



REAR-SURRECTION, PART 1

PROJECT GETAWAY GETS REAR-ENDED WITH QUALITY COMPONENTS FROM CHRIS ALSTON'S CHASSISWORKS, STRANGE ENGINEERING, AND WILWOOD.

By Dan Ryder Photos by the author and Bobby Carroll

We last left Project Getaway, Ed Krawiec's '66 Nova dream car, with the front half mocked together and actually starting to resemble a car again. Our next mission was to turn to the back half of the car to begin hacking the floor out from about midway of the front seat to the rear tailpanel, thus allowing room for the installation of the Chris Alston's Chassisworks 4x2-inch rear frame configured to receive Alston's canted billet four-bar rear suspension system and FAB9 rear housing.

Since the Chevrolet Nova, or Chevy II, considered an American compact car in the 1960s, was of

unibody construction (not full framed), Getaway needed some serious upgrades to handle the

high-horsepower and suspension modifications we plan on throwing at it. Considering Krawiec wanted to go with a G-machine/Pro Touring-style Nova, the canted four-bar system would be right at home with its versatility. The system can be utilized for optimized handling and traction due to its self-centering design, coupled with adjustability from the aftermarket. Whether you enjoy carving corners, cruising Main Street USA, or barreling down the quarter-mile of your favorite dragstrip, the canted four-bar is a solid option.

Beyond the installation of the rear frame, we once again called upon Chris Alston's Chassisworks to provide us with its 9-inch housing featuring fabricated center-section panels, internal gussets, and consistent robotic spray arc-welded seams that



provide ultimate strength and durability. With the combination of the Alston rear frame, FAB9 housing, billet four-bar system, and double-adjustable shocks, we'll have achieved a highly adjustable, easy-to-tune rear suspension system.

In order to stuff the FAB9 housing, we called upon the knowledgeable staff at Strange Engineering in Morton Grove, Illinois. Strange Engineering is a family-owned establishment that began developing products in the late 1950s out of a two-car garage and now calls a 120,000-square-foot space home. After a brief discussion with J.C. Cascio of Strange, he recommended Strange's 9-inch Pro Iron third member, complete with a Detroit Locker differential and a 3.90-ratio street gear. As for the axles, Cascio recommended the S/T 35-splines complete with bearings and a half-inch stud kit for the ultimate in strength on the

street or track. The Pro Iron unit is a step away from Strange's Aluminum Ultra case, which yields a weight savings of around 10 pounds. Since we're not too worried about weight savings, the Pro Iron unit will work out great.

In order to stop this future bad boy, we'll utilize Wilwood Engineering's massive 14-inch rotors as well

as the company's SL4R radial-mount four-piston calipers out back. In the previous issue of SUPER CHEVY, we installed Wilwood's SL6R six-piston units up front along with 14-inch drilled discs. We shouldn't have any problems in the binder department.

Now follow along as we get down and dirty. 🔧

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Pictured here is the CNC-mandrel-bent 4x2-inch rear frame and FAB9 rear housing as received from Chris Alston's Chassisworks. Since we were unsure of the rear end width and axle centerline needed, both items were ordered oversized so they could be cut to fit. The rear frame section is available prewelded or can be obtained piece by piece with widths ranging from 34 to 50 inches. Once these components were put to the side, it was time to tackle the removal of the floor from Project Getaway.



At first we thought Krawiec wanted to see how many bodies could be fit into the trunk, but believe it or not, he was getting down and dirty cutting out the trunk pan. The rear frameroils were also removed at this time to make room for the new "real" frame section.



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Shown here is our new Flintstone mobile (minus the stone wheels). Once the floor is cut around the edges, it's necessary to employ a drill bit—or better yet, a spot-weld cutter—to properly and carefully remove the remainder of the floorpan that's welded to the rocker section.

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We're now getting ready to lay the rear frame section under the Deuce, but not before determining the axle centerline. This is one of the more critical measurements besides ride height and properly squaring the rear in the vehicle. At first a visual is performed to see where the builder/owner would like the wheel to sit in relation to the wheelhouse opening. Once that's determined, a plumb bob is used to properly measure the centerline. We will be stretching the wheel openings a few inches at a later date to allow for a more proportionate look and easier access.

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Once the axle centerline was determined, the rear frame was mocked up under the Nova, measured for length, and trued to the vehicle itself. After the crossmember and the rear portion of the frame were cut, it was tack welded into place (the frame will be fully welded once



Bobby's satisfied that all the components are properly lined up and no binding occurs). Note the built-in driveshaft safety loop and 4-inch exhaust cutouts incorporated into the frame from Chris Alston's Chassisworks.

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Here Bobby displays the additional length of frame that was removed. Since this piece contained the crossbar in the rear, it's advisable to tack in a new cross-piece further toward the front to keep the frame true during the installation. We caught Krawiec playing with something on the bandsaw. What the heck are you doing, Krawiec?

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Krawiec is no slouch; whenever time permits he enjoys getting in the mix to further Project Getaway's progress. The Pro Stock Motorcycle racer is making fill-in pieces to smooth the look where the tailpanel meets the framerail. What is the reason for this offset, you ask? After rapping with Bobby for a bit, we found that both he and Ed decided to sink the frame up into the Nova's shell an additional 2 1/2 inches to really give it a lowered look—sinking the Nitto rubber and Intro wheels way up into the well. While this looks awesome, it may create additional fabrication that is not normally needed. Stay tuned and we'll keep you posted as to the additional necessities throughout the build.

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Pictured is the rear frame section from Chris Alston's Chassisworks all tacked in and ready to receive the FAB9 rear. Stay tuned for the next issue of Super Chevy as we show you how to properly narrow a 9-inch rear housing with the special tools needed to square the housing ends, weld 'em on, and garnish it with products from both Strange and Wilwood Engineering.

SOURCES

CARROLL'S ROD AND RACECRAFT

732/416-9887
www.carrollrodandrace.com

CHRIS ALSTON'S CHASSISWORKS

800/722-2269
www.cachassisworks.com

INTRO WHEELS

800/454-6876
www.introwheels.com

NITTO TIRE

800/581-2982
www.nittotire.com

STRANGE ENGINEERING

847/663-1701
www.strangeengineering.net

WILWOOD ENGINEERING

805/388-1188
www.wilwood.com