

FJc MAGAZINE



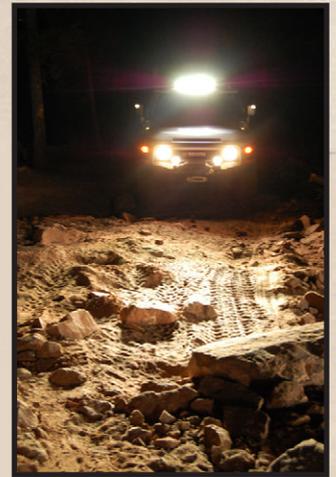
APRIL 2011 • VOLUME 4 • ISSUE 2

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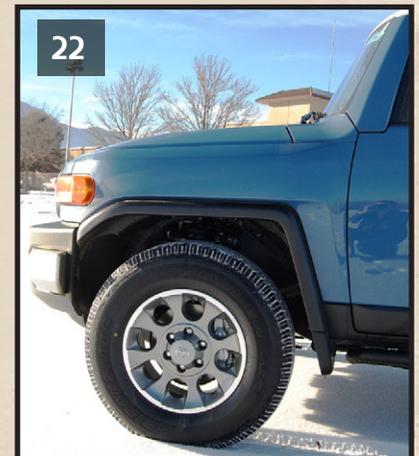


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The Baja Designs Stealth
LED Lightbar on the trail



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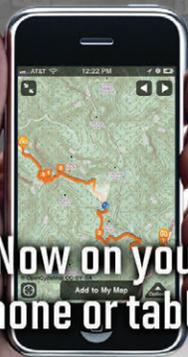
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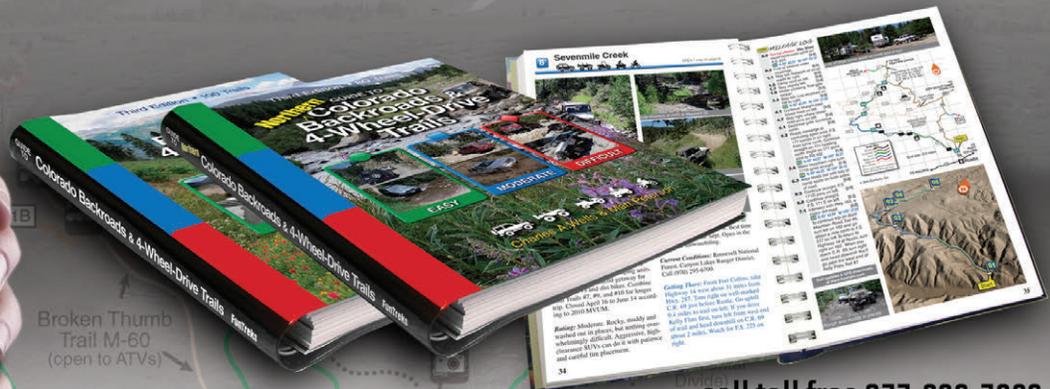


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FROM THE STAFF

Welcome to the April 2011 issue of FJC Magazine.

As blessed as we are to live here in beautiful Colorado Springs, I want to take a minute to talk about our brothers & sisters in both Japan and New Zealand. The amazing people in Christchurch and throughout Japan need our help now more than ever. Hopefully they are all in your prayers as they are in ours, and we wish every person affected by the recent disasters the best of luck in the future.

It's not often that disasters of this magnitude hit so close to home. With the recent launch of FJ Cruisers in both countries, we've come to know a few very special enthusiasts throughout the pacific region and we look forward to wheeling with them someday when this is all a distant memory. For now, let's keep thinking of them and send our best wishes their way!

As for this issue of FJC Magazine, we're stoked to share a lot of great FJ Cruiser content with you! Steven D has an inspiring article on FJ Cruisers in Japan that will make you want to book a ticket for their 2nd FJ Summit this summer. We put together a group of LED lightbars from Baja Designs, Vision X, and Rigid Industries for your reading pleasure. We also have a seat cover review from Taft, new products from Red Eye Fabrication and FJ Freedom Windows, and a SWEET featured rig that's a little more than a mall krawler. Did I mention we have first hand pics & discussion from the recent FJ Cruiser launch in Australia? Finally we have a preview of the 2011 FJC and a first look at the new BajaRack utility rack. So what are you waiting for? Dive right in!

--FJC Magazine

FJC
Magazine
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For FJ Cruiser Owners & Enthusiasts
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It's a Bright, BRIGHT World

LED Lightbars Compared

Off road lighting has come a long way in the last couple of years. In our original off road light comparison article (January 2009), every light we tested was a traditional halogen type. The main differences in that type of light are the wattage and lens options, since those are the two main factors that effect traditional 'yellow' lights.

Since then, there have been major advancements in several off road light technologies.

High-Intensity Discharge (HID) lights are the current default standard due to their increased light output and decreased power requirements.

They do have drawbacks though in that they're not 'instant on' and take a little time to warm up to full operating brightness. Additionally, HID systems are known to have maintenance issues and are also more expensive than traditional halogens, so we never saw them as an option.

The newest advancements in off road lighting are coming in the form of LED light bars. While just a year or two ago LED lights were prohibitively expensive, their rise in popularity has brought prices closer to the budget for weekend explorers like most FJ Cruiser owners. Beyond the higher light output of LED systems (see below), these new light bars consume far less energy and are rated to last much longer than any other system. LED bulbs are generally rated for 50,000 hours of use, vs 500 - 3,000 for halogen and HID lights, respectively.

We contacted several vendors about their LED light options so we could setup a comparison. Rigid Industries, Vision X, and Baja Designs each sent over units for our test, and we were able to get a few FJ's together for a night run. Each company

offers several different options of lights, so for our testing we had two basic requirements. We wanted to test light bars about 20" wide, and they should be rated at about 7,000 lumens (see side note on light ratings).

How much power?

Reduced power consumption is also a major reason to consider LED lights. For example, the 22" Vision X bar is rated at about 10amps, vs the 23amps for 4 halogen lights. When you look into running lights on the roof, bumper, rear, and possibly the sides of your FJ, power draw can become a major factor. With LED lights you may not even need a second battery.

On to the testing!

The first thing we noticed on the trail is that each of these light bars puts out more than enough light for virtually

any need. Since they're all rated about the same (7,000-7,200 lumens), similar light output is to be expected. Where you really see the difference in these lights is build type and features.

Wiring harness

All three sets of lights shipped with pre-wired harnesses, so they are all fairly 'plug and play' systems. The easiest to use harness came from Baja Designs though. Their harness is wrapped in plastic tube for a clean easy install and included more than enough wire to route everything properly. The other harnesses were feature complete, but the Vision X harness had to be modified. We had to extend the wiring so the light could be mounted on the roof.

Mounting Systems

The other major factor to look at with these lights is the mounting system. Two of the lights (Baja Designs & Rigid Industries) use fairly standard side-mount brackets. While these are very easy to adjust, they may not always fit your roof rack.



Rigid Industries E-Series
20" E-Series, 3W LED X 40, 7200 lumens, 78 watts, \$699



Baja Designs Stealth
21.5" wide, 5W LED X 20, 7000 lumens, 84 watts, \$779



Vision X Xmitter
22" wide, 3W LED X 40, 7200 lumens, 120 watts, \$699



Mike F. also joined us with his Vision X Xmitter
32" bar that puts out 10800 lumens.

In addition, Vision X sent over one of their new Evo series lights which is rated at 10200 lumens. We didn't include that bar in this test since it uses 10watt LEDs, but look for coverage on that system on our Facebook page.

Rigid Industries also sent over a pair of Dually D2 compact lights. Each of these lights contains six high power LEDs and put out over 2600 lumens, so together they shine nearly as bright as a full lightbar.



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BOZTEC
www.boztec.us.com





20" Stealth



32" Xmitter

LIGHTBAR



HEADLIGHTS



For example neither of these lights fit the Barack Expedition Rack (See page 20) without additional hardware. The Vision X mounting system is fully adjustable, so it's easy to mount this light to virtually any rack with light tabs. All manufacturers offer various mounting solutions to suit any setup for a custom installation.

Adjusting the light height is very easy with all three bars we tested. The Baja Designs and Vision-X require a few turns with an allen wrench, while the Rigid Industries bar requires a socket. It's very important to make sure your LED light bar is adjusted to the proper height before you get on the trail, so test it in a local field before heading out.

Beam Patterns

The other major factor when choosing a light is the available beam patterns. All of the lights we tested included the 'Euro' pattern, which consists of a flood pattern on the sides with a spot pattern in the middle. While it's possible to order lights with just a spot pattern, we feel the combo pattern is the best way to go.



Shining all three LED lightbars on an obstacle makes climbing easy

Weight, design, other features

The Vision-X and Rigid Industries bars look very similar in design. They each consist of two rows of 20 3W LED lights housed in aluminum. The Vision-X is a little heavier than the Rigid Industries light since it uses an internal mounting system. The Baja Designs "Stealth" light is truly that. With just one row of LED lights this bar is the slimmest and lightest we tested, so it's perfect if you don't have much room to work with. The Stealth bar is also the only light we tested that includes a 'dim' mode for dusty conditions, activated by a secondary switch that's pre-wired with the harness.

Compared to halogen and HID solutions, it's hard to pick a clear 'winner' in this comparison since they're all so bright. All

three lights are very well built and perform excellent on the trail. The companies are great to work with and have several options if none of these exactly fit your needs. We really think the future of off road lighting is with LED light bars, and they're certainly becoming more cost effective. Which light system have you decided on? Hit us up on our Facebook page & let us know what you think.

SOURCES:

Rigid Industries

<http://www.rigidindustries.com>

Vision X

<http://www.visionxusa.com>

Baja Designs

<http://www.bajadesigns.com>



20"
"E" Series



22"
Xmitter



Ricochet

- Offroad Armor -



Complete Aluminum Armor Kits for the FJ Cruiser

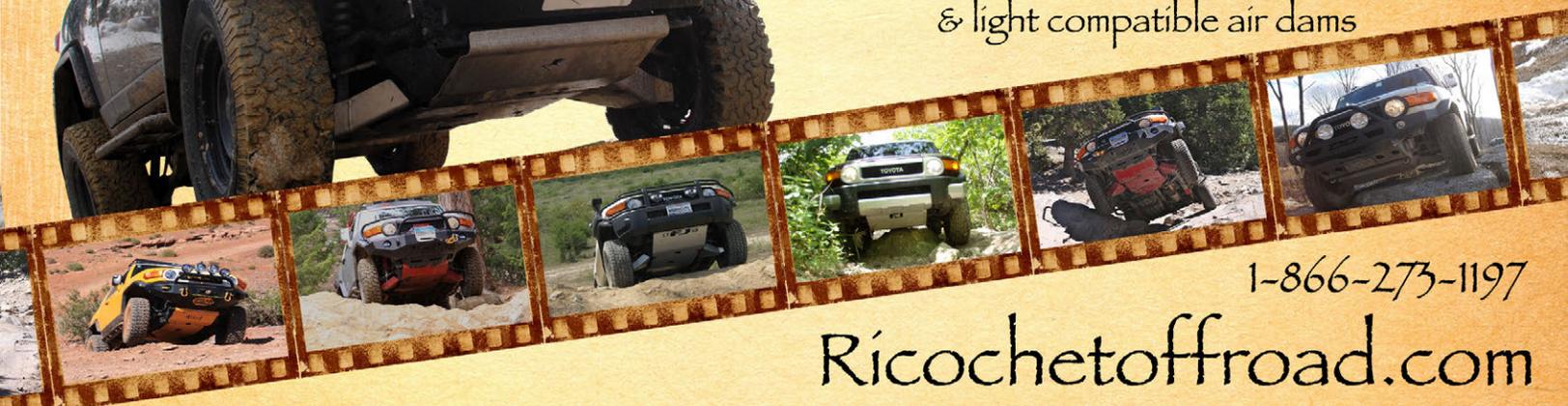
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My Mall Krawler

By Doug Wilson



Reign

"Excuse me sir, do you mind if I take a look at your FJ Cruiser?"
That was the moment Christi, my wife, told me that she knew I was going to buy an FJ Cruiser.

Acquiring the FJ:

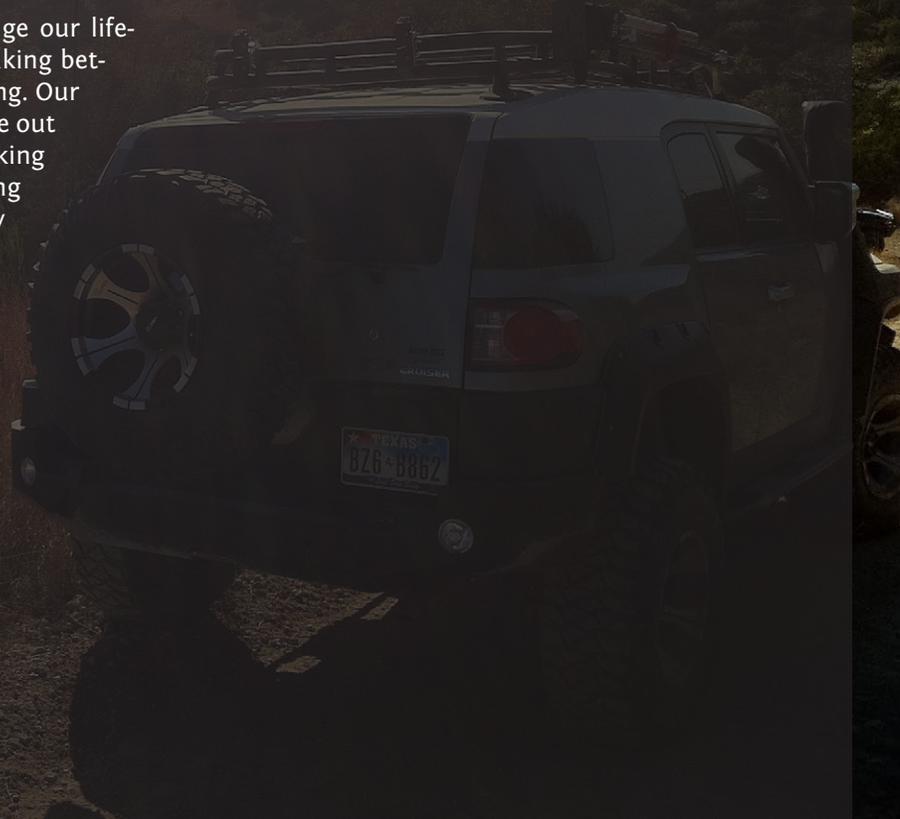
Christi and I had fallen into what so many American's have over the years: we were severely overweight. The combination of eating poorly, lack of exercise or any strenuous activity in general and both of us working sedative jobs lead to years of slowly getting bigger and bigger.

In December of 2009 we decided it was time to change our lifestyles and start to get healthy again! We started by making better choices for our meals and getting back into exercising. Our choice of exercise was to mountain bike, and boy did the outdoor fever kick in! We started camping and mountain biking and really enjoying the two. While we were mounting biking at Hidden Falls Adventure Park we noticed a few offroad vehicles and that got us thinking!

In July of 2010, I had shed about 72 pounds and because I want to stay happily married, I'm purposely leaving Christi's numbers out of this, but her numbers are impressive too! We decided it was time to get a vehicle that was more suited to our lifestyle change; the two door coupe just wasn't cutting it for camping and mountain biking!

We created a list of priorities for our new vehicle.

1. Dependability
2. Offroading
3. Camping
4. Towing
5. Comfort



We then started to look at Toyota's and Jeeps and compared what each had to offer. We spent plenty of time test driving and researching different models from both manufacturers. Based on the research we did and our priorities for a new vehicle, the FJ Cruiser was the best match. The problem was that none of the Toyota dealerships we visited had any FJ's on the lot to test drive or look at. I then came across a very friendly individual with a brand new FJ Cruiser in a random parking lot and I asked if I could take a look at his FJ. Christi immediately knew I had my heart set on one.

Enter Reign:

Reign was born of a passion. This thing we do, we embrace, we love. Spending time with friends and family in the great outdoors, camping, wheeling, laughing and enjoying what mother earth has provided us and what so many take for granted. Reign is here, Reign is now.

Work Hard|Play Hard... A motto Christi and I have started to live by since we decided to shed the weight. It was no surprise when we started to build this FJ Cruiser that would become known as Reign that it would follow the same motto.

Reign was purchased in July of

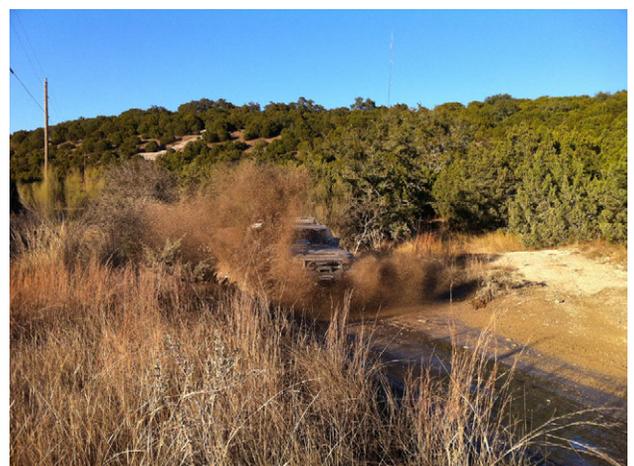
2010 and I immediately started working on prepping her for camping and offroading. I joined the FJ Cruiser Forums and started reviewing other members' builds and reviews. I reached out to some local folks that were organizing an event in Texas that is very close to the Austin area: Pandora Adventures.

Wheeltoberfest 2010 was on the calendar as Reign's first real trial by fire. This would also be our first trail pin stripping and a crushed rear fender flare! What Christi and I love about the FJ Cruiser seems to extend into the community at large as well:

Great, down to earth people sharing a common interest and looking to have a great and exciting time safely.

The Pandora Adventure Tribe has really helped us fit into the off road community and they give back so much more. Pandora Adventures organizes events year round that bring people together and create even better communities of friendship.

We built Reign to be a hybrid of sorts, to be able to have the tools to tackle any obstacle we present including bringing us back home after our demanding challenges have been conquered.



Most Recent High Impact Modification

Christi and I were prepping Reign to go to the Lone Star Toyota Jamboree where we were to meet up with the Pandora Adventure Tribe. The one thing we noticed is that we always seemed to go on night runs and let me tell you, who ever said "You can never have enough light." Was not joking! I got in contact with Istvan at www.offroadgears.com to start working on a light solution that would mount to factory roof rack of the FJ Cruiser.

Offroad Gears got me turned on to Rigid Industries LED lighting and a light bar that mounts to the factory roof rack bolt locations. The bar holds two 10" LED lights on the left and right side and one 20" LED light in the middle. This solution provides almost a 160 degree field of vision! Offroad Gears has now taken the lighting solution to a new level with a custom wire harness that is a complete set up, from the lights to fuse, relay, and rocker switches. This complete wire harness solution also allows all three LED lights to be toggled on and off individually! If you have a need for auxiliary lighting, this is way to go!



ARMOR

1. Expedition One Trail Series, Single Hoop - Front Bumper
2. Expedition One Trail Series with Tire Swing Carrier - Rear Bumper
3. Expedition One Spacer Armor Plate - Black
4. Bud Built Skidplates front to rear
5. Expedition One Rocker Sliders

SUSPENSION AND TIRES

6. Dick Cepek DC2 16x10 Rims 4.50 Offset
7. Mickey Thompson Baja MTZ - 285/70R16
8. Body Chop Done by Atomic 4x4 - Cut, Capped and Painted
9. Front suspension by Icon including Remote Reservoir Extended Travel Coil-over Shock Kit, Billet Upper Control Arm Kit
10. Rear suspension by Icon including VS Series Rear PiggyBack Reservoir Shocks, 2" Lift Rear Coil-spring Kit, Billet Aluminum Upper & Lower Rear Trailing Arms
11. Icon Adjustable Pan Hard Bar
12. Gorilla Lugs

EQUIPMENT ADDITIONS

13. Garmin Oregon 500t GPS
14. Bushwacker Fenderflares
15. Baja Rack OEM Drop in Rack
16. Custom Built Rear Camera Mod in stock location
17. Man-A-Fre Auxillary (22 gal.) fuel tank --Providing a total capacity of 43 gallons
18. Scanguage 2
19. Expedition One Quick Release Hitch System
20. Dirty Parts Auxiliary Battery Kit with PC1500 ODYSSEY Battery
21. Blue Sea 12 Circuit Fuse Block
22. sPOD (6 switch block to add aux accessories)
23. Expedition One Bottle Washer
24. ARB 50qt Fridge/Freezer w/Transit Bag
25. Fire Extinguisher
26. ARB Safari Snorkel
27. TRD CAI for 2010
28. Custom 3 inch exhaust, including Y pipe (w/ Magnaflow muffler)

COMMUNICATIONS

29. SPOT Satellite Personal Tracker
30. Cobra 75 wx st CB
31. Firestik 3' antenna on a Bandi Mount

LIGHTING

32. Airflow Headlight Covers - Smoked
33. Rigid Industries 20" LED Flood/Spot Combo, 2 X 10" LED Flood on a Rigid Industries LED Light Bar Bracket for OEM rack
34. PIAA x2 Driving Lights (mounted in the Expedition One Front Bumper)
35. Hella x2 Flood Lights (mounted in the Expedition One Rear Bumper)
36. Vision X Tantrum Rock Lights with custom fabricated brackets
37. APC Turn Signal Markers

TOOLS & TRAIL EQUIPMENT

38. Short Handle Shovel
39. Jumper Cables
40. JB Weld
41. Spool Parachute Cord

42. Roll of 100 MPH Tape

GEAR STORAGE

43. Fourtreks Shovel/Axe mount
44. Fourtreks HiLift Jack Mount
45. Fourtreks Fire Extinguisher mount
46. Springtail M-PAC rack and MOLLE gear (Custom Cut)
47. Springtail M-PAC Pet Barrier

PNEUMATICS

48. Viair 450p constant duty compressor
49. Viair Air Gun/Deflator
50. ARB Tire Repair Kit

RECOVERY

51. Superwinch EP19.0s Winch
52. Viking Synthetic Winch Line (80')
53. Expedition One Fairlead Roller
54. SuperWinch Snatchblock
55. 4 x 3/4 ton D-Rings
56. Hi-Lift Jack Extreme 60", Base, handle keeper, & boot

EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

57. Basic Survival Kit
58. Knife(s)
59. Firearm(s)

AUDIO

Head Unit

60. DNX9980HD (Pre-Ordered!)
61. CMOS-300 Backup Camera
62. KNA-EC100 external ODBII interface module
63. Kenwood KCA-iP302 NEW Video iPod Adapter & IP102 Adapter (Used for second iPod)

Front Stage

64. Front Pillars - Finished
65. Front Door adaptors'
66. 3 way front stage 6.5" speakers
67. Model - HSK 163

Rear Stage

68. Rear Pods
69. 2 Way Comps 6 1/2
70. Model - HSK 165 XL

Subs

71. Magic Box passenger side w/dual JL W3W3 10"
72. FJ Badge

Amps

73. JL Audio HD600 & JL Audio HD750

Wiring

74. knukonceptz Flex Amp Kit for 4 channel amp - 4 gauge

Deadening

75. Edead 45, 80 and v4 Teklite

Reign All Dressed UP

Reign

TOYTEC™ lifts

We started with the Toytec Ultimate 3" lift: We used the optional silver Eibach coils on the Toytec coilovers in the front and the Toytec Superflex coils paired up with Bilstein 5100 shocks in the rear. We followed that up with the XD 122 wheels and Goodyear Duratrak tires. Next we added the Light racing upper control arms and had the front end aligned. Then it was off to the mountains for the weekend to test the tires in the Colorado snow.

There was so much snow that some of the trails were closed, but we did manage to find some deep snow to test the FJ in. We were all impressed on how well the Goodyear DuraTracs did in the champagne powder. They're superior to the original Goodyear MTR's we have on our 2000 4Runner and in the hard packed snow, the DuraTracs cleaned out the lugs better than the rest of the vehicles we had on the run. From what we saw the DuraTracs should perform well in the mud as well and we're very happy with our tire choice. We also made a custom cargo rear storage unit to keep the recovery gear and winching accessories from rolling around the back of the FJ.

For the next issue we'll be adding the ARB rear bumper, custom rock sliders, and a few other goodies!

Until next time!
Doug Gosh



Here's our list initial mods for this FJ:

- ToyTec/Bilstein adjustable front coilovers
- ToyTec Superflex rear coils with Bilstein 5100s
- SPC/Light Racing upper control arms
- Goodyear DuraTrac 285/75/16 tires
- KMC XD122 wheels
- ToyTec rear lower arm skids
- Expedition One front bumper...
- Custom sliders
- PIAA lights
- Smittybuilt winch with synthetic rope
- ARB rear bumper
- Custom Rear cargo unit

PROJECT F.U.



FJ's in Australia

Since we couldn't make it down to Australia for their official FJ Cruiser launch, we asked Ben from Maxtrax if he knew of any early reports on the right hand drive FJC. Not only did Ben point us to some great discussions, but he was able to make contact with a couple of early reviewers and get some great photos for us to publish.



RobA from PradoPoint.com had this to say:

"The Australian spec is a single vehicle with the only variation being colour. Five speed auto with V6, aggressive traction control and electric rear diff lock are standard along with AC of course. Tyres are 17" and 70 profile.

Here are some observations after putting it over our test tracks: All round visibility is much better than you may expect and I found it quite easy to position individual wheels quite accurately in very tight situations. It looks even better in real life than the photos. Feels light and nimble on and off-road. I think they will sell well"

Darren McRae from Auto Craft
--<http://www.auto-craft.com.au>

"I have to say it drove quite nicely, vision was good, torque delivery was nice, the steering felt nice with good feedback, and vehicle size was easily judged, though those who are height challenged may find the bonnet shape a little imposing. Interior space was also surprising. The reverse camera image in the rear view mirror is only about 50mm square, which was disappointing, but I'm sure the stereo head unit is camera ready, for a bigger screen view, if required. The side door mirrors are also very good for checking your surroundings I found, for the amount of talk about blind spots and big pillars."





Stephen Gillies also submitted a couple of photos of the Aussie FJ.



Trips & Reviews



Information & Instruction



adventureinsider.com

THE SON RISES IN JAPAN

BY STEVEN DOZEN

The period between 2003 and 2006 was fraught with many anguishing moments around the world, such as the economic downturn, wars, political unrest, natural disasters, and the long, torturous wait for the production release of the Toyota FJ Cruiser. In fact, many have said that the wait contributed to the unique and sometimes bizarre camaraderie that exists among FJ Cruiser owners in America today. However, what these informal studies have not shown are the results of this long wait combined with the news that the FJ Cruiser would not be released in your own country even if it is manufactured in your own country. Welcome to Japan!

Spearheaded by the Toyota Trail Teams, FJ Cruiser Forums and a variety of regional online networks and clubs, the FJ Cruiser community flourished in the States soon after its showroom debut.

Many enthusiasts flocked to events that featured the presence of the Trail Teams and photos and videos from these events went viral – so viral that



it spread thousands of miles over the Pacific to the production center of the “son of FJ40.” Unfortunately for many Land Cruiser enthusiasts in Japan, Toyota Motor Corporation had no plans to release the FJ Cruiser in its home market anytime soon.

Not even Masato Fukushima, an electronics engineer at Toyota, could get his hands on one. “I inquired, but was unable to purchase one,” says Fukushima. “I had many opportunities to see the FJ Cruisers lined up at the port waiting to be shipped to the US and was baffled as to why I was unable to

purchase one in Japan.” Fukushima, who had just joined Toyota when the FJC concept was introduced at the Chicago Auto Show in 2003, maintained interest in the vehicle until news of its production hit the wire. Still unable to purchase one through his company, the 26 year old Toyota City resident took matters into his own hands and made the decision to purchase an FJ Cruiser through an auto broker. Pur-

“I felt the same enthusiasm and camaraderie as my counterparts in America, so I wanted to create the same excitement here in Japan.” – Toshiki Nuri

chasing automobiles through the gray market always comes with a certain amount of risk, but Fukushima felt the reward far outweighed the potential consequences.

By February 2008, Fukushima found himself behind the wheel of a “hidari-handoru” (left-handle) vehicle in a “right-handle” country. And by the following month, he was behind the wheel of the first FJ Cruiser club in Japan. The FJ-Cruiser Owners Club was formed in March 2008 and immediately attracted left-handle FJ Cruiser owners from around the country. The online and offline club membership, whose motto is “No Stuck, No Life,” quickly grew within the first several months.



**Imported with a driver!
Mike “FunJunkie” Kirsch takes a whirl in the snow**

“They aren’t as crazy as we are.” – Toshiki Nuri

Among the members was the catalyst of the left-handed, FJ Cruiser-fueled frenzy.

Just five months before Fukushima procured his FJ Cruiser, Toshiki Nuri had gone through the same process of importing his FJC through the gray market. And like his Toyota City counterpart, Nuri had kept his eye on the FJ Cruiser from its concept debut to the ensuing frenzy that swelled around its production release in 2006. “I was very interested in the FJ Cruiser, so I visited as many FJ Cruiser websites as I could, including FJ Cruiser Forums,” stated the real estate agent from Owariasahi. Utilizing translation software, Nuri was able to immerse himself in the enthusiasm that filled the thousands of forum discussions covering all aspects of the vehicle and its capabilities. “I

wanted to create the same excitement here in Japan.” And that he did.

On June 6, 2010, Nuri organized the first national FJ-Cruiser Owners Summit, which attracted approximately 100 left-handle FJC owners from around the island nation. The event provided a unique opportunity for FJC owners to meet each other in person for the first time as well as see numerous aftermarket modifications. Although the

felt the same enthusiasm and camaraderie as my counterparts in America, so I

remaining FJC fanatics had only corresponded via online channels such as Minkara, FJ-C.net, and mixi. The event was a resounding success and videos highlighting the gathering quickly reached the shores of the US via YouTube and through channels such as FJ Cruiser Forums and NorCal FJs.

The event immediately spurred a flurry of camping trips and socials and reinforced some “long-standing,” albeit three years, traditions carried over from the original core group of owners. Among them



Navigating through the obstacle course at Sanage Adventure Field
Photo by Masato Fukushima

core group of about 26 members saw each other frequently on trail runs and at weekly socials at Starbucks Coffee in the Nagakute district of Nagoya, the

Nuri’s camp cooking and signature all-terrain Radio Flyer wagon. “Everyone seems to enjoy my cooking,” which ranges from spaghetti to hamburgers to jerk chicken. As for the wagon, Nuri used it to transport camping gear and it caught on with other members even if for alternate uses. “Watch the Owners Summit video and find out,” laughed Nuri.

With left-handle FJ Cruisers soaring with popularity, one would assume that being a left-hander in a right-hander’s world could pose a few challenges, but members of the FJ-Cruiser Owners Club shrug off any notion that it has inconvenienced them. Tolls on highways are collected through tran-

Group photo at the first FJ-Cruiser Owners Summit in 2010
Photo by Masato Fukushima



FunJunkie at the base of Mt. Fuji





A "migi-handoru" FJ tackles the rock garden at Sanage Adventure Field
Photo by Masato Fukushima



Tsuyoshi Nagano airs down on Gunsight Pass near Tuscon, AZ

sponders eliminating the need to pay toll takers and as far as driving and shifting with the other hand, "You get used to it," says Fukushima. If anything, only the width of the FJ Cruiser seems to be minded occasionally. "It can get a little tight. We are crazy anyway, so it doesn't really matter," joked Nuri as he and Fukushima break into laughter. "I

would not buy a right-handle FJ Cruiser even if it is more convenient for the roads in Japan. For me, it's all about the spirit, attitude and uniqueness that comes with a left-handle drive from America."

By 2007, Japanese ex-pats in the States had already joined in on the FJC craze and began to exude that spirit. Katsuyuki Iwasaki had been on an ongoing search for an FJ55 in decent condition when he accidentally discovered the FJ Cruiser in a Toyota dealership showroom in 2007. The Kura-



Tsuyoshi Nagano negotiates up a rutted hill on Gunsight Pass

shiki native immediately began his search for a 6-speed manual, Trail Teams Special Edition model and five months later, found himself driving his new rig to favorite surf spots like Santa Cruz's Pleasure

Point and on trails in the Eastern Sierra. "I still like to drive it even after three years of ownership," says the owner of Himawari Restaurant in San Mateo. "I don't want to separate from my FJ. I want to keep it for a lifetime." In 2009, a year-long search for the right FJ Cruiser finally came to an end for Tsuyoshi Nagano of Scottsdale, Arizona. "I was looking for an FJ Cruiser for almost a year. Yes, a year," stated the IT Specialist and AZFJ member. Nagano blamed the lack of inventory at dealerships and skyrocketing gas prices for his prolonged and agonizing search. Now, Nagano uses his Sandstorm FJ Cruiser as a daily driver and trail rig that is often seen on the trails of Arizona...and sometimes even mistaken for the classic FJ40 Land Cruiser. "One of my friends who lives in Japan saw a picture of my FJ Cruiser and said, 'You have nice, classic Land Cruiser, my dad used to own one. Are they still in production?'"

The FJ Cruiser parallels between current-day Japan and the early days in the US are uncanny, especially now that the right-handle FJC has been released on Japanese soil. As of writing, the Hamura plant had monthly production orders of 200 right-handle FJCs with 2,000 on order. 500 FJCs are on backorder in Aichi Prefecture alone and a waiting period of 4-5 months is not uncommon. "Many of those who had pre-ordered their FJCs when

Toyota announced availability [in late-November 2010] are now just receiving them,” stated Nuri.

However, Nuri states that the mentality of those purchasing “migi-handoru,” or right-handle, FJCs is just not quite the same as those with left-handle FJCs. “They aren’t as crazy as we are,” Nuri joked over a Skype call. “We meet almost every week, have “do-it-yourself” guys like Natsuki Kobayashi who custom makes fairings and storage solutions, and our conversations and laughter never seem to end even after three years of knowing each other. We are a very tight-knit group even though we never knew each other before this vehicle brought us together.”

Recently, that camaraderie was on display during the complications and relief efforts immediately following the T hoku earthquake and tsunami. The club conducted a Red

Cross fundraiser at a recent off-highway driver training at Sanage Adventure Field and even pitched in to purchase and ship bottled water to a club member in Mito, Ibaraki Prefecture, who had been affected by the earthquake.

As relief efforts continue in the T hoku region, Nuri continues on with plans surrounding the 2nd annual FJ-Cruiser Owners Summit to be held on Sunday, June 5, 2011. Like the inaugural event in 2010, this year’s gathering will take place at the seaside

Related Links

FJ-Cruiser Owners Summit Japan 2011 on Minkara
FJ-Cruiser Owners Club on Minkara
FJ Cruiser Community
Video: All Japan FJ Cruiser Meeting 2010

amusement resort, Laguna Gamagori, located in Aichi Prefecture, an area largely unaffected by the earthquake and tsunami.

Undoubtedly, this year’s event will surely attract new, right-handle owners who will join the “crazy” core of left-handle enthusiasts. The friendly ribbing has already begun as a result. “The right-handle owners will come to the event to see what modifications they will need to copy our crazy image,” Nuri states with a sheepish grin. “Of course, they will never use their rigs how they were meant to be used... to travel off-highway. They’re just a bunch of mall crawlers.”



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First Look: BajaRack Utility Rack

As much as we've loved our stock roof rack with the WAAG basket insert, that system isn't compatible with LED light bars (See page 4). So we got in contact with BajaRack to see if they had something that would work great for a 20" light bar and would give us more clearance for parking garages. They suggested we take a look at their new FJ Cruiser Utility Rack to see if that would fit the bill.

We've come to expect great products from BajaRack and this rack is no exception. It comes very well packaged and includes everything you need to get setup. All hardware is

stainless steel and individually packaged, as are all the brackets needed for the install. The rack installs to the stock locations so we won't go into detail there, the BajaRack instructions are laid out perfectly so there is no guesswork involved.

This rack is perfect for a roof top tent, as a low profile option, or just a great system if you're constantly hauling items on the roof. Within hours of bolting the rack on I was at Home Depot picking up supplies for a new privacy fence. It handled the load perfectly with its 300lb rated capacity and ample tie down spots. At 51" wide and 91" long, it certainly changes the roofline of the FJ Cruiser, which will take some getting used to. The look is a little more 'boxy', but that's to be expected from a rack like this.

The great thing about this rack is that it only adds



4.5" to the height of the FJ. The LED light bar we installed added about another 2", but this setup is still 3" shorter than our stock/WAAG/Lightforce setup. Before the switch we were literally brushing the weatherstrip on the garage door when backing in. Now dreams of taller tires are dancing through my mind.

We'll be putting this new rack through its paces over the next few months, so stay tuned to our Facebook page and of course FJC-MAG.com for the latest updates.

Source: BajaRack | (760) 621-0171



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Toyota Land Cruiser Association
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2011 FJ Cruiser Test Drive

By Shane Williams



You've seen them on the forums, and you may have seen a 2011 FJ Cruiser at your dealer or on the road. But have you had a chance to sit in one & experience the changes yet? We did just that a few weeks ago when we were able to find a 2011 FJ Cruiser in Calvary Blue at Toyota of Colorado Springs.

Our friendly salesman, Robert Raphael, was very helpful in getting us a test drive in this just-off-the-truck FJ. The truck literally had 3 miles on it when we started it up, so it was almost a shame to get it dirty in the snow. This model was a manual transmission that included the Off Road Package, so it was a pretty good representation of what you'll find at a local dealer.

Pretty much all brand new FJ Cruisers drive the same, so we won't bore you with details on handling, blind spots, engine details, or basic features. The biggest changes for the 2011 FJ Cruiser are interior related and we made some interesting notes on some of these.

First, the new radio that comes in the FJ (should we still call it the FJammer?) has really bumped up the features quite a bit. The system

comes with integrated Bluetooth (BT) technology that not only allows you to make hands free phone calls, but also supports BT audio (more on that in minute). When you turn the system on you get a cool FJ Cruiser logo, which is always great to see. The buttons are large and easy to use, and the unit supports both WMA and MP3 playback. The system also includes a USB-AUX input for iPod and similar devices, but we didn't test that feature. In addition to BT audio, the new stereo includes XM satellite radio for those that like to jam in the backcountry. Our favorite feature though, by far, is the Bluetooth audio interface. After we setup the hands free calling (which is as good as any OEM unit we've seen), it asked us to pair for BT audio. A few seconds later we were able to use Pandora or any other audio source from the

iPhone wirelessly to the FJ. While this doesn't help with charging, it certainly is a great feature for the daily drive to work.

The two other changes we looked at were 'easier' access to the rear seats and the folding rear headrests. It is indeed easier to slide into the back seats in the 2011 FJ with the new changes. The front passenger seat slides forward quite a bit more than previous years, so those with older children will like this



feature quite a bit. The rear seat headrests are another issue though.

Those of us with older FJ's know that if you want the seats to fold flat, you have to remove the rear headrests. While this isn't a huge issue, it is a little bit of a pain. For 2011 Toyota has included rear headrests that fold into the seats that are supposed to help with this issue. The problem is that even though they fold down, it's still very difficult (or impossible) to fold the seats completely flat with the headrests installed (see photo). We didn't jump on the seat to get it to slide down, so it may be possible with enough force, but this is not a worthwhile solution as far as we can see. This may be useful if you remove the seat bottoms,



but that really is not an easy job and defeats the purpose. For now, you'll still likely remove the headrest completely to fold the seats flat.

Overall we're impressed with the 2011 FJ (except for the headrest issue), and it yet again seems like a wonderful vehicle. The Bluetooth & Satellite radio integration are very worthy upgrades, so we'll see if it's possible to install these into previous FJ Cruisers. We look forward to seeing many '11 FJ's on the trail this summer!



FJCRUISER FORUMS.COM

The Largest FJ Cruiser Forum on the Net!

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Clazzio Seat Cover Review

By Taft Babbit



At 44,000 miles the stock FJ Cruiser seats were still holding up well, but from time to time they do demand some cleaning and the fabric used can make some cleanups more challenging than others. I was therefore excited to have the opportunity to test Clazzio leather seat covers in my 2007 FJC for the past several months. The first thing I noticed as I picked them up was the feel of the leather. The covers are made with high quality leather with backing material that provides a good first impression. The piping on this set is white so it matches the FJ perfectly. I allowed the leather to warm a bit because they were very cold from the winter shipping and I figured that they may go on easier if they were at room temperature. After giving the stock seats a good cleaning with an industrial vacuum I was ready to begin.

The Clazzio seats ship with very detailed instructions, so I jumped right in and started with the headrests. The covers for the rear headrests went on without much fuss and provide a clean tight fit. The covers for the front headrests were a different story. It took a lot of muscle to get those babies on and the pulling, stretching, and brute force it took to get those on served as a good workout to one who rarely exercises and shows solid evidence that Clazzio uses solid materials. The leather put up with that exercise and so did the sewing and seams without any issue. With as much force as I was using I figured it was just a matter of time before some threads started to call it quits and break - but they never did, and once in place the materials still looked

perfect. The fit on the front headrests was also snug and fit; there was only one spot at the top center of that didn't sit completely flush against the underlying headrest, but in my opinion this is a small issue.

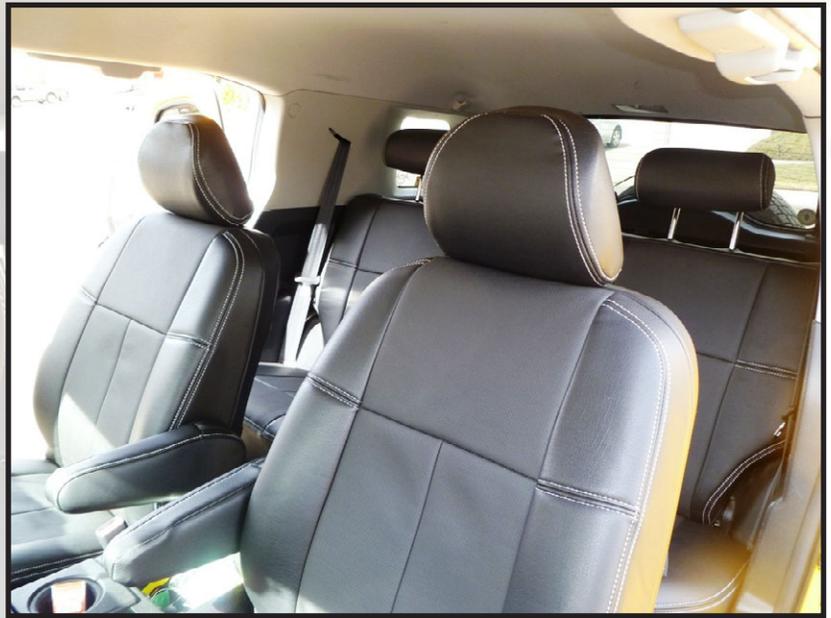
Next it was on to the backs and bottoms of the seats. Each piece went on easily and provide a very good, snug and secure fit. The backs of the front seats have a extra long section that wraps nicely under the back of the seat. The bottoms of the front seat require you to take the seat adjustment nobs off the sides for an ideal fit. Also this section has a cinch rope around the bottom (think of the way you tighten up sweatpants around your waist) which I found not to be very useful so I just tucked the ends away under the seat so they were out of the way. What are useful are the latches which run from the front to the back under the seat to secure the fit. The rear bottoms are very similar and went on perfectly, as did the rear backs.

In order to install the covers on the arm rests, you have to take them off and slide the leather over the armrest. These went on easily but attaching the arm rest can be tricky to ensure you put it back on the right way so that the up and down movement of the arm is as desired. I had to try this a few times before getting it right (otherwise the arm would not stop at the right position to carry the weight of my arm.) All in all it took about 2.5 hours to get it all done, with easily an hour of that going to the two front headrests alone.



I was surprised how much better the interior of the FJC looked to me once they were on. They gave a more refined look and also provided some additional comfort due to the padding built in. I have not found the seats to be noticeably slicker or colder this winter than the stock configuration, and am very pleased with the upgrade. I have not had them in the summer yet but with tinted windows I don't expect them to get very hot. Since the original seats are black anyway I suspect there will not be a major difference.

I have already had the chance to do some cleanup of spilled food and drink on these and it was a much better experience than the fabric found on the stock seats, they cleaned up easily with a wet towel even after a bit of drying had taken place. I have 4 kids, it happens :) I'm sure these seats will stand the test of time and will serve the FJ for years to come.



SOURCE:
Clazzio Seat Covers
TRD Sparks
Phone: 866-249-3607
<http://www.trdsparks.com/>

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Kennedy's Wagon

Ben from Maxtrax sent over a few pics of this Radio Flyer wagon he 'modded' for his daughter. He calls it the Radio Cruiser and it is just **TOO** cool. We think our little one will get something just like this one soon!

"Kennedy loves my "Daddy truck" and wanted one of her own so I made the Radio Cruiser.

We bought the Radio Flyer ATW (All Terrain Wagon), I painted the wagon tub yellow, wheels, 2 gas can flasks, and bed rails, added bicycle shocks to the rear as an OME suspension, purchased a spare tire, made a



gas can carrier like mine, and had the Radio Cruiser graphic made in the style of the original. I finished it off with a custom license plate to make it all legal.

I added a small Bruisers sticker and gave it to her for a special occasion.

She loves it and we take it with her everywhere we can pull her.

A set of sliders is up next, as soon as I can find the time!"

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FJ Freedom Windows

Since the FJ Cruiser went on sale in 2006 the number one request has been rear windows that open. That wish has finally been granted with FJ Freedom Windows.

These durable plexy glass replacement windows are installed in place of your existing glass rear windows. The Freedom Windows pop out for ventilation, or are completely removable for full airflow and enhanced views from the back seat. A storage bag is included so you can keep the windows safe & sound when removed. Professional installation is recommended so that your factory windows can be reinstalled if needed.



SOURCE:
FJ FreedomWindows
Phone: (303) 882-8776
<http://www.fjfreedomwindows.com/>

REDEYE FABRICATION

Adjustable Swaybar Link Set with Rear Swaybar Relocator

The all-new adjustable swaybar link set from Red Eye Fabrication is designed to withstand some of the most grueling off-road conditions. They are made using heavy wall steel throughout and are easily rebuildable. Each joint has a grease zerk fitting and uniball-style, articulating fluted bushings for a squeak-free, long lasting joint.

Both front and rear links come with custom machined aluminum spacers* designed to set the links at 0 degrees and grade 10.9 zinc plated bolts for corrosion resistance.

The rear links are made 3/4" longer than the factory links to bring the swaybar closer to the factory position if you have a lift kit installed. They also can be lengthened beyond the 3/4" pre-set depending on your lower rear link configuration. When combined with the

soon-to-be-released swaybar relocators, your swaybar will be very close to the ideal factory position for increased articulation.

Choose from all black powder coating, red-black combo or silver-black combo.

MSRP: Front links - \$185.00, rear links - \$205.00, rear swaybar relocator (TBA)

* Two different upper spacers are available (please specify). One standard 1/2" wide and one 1" wide to correct the swaybar link misalignment caused by swaybar relocators.



SOURCE:
orders@redyefab.com
RedEye Website

FJ Cruiser Events

2011 FJ Northeasters Easter Event

Dates: April 22-24, 2011
Location: Rausch Creek ORP, PA
Contact: FJ Northeasters Website

3rd Annual All Cal

Dates: July 15-17 2011
Location: PsychoRanch, SoCal
Contact: All Cal Website

2011 Cruise Moab

Dates: April 27-May 1, 2011
Location: Moab, Ut
Contact: Cruise Moab Website

2011 FJ Summit #5

Dates: July 20-24 2011
Location: Ouray, CO
Contact: FJ Summit Website

2011 Spring Mud Fling

Dates: May 27-30, 2011
Location: Winchester, VA
Contact: FJ Bruisers Website

2011 SedonaFest

Dates: August 19-21, 2011
Location: Sedona, AZ
Contact: SedonaFest Website

23rd Annual Rubithon

Dates: June 14-19, 2011
Location: Moab, Ut
Contact: Rubithon Website

Thrill on the Hill 2011

Dates: Labor Day 2011
Location: Cloudcroft, NM
Contact: Thrill on the Hill Website

For the latest event news
& coverage, visit
FJC-Mag.com and click
on Event Calendar

ATLAS SHRUGGED PART I

in theaters
April 15, 2011



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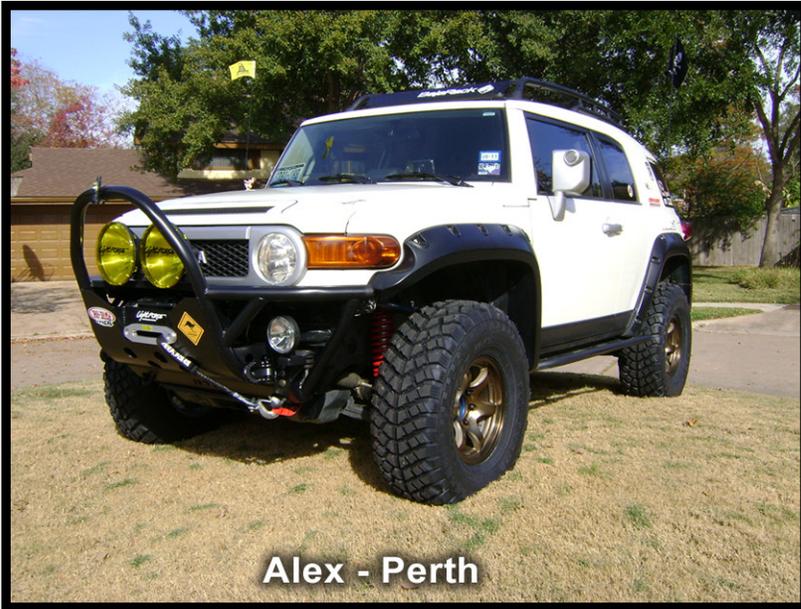


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FJ's International



Hatim - Dubai



Alex - Perth

*Have a great pic of your FJ?
E-mail a high-res version to pics@fjc-mag.com*



Photo by Masato - Japan



Team FJ - Hail Rally 2011