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4WD Toyota Owner

THE INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE

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UNDERCOVER FJ CRUISER RECOVERY SETUP



Mean Mother Edge 9500 winch/U.S. Offroad Bumper

By the staff of 4WD Toyota Owner Magazine, Photos by Edward Woo

For many in the offroad world, big brush and bold is the way to go. Everything stands out loud and proud—the trucks with meaty mud terrains, a large lift kit, 50" light bar, and a big bumper up front. And there's nothing wrong with this whatsoever! In fact we daresay it's almost a tradition in the wheeling world to build big.

U.S. OFFROAD'S INTERNAL MEDICINE

But of course some will want to walk a different path. It's kind of like in the sport compact world, where some builders show a big "coffee can" exhaust out the back and dropped/splayed wheels, while other keep

things stealth—until it's time to unleash the heat on the street. That's where U.S. Offroad (www.usoffroad.us, 817-736-0787) comes in with their internal winch bumper mount for the FJ Cruiser. The Texas company proudly makes this \$499 unit in Texas from clean CNC laser cut



With a U.S. Offroad internal winch mount bumper and a Mean Mother Edge 9500 winch, the new look is subtle, but strength is lurking under the cover! This is a rugged stealth setup that gives you unobtrusive winch recovery access without extra weight, wind resistance and cost.

steel. The mounts are .250" steel with a .125" fascia for a total of .375" of protection

up front, and are full height front and rear. The piece has multiple reinforcement

ROCK SOLID OFFROAD

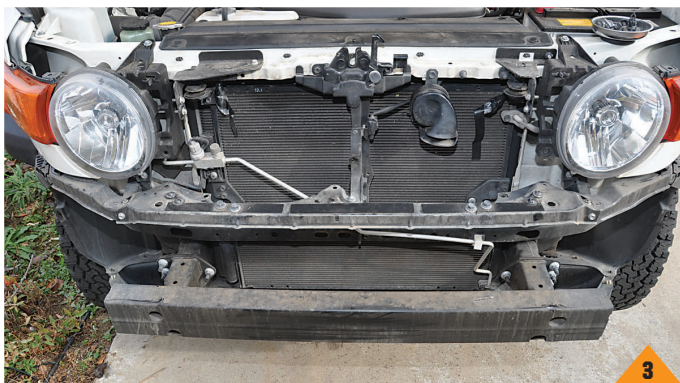


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1. First step: remove top grill, which requires (2) 10mm bolts and two top clips to be removed.

2. Front bumper needs to be removed to install the US Offroad winch bumper. Five clips on top, eight bolts from underneath, and four bolts from the sides need to be removed. You'll trim out the bumper later.

3. Grill and bumper removed.

4. Four nuts on each side hold in old bumper support. New U.S. Offroad winch bumper uses same location and nuts.

5. Here is the U.S. Offroad winch mount bumper out of the box. You can see it is a full height tub, and is constructed of 250" steel with a .125" fascia for a total of .375" of protection. The powdercoating is an excellent Teflon blend that is extremely durable. Now it's time to mount the Mean Mother winch into the U.S. Offroad unit.

FEATURE >>> FJ CRUISER RECOVERY SETUP



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6. Here is the Edge 9500 out of the box. It's a complete setup with Dyneema SK75 synthetic rope, clevis pin, hawse fairlead, and control equipment.

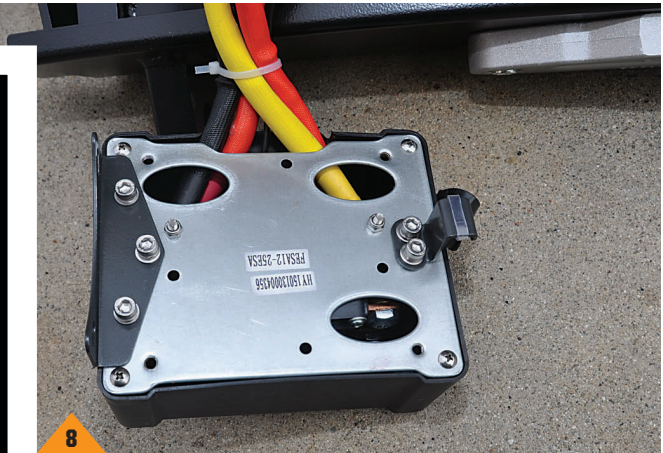
7. Winch bolted to bumper. The U.S. Offroad tub has pre-drilled holes for the standard winch mount pattern.

8. Solenoid box is waterproof and comes with multiple mounting brackets for locations including an external bull bar or engine bay. These are the ones to install on top of the winch.

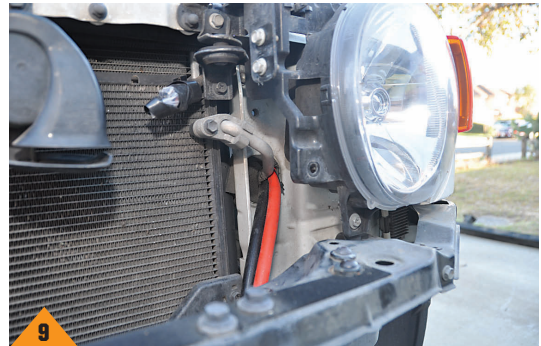
9. Winch power cables were fed through an existing hole. All Edge series winches are equipped with tinned coated copper power cables with PVC insulation and the additional protection of a fiberglass outer sheath.



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gussets and has smart design features such as a properly placed cutout to accommodate an A/C line, and of course 1" wide recovery mounts for D-shackles.

We chose the optional Teflon-impregnated powdercoating for a sharp and durable look and it is designed to mount essentially inside your existing bumper fascia! If you don't want a large external bumper then this is the way to go. It certainly keeps the aerodynamics of the vehicle very close to stock, weighs less (55 pounds), and also costs less than most external bull bars and bumpers. And, as mentioned, there is certainly something cool about keeping your FJ Cruiser looking near to stock, yet having great recovery gear right under the surface.

MEAN MOTHER EDGE 9500
Speaking of recovery, we put an



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10, 11. The clutch selector on our Edge 9500 touched the stock A/C bracket, which needs to be trimmed. Quick and easy.

12. Backside of bumper. Remove 6 nuts to remove front bumper fascia and then trim out lower portion.



13. Rough edges left by Dremel cutting wheel. Use a razor to clean it up.



Australian Mean Mother Edge 9500 (www.meanmother.com.au) winch in our U.S. Offroad winch mount bumper. We contacted United States distributor Boss 4X4 (www.boss4x4.com, 951-746-3393) for ours. The Edge series is the quality value line, while Mean Mother has a more expensive Boss series that is listed as their premium line. For us, the \$875 Edge 9500 with synthetic rope was the ideal choice for this truck and driver. If old school steel cable is your thing, the Edge 9500 with steel can be had for \$625. We always prefer synthetic rope and the Edge comes with 100 feet of genuine Dyneema SK75, plus a hawse fairlead and clevis hook. Other load ratings available are 6000 and 12000 pounds, so if you own a big ol' FZJ80 or similar, Mean Mother has a winch option for you.

Coming from Australia, one would expect they have been tested and proven in outback conditions. Turns out they have, and how! Each winch sold is both strength and durability tested. Each model is tested to the following specifications: 1.1 times rated line pull (dynamic testing) and 1.25 times rated line pull (static testing). These tests are designed to examine the overall strength and ability of the winch while observing and recording the important characteristics and operational performance specifications.

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14. You're done! Total time: around 90 minutes. The final look is clean and subtle, and we like the aluminum hawse fairlead that's included. Note also the D-shackles. Boss4X4 can hook you up with those as well.



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15. Breaking snow trail with BFG All-Terrains can be an exercise in frustration. The Mean Mother Edge 9500 had no problem pulling our FJ Cruiser through cement-like hard pack snow time and again as we explored some winter trails up at Big Bear. Each Mean Mother winch is individually tested before being approved and sent to distributors. That kind of reliability and a reasonable \$875 price point make this unit an option for winch shoppers.

Then the winch is tested to the maximum duty cycle (1 minute) and rated line pull (winch applicable rating) in a dynamic test. This test is performed no less than 100 times and recorded; and the first cycle is tested to 1.25 times the rated line pull. After the winch has passed 100 cycles without failure the winch and components are passed and inspected. All testing is performed with the 1st layer of winch cable on the drum.

THE END RESULTS

Hey, we like a big bumper out front as

much as anyone, but the internal mount look has really grown on us! It's stealth yet totally solid, and for those who live in higher crime areas, this arrangement may not attract the attention of undesirables as fast as an obviously modified rig. More important than that, however, is the solid construction of both the U.S. Offroad winch mount and the tested dependability of the Mean Mother Edge 9500 winch. When you need them, they are there to get you out of trouble. Don't call Saul—call US Offroad and Mean Mother! ✓