

BY JORDAN MAY

PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF HIGH REV PHOTOGRAPHY & RORY WARD

**I**t's not every day you read about a vehicle that can sufficiently be called a "Trophy Truck killer." After all, Trophy Trucks are one of the most dominant and well-built off-road race vehicles on the planet. So why did No. 1449 land this auspicious title?

Originally built in 1990, No. 1449 was first driven by Glenn Harris and Jack Johnson and then Pat Dean in 1992. Under these drivers, the vehicle was able to achieve overall

victories placing ahead of names such as Ivan Stewart, Robby Gordon, and Walker Evans. After a strong career, the vehicle was unfortunately put in storage in 2002. Fast forward to October 2006, when Rory Ward of Racers Only Motorsports ([www.racers-only.com](http://www.racers-only.com)) came across No. 1449 and decided it was his turn to give this champion of the dirt another go at the record books.

So how has Rory fared since the rebirth of the Killer? How does a First Place victory in both the 2007 SCORE Primm 300 race and 2008 SCORE Laughlin Desert Challenge race sum it up? Rory Ward, his team, and many sponsors have done an incredible job bringing a true masterpiece back from the dead and keeping it living up to its name. The next time you head to a SCORE, BITD, or SNORE off-road race, be sure to stay on the lookout and keep your camera ready to snap this high-speed desert dominator, as it may fly by you in the blink of an eye.

Under the hood or, rather, out back, is a Chevrolet V-8 engine pushing over 360 hp. That's right — they stuffed a V-8 where a flat V-6 used to be. Keeping the



BEATING THE BIG BOYS  
IS NO EASY FEAT

**TROPHY TRUCK**

**KILLER**



motor purring is an Advanced Air Cleaner Systems air filter working in combination with a custom-piped R.E.F. Unlimited exhaust system. Shooting the fuel around is a Bosch fuel pump coming from a 35-gallon Fuel Safe cell. The radiator is from C&R Racing using a Spal fan.

Moving power throughout the vehicle is a Jeff Fields transmission being controlled through an Art Carr shifter and cooled by a C&R heat exchanger. The torque converter is made by TCS with a stall speed of 3,000. All transmission work was completed by Valley Performance out of Las Vegas. An Optima RedTop battery and an MSD ignition system was found controlling the electronic systems.

The buggy was constructed in Chenoweth design using 4130 chrome-moly tube, most 1.50-inch-diameter. Although much of the original build is still found on the vehicle, several

chassis components needed an update. The new front bumper was made by Bear Race Cars, and the rear bumper was fabricated by Pete Corwin. Both Pete and Bear Race Cars also mounted the motor to the transmission, fixed various cracks in the chassis, constructed new water lines, radiator mount, jack mount, center console, and more. The front brakes are Wilwood, and the rear are from Summers Brothers. Steering is controlled using a Howe steering box with a CNC column.

The original suspension design that was created in 1990 by Bruce Fraley is still being used. Bruce used to work for Michael Gaughan, the father of NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series racer Brendan Gaughan. Foddrill trailing arms provide 17 inches of wheel travel in front, and Foddrill rear arms provide 22 inches in the back. This was also the first "buggy" ever created to run 3-inch-diameter race shocks typically considered a "truck-

only" shock at the time of its creation. Kuster coilovers and Kuster triple-bypass shocks control every bit of dampening needed. The tire-and-wheel combination include 15x4 BTR beadlock wheels wrapped in 33-inch BFGoodrich T/A<sup>KO</sup> tires in front and 15x7 BTR beadlock wheels covered in 35-inch BFGoodrich Baja T/A tires in the rear.

Racing at night requires some quality lighting. Rory turned to Vision X Off Road, mounting four of its 8-inch HID lights on top. Climbing into the cab, the space is limited but carries just enough room for a pair of Beard racing seats using Crow five-point race harnesses. We also found a ChaseCam in-car camera system, Avcomm intercom, Auto Meter gauges, Beard toolbag, Beard window nets, EFI electronics, and a custom console made by Bear Race Cars. The entire fiberglass and aluminum body was painted by Dennis Botsko of Bullhead City, Arizona. **OR**







# TROPHY TRUCK KILLER



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