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JON BARRICKLOW'S CUMMINS-POWERED '95 FORD BRONCO XL

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Bruce W. Smith

Instead of money, Jon Barricklow says he married into paint. His wife, Rhonda, grew up working in her family's autobody collision repair business doing everything from disassembly to finish paint. Jon also married into a family of staunch Bronco lovers. It's all worked out really well over the ensuing years, too, resulting in he and his wife doing three frame-off custom bobtail rebuilds, all of which are part of the family stable. A fourth has joined the ranks: an awesome Cummins-powered '95 XL that is Jon's daily driver.

“I needed a reliable, fuel-efficient commuter rig and figured I could buy a cheap mid-’90s Bronco, drop in a Cummins 4BTA so it’d get 25-30 mpg, and have the perfect 4x4 that I could drive forever and ever,” Jon remarked. He achieved that goal and more.

Jon found a ’95 XL a couple hundred miles from his shop, shelled out \$1,800 for it, and trailered it home. The passenger side was caved in, but “everything worked, and it drove good,” Jon notes. The Ford 302 and manual five-speed was quickly yanked to make way for a new Cummins 4BTA. It was during that part of the project that the money ball started rolling quickly downhill.

Jon started rethinking the entire drivetrain and its reliability behind the torque of the Cummins. By the time the engine arrived, he had Super Duty axles, a ZF manual transmission, and an Advance Adapters Atlas 2 transfer case laid out on the shop floor to replace the Bronco’s stock running gear. The domino effect continued to roll along with even more custom modifications inside and out while his wife spent more than 200 hours doing all the bodywork.

“I needed a reliable, fuel-efficient commuter rig and figured I could buy a cheap mid-’90s Bronco, drop in a Cummins 4BTA so it’d get 25-30 mpg, and have the perfect 4x4 that I could drive forever and ever.” –Jon Barricklow

Jon, the owner of JB Custom Fabrication, admits his Bronco project got a “little off track,” but the end result is way better than he expected. He likes the way the little diesel rattles like a big rig at idle and the way it performs on-road and off. Oh, and his “new” daily driver is also miserly on fuel, which was the main goal from the beginning.



Hutchinson double beadlock 17x8.5 rims ensure the 35x12.50R17LT Toyo Open Country M/Ts stay connected when running low air pressures. A water-cooled, engine-driven Holset air compressor speeds up re-inflation of the tires. A JB Custom Fabrication one-off winch bumper holds a two-speed Mile Marker hydraulic winch, powered by a Vickers engine-driven pump, to provide pulling power to the Amsteel Blue winch rope. The JB Custom Fabrication roof rack serves as the lightbar for a six-pack of PIAA 510s. A pair of 10-inch Hella off-road lights on the bumper provide additional lighting for night romps in the dunes.



At the heart of the Bronco is a fresh-out-of-the-box 3.9L Cummins 4BTA replacing the Ford 302. The Cummins runs a modded 6BT exhaust manifold to relocate the HX35W turbo to a location that keeps the factory Ford A/C in its stock location. Oregon Fuel Injection set up the pump with a 3,200-rpm governor spring and matched it with the proper injectors so the engine delivers max power without “rolling coal.” Barricklow modified a 6BT intake to work with the pump. The engine crossmember has been reworked, and vibrations from the Cummins are damped by fluid mounts. A Howe aluminum radiator with a Derale two-speed electric fan provides cooling.



A Dana 50 from a '00 F-250 graces the front of the rig and it has a Mag-Hytec diff cover over the 3.73s and ARB Air Locker. Custom tie rods connect to high-steer arms while a PSC hydraulic ram-assist runs off the stock Bronco steering box to make turning the 35-inch Toyos nearly effortless. A Currie Antirock sway bar helps control the big Bronco's body on-road and off.



The factory Twin-Traction Beam front suspension and Dana 44 were dumped to make way for a three-link setup with Fox 2-inch hydraulic bumpstops and Fox 12-inch coilover shocks fit with Eibach springs.



Jon runs an ARB Air Locker-shod Sterling 10.5-inch axle from a '00 F-250 under the rear of the Bronco. The axle sports 3.73:1 gears and a Mag-Hytec diff cover. Flipped shackles and 2 1/2-inch leaf springs from Jeff's Bronco Graveyard provide the lift. Jon installed long-travel air springs (adjustable from the cab) and Bilstein shocks to the rear setup for added suspension control.



Jon ditched the worn out factory rear bench seat to make room for a slide-out equipment tray and a pair of 15-inch Polk Audio subwoofers powered by a 400-watt Alpine amp and Pioneer head unit. RotoPax fuel, water, and first aid containers from Wild Horses Four Wheel Drive take up residence on the sides. Jon built the rollcage out of 1.75-inch, 0.120-wall ERW and had it powdercoated satin black.



Corbeau seats with safety harnesses are mounted to the interior rollcage assembly.



One of the many unique mods to the Bronco is the JB Custom Fabrication center console and twin-stick cable shifters that allow the Atlas 2 transfer case to drive only the front axle if needed. The ZF five-speed manual transmission uses a Midwest Transmission short shifter with a driveline brake. The rig's ARB Air Lockers are controlled by the red rocker switches.

At A Glance

General

Vehicle: '95 Ford Bronco XL

Owner: Jon Barricklow

Stomping grounds: Salem, Oregon

Build time: 6 months

Drivetrain

Engine: Cummins 3.9L 4BTA I-4 turbodiesel

Transmission: ZF 5-spd manual (S5-42)

Transfer case(s): Advance Adapters Atlas 2

Low range ratio(s): 4.3:1

Crawl ratio(s): 91.7:1

Front axle/differential: Dana 50, Mag-Hytec diff cover, 3.73 gears/ARB Air Locker

Rear axle/differential: Ford Sterling 10.5-in, Mag-Hytec diff cover, 3.73 gears/ARB Air Locker

Suspension

Front: Custom three-link, 12-in Fox coilovers, Eibach springs, Fox 2-in hydraulic bumpstops, Currie Antirock sway bar

Rear: Jeff's Bronco Graveyard 2 1/2-in leaf springs, long-travel air bags, shackle flip

Steering: PSC hydro-assist

Tires/Wheels

Tires: 35x12.50R17LT Toyo Open Country M/T

Wheels: 17x8.5 Hutchinson double beadlock

Miscellaneous

Lighting: Six PIAA 510s, two Hella 10-in

Armor: JB Custom Fabrication frame-mounted rock rails

Cool stuff: Custom 'cage, onboard air, Mile Marker hydraulic winch, slide-out tool tray, JB Custom Fabrication swing-away tire carrier/rear bumper; JB Custom Fabrication cable T-case shifters