

KEVIN WHIPPS

PORTFOLIO
(THE SHORT VERSION)

me@kevinwhipps.com
kevinwhipps.com
[linkedin.com/in/kwhipps/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/kwhipps/)



Hi.

My name is Kevin Whipps, I'm a writer based in Arizona, and I need a better headshot.

I've been writing professionally since 2000 or so, as an editor, writer, copy editor, author, copywriter and copy director. In that time I've published dozens of magazines, produced two books, written hundreds of headlines and even moved a few times. I currently live in Tucson, Ariz., but I'm open to relocating for the right position.

This portfolio is a way for me to consolidate all of the work I've done in various genres — and there's a lot of stuff to dig through. But if it does nothing else, it should give you an idea of what kind of writing I do, and the work that I'm capable of producing.

If you want to talk further, I'm on the socials pretty much everywhere as @kevinwhipps. Or you can always email me at me@kevinwhipps.com.



Kevin Whipps

TESTIMONIALS

Knew Kevin through mutual connections in the days of the Internet when blogging was the new hotness. Later, I came to work with Kevin as he was editor on an exciting new startup brand with expressions across print and digital platforms. He contracted me to write for him and I found the experience to be in the top 1% of editors I've ever worked with. He was timely, diplomatic and incisive with his edits and the final result frankly made me look like a better writer than I actually am. He's great! Work with him! I say this as a chief content officer for a major publisher and also as an industry veteran of 30 years who has worked with the best and worst the industry has to offer. Kevin is the real deal. Would cheerfully recommend him to anyone needing a quality wordsmith, and can only hope for the day when we might one day work together again on something. Anything!

Stephen George
Content Leader
Kalmbach Media

Kevin is an exceptional editor who not only pays attention to the details, but also will passionately advocate for good content and processes. He's got a proactive ethic that steps up to any project and is responsive to input from the rest of the team. Any publication would be lucky to get his talented hand.

A.J. Hackwith
Author
The Library of the Unwritten

I am so lucky to have been able to work with Kevin on Rebel. He is easily the most organized and driven editor I have met. Kevin has never missed a deadline and is easily the most important person to have on your team. Coming from the design side, these skills are make or break in the publishing industry. He not only has eyes like a hawk for editing, but he has an amazing way of telling stories that are thought provoking and inspiring.

Jenny Poon
Founder
CO+HOOTS/HUUB

Kevin Whipps and I both worked as copy editors at 944. During that time, we worked both together and separately on various projects. Kevin was always prepared and extremely organized, and he was great at brainstorming new ways in which we could streamline our department and production procedures. He is an incredibly detail-oriented worker who sometimes goes to great pains to do whatever it takes to guarantee that his finished product is not only his best possible work, but also exactly (or even above and beyond) what his client or coworker had in mind, making him an absolute pleasure to work with. Kevin is the guy you go to when you want something done right the first time.

Marie Look
Digital Editor
Masterclass.com



Courtesy of Barrett-Jackson Auction Company

1963 Chevrolet Corvette Split-Window Resto-Mod

It's a resto-mod, sure. And it sold for big bucks. But is it the right car for you?

By Kevin Whipps

Chassis number: 30837S117874
SCM Condition for this car: 1

- GM LS3 with 540 hp
- GM 4L70E automatic overdrive transmission
- Lokar shifter
- Art Morrison sport chassis
- Strange Engineering self-dampening shocks
- Six-piston polished Wilwood front brakes; four-piston Wilwood rear
- Power windows
- Air conditioning
- 18- and 20-inch Schott wheels with Toyo Redline tires



SCM Analysis

This car, Lot 240, sold for \$357,500, including buyer's premium, at Barrett-Jackson's May Online Auction.

This resto-mod 1963 C2 is a good-looking car that sold for huge money in comparison to original 1963 Corvette Split-Window cars. But is it just another cookie-cutter build?

A resto-mod for the masses

The Corvette C2 has been an auction staple for years. They're a fairly reliable sale, with many of them pulling in six figures and some even going (or at least listing) for over a million dollars.

But the market is changing. These cars are still out there and changing hands, but the examples you're seeing are a bit different than they used to be. Are full restorations still the way to go, or are we just going to see more and more resto-mods?

Dollars and sense

Let's begin with the basics: There were a little over 20,000 C2s made in 1963, with a roughly 50/50 split between convertibles and coupes. Their relative rarity — especially for the Split-Window coupe — is part of the appeal, as are the timeless looks. But because the cars have been around for so long, there's a lengthy history of them appearing on the auction block.

From a collector's perspective, one can understand the angle. Seeing all these huge paydays come down the pike sure is attractive. And if you've got yourself a 1963 C2 of your own — especially a special Split-Window coupe — thoughts might turn to restoring it, then selling it and buying a new yacht or a stately manor in rural Montana.

Were this five or 10 years ago, we might agree. But now? Well, not so much.

See, the audience for these cars is changing. Lots of people out there buy the rides they wanted from their childhood — or the ones they had

when they were first learning how to drive. It's all about nostalgia. And if you fit into the early-Baby Boomer market, you would've been around 17 when the iconic '63 Split-Window first hit the scene. Today, you'd be 74. Is that the right time in your life to spend six or seven figures on a car? Sure, maybe — or maybe not. It's possible that if you want your nostalgia fix, you'll just pick one up for under \$100k and be just as happy.

And there's another factor here, too. These C2s have been around for 57 years, as has the C2 in general. Which means a lot of people have messed around with them, customized them in one way or the other, and that makes it even harder to find good versions that are all-original.

Enter the resto-mod

This brings us to the resto-mod scene. You have to be a certain type of person to find them appealing. You're not a numbers-matching collector, and you don't care how many owners it's seen. What you do want is something that looks and performs amazingly well — perhaps with the brakes and handling of a modern car. Maybe you just want a really pretty car — and that's it. Is it original? Who cares? It lays down a mean patch of rub-

This car brought a ton of money — well over the current SCM Median Value of \$78,000 for a standard 1963 Corvette Split-Window coupe. In fact, this resto-mod sold for more than the SCM Median Value for a 1963 Z06 Split-Window coupe — which is the holy grail for many Corvette collectors.

ber and looks like it belongs in a Hot Wheels collector case. That's all that matters.

This car is clearly a resto-mod. And, frankly, it's beautiful. No, there wasn't a clinical restoration done of the car with the perfectly rebuilt, numbers-matching engine, but will it get looks? Absolutely. And if you're the type who drives their cars (or even just shows them off parked), then yeah, this is a perfect car for you. It would stand out in a crowd of similar hot rods, but not overpower anything in the garage. It's just a clean, pretty car that gets attention. And who doesn't want that?

About that price ...

This car brought a ton of money — well over the current SCM Median Value of \$78,000 for a standard 1963 Corvette Split-Window coupe. In fact, this resto-mod sold for more than the SCM Median Value for a 1963 Z06 Split-Window coupe — which is the holy grail for many Corvette collectors.

This brings us to the next sticking point — the price. Is \$357,500 fair for this resto-mod car? Possibly.



Let's go to Barrett-Jackson's Scottsdale Auction on January 13, 2020, where a black 1963 Corvette Split-Window resto-mod sold for \$385,000 (SCM# 6922270). When you compare the two cars, they're awfully similar. Both have the same wheels, the interiors are both red and they have almost identical drivetrains and suspensions. The big difference? One is black and the other is white — and that black one earned an extra \$30k on the block. That all tracks, as the cars were both built by Jeff Hayes Customs and completed months apart.

You could chalk all this up to chance, but these resto-mod Split-Windows are often selling for bigger bucks than an original Split-Window. But is this really what you want?

A look into the future

What does this all mean then? Well, it seems like there's an industry out there for building resto-mod Split-Windows. If you buy one, you'll get a beautiful car like this one here, but it may share some traits with another one that follows it on the block. That's not necessarily a bad thing, because a good-looking car is a good-looking car.

But it's not really unique — there are other examples that are very similar. How much that matters to you is what's important. At the end of the day, spending over \$300,000 on a car is a big investment. Spending this kind of money on a resto-mod has backfired many times when owners go to resell the car. In the past, the resale market for resto-mods — no matter how well they're done — has been shaky.

You may get your money back — and you may not. Collectors who value original Corvettes — a big part of the Corvette collecting world — will hate your car and will never buy it.

But if you're good with that, then a C2 resto-mod like this one isn't a bad deal. ♦

KEVIN WHIPPS is an American car guy through and through — he's a longtime custom-car and -truck magazine writer, and is the author of several books on GM truck restoration.



DETAILS

Year produced: 1963
 Number produced: 10,594 Split-Window coupes
 Original list price: \$4,252
 Current SCM Median Valuation: \$371,250 (resto-mod 1963 Corvette Split-Windows)
 Tune-up / major service: \$200
 Distributor cap: \$12.99
 Chassis # location: Under the glovebox on the instrument panel brace
 Engine # location: Passenger's side front cylinder head
 Transmission: 4-speed manual or 3-speed automatic
 Club: The Corvette C2 Registry
 Web: www.c2registry.org
 Alternatives: 1963 Porsche 911, 1963 Aston Martin DB5, 1963 Chevrolet Corvette Z06 Split-Window coupe (stock)
 SCM Investment Grade: B

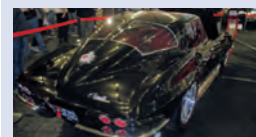
COMPS



1963 Chevrolet Corvette Split-Window coupe
 Lot 109, s/n 30837S108329
 Condition: 2
 Transmission: 4-speed manual
 Sold at \$128,800
 Gooding & Company, Scottsdale, AZ, 1/17/2020
 SCM# 6919168



1963 Chevrolet Corvette 327/360 Split-Window coupe
 Lot 225, s/n 30837S106704
 Condition: 1-
 Transmission: 4-speed manual
 Sold at \$134,400
 RM Sotheby's, Phoenix, AZ, 1/16/2020
 SCM# 6922270



1963 Chevrolet Corvette Custom Split-Window coupe
 Lot 1363, s/n 30837S119414
 Condition: 1
 Transmission: Automatic
 Sold at \$385,000
 Barrett-Jackson, Scottsdale, AZ, 1/13/2020
 SCM# 6922285



@ SQUARE

THE CREATOR OF TWITTER ISN'T DONE YET

In the past few years, there have been a few major game changers in the world. eBay changed the way people make purchases online, Craigslist decimated the newspaper industry with free classified ads, and now, Square is going to change the way people pay for products.

Enter Jack Dorsey, the man who brought Twitter to the masses. At 33, most men haven't conquered folding their own laundry, much less an industry as volatile as the Internet. Which is why when he stepped down as CEO of Twitter in 2008 and started considering other ventures, he thought big: healthcare and the financial industry. "Given that we've just had this major crash, it's this kind of clearing of the slate," Dorsey says. "All the abstractions that have been built upon other abstractions and created this massive exchange that no single human understands, has kind of been erased." Which one to choose came to him in the form of a problem.

"My co-founder Jim McKelvey was trying to sell a piece of his glass art," Dorsey says. "He found that if he could not accept the form of payment that people would want to use, he would not be able to eat that night, for instance." The dilemma led to a conversation over the phone between the pair. "We have these iPhones, and we have every single thing we need in the palm of our hand to complete that transaction and make that payment. Why wasn't that possible?" That led into research on the topic and then the duo decided to take matters into their own hands and start a new company, titled simply, Square.

The new firm developed a product, designed to fit into the headphone jack of any smartphone with a square dongle on the end that contains a magnetic card reader. This allows the owner to take credit card payments securely over the Internet,

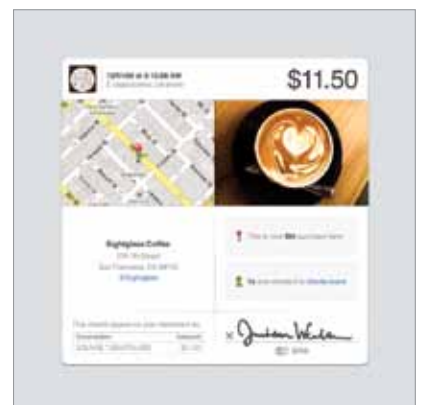
and produce a receipt on the spot. Better yet, it won't cost much, either. "The idea is to make the hardware extremely cheap — cheap enough that we could give them away to everyone who wants one, so that we enable terminals all over the world in any capacity and any situation," Dorsey says. "Anyone who can pay with a credit card could receive with a plastic card. There's no reason why I shouldn't be able to do that."

On the surface, this doesn't sound like a very revolutionary idea. After all, PayPal has been making credit card payments on eBay easy for anyone to perform. But Square makes the process mobile and more personal. "The exchange of value is inherently social. It's often times a face-to-face thing," says Dorsey. "Ninety percent of commerce in the world is still done face-to-face — not online — yet, it's never really been designed as a social element."

With Square, Dorsey aims to change that. Now custom receipts have been designed with maps of the store's location, as well as a copy of the signature, all sent via e-mail or text within seconds of making the purchase. Photo identification is available as well, making the process more secure than traditional transactions. It's currently being beta tested in San Francisco, St. Louis and New York, with more sites on the way.

In the coming months, more and more Square units will be popping up across the country. As more people get exposed to the concept, they'll slowly adjust to the change and, eventually, treat a purchase on a Square device the same way they would any other option. And then, when Square takes off like Twitter did, maybe Dorsey will have some free time on his hands to handle those other projects he's been thinking about. Like healthcare.

See the new bill at www.squareup.com



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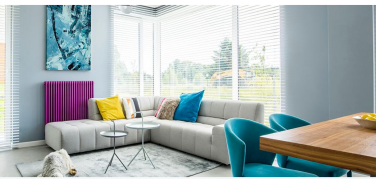
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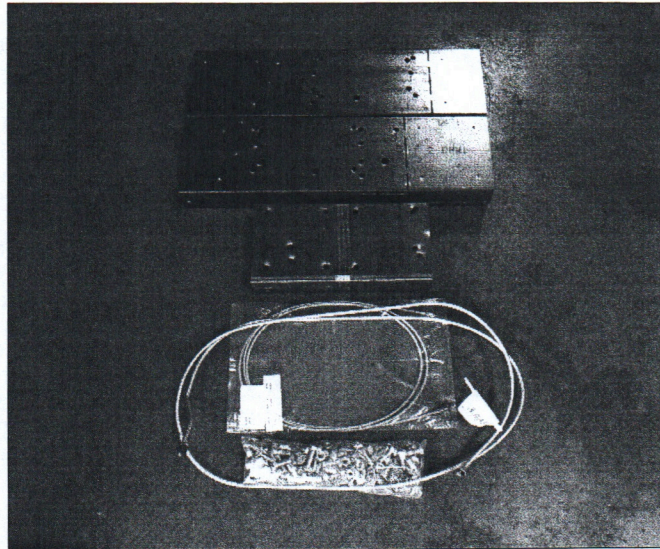
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Should be a
SIDEBAR

Long-Bed to Short-Bed Conversion Kit

How popular are long-bed to short-bed conversions? Enough that Brothers Trucks decided to make a kit to do just that. They have two options for this era of C10s—1967–1971 and 1972—and both of them run the same price at \$469.

Now this is not a necessary thing to purchase if you want to cut down your long-bed truck. But it does take a lot of the fear out of the whole process. The kit comes with a pair of steel brackets that act as templates through every step. And when you're done, they turn into the fishplates you need to bolt your frame back together and then weld up. They also have shortened brake lines and accessories, so you don't have to do anything weird or custom to make it



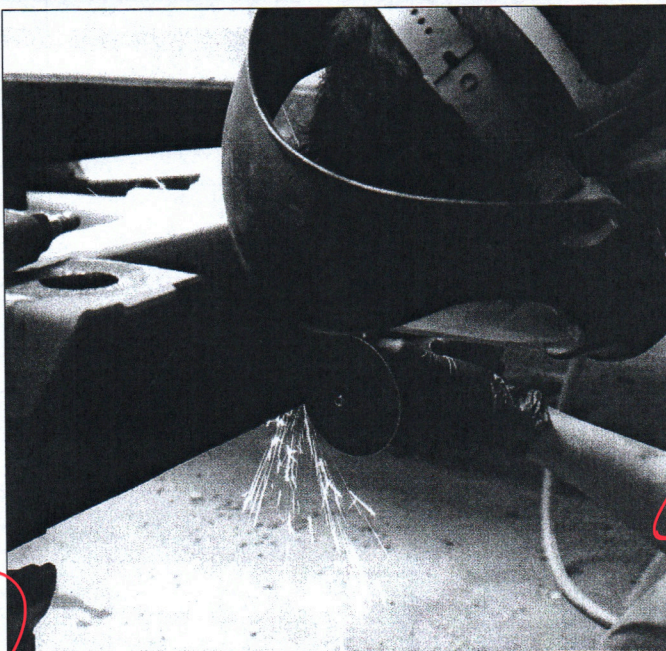
Just \$469 gets you everything needed to convert a long-bed truck into a short-bed (minus the sheet metal).

all happen.

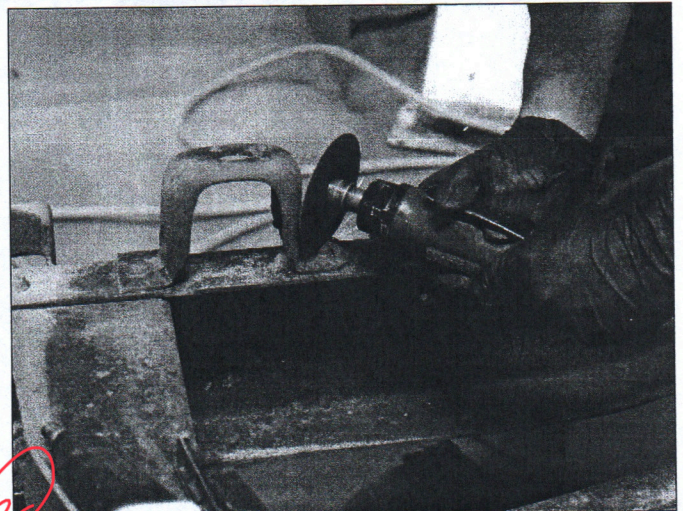
Long story short (pun very much intended), the Brothers kit is nice to have if the idea of cutting down your truck is intimidating. It gives you step-by-step instructions,

and they say the average builder can do it in about 8 hours. Combine that with a newly purchased bed and you can turn your long-bed into a short-bed over the course of a weekend.

Modifying the Frame



After verifying the 12-inch measurement he made earlier, Kyle cuts the frame so that it will now be the right amount for the new bed.



The forward-most bed mounts need to come off because the newly shortened bed will only use four (if Kyle had used an aftermarket short-bed floor, he would've used six). To remove it, the rivet heads are cut with an X pattern using a cut-off wheel, then the rivets are knocked off with an air chisel. He does the same thing with the cab mounts but sets them to the side for safe keeping.

GETTING STARTED

unfortunately, you don't. It's difficult to pick them out just by looking at pictures, but in general, read the reviews, make sure the sheet metal gauge is noted and is correct to your truck, and that the price doesn't seem to be too good to be true.

Who are the good guys here? Dynacorn, Classic Industries, Goodmark, and AMD are a few, particularly for sheet metal. If you look at them as a starting point, you have a solid foundation.

Going back to your level of restoration, the one you pick will determine which parts you need to buy. If you're meticulous about keeping your truck absolutely original, then you'll need to go with NOS parts or just putting more time into restoring what's on the truck. This will cost more and take more time, but there is a potential for added value in the end, particularly with other collectors.

If the goal is instead to build a daily driver, reproduction parts might be just fine. And if the component you need is one that will degrade over time—rubber window moldings or taillight seals, for example—then buying something from the aftermarket might work as well. Aftermarket parts aren't NOS because they're not made by GM, and they're not reproduction because even though they may fit like stock, they don't look or function like stock parts. Let's take the stock hood hinges, for example. Often you'll find a truck with the back of the hood popped up slightly and misaligned, and that's because the rivet between the moving parts has worn out, causing play. Some aftermarket hinges remove the spring entirely and replace them with gas-charged shocks. They function and look better, but by no means are they authentic.

At the end of the day, this is all your call. If you're insistent on NOS parts, then by all means, use authentic NOS parts. But if you're a bit more flexible or less particular, aftermarket or reproduction parts could fit the bill.

Using a Parts Vehicle

Before you find your perfect project, you're going to find more than a few duds. Sometimes they're missing a title, other times it's missing a bed. Or cab. Or everything but doors and a bed. Either way, typically the truck is cheaper than usual. And if the parts on that truck are needed for your build and the cost is cheaper than buying NOS, then you might have the perfect parts vehicle in front of you.

Think about how a junkyard works. They buy cars and trucks from insurance companies and local wreckers that no longer function for one reason or another. They buy them cheap then put them in a huge yard for people like you to wander around and get what they need. Then they mark up those prices accordingly, and by the time the vehicle is nothing but a stripped-down shell, they've more than made back their initial investment.

Now let's take your truck project. Say you need a pair of doors for your 1972, and they have to be 1972 doors because of that screw hole that only they have. You find a truck that's got doors in amazing condition, but it was pinched in a front and rear collision, making the rest of the truck essentially worthless. Oh, and it's missing the title. If that person was selling the entire truck for less than the cost of a pair of similar doors from a junkyard, and/or they're just easier to find, then it might be worth picking up the truck. Then, should

there be other parts along the way that you need, maybe they're on that truck, maybe not. And when you're done, you can sell it just like the original guy and move on your way.

All that said, the main reason why many in the 1967–1972 restoration crowd would purchase a parts truck comes down to two things: the frame and the bed.

If you want a short-bed truck, you're going to have to do some digging. Chevrolet sold substantially more long-bed models than short-beds, and the people who own them typically know how much they're worth (particularly the fleet-side models). The two defining characteristics of a short-bed are the bed (naturally) and the frame underneath, both for the shortened length. Although you can shorten a long-bed frame to match the short-bed's dimensions, a purist prefers the original chassis, not one that's been cut and re-welded. Hence why the bed and the frame are so popular in a parts truck. In fact, sometimes there are parts trucks available that are just frames and beds because the current owner needed everything else for their own project.

One last thing to note: trucks without titles are usually missing it for a reason, and although they are numerous, there's a nefarious one that stands out: theft. The same applies for trucks with VINs that look like they've been removed or are missing entirely. And should you decide that you want to buy a parts truck for the cab, know that swapping out the VINs is illegal in most U.S. states.

Parts Organization and Cataloging

You're going to have a lot of parts floating around your shop, par-



THE BODY

The basic concept of this book is that by the time you're done, you'll have a truck that you went through from top to bottom and restored to a factory condition. And to do that, you're going to lean heavily on a lot of mechanical skills.

Bodywork, however, is different. It's not quite mechanical work, nor is it grunt work. It's an art, and as such, it takes practice. You might feel like Sisyphus with the boulder some-

times, but in this case, it is possible for you to get to the top of the mountain. It's just going to take some time.

The idea here is that bodywork is a skill, and as such it's one that you can learn. You're going to spend more time on the project as a result, and you'll burn through a lot of body filler and sandpaper in the process. You're also going to want some extra patience stored up somewhere because if this is your first time laying

filler, you will get frustrated along the way. Again, take a breath, calm down, and just keep trying. You'll get it.

How do you learn? There's the obvious options like finding a local class or seeing if you can hang out at a shop for a bit, but those might not work for your situation. Maybe look at talking to a buddy or learn from other pros in the area. Ask your friends who knows how to do it and then spend time watching them perform their magic. Ask lots of questions. And if you are a little bit more serious, check with your local paint shop and see if they know anyone you could talk to or of classes in the area. (Many welding shops also have classes, and that will help too.)

All that buildup is to say that bodywork is a difficult and trying task, particularly when you start out. Which means that if you want to pay a professional to do this part for you, there's no shame in that at all.

Here's why: your truck's paint job is going to get a lot of looks. And if the bodywork underneath or the prep work to get you to paint is spotty or poorly done, the entire truck will suffer. It is an absolutely critical part of the restoration process, and it must be done correctly.



The bodywork process is a long one, but when it's done, the results are well worth it. (Photo Courtesy Mark Burdo)

So can you do it? Absolutely. But should you? Only if you know what you're doing. If not, consider having a professional do it for you. And if you have any question on whether or not you can do it, skim through this chapter and see what's up. Then you can make an accurate decision.

Stripping the Finish

Unless you were the person who paid for the truck back in the late 1960s/early 1970s, you have no idea what's really happened to it. Was it ever in a wreck? Did it get repainted in the 1980s? Face it: you'll never find out. And that's fine, but the only way to get things sorted is to take it down to the bare metal. You need a fresh start.

Chemical Methods

The first option you have to get rid of your paint is aircraft stripper. If you've never used it before, it's a process that has you pouring this gelatinous material onto the surface of the truck (or spraying it, depending on the product), and then you allow it to sit for a specified amount of time. Once the paint bubbles up, you take

a scraping tool and peel it away from the metal. It may take multiple applications, but when you're done, you'll have bare metal to work with.

You have quite a few brand options to choose from. Kleen-Strip Aircraft Paint Remover does the job, and POR-15 Strip Gel Aircraft Paint Remover is a respected brand in the field. Gel tends to stay in place longer and function better, while the spray is best for areas you can't easily reach.

Here's the downside: aircraft stripper is messy. And since it's a caustic material, you're going to need to suit up with eye protection, rubber gloves, long pants and sleeves, and absolutely, above all else, an area with lots of good airflow. A mask or respirator isn't a bad idea.

Another thing to think about is the mess. Putting some plastic under the truck before you get to stripping is recommended, as there will be a lot of sludge to deal with. You don't want to try to clean that up by hand.

But with all that said, aircraft stripper is an efficient way to get paint off of your truck without damaging the metal underneath. And that can be a very valuable tool in your toolbox.

Mechanical Methods

If you would rather stay away from the chemicals, you could just get after it with some sandpaper. Ideally, you'll have a D/A sander and a wide variety of grits to work with.

Start with a rough estimate. How much paint do you think is on the truck? If it's a lot, start with a 24-grit sandpaper. Then, as you start getting through more and more layers, work your way up to 80- or 120-grit and stop there. If the paint is already flaking away, you can start with the 80 grit and you should be fine.

The key is to move the D/A around a lot. You don't want to build up too much heat in any one area, as that gives you the potential to warp the sheet metal. Keep moving and swap out the sandpaper for fresh stuff whenever it gets clogged up and you'll be fine. That said, a D/A is nowhere near as bad at building up heat as a grinder, but if you have some delicate metal under there, you might cause some damage. Just be aware.

You will deal with a lot of dust here, so wear a mask and some eye protection. But otherwise the only issue is getting the dust off yourself when you're done. For that, take a blow gun and put it on your air hose, then give yourself a shop shower. It'll do in a pinch.

Media Blasting

If you want to take the truck down to the bare metal fairly fast, you can look into media blasting. The idea here is that you combine air from a compressor and a media to blow onto the surface. The abrasive quality will remove the paint and filler from the truck, as well as any rust, and you'll be left with a clean piece of metal to work with.



Aircraft stripper creates quite a mess, but it does get the job done for a relatively small amount of money. It needs a lot of elbow grease, but you will get a bare-metal finish once you're done if you do it correctly. (Photo Courtesy Mark Burdo)



If you're going to handle the media blasting yourself, then you want to do it outside—somewhere that has lots of ventilation. Also be sure to protect yourself and put on some kind of dust protection, particularly for your lungs. (Photo Courtesy Mark Burdo)



One of the nice things about media blasting is that you can spray otherwise inaccessible areas, like inside the rear marker light pocket. (Photo Courtesy Mark Burdo)

If you're doing this at home, then you'll need a beefy compressor to handle the load. Consider a 60- to 80-gallon tank with 9 cfm of airflow at 90 psi. You'll also want to strongly consider what kind of media you need to use. If you go with something too aggressive, you could blow holes in otherwise quality metal or warp the panels from too much heat. Or, if you go for something too light, it'll take forever to get the job done. If you're looking for a general rule of thumb,

then go with 60 grit for the hood and roof, and 30–60 grit for everything else. Oh, and since some media is recyclable, consider doing your work over a drop cloth. Not only will that make it easier to clean up, but you can reuse some of the media too.

There are a lot of different types of media out there, but the most common ones are silicon carbide, aluminum oxide, and glass bead, with the latter two being the most preferable. To find out if either will

work for your truck, give them a quick run along a rocker panel or the back wall of the cab—a place that's generally inconspicuous. If you think it's going to be too much, go with one of the less-abrasive options, such as corn cob or walnut shells. These two don't etch the metal and are considered to be less abrasive, yet still can take bodywork and paint off the truck while building up less heat. The thing is, walnut shells are messy to use because they get lost in crevices, and since both materials aren't as aggressive, they will take longer to do the same task.

Let's take a moment to break down some of the different types.

- Glass beads are considered to be medium abrasive, and you can reuse them up to 30 times.
- Plastic beads are more aggressive, but they don't build up a ton of heat.
- Aluminum oxide is made up of tiny grains. It's also not biodegradable, so be sure to clean it up carefully.



What's the downside to doing media blasting yourself? Well, this. It's messy and hard to contain because it creates so many fine particles. Base your decision on what kind of workspace you have and how much time you want to dump into the process. (Photo Courtesy Mark Burdo)

Now it's important to note here that the process itself is pretty critical. Again, if you spend too much time in one area, you could blow through the metal. And even if you don't, you can warp the panel just from the heat. So make sure to follow a few simple steps.

First off, you don't need to crank up the pressure on your air compressor to get this to work. Just 35–45 psi will work just fine. If you use more, you're almost guaranteed to damage the panel, either by penetrating it too much or just applying excess heat.

Second, the truck needs to be stripped 100 percent before you start. That means the windows, moldings, trim, taillights, rubber, and everything else should be off the truck completely. If, for some reason, you can't or don't want to remove a specific part, then you'll need to mask it a ton—and even then there's still a chance it could get damaged, particularly if it's plastic.

When it comes time to actually start blasting, begin with a plan. Each part should follow the same basic process so that things are consistent and you get better results. Keep the nozzle 9–10 inches away from the panel and tilt it approximately 45 degrees from the surface. Pick a pattern—front to back, top to bottom, or whatever—and stick with it on each piece. Make sure to follow the pattern all the way on each panel so that you don't forget to spray a spot along the way.

As you work the panel, remember that your truck probably had a few coats of paint on it, plus possibly a clear coat and some primer. Don't expect to remove it all in one shot. Go a layer at a time and be patient. You'll be able to watch the results as you go, so you will see

progress. And the slower you go, the safer you will be.

If you're doing this all yourself, then you'll need to find a portable sandblaster of some kind. Fortunately, there are quite a few affordable options. Eastwood sells a kit that's around \$165, but it's made for finer materials (80 grit and up), and they recommend that you don't use walnut shells. RedLine has one for \$180, and there are all sorts of "bring your own bucket" versions that are essentially a gun and hose, and they're around \$50 or so, depending on the model.

Now at this point, there's been a lot of general talk about the topic, but let's get to a recommendation.

Soda Blasting

If you're not sure which media you want to use, give soda blasting a good look. Although it's not as hardcore as some other methods, it gives you a nice option that removes paint and small amounts of rust. It's not going to turn that rusted-out C10 of yours into rust-free perfection, but it will get rid of some basic scale and, more importantly, previous iterations of paint. On the downside, it won't be good for blasting through bodywork, so if your truck is heavy with filler, you might consider something stronger.

Soda is nice because you can use it on pretty much anything: metal (both steel and aluminum), fiberglass, and plastic. If, for some reason, you need to keep some chrome on your truck, you can spray around the shiny stuff without worrying about damaging it.

Another advantage is the finished product. A lot of media-blasted cabs and beds have an interesting texture to them. Sometimes that works to

your advantage; you might not have to prep too hard before laying down primer, for example. But if you want the metal on your truck to look as new as possible, giving yourself as true factory fresh start, then soda is the best option. It doesn't create that texture found on other media options, and—as an added bonus—it covers the whole part with soda. Even though it's not permanent, that's a nice way to prevent your bare metal project from rusting further. And when it comes time to prime the vehicle, you just need to rinse off the part with water. No big deal.

Now again, this is your project, and you'll have to be the one to make the big decision. If you want to do the media blasting yourself, then you'll need to choose the media. If your truck is packed with filler, something more aggressive such as walnut, aluminum oxide, silicon carbide, or glass beads may be your best choice. And if you're just not sure which way to go, well there's another option too.

Body Shop Blasting

If you do some light Googling, you'll find anywhere from one to a few dozen media blasters in your area. There are also body shops that will do the job for you too, although they may just farm it out to their favorite shop as well. But before you drop off your project, you should do a good amount of research.

You'll want to know what kind of media they use. Do they charge by the hour or by project? Do they need to have the entire truck stripped down or can you send them a rolling chassis? And, the most important one: downtime. How long will it take to get your parts done from start to finish?