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FROM THE EDITORS OF DIESEL POWER
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**TIPS TO MAKE THE FUEL, COOLING,
AND ELECTRIC SYSTEMS WORK**

DIESEL CRATE ENGINE BUYER'S GUIDE

27 NEW PARTS TO MAKE YOUR SWAP EASIER

**CHOOSE THE
RIGHT ENGINE
& TRANSMISSION**



ON THE COVER

We visited Gale Banks Engineering in Azusa, California, and watched as a 1,000hp race-prepped Duramax was placed between the framereils of a limited-production Chevrolet 454 SS truck.

Photo By: Fernando Escovar

DIESEL CRATE ENGINE: BUYER'S GUIDE

GALE BANKS ENGINEERING

- **ENGINE:** 6.6L Duramax, 866T complete engine
- **BUILD SHEET:** LML-based block and heads; high-volume oil system; upgraded piston cooling nozzles; rear oil pan sump; heavy-duty viscous vibration damper; CP3 injection pump; solenoid-style injectors; billet-aluminum, front-facing, dual thermostat housing; cast-aluminum valve covers; Garrett high-flow, water-cooled, VNT turbocharger; Banks exhaust manifolds and turbo up-pipes; and Banks AutoMind ECU
- **POWER LEVEL:** 275 hp to 475 hp, 575 hp (shown); 1,200hp streetable, turbo-and-supercharged packages also available
- **PRICE:** Starts at \$15,980 (turnkey engine, complete with ECU)
- **OTHER DETAILS:** Six-month limited warranty (for material and workmanship), owner's manual, and installation guide included with 275 to 475hp engines



100% New Parts

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY STEVE TEMPLE

STRIKE OF THE SIDEWINDER



After receiving tweaks by Banks Engineering, the Dakota pumps out an incredible 700-plus horsepower and a humongous 1,100 lb-ft of torque.

BITTEN BY THE WORLD'S ONLY DIESEL-POWERED 200-MPH PICKUP

Setting a speed record in a diesel pickup is challenge enough, but doing it in a street-legal rig that can also serve as a tow vehicle is another thing entirely. That's the extraordinary achievement of Gale Banks' Project Sidewinder Dakota, custom-fitted with a seriously modified Cummins ISB 24-valve 5.9L powerplant.

No single vehicle has ever done so many things so well. Consider the following comparisons: How many street-legal cars are capable of speeds in excess of 200 mph?

The short list includes the Ford GT, Ferrari Enzo, Dodge Viper GT-R, Lamborghini Diablo, RUF Porsche, McLaren F-1, and Project Sidewinder.

And how many other pickup trucks have broken the double-century mark? Or diesel-powered vehicles of any type—*nada*, zero, zip. In addition to tearing up the record books, the Sidewinder could do so after trailer-towing any one of those other 200-mph vehicles to Bonneville. Not only that, when cruising solo, the Banks Dakota sips fuel, getting more than 20 mpg.

Given this amazing range of performance capabilities, the obvious question becomes: What's it like behind the wheel?

For some firsthand impressions, we took a ride with the Banks crew on the Hot Rod Power Tour a few years ago. For a road trip, obviously some reining in of the 700-plus horses is required. So, the boost was lower and the injectors smaller, but with the output still in the 600hp range, that's enough power to propel it to 190 mph.

Our first impression is that the Sidewinder Project is too many things—too hot, too



loud, too rough, and too much fun. The bare metal on the tranny tunnel cooks your right pant leg, the ride reminds us of a '50s pickup, and the brakes are as stiff as a cast-iron engine block. But, we've never enjoyed a diesel truck so much. You come away feeling like you have the baddest ride on the block, which, from a *Diesel Power* perspective, you do.

The Sidewinder is almost as comfortable as riding in a trash truck, except without the funny smells, and there are lots more switches and a rollcage, as well. But, just stomp on that roller throttle pedal, and the party starts. You feel like you're in a cruise missile going ballistic with a cloud of black exhaust smoke trailing behind.

While the straight-line acceleration keeps you pinned to the seat, the five-point harness holds you in on the curves. Don't expect much in the way of handling, though, because the turning radius is measured in acres, which is just as well, since the huge hoodscoop keeps you from seeing anything but the horizon anyway. No, this is one cannon of a pickup that you just point and shoot.

What compelled Gale Banks to build this hot-rod Howitzer? As with his other projects, the objective of the Sidewinder Project was



to create a positive showcase for diesel vehicles, obliterating the negative associations many people have with them. That required an emphatic demonstration of how a diesel offers astounding performance in every possible sense: quick, clean, and quiet, along with unparalleled fuel efficiency.

Getting record-breaking power out of the 5.9L engine obviously required some heavy breathing, provided by a Holset HY 55 variable-geometry turbocharger, along with a custom intake, ported cylinder head, and stainless steel exhaust. In basically stock form, but slightly hopped up, the Cummins' dyno'd at 393 hp and 600 lb-ft of torque at 3,600 rpm. After bolting on Banks' embellishments, this engine produced 700-plus horsepower and a humongous 1,100 lb-ft of torque.

When attempting to break the 200-mph mark, wind resistance became a significant factor, as well. The Dodge Dakota platform provides a smaller, lower-drag aerodynamic

package for top-speed runs. With less frontal area and a slightly smaller coefficient of drag, the Dakota requires less power to reach a stratospheric top end.

A front air dam is used to reduce airflow under the truck as much as possible. Aerodynamic downforce is also needed at the rear, so a slight

rake of about 1 degree (nose lower) is used to get some downforce on the rear tires at high speeds. This also improves straight-line stability.

All of the modifications done to the Dakota are too numerous to list here, but Banks provides plenty of detail about it on the company website, www.bankspower.com, along with an amusing footnote.

After making some spectacular wins at a drag race and running 12.167 seconds at 115.10 mph with no nitrous or propane injection, the truck was on display in Las Vegas at a Cummins dealership. There, the unwitting owner of a Corvette challenged the Sidewinder to an impromptu duel on the street, in full view of the police. The hapless Vette driver never knew what hit him, as the Sidewinder beat him by five car lengths. Even the cops nodded in approval and didn't write any tickets. After all, how would they ever catch up with the Sidewinder? **MP**