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1976 CHEVROLET C10 CUSTOM PICKUP

# The next big thing is already here



VIN: CCL146Z142937

by Jay Harden

**T**his pickup was built by Gas Monkey Garage on Discovery's hit show "Fast N' Loud." It has a fresh new paint job using the factory colors with a factory two-tone paint scheme. The low stance of the truck was achieved using air-ride products from Porterbuilt Fabrication and AccuAir Suspension. Under the hood is a GM Performance crate LS7 with a host of parts that produce an estimated 600 hp. Backing up the motor is a heavy-duty 4L85E auto transmission. Inside the truck is a fully custom interior done by Hix Designs and LeatherSeats.com.

**ACC Analysis** This truck, Lot 1282, sold for \$45,100, including buyer's premium, at Barrett-Jackson's annual Scottsdale, AZ, auction on January 17, 2015.

A couple of years ago I decided it was time to find myself a nice old Chevy half-ton pickup. I was looking for a solid, turn-key and relatively rust-free truck that I could fluff up and throw shiny bits at between plywood runs and dirt-road shenanigans.

Unfortunately, the longer I scoured the local classifieds, the more painfully obvious it became that: 1) I had clearly missed the boat on the '67-'72 C and K10s, and 2) that the average seller and I had very different definitions of the word "driveable." My options in trucks from that era were limited to too little a truck at too high a price, so I simply moved my search criteria up an era and began sifting through '73 to '87 GMs.

Muscular and well defined, this era of hauler strikes a square-jawed silhouette when compared with the bubbly lines of today's waxed and manicured pickups

## Going square

Although the square Chevys have been popular in the lowrider and mud-slinger circles for years, those are two very niche crews that the mainstream has long kept at arm's length. As a consequence, I was expecting to snag a quality rig on the cheap that, as far as I was concerned, was about as collectible as belly-button lint. I wasn't quite prepared for what I found.

Unbeknownst to me, all the square-body owners must've gotten together sometime in the past four or five years and decided their trucks were classics, too. Asking prices were easily double and triple what I was expecting to find, and, as a result, weren't much cheaper than their muscle-car-era cousins. All I could think was, "In what world does this make any sense?"

Then came the fully restored 1978 Silverado K10 that Chevrolet debuted at 2013's SEMA show. It was all cleaned up and dressed in Tuxedo Black and Scarlet Red in the stock scheme — just a simple, straightforward truck with all-new technology discreetly hidden under the hood. That truck was a show-stopper that no one saw coming. A little over a year later, we have this truck's sale to deal with.

## Towing the market

Muscular and well defined, this era of hauler strikes a square-jawed silhouette when compared with the bubbly lines of today's waxed and manicured pickups. Although I'm sure there's a few in this crowd grum-



bling about this green-and-white beauty's enormous rollers and weed-eater stance, it's hard to deny that this is anything but one handsome devil of a pickup. But \$45,000 is a heck of a lot of money to spend on an old truck that few would dare to classify as worth the effort.

To be fair, the components list does consist of some high-dollar items, most notably that LS7, those 22-inch wheels, and the custom interior. But I still don't see this as a parts-are-greater-than-the-sum scenario. The price paid here is simply too high for that. Something else is happening.

You might assume this buyer simply watches too much television and, as a result, got a bit carried away with the celebrity status of the builder. However, I'm not sure this truck's 15 minutes of fame had much to do with the price, if anything at all. Looking outside the bubble of this particular sale, it quickly becomes apparent that the money spent here isn't as far out of line as I may have initially thought.

For example, take a look at Lot 47 from the same B-J Scottsdale event. A bone-stock, completely unadulterated '77 C10 longbed that sold for — brace yourself — \$35,200. Holy moly. That truck is a low-mile survivor, but is it collectible? Certainly not from a performance or historically significant standpoint. By my calculations, somewhere around a bazillion of these trucks were built, so we can rule out exclusivity as well. So what then?

## Timing is everything

Well, I may be oversimplifying a bit, but the truth may be as simple as the fact that we ain't gettin' any younger. I know that sounds ridiculous, but hear me out.

The explosion of interest in the cars and trucks from the late '60s and early '70s perfectly coincided with an equally dramatic wane in the street-rod market. Why? Well, it really all comes down to the timing.

Back in the 1980s, the vast majority of high-dollar builds and restorations were all of pre-war vintage. Why? Because the guys who could afford to build them were also the same guys who grew up with them, and, in many cases, had waited their entire lives to park one in the garage.

By the time the early 2000s rolled around, the muscle car era had been dead for nearly three decades, and those who lived through it were somewhere deep into their 40s or 50s. Not so coincidentally, and almost overnight, the first-gen Camaro became every

bit as relevant as the '32 roadster, and perhaps even more so.

This seems like a good time to remind ourselves that our subject truck will be 40 years old next year.

## Rolling back the clock

Another important factor to consider is that there really wasn't much excitement from Detroit in the decade after the oil crunch. The bar for American-made, V8-powered, rear-wheel-driven goodness was set painfully low. At least the pickups had some utility about them, and they were workhorses that easily transitioned from the cornfields to the high-school parking lot. They were sturdy if not exhilarating, and most of us can recount at least one youthful ride in the bed of a pickup back before lawyers ruled the land. Remember? You probably almost fell out. And it was awesome. I'd bet the memory brings a smile to your face.

The point is that we crave what we know. We want to relish those moments that defined our youth while slowly reimagining them through the oh-so-pleasant lens of nostalgia. In some cases, it's the opportunity to relive an open-highway moment behind the wheel of a hot rod that only existed in the droopy-eyed slumber of a school kid waiting for the day's final bell. In others, we want to take the wheel again with the memory of grandpa staring lazily out the passenger's side window as the mile markers zip by on a quiet country road. The easiest way to ride with that memory is to put him in the right seat.

ACC has been asserting that trucks and SUVs from the '70s and '80s will be the next big thing for a while now, but if you look around, you'll notice that they already are. I'll stop short of encouraging you to trade that '32 roadster or '69 Camaro for a truck, but don't be surprised if this sale, which may seem like an outlier, turns commonplace.

This truck was expensive, but I don't think I can really call it well sold — there's just too much money sunk in it already. It still may be a little early to call this truck well bought at this price, too, but it's still cheaper than buying a new one and replicating the customizations. We may just need to accept that the market has spoken and the inevitable is here.

I should have bought mine cheap when I had the chance. Looks like I'll just have to pay to play. Like I said, we ain't gettin' any younger. 🚚

(Introductory description courtesy of Barrett-Jackson.)



## Detailing

**Years produced:** 1973–87  
**Number produced:** 458,424  
 (all 1976 C10 and K10)  
**Original list price:** \$3,863  
 (short bed)  
**Current ACC Valuation:**  
 \$10,000–\$20,000 (stock)  
**VIN location:** Inside of left-hand door pillar  
**Engine # location:** Pad on engine block, passenger's side, ahead of cylinder head  
**Club:** [www.67-72chevytrucks.com](http://www.67-72chevytrucks.com)  
**Alternatives:** 1967–72 Chevrolet C10, 1960–66 Chevrolet C-10, 1967–72 Ford F-series  
**ACC Investment Grade:** D

## Comps



**1977 Chevrolet K20 Scottsdale pickup**  
 Lot T120, VIN: CKL247F442630  
 Condition: 3+  
 Not sold at \$15,500  
 Mecum Auctions, Kansas City, MO, 12/5/2014  
 ACC# 256604



**1972 Chevrolet C10 Cheyenne Super pickup**  
 Lot S174, VIN: CCE142S148014  
 Condition: 2  
 Sold at \$20,520  
 Mecum Auctions, Chicago, IL, 10/10/2014  
 ACC# 255985



**1978 Chevrolet C10 custom pickup**  
 Lot 718, VIN: CCL448Z201491  
 Condition: 1-  
 Sold at \$31,900  
 Barrett-Jackson, Reno, NV, 8/2/2014  
 ACC# 244983