

TOYOTA

CRUISERS & TRUCKS

ADVENTURE. INSPIRATION. EXPLORATION.



LAKE TITICACA

The beautiful fresh-water lake surrounded by white-topped mountains.

TRD TACOMA BUILD

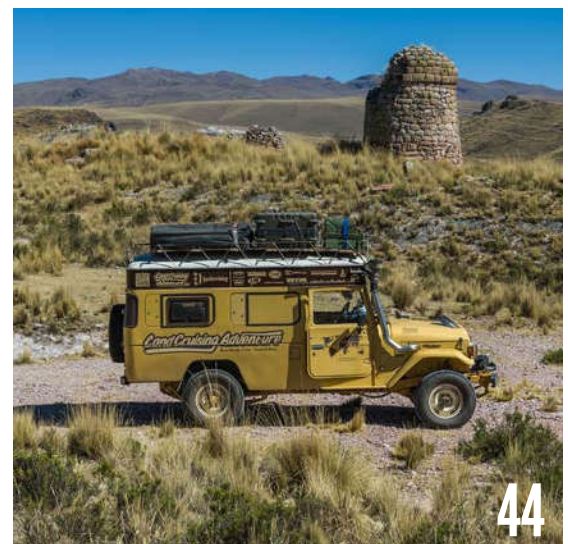
Check out all the goodies on the 2019 Voodoo Blue TRD Tacoma.

ALCAN 5000

The ComeUp Winch teams competes in the bitter cold with their FJ Cruiser.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME 13 | ISSUE 2 | SPRING 2020



FEATURES

12

COVER » TRD PRO TACOMA BUILD

After 12 years of with a 4Runner, our Senior Editor unveils his ready-for-anything 2019 Voodoo Blue Tacoma.

32

MY JOURNEY TO REBELLE

Our Creative Director shares her personal account of competing in the 2019 Rebelle Rally.

44

EXPLORING A LITTLE-KNOWN CORNER OF LAKE TITICACA (PERU)

Travels through Peru to Lake Titicaca, the "birthplace of the sun".

56

LAND OF THUNDER

A dream trip to Bhutan and the realization of the same love of Toyota vehicles as the locals.

» ON THE COVER

2019 Voodoo Blue TRD Toyota Tacoma build, ready for adventure.

Page 12

PHOTO BY Phillip Jones

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DEPARTMENTS

2 | *Publisher's Letter*

4 | *New & Noteworthy*

Gear

8 | *Tuffy Secure Console Safe Insert*

Step-by-step install of the Tuffy Secure Console Safe in a Tacoma.

Reviews

20 | *Cooper Discoverer AT3 XLT*

After many adventures and nearly 12,000 miles, a review of the Cooper Discoverer AT3 XLT.

62 | *Dometic PLB40 Battery System*

Is the Dometic PLB40 battery system a good alternative to a dual-battery setup?

64 | *Roofnest Falcon Roof Top Tent*

A quick closing hard-shell roof top tent that's cozy, comfortable, and functional.

Events

50 | *An Extreme Winter Challenge: 2020 Alcan 5000 Rally*

The ComeUp Winch team challenges their FJ Cruiser in the Arctic at the Alcan 5000 Rally.

The Last Word

68 | *Our outdoor enthusiast world during the time of COVID-19*

A personal perspective on the effects of COVID-19 in the outdoor community.

Your Rigs

Back Cover | *Reader rigs*

[FRAMED]

Amazing photos of off road adventures from our readers

24 | Black Hills/ Photo by David Davis

26 | Goosenecks at night/ Photo by Phillip Jones

28 | Bonneville Salt Flats/ Photo by Kathy Locke

30 | Colorado River/ Photo by Shane Williams

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An Extreme Winter Challenge: 2020 Alcan 5000 Rally

*Photo by Ben Huang*

Man and machine versus Arctic temps. Snow and ice-covered roads, along with blizzard conditions—the 2020 Alcan 5000 Rally was that plus much, much more. The 10-day 5,120 mile-long winter rally posed grueling challenges even the most seasoned competitors had to work through carefully. Ben Huang (President of ComeUp North America and Managing Director COMEUP Industrial Inc. based in Taiwan) and friend buddy Ben Liao teamed up to rally together for this event. They decided to commandeer one of ComeUp's company vehicles: a fully customized 2012 Trail Teams Edition FJ Cruiser. They prepared, they rallied, and they completed. Not an easy feat for any adventurer.

WHAT IS THE ALCAN 5000 RALLY?

The Alcan 5000 Rally (started in 1984 as a summer event but in 1988 as a winter challenge) is an extreme TSD (time-speed-distance) rally. Teams of two (or three) tackle tons of things together: like very long hours behind the wheel and navigating, severe terrain, and the harsh Arctic elements. In addition, each team must follow a detailed route book and complete all the mini-TSD rallies within the overall rally. There's a lot to keep track of, lots to concentrate on.

This year's rally started in Kirkland, Washington and took competitors through remote residences, heading due north through all of Canada (British Columbia,



Yukon Territory, and the Northwest Territories). Teams braved temps at cold as -40 degrees and unexpectedly closed fuel stations in the middle of nowhere to reach cities like Quesnel, Whitehorse, Dawson City (where the rally's ice races were held). Finally, they reached Inuvik, a small city not far from the Arctic Ocean. Those brave enough to conquer nature's harshest elements pushed their way up to Tuktoyaktuk, a tiny town built on stilts, nestled on the beaches of the frozen Arctic Ocean.

Teams then made their way back down to Whitehorse, the capital of the Yukon Territory, and then switched gears to head west to Fairbanks, Alaska. After a few more days of TSD rallies and optional extreme controls, competitors finished in Anchorage—the day before the ceremonial start of the 48th annual Iditarod dog sled races.

COMEUP'S COMPETITION

Huang, who decided to participate as gift to himself for his 50 birthday, originally planned to drive a Mercedes G500 in the Alcan 5000



This page: Alcan 5000 traffic jam Dempster Highway; Canada's Arctic Circle Sign

EVENTS



Photo by Ben Huang

Rally. The week before rally, however, it had an electrical issue and couldn't be started. After discovering it could potentially take 2-3 weeks to fix the issue, he abandoned ship and decided to take FJ Cruiser.

However, Huang had never driven on ice roads nor completed any TSD rallies before. He wasn't sure what to expect. But, he saw it as a once-in-a-life experience. "As a Taiwanese, I probably don't have many chances to do it again," Huang said.

To him, the biggest challenge was driving on ice and snow-covered roads. As the primary driver, he had lean to overcome the fear of vehicle drifting when driving on ice roads—especially when it came to the TSDs.

Another challenge was driving in a snow storm. "In day two [during the evening] on the way to Fort Nelson, we hit a heavy snow storm and couldn't see anything. It just like white wall in front of car. We got to drive it very slow and make sure to keep the car inside the lane."

Many competitors, including my husband, Andy and myself as Team Crankshaft Culture, were also challenged by severe weather during the Alcan 5000 Rally. White-outs, driving snow, drifts that could span several feet long by a few feet high, and slick surfaces made for already

long days nearly unbearable. My team gauged from 13-16 hours of seat time every day—10 days straight. You were lucky to get a meal and a beer at the end of a day.

After a few decades that rally owner Jerry Hines has been traveling the Alaska, Dempster, Dalton and other highways, he's never seen conditions so bad. "The 2020 Alcan was our 25th Alcan 5000 since 1984, and the 11th Alcan 5000 Winter Rally," he said. "Most events since 1985 have included the Dempster Highway but 2020 was unique: It was our most difficult drive northbound in 35 years, but the best conditions & weather in memory driving 500 miles south just two days later."

A multitude of teams ended up in the ditch (4x4s, AWDs, and front-wheel-drives included), some teams more than once. Crushed body panels, cracked windshields, and missing fog lights, as well as a severe oil leak and other casualties were reported. A variety of causes led to kissing ditches, but thankfully, no one was hurt. Vehicles can be replaced but people cannot.

"On the way to Dawson city, we accidentally caught an ice patch and spun the truck to opposite roadside snow pile," Huang exclaimed. "Luckily there were no other vehicles in both directions. In the end, the sweeps team



pulled us out of snow pile." The ATs on there now got them to the finish line safely but he said next time he'd prefer rubber with studs.

Although there was a plethora of damage or issues with other rally rigs, Huang's trusty FJ only had a long crack in the windshield. It was quickly replaced once they got back. "It is a very reliable truck and never gives me any trouble. Even in -30F temperature conditions in Tuk, we still can ignite the truck without any problem," Huang said with a smile.

When asked if he'd rally the winter Alcan 5000 Rally again he said no, but he wants to explore the Alcan 5000 Rally in the summer (he'd rally it with his wife and their Subaru Outback). The rallies are held like the Olympics, winter then two years for the summer rally, then another two years for the winter one, etc.

This page: An Arctic grader, a lifeline;
Old Yukon border sign

EVENTS

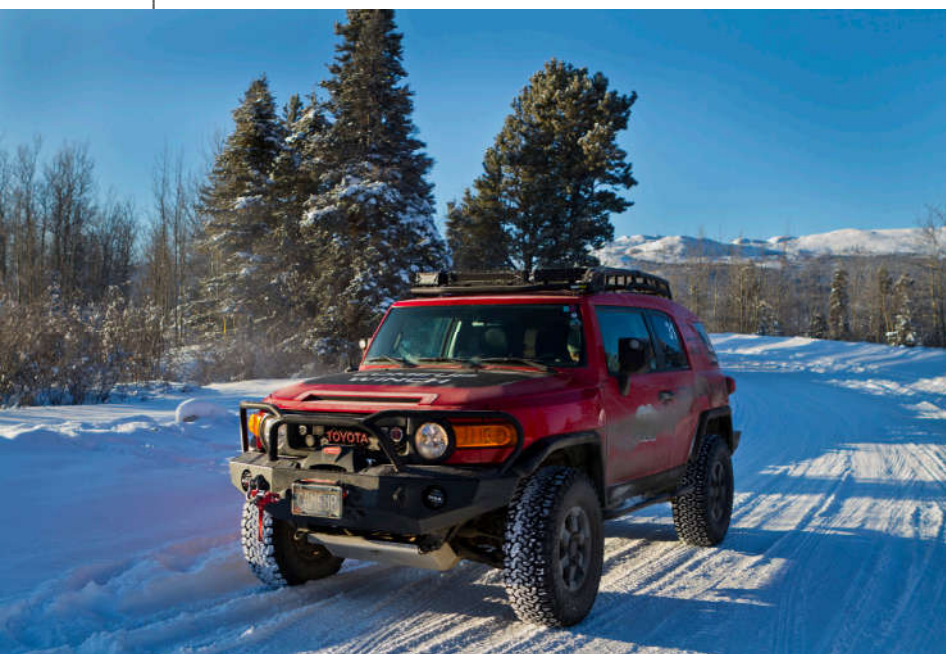


Photo by Ben Huang

"I was planning a road trip from Vladivostok to Moscow with my partner in Russia, but now due to the virus outbreak I will postpone this plan," Huang said. As with all of us, the world has changed and we can't wait to get back out there. **TCT**

BUILD LIST:

Front bumper: Expedition One
Rear bumper and tire carrier: Metal-Tech 4x4
Winch: ComeUp Seal Gen2 9.5rsi
Front suspension: Icon Vehicle Dynamic
Rear suspension: ARB OME
Tire: BF Goodrich AT KO2
Fog light: PIAA

ABOUT COMEUP:

ComeUp originally based and founded in 1975 in Taipei, Taiwan under the name Chuan Phang Ent. Co. specialized in producing a wide range of industrial electric winches. ComeUp showcases award winning winch products.

In 2004, to enlarge worldwide product distribution, the company changed its name to COMEUP Industries Inc. and has expanded products in the following categories: Automotive, Powersports, Industrial, and AC Winch.

In 2012 COMEUP expanded to the United States and set up a branch office to develop the American market. Their US headquarters is located in Clackamas, Oregon.

Currently, COMEUP winches have been distributed in more than 60 countries on five continents. COMEUP offers consumers worldwide reliable, high performance products, and is one of the world's most recognized names for the "ultimate winch solution".

ComeUp is proud to offer a variety of premium winches for the offroad market. Whether you need a winch for weekend warrior adventures or you're facing extreme conditions of the Arctic or the anywhere beyond, COMEUP winches will reliably get you unstuck.

Stay tuned, two new ComeUp competition winches will be on the market soon: Blazer M2 & Blazer M3.



This page: Snow-encrusted Arctic trees; Wildlife was abundant



Welcome to

TUKTOYAKTUK

LAND OF THE PINGOS