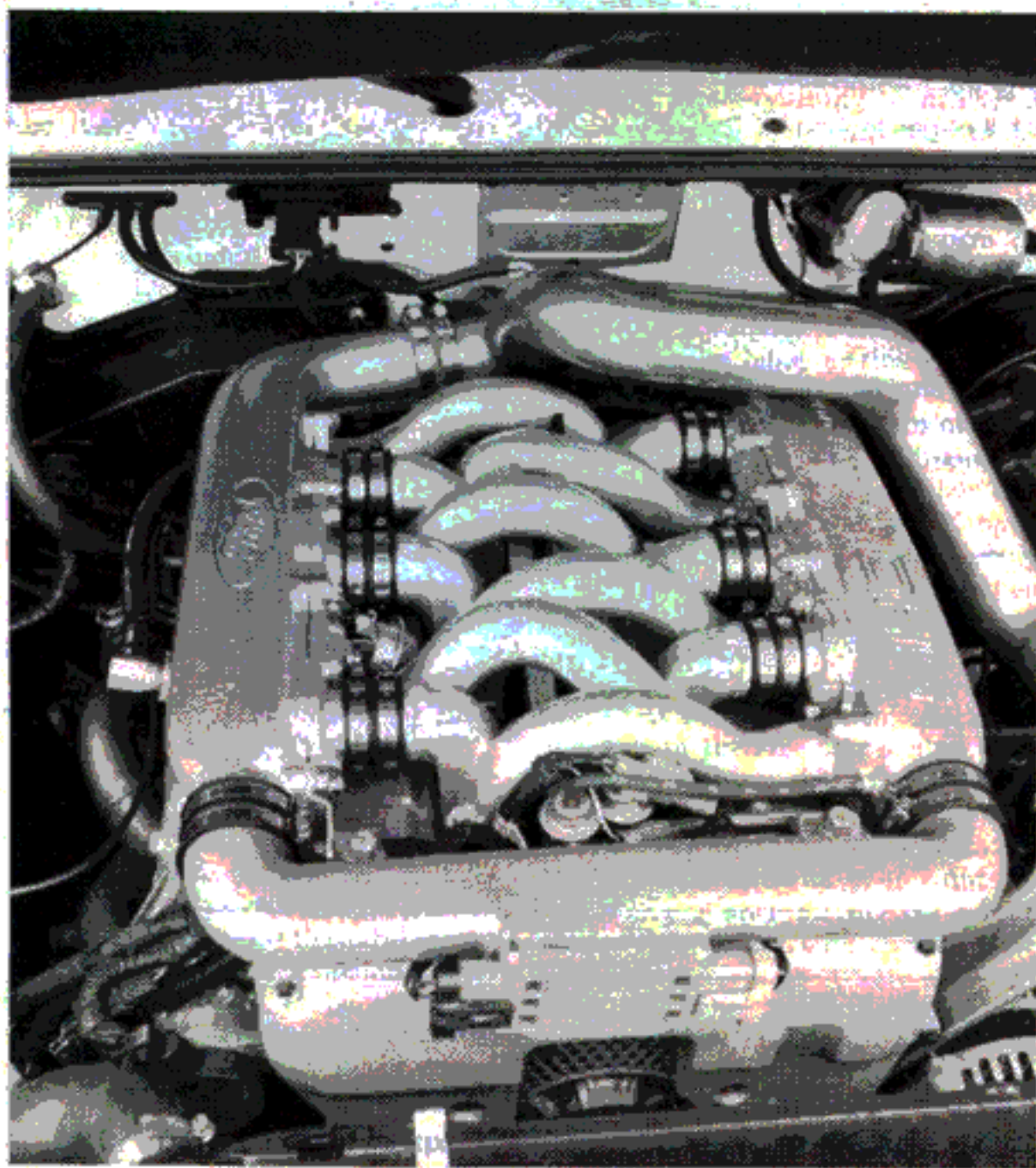
Interior is comfortable with instrumentation, power bucket seats, racing wheel, modified Mustang shifter, top-of-the-line sound system and red cloth and vinyl upholstery. Now, if Ford would just produce them.

SHO Down

Have you stomped in a Ford lately?

BY FRANK HAMILTON

PHOTOGRAPHY: FRANK HAMILTON



ignition. The first impression surprised us as the engine rumbled through what sounded like a performance muffler system.

A light tap of the accelerator while letting out the clutch, jerked our heads back. Shifting through the familiar Mustang GT gearbox we were soon moving! Funny the SHO didn't feel like a mini-truck. The handling was very tight as turns were negotiated with confidence. The lowered stance of the truck didn't bottom out once as we went over bumps. This was no ordinary Ranger!

SHO RANGER RUNDOWN

The white Ranger sports a Eurostyle package which includes ground effects with the "Ranger GT" logo molded into the rocker panels and Euro bumpers with air dam cut outs in the front. A thick show bar raises out of the bed just behind the sliding back window. Black tinted glass surrounds the cab with a "SHO Ranger" banner affixed to the windshield. It rides on Goodyear Eagles (P225/50R-16) mounted on 16 inch Enkei wheels.

Under this mini-truck hood is about as much power as you could want in a compact pickup. A 1989 Ford Taurus V-6 engine is set in the engine well and that 24 valve 3.0L double overhead cam powerhouse looks wild! Horsepower rating of the SHO drivetrain is 200 horses at 4800 rpm and 220 at 6000. Intake is modified production and employs electronic fuel

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SHOW DOWN

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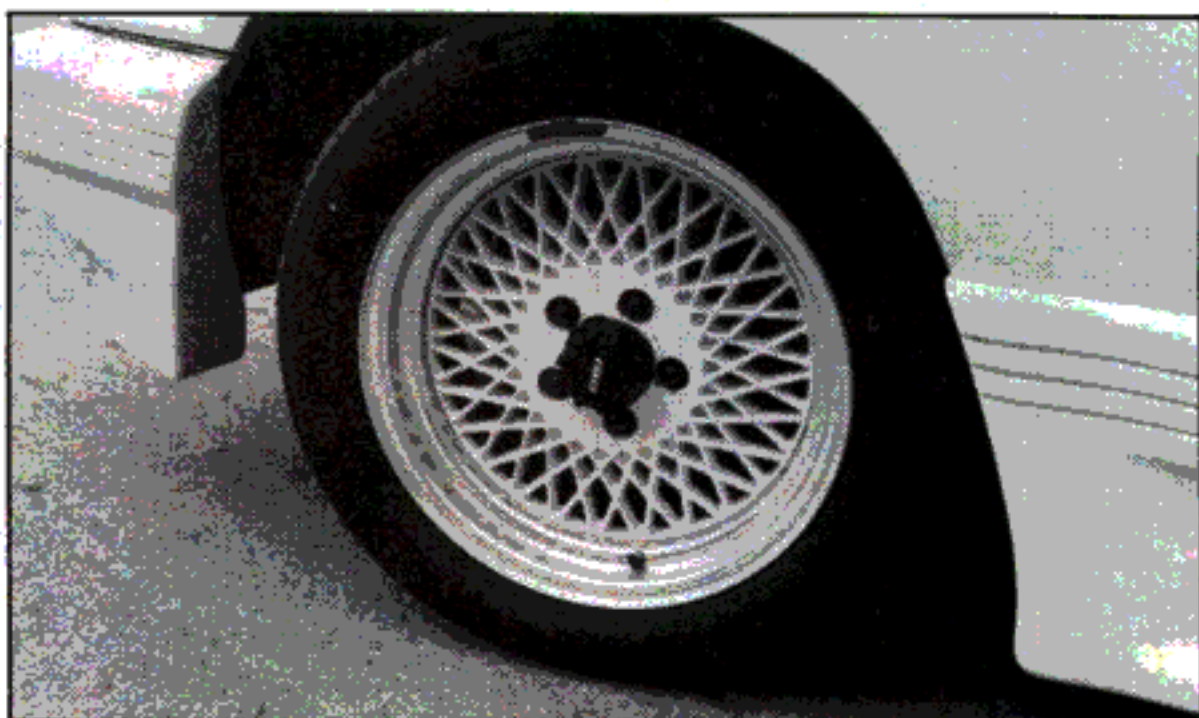
injection. An EEC IV controls fuel and ignition while exhaust is free flowing through a custom two inch header system. A Borg Warner T5 trans shifts through all five speeds via a modified Mustang shifter. Ford Motorsports contributed a racing clutch and pressure plate to the Ranger. A Ford 8.8 limited slip differential rear end is linked to the trans through a custom driveshaft. Ring and pin ratio is 3.73:1. Kicker traction bars keep horsepower on the ground where it belongs.

Once the truck was up to a decent running speed, we had a chance to get the feel of the Ford Motorsports racing suspension based on a twin I beam front end. The lowered truck is able to take tight corners at fairly high speeds without leaning. The tight cornering is made possible through the use of one inch anti-roll bars in front and rear. The ride is kept firm with Koni shocks set to Motorsports calibration standards and work in conjunction with de-arched leaf springs in the rear and heavy duty (450 lbs./square inch) coil-overs in front.

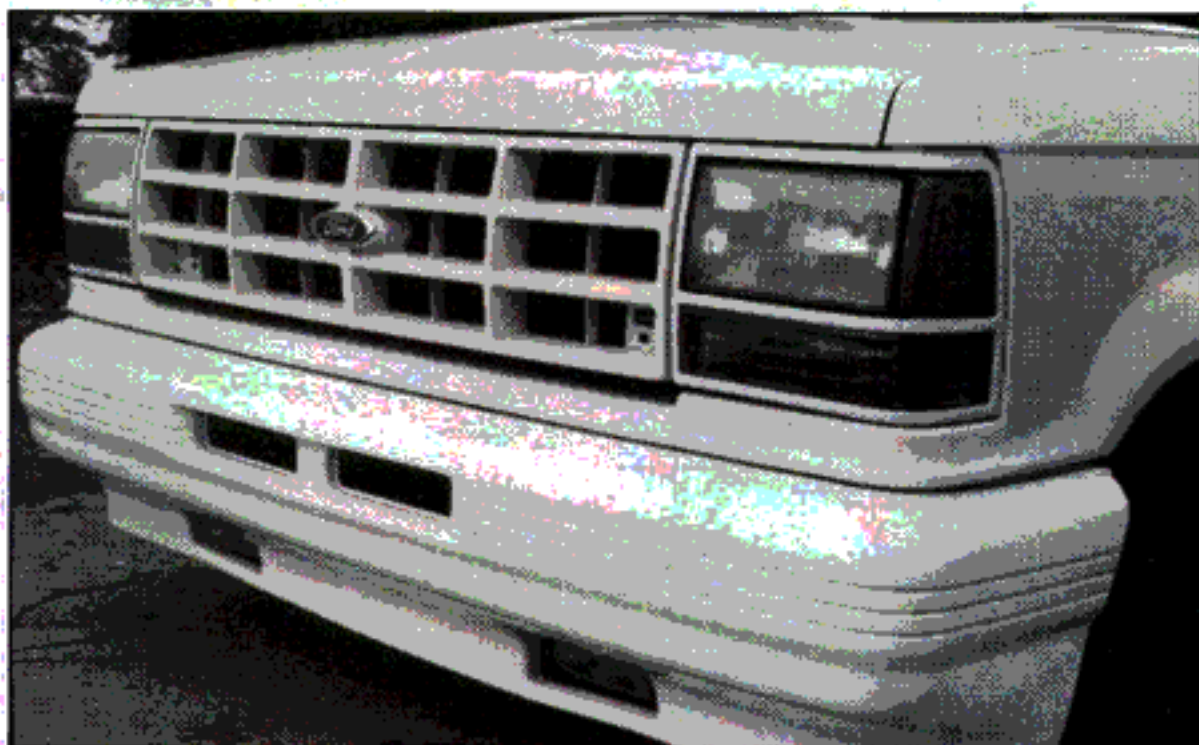
The interior is about as comfortable as it gets. As a driver sits in the power bucket seats, everything is well within reach. Luxury features include factory air, a top of the line factory sound system with four speakers, and power windows. Door panels, headliner and seats are stitched in red cloth and vinyl with a matching carpet. Water and oil temperature gauges have been added to the stock instrumentation. Steering is easily commanded by a racing wheel.

The SHO Ranger is without a doubt one of the hottest project trucks around. We found the truck to be very well thought out, blending horsepower and handling together in a smooth balance which is often not the case where high performance drivetrains are concerned, particularly in compact trucks. This Ranger's handling is close to that of a sports car with the difference being the height factor. We can honestly say driving the SHO Ranger was the most fun that we've ever had driving a mini-truck.

Ford uses vehicles such as this SHO Ranger to test the market, and there are no definite plans to market this package. But, who knows what the future holds for the Ford Ranger. We do know that they are looking at increased performance and improved handling by just testing this prototype truck.



Goodyear Eagles (P225/50R-16) are mounted on white Enkel 16 inch wheels. Ground effects wrap around entire underside of truck.



Front view shows Eurostyle bumper with center air dam cut outs. Turn signal lights are frenched in at bottom.



Rear view shows neat Eurostyle bumper with square exhaust extending through slot.