

PROJECT FLAMING RIVER REPLACEMENT COLUMN SCRATCH-BUILT SCRAMBLER

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PHOTOGRAPHY KEVIN MCNULTY

WITH MOST OF THE major fabrication out of the way, the Scratch Built Scrambler project is winding down to some of the last few gadgets of the build. Typical of most builds, a few components that we thought would work ended up being more of a headache than anything else. While trying to save a few bucks, we scavenged a tilt steering column from a wrecked Jeep Wrangler YJ in a salvage yard. After we bolted it in, the column jammed in the upright position

and we were unable to free it. Rather than fix a column that's likely well beyond its usefulness, we called Flaming River for a replacement.

We are always impressed with the quality and options of Flaming River columns. The company offers all-new, direct-fit columns for just about any truck, Jeep, 4x4, or custom application. They are available in column shift and floor shift, keyed or non-keyed, and in a number of different finishes including bare metal. Although a hundred components on the Scrambler are trick, the steering column and steering wheel are what we'll interface with every time we drive the Jeep, so they might as well be comfortable, work properly and safely, and look sharp.





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1 Many direct-fit columns and installation components are available from Flaming River. We chose the 30-inch stainless steel model, which is designed for use with the 2-inch OEM mounting hole. Since our CJ is completely scratch built, we ordered a '97-'00 Jeep TJ power steering shaft, which we custom-mounted in the Scrambler.

2 The billet drop bracket that holds the column in place is built to factory specs, but is fully adjustable for fine-tuning from left to right. This will help center the steering column and wheel.

3 We sealed the area between the firewall and the used brackets with new foam insulating tape to keep out the wind noise, engine fumes, and trail dust. The factory brackets have rubber insulation glued to them, but after 20-30 years of hard use it becomes brittle, deteriorates, and leaks.

4 The steering columns can be ordered to mate to the existing factory linkage and shafts. Rather than use the worn-out parts from the salvaged YJ column, we ordered new shafts and joints. The shafts can also be ordered as direct replacements, or shafts are available that can be cut to fit by the installer.

5 We'll finally be able to steer the Scrambler around the shop! The old column didn't have a joint/coupling that mated to the custom steering box, so it was a major pain trying to push the Jeep around. The billet joints are machined from aircraft steel and use sealed needle bearings, which should be durable enough for years of abuse in the CJ.

6 The column's electrical connections are easy to figure out and come with an exact factory plug-in. Electrical adapters are also available, or an easy-to-follow wiring diagram comes with the column so the wiring can be spliced into an existing electrical system.

7 OK, so our new steering setup is a little blingy, but it's cool and built with all-new high-quality components. The D-shaped Revolution steering wheel is slick and ergonomically designed for driving comfort. The steering wheel is definitely easy to grip, which will help in tough wheeling situations. 🌟

SOURCE

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