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Jean-Marc Lacasse's love of his 1955 GMC pick-up started more than four decades ago, riding in the truck owned by his father.

After an accident left his rebuilt 1955 GMC truck a write-off, Jean-Marc Lacasse went back to the drawing board

# Second chance

LARRY D'ARGIS

FOR 1955, GMC and Chevrolet had planned to introduce an entirely new truck. Confronted with delays and problems, there was no way to get all of the product revisions completed in time for the fall introduction of 1954. A decision was made to postpone the release of the all-new trucks until the spring of 1955. The 1st series offered the familiar 1954 styling, but with advance-design styling, finish and engineering. By mid-year, the dramatic new styling of the 2nd series was available. It featured a dual bar grille and hooded headlamps, accompanied by a hefty bumper with circular guards that appeared similar to those found on the Oldsmobile and Cadillac. A panoramic windshield, sculptured fenders and roomier cab gave the truck a totally new look and feel.

For Jean-Marc Lacasse of Fannystelle, his '55 GMC truck story started more than four decades ago. Riding in the truck owned by his father, Marcel, left an indelible memory. Over the years, Jean-Marc had owned and built several cars, but in 2003 he bought a '55 GMC pick-up from a friend in Lockport, with the intent to build it into a reliable cruiser, while retaining the truck's original style.

Lacasse, a retired veteran currently working as a civilian mechanic for the military, planned and fabricated a complete rebuild of the truck with new

suspension, powertrain and several custom body modifications. Built to drive, the 10-year project saw Lacasse and his wife Heather Harding rolling up more than 19,312 kilometres attending shows throughout Canada and the United States. The truck was no stranger to awards as it won several wherever it went.

Returning home from one of the last shows in September of 2015, Lacasse and Harding were broadsided by a vehicle running a stop sign. The collision caused so much damage, Autopac declared the truck a write-off. With the claim settled, and thankfully no one seriously injured, Lacasse purchased the salvage and began another rebuild.

Because of the extensive damage another frame was used. This one comes with late model Corvette front suspension and power rack and pinion steering.

In back is a four-link with panhard bar and Alden coil-over shock absorbers. Power assisted four-wheel disc brakes take care of things in the stopping department. Power comes from a fuel-injected 5.3 Chevrolet Vortec V-8 engine rebuilt by Piston Ring Service. A 4L60E automatic overdrive transmission transfers the power back to a Chevy S10 rear axle geared for highway cruising. Fuel is supplied by a CPP under-bed fuel tank and cooling is handled by an aluminum radiator from City Auto Glass.

The body has many subtle modifications including a custom 1957 hood that Lacasse modified to use the original latch, but it lifts, slides forward and the rear flips open to allow access to the entire engine compartment. An oak bed is finished by chrome dividers with hidden fasteners. The bed rails now house the back-up lamps and there is a sectioned 1980s El Camino

rear bumper that houses the tail-lamps. Box side steps employ laser cut stainless steel strips adhered with 3M adhesive and, to give some continuity to the treatment, it's carried out inside the cab side steps. Up front is a custom grille with show chrome plating provided by The Chrome Pit. The wrap-around tinted windshield, with factory sun visor, flows into ventless side windows, leading rearward to an optional big back window with dual chrome rear-view mirrors.

The body is a work of art, bathed in a Viper Snake Green and Audi Beige Metallic base clear paint by Don Salisbury, with custom pin striping by Peter Tetrault.

The truck rolls on Riddler 665 five-spoke aluminum wheels with 17-inch BF Goodrich G-Force radial tires.

The interior features two-tone tan and taupe Ultraleather upholstery by Omer Gautron in Fannystelle. The centre console, door panels and headliner are all custom fabricated and the console houses a seven-inch touch screen to control the AM/FM/CD/DVD and GPS. When Lacasse slides into the cab, he's greeted by a GM tilt steering column with leather-wrapped wheel, cruise control and Dolphin gauges monitor the under-hood functions.

From the concept, to the plans, execution of build and attention to details, it's easy to see this '55 GMC will go on to collect many more awards. Lacasse says, "Be sure to get your vehicle appraised, because you never know what can happen on the road."

With part deux of the build behind him, Lacasse says it's still a driver and he and Harding, proud members of the Manitoba Street Rod Association, enjoy cruising in it.

57ford@mymts.net



The interior (top) of Jean-Marc Lacasse's '55 pick-up features a two-tone tan and taupe Ultraleather upholstery with a custom fabricated centre console and door panels. The power comes from a fuel-injected 5.3 Chevrolet Vortec V-8 engine (above).

## Manitoba Street Rod Association revved up for Toy Run

ON Sunday the Manitoba Street Rod Association is hosting its 22nd annual Toy Run at the Revenue Canada Taxation parking lot on Stapton Road, directly across from Sears Kildonan Place Shopping Centre. Entry fee for participants is a new unwrapped toy or cash donation, with all proceeds going to the Children's Rehabilitation Foundation. The show will also feature the draw for a custom 1959 Cadillac love seat and restored Supertest gas pump, perfect for display in a rec room or man cave. For further information see msra.mb.ca. See you there!

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