



## PROJECT EVERYDAY

# TITAN

### Part 2: Functionality vs. Form

By Robin Stover Photography by Robin Stover

**O**ur Everyday Titan has undergone several changes since its last appearance in *Four Wheeler*. First of all, we took off the Stillen supercharger so that our other project Titan (Mega Titan) could benefit from the 100-plus horsepower it provides. Aside from producing way more power than we require for a daily driver, the blower setup committed us to 92-octane gas, which here in Southern California can typically run upwards of \$3.80 per gallon. The Mega Titan has seen all of 250 miles in the past two years, versus the Everyday Titan's 15,000 miles this year alone. Simple economics made the decision easy for us. We also removed the Bushwacker fender flares



The LT 325/85R18 Nitto Terra Grappler tires offer excellent flotation in sand and mud, while the strategically placed zigzag siping provides superb traction on wet pavement. When this shot was taken, we had almost 7,000 miles on them. As you can see, they hadn't shown any signs of wear yet.

because they unexpectedly rubbed into the truck's vinyl wrap, slightly damaging the one-off cosmetic cover-up in the process. Without the flares, the 33-inch Nitto Mud Grapplers stuck out quite a bit past the fenders. This looked quite silly without a lift, so we decided to hit Nitto up for a different set of narrower and taller tires. In preparation, we bolted in a pair of simple homemade coil spacers—or what you might call a leveling kit—up front to level the truck temporarily. This, along with some pretty extensive front fender trimming, allowed enough clearance for the set of LT325/85R18 Nitto Terra Grappler AT tires that you see here. These tires work awesome on and off pavement, and in some ways we think they even look better too. They sure don't stick out as far as the Mud Grapplers. The larger tires do rub slightly at full compression and while turning sharply, but it's totally livable for the short term until we tackle the rig's suspension upgrades in a future segment.

With these larger meats came the requirement for us to change our strategy for mounting a spare tire. This led us to Wilco Products of Santa Ana, California. Wilco builds the popular TireGate replacement tailgate system. We fell in love with this product from the moment we saw it. It allows a secure attachment point for up to a 40-inch spare tire. The system is built super-tough and is available in three different configurations. We chose the Prerunner series TireGate to fit in with the Southern California desert-racing scene.

Next, we wanted to add a winch to our daily driver, because you never know when your buddies might need a tug. So we contacted a few bumper companies to see if anyone had plans to build a Titan

front bumper. Ironically Road Armor of Mukilteo, Washington, happened to be looking for a Titan truck to prototype one on. In a few weeks time, we met up with Road Armor's owner and had a measuring session. Three months later, we had our good friends at Triple X Traction of Seaside, California, install our new bumper. The installation was fairly simple, and in the

end, it looked as though our truck could survive any unexpected encounters with obstacles. At the same time, this bumper gave us the ability to mount a slick Ramsey Profile 9500 electric winch. At first we had mixed feelings about our truck's new appearance. On one hand, we like the aggressive new appearance that the Road Armor bumper in conjunction with the

taller Nitto tires provided. On the other hand, we felt the sizable gap between the bottom of the grille and the top of the new bumper was excessive and looked unfinished. However, when we contrasted this to the added approach angle, protection, and utility afforded by the new bumper, we decided the trade-off in aesthetics was a small price to pay.



**1** Here is the TireGate in the closed position. We decided to run it with the tire positioned outward so as to improve bed-cargo capacity. Every TireGate is powdercoated with black polyester semi-gloss and is equipped with zinc-plated hardware for long-lasting good looks.

**2** The TireGate is the perfect balance between functionality and good looks. The sweetest part about it is that it doesn't require any cutting, drilling, or welding to mount. It required just 10 bolts, making this product truly bolt-on. We also installed a cable-style bike lock to prevent spare-

tire theft. The tubular support structure is very stout and is load rated for up to 150 pounds. Manufactured from 2-inch steel tubing, mandrel-bent, and MIG-welded together, the TireGate is the perfect solution for anyone looking to mount an oversized spare tire on a pickup.

**3** This is the newest bumper in road Armor's lineup. It came to us strapped to a large wooden pallet, powdercoated black, with some of the necessary hardware to install it. Unfortunately, we did have to make a run to the local hardware store for four fine-thread metric bolts to complete the installation. Notice the gap between the lower portion of the grille and the top of the bumper. We didn't exactly like this aspect of the bumper, but felt we could live with it

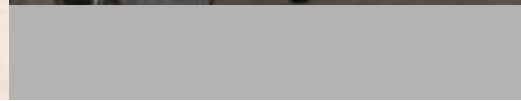
because of the increase in functionality the bumper added.

**4** The inner support structure of this bumper was all business. Note the laser-cut Road Armor logo present in the lower centersection.

**5** This shot shows one of the adapter brackets included with the bumper. As you can see, the bolt

holes are slotted. This allows for easy adjustment once the bumper is secured to the frame.

**6** Triple X Traction's lead mechanic Nick Burgess tightens the final nut securing one of the four PIAA 510 series lights (included) in the recessed pockets of the bumper.



**3**

