

Sandy man designs 1st customized Ranger

by SCOTT NEWTON

Not all vehicles are customized in California. Jim Steele of Sandy designed the first customized 1983 Ford Ranger in the country.

Steele and Ron Lacey, body man, by evening had taken the top off the first 1983 Ranger to show up in the Marv Tonkin Ford showroom.

"We're not building hot rods, we're building toolers," Steele said. The 2300 cubic centimeter engine reportedly gets 35 miles to the gallon on the highway, and 28 m.p.g. in town.

The four cylinder four-speed Ranger hit the market in May of this year, though all models are '83s.

The Ranger is the model between the Courier and the half-ton pickup. The Courier line was discontinued this year.

Though some people think of hot rods when they think of a customized car, Steele points out that few people can justify driving a car that gets five miles to the gallon.

He referred to the customized Ranger as "Tonkin's Tooler."

This particular pickup could be driven away for \$14,865, and Tonkin Ford is taking orders.

"Ford Motor Company just loves it, too," said Lacey of the pickup. Hot Rod Magazine and Vans, Pickups and Minitrucks are among the magazines reportedly interested in doing stories, and Steele said they're going to use a log cabin-type backdrop in the photographs for a Northwest slant.

Steele's boss, Marv Tonkin, reportedly went for the customizing right away, and both men were surprised. "I had to take the day off when he told me," Lacey joked.

Steele said in 17 years in the business Tonkin is the first dealer he's known to consider such an idea.

Steele thinks the reasoning is sound, though. A totally customized 1983 mid-sized truck with warranty for under \$15,000 is a good deal, in his opinion.

Build a '55 Chevy from the ground up and you're

out \$15,000, and that's without a warranty or a new vehicle.

Steele said, "I know. I've been that route."

"Me too," Lacey added.

Being that it's not a hot rod, Steele doesn't see any reason for insurance to be too expensive, either. Additionally, the flares over the wheels are steel.

"There's no fiberglass in it," Steele said.

Another interesting feature is the door handles, or rather the lack of them. A key opens the door. If someone wanted to break in

they'd have to take out a window.

Fairmont mirrors fit into the door, and the pickup takes regular glass (for replacement) as the top has been lowered only four inches, which is "not radical."

The Mustang GT spoiler is primarily for looks, though it cuts wind resistance some. Also, fog lamps can be mounted more easily with a spoiler.

The Ranger also has covered headlamps, eight-inch-wide tires on the front and 10-inch-wide tires on

the back, mag wheels, AM radio and FM and cassette stereo, tinted glass, chromed rear-step bumper and a toner cover over the bed.

Though Steele works on 1313 NE 122nd in Portland, he's lived in Sandy about two years.

"I've gotta work with the

flatlanders, but I don't have to live with 'em.

"We love it here in Sandy. It's real nice. Coming home every night is like go-

ing to the mountain."

Steele and his wife, Marlene, live east of Sandy.

"I've always had a gun in

my hand," he said. It was an M-16 when he was in the Marines. For the last 15 years it has been a spray gun.



Ron Lacey and Jim Steele with customized 1983 Ford Ranger.



Wendy Heckard puts up a shot during the Pioneers' 50-48 loss to David Douglas.

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Girls

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group of competitive girls. The key tonight was that everyone contributed."

He said Peggy Gillies, Tamee Linday and Sharon Jensen "really contributed on the boards." In addition Jensen had three steals and seven points.

Linda Mosbrucker scored 14 and Crystal Calkins contributed eight.

Wendy Heckard "played another good game at point guard," Smith said. "She's a natural at that position. She likes to handle the ball."

Lindsay Jensen, Mosbrucker, Calkins and Heckard started for the 1-5 Pioneers. Columbia is 3-3.

Smith said that Gillies, Amy Aschoff and Jill Ingram did a good job going in off the bench.

Lindsay has been playing better and better the last three games, according to Smith. He added that Calkins has "as good of first two or three steps as anybody in the league."

"They're only juniors (Lindsay and Calkins). They're going to be really good basketball players."

Friday night the Pioneers fell two points short of a win, falling 50-48 to David Douglas.

Sandy led by nine at one point in the fourth quarter, but the Scots got the lead with 1:50 to play, and made it a two-point margin with a free shot.

With 11 seconds to play the Pioneers got the ball at David Douglas's end. They got the ball down court, but Ingram's shot was off the mark. Jensen rebounded but couldn't get the ball in either.

Dick Harrison, director of student services, received the approval (via thunderous applause) of the student body at one point near the end of the game.

One student shouted a four-letter word similar to manure after a referee blew an obvious call. Said Harrison, "Sit down, John. He's blind."

698 rolled

Glenn Sheppard of Sandy, bowling with a team of Williams Thriftway employees, had a 698 series recently.

Sheppard had games of 224, 227 and 247 in the Merchants League at 20th Century Lanes on Dec. 13.

Bowling

Sandy Early Birds	
Dec. 20	
Raggedy Ann's	Andy Too 37 23
Zig Zag Inn	33 27
Eagle Poultry	31 29
Brightwood Store	28 32
West Coast Bending	28 32
Toni's	25 35
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