

▶ SWAP YOUR AUTO FOR A REAL TRANNY!

# PETERSEN'S 4WHEEL & OFF-ROAD



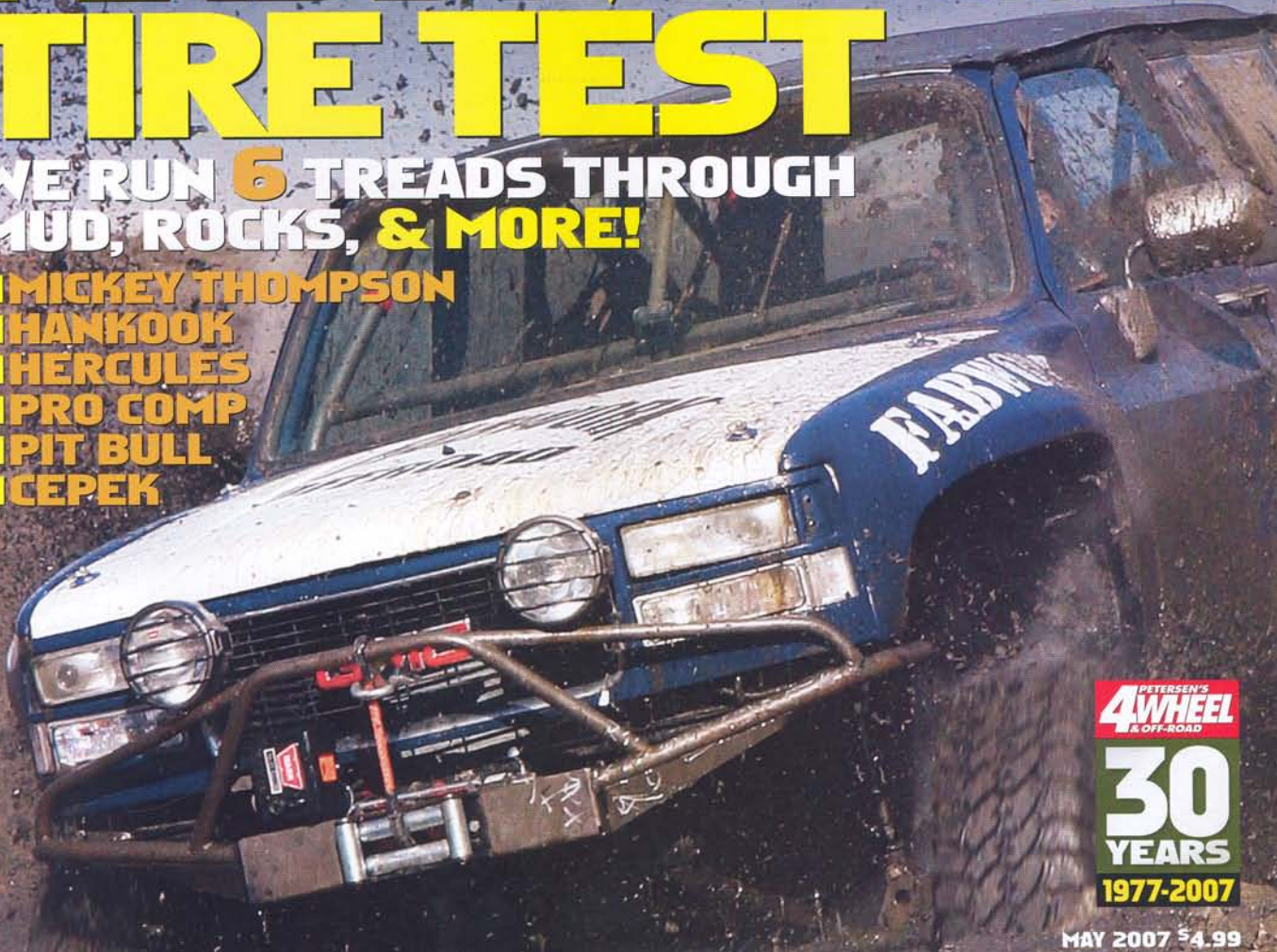
OUR TROOPS  
BATTLE THE ELEMENTS

**SOLDIER STUCKS  
& OTHER STORIES**

# MASSIVE MUD TIRE TEST

WE RUN 6 TREADS THROUGH  
MUD, ROCKS, & MORE!

- MICKEY THOMPSON
- HANKOOK
- HERCULES
- PRO COMP
- PIT BULL
- CEPEK



PETERSEN'S  
**4WHEEL**  
& OFF-ROAD

**30**  
YEARS  
1977-2007

MAY 2007 \$4.99

- TRAIL RUNS FROM NEW YORK TO COSTA RICA
- DISTRIBUTOR INSTALL
- OUR FIRST 30 YEARS

#BXBCBKB \*\*\*\*AUTO\*\*5-DIGIT 85053  
#9776700054649874# E07E0Y0 FL  
DONALD MCMILLAN MAY07

13855 N 36TH AVE  
PHOENIX AZ 85053-5502

VISIT: [WWW.4WHEELOFFROAD.COM](http://WWW.4WHEELOFFROAD.COM)

PRIMEDIA

# COSTA RICAN EXCURSION

## GRINGOS IN A TICO LAND

BY Jerrod Jones PHOTOGRAPHY JERROD JONES

**H**ave you ever wondered what it was like to be famous? Just take a lifted 1-ton Super Duty across a Central American country and you'll get a good taste of it. This past December we ended up in Costa Rica to meet up with the Ford Super Duty we had built ("Building for Extreme Excursions," Apr. '07) for eight days of exploration through some of the most beautiful (and Gringo-friendly) parts of Central America that anyone would be lucky enough to see. Not only that, but we got to experience some of the most outrageous wheeling of our lives. But we'll tell you right now that this is no trip worth risking without a large amount of off-road experience, a good grasp of the Spanish language, a lot of planning, and contacts within the country's borders. Fortunately for us, we know a little about wheeling, and our old college roommate, Cody Qualls and his wife Sunshine, had immersed themselves in the culture about two years ago, picking up the language and making good acquaintances.

It all started after we got a call from our friend, Cody. When he'd moved a couple years ago, he'd left behind his '99 Super Duty F-350, and was now looking to ship it down to Costa Rica instead of selling it. But many of the roads down there are treacherous, and Cody wanted to know how we would build a truck meant for full-time life in terrain like this.

It took all of two seconds for us to ask where we could find the keys, the truck, and when it had to be on the boat. He wasn't going to build it. We were. We hadn't had a crack at building a true international excursion truck before, and we saw an immediate opportunity to do a little foreign wheeling if we could somehow hide under the backseat while the truck was being shipped.

We spent the next six weeks working with Pro Comp, Fab Fours, Dynatrac, Eaton/Detroit, T-Max, Pull Pall, and Daystar to put together something we would feel good about dipping into foreign mud. Everything that was not replaced was inspected or rebuilt. The main goal was to get down there with the truck, but we also wanted the truck and us to make it back alive.

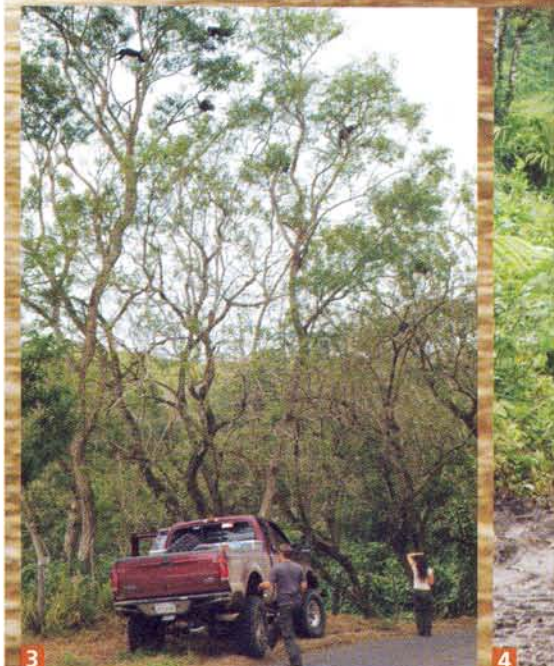
Think of this trip as an Ultimate Adventure, *without* 20 other trucks and 40 other guys to help you out. Oh yeah, and without the utilities, services, and cell reception we have here in the U.S. We knew we were in for an adventure.



1



2



3

4



**1** As soon as we got off the plane in Alajuela, Costa Rica, Cody Qualls picked us up in the Super Duty that had arrived the day before after a month-long boat ride. He mapped out a course that would take us over the Panamerican Highway, through a cloud forest in the highlands, under an active (and erupting) volcano, and eventually to Playa Negra in Guanacaste where we would spend the remainder of our days off (uh, we mean working).

**2** The next day we left the city and headed northwest. It had started pouring already and we got our first lesson about waterproof bags, as everything in the truck bed got soaked. Since everything we had was already sopping wet we decided to pop through a couple of river trails instead of taking the bridges across. The alternate routes almost made up for our sopping clothes.

**3** We pulled over for a second for a quick pit stop, only to get screamed at by a clan of howler monkeys. Man, do those guys make a racket! They're pretty good jumpers as well. And they hate diesel trucks because of the noise. When the howlers get ticked off, they tend to take aim and throw a pile of their own special blend at you.

**4** We have no idea where we actually were, but we'd pull off every chance we could to go explore some dirt road. This one brought us down to some slick mud and to the shore of Lake Arenal. Next to Lake Arenal is Volcan Arenal, one of the most active volcanoes in the world. In fact, it was erupting while we were there. We thought everyone in the towns below were a little too carefree about the eruptions. But apparently death by lava is kind of rare, so we spent the night below the volcano.

**5** In Parque Nacional Monte Verde, we hiked through a cloud forest that eventually brought us to the Continental Divide. We would've wheeled there, but there were no trails and blazing our own is never an option, especially in an ecosystem as fragile as this one. The funky little guy looked to be related to a raccoon, and was obviously fed well by all the tourists.



**5**

# MADE IN USA



Eagle alloys



Series 140

Series 114

Series 185

Since 1977, American Eagle Wheel has been outfitting the Off-Road Vehicles that run wild across this great country. For the best in Strength, Fitment and Looks — look no further than American Eagle Wheel. Made in China, CA not China.



WWW.AEWHEEL.COM 1-800-583-2453

## COSTA RICAN EXCURSION

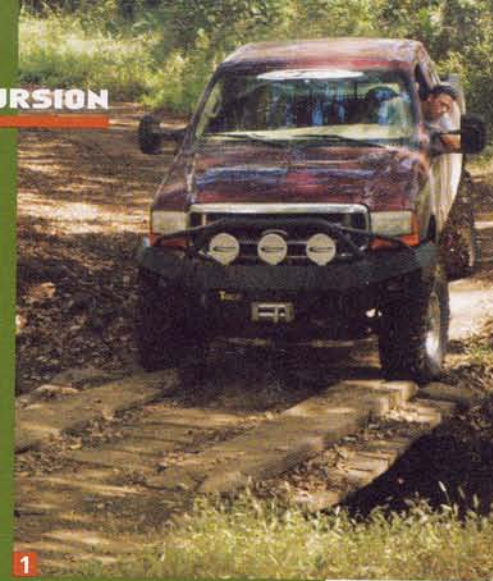
**1** On the third day, we pulled into Guanacaste, the region our friend lives in on the Pacific side. Our clothes were all mildewed, we were already worn out, and we hadn't even hit any deep mud yet. After dropping off the girls and all our gear at his house, we took off to find some mud. Unfortunately the bridge he had always taken to go mudding in his 4Runner was a little smaller with a Super Duty lumbering over it. Besides that, the bridge was sadly dilapidated. We took one look at our friend and said, "Are you kidding me right now, dude? We don't have a rear winch for when the front of the truck falls through." We can't believe he made it over. The bridge sounded like it was going to snap in half.

**2** The bridge had already put the pucker factor in us, so it was no biggy when we found this giant mudhole. Believe it or not, the rainy season had already passed, and the road still had this in it. Good for us, but bad for anything without a T-max winch, a Detroit Locker, and 37-inch Xterrains.

**3** We received our first bit of damage through this mudhole as well, but it was almost welcomed when we thought of how badly a bridge incident would've been. Minus one steering stabilizer, we were good to go.

**4** Cody had told us about one of his crew members, Vidal, who had recently purchased a CJ-8, but couldn't afford to fix it up enough to drive it to work. Instead Vidal rides a 10-speed road bike 10 miles every day on dirt roads to get back and forth to work so he can support his son and daughter. We went over to take a look and see if there was anything we could do to help Vidal out.

**5** Our fifth day into the trip, Jayne (one of the girls with us) jumped into the truck complaining that she was missing out on all the mud fun. Well, we gave her a real treat. Cody had just turned to tell us "that there should be mud on this road" when the truck absolutely buried itself in a wonderful mixture of mud and special cow ingredient. We went from solid ground to goop in about 10 feet. While we bogged ourselves in the mud, Jayne had her first off-roading experience this trip driv-



1



2



3



4

>> Think of this trip as the Ultimate Adventure, *without* 20 other trucks and 40 other guys to help you out. <<

ing and controlling the 12,000-pound winch hooked up to a tree and a Pull-Pal winch anchor. She actually did pretty darned good, for a girl (just kidding).

**6** When the tree got too close to the truck, we had to switch to the Pull-Pal winch anchor. We'd practiced with it in our yard before the trip, but it was a lot trickier trying to set it up while sinking in mud. It worked like a charm though. It really is amazing how well those winch anchors work.

**7** Once we popped the truck out the other side, we rushed to the nearest beach of Playa Negra to jump in and get the mud and cow contaminate off and out of our wounds. While we were drying off, Jayne stole the truck and went bombing down a river pass to "wash the mud off." At least she left us with the camera so we could get a couple of shots.



5



6



7



## COSTA RICAN EXCURSION

**1** We got out of the mud, the river, and off the beach just in time to get Cody back to one of his jobsites before his crew left for the day. None of the Ticos (the locals) could believe how big the truck was. A few of them were a little peeved at us, as they couldn't believe that we'd thrash on such a nice truck. We explained that it was built specifically for just that, and that the mud wouldn't do too much damage.

**2** A quick stop for an Imperial *cerveza* brought us to this cool diesel FJ40 pulling this engineless FJ40 that was doubling as a cargo



trailer. Almost all the Toyota Hi-Lux (Tacomas) and Land Cruisers we found down there were diesel. In fact almost all the vehicles we came across were diesel.

**3** After sitting for a few minutes behind a semi-slow moving truck, we decided it was time to take the initiative and go for a pass. Unbeknownst to us, a road crew had recently filled in a 3-foot-deep ditch and had failed to pack any of it down. Add a little rain to it, and you get this type of situation. It looked like solid road at 40 mph, and we're just glad the truck stayed on its wheels. Eventually we grabbed a tree with the winch and pulled the truck out. The truck we tried to pass saw what happened and stopped, as did traffic in back of us. Now we were the *estupido turista gringos* that got stuck trying to hurry around, but everyone was still very friendly and wanted to show their trucks' *machismo* by having us hook up our winch hook to their Toyota or whatever.

**4** The next day, we took it easy and gave the truck a break after all it had been through the entire week. We washed all the mud off, knocked out the interior, and



headed for a beach to relax for a little bit. This was different than most trips to the beach, as we brought the truck with us onto the deserted beach we found.

**5** Our trip had been great, and we couldn't believe it was already the seventh day and we were heading back for the Juan Santa Maria International Airport. On the way back we got one final treat near the Parque Nacional Palo Verde at this old rock quarry. Look closely at this picture and you can see how this tree's gigantic roots grew straight through this rock and down to the ground. It is amazing what nature can accomplish given enough time. 🌳

