

**November 2014**



**1974**



When I was a kid, my dad built me a work bench. Nothing too crazy, just a platform with a pegboard back, but it was made short and shallow so I could actually use it. He had his own benches which ran the depth of the garage, but most of the time they just collected stuff. As I grew up, I graduated to using his benches and when I bought my first house I came up with a plan to build my own workbench. It was one of those rites of passage.

It started out innocent enough, I wanted to take advantage of the extra depth available in my detached garage, as well as use that side space some too. The picture in my head was not too far off from that of a large corner office desk. I wanted it solid, strong, and big. It ended up measuring something like 8 feet wide, 2 feet deep, with the left side coming forward along the wall about 3 additional feet. I built it like you would build a deck: 4x4 posts, joist hangers for the top structure, and a 3/4" plywood top with tempered hardboard as the work surface. I managed to stuff a toolbox base cabinet under it and reinforced above it with angle iron to keep that area strong. That bench was beefy enough to hold myself and an entire disassembled engine, which was my test. Over the next few years, I shortened the bench because it was WAY too big and collected too much stuff.

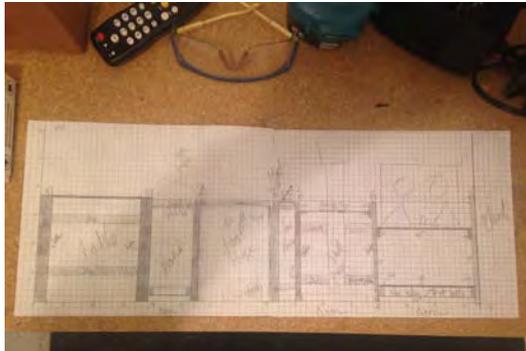
Fast forward to the next house, I learned my lesson and kept the bench smaller. Then things started happening. I started doing more home projects which meant buying more bench top tools and that meant less useable bench space. I bought a Craftsman "3 in 1" workbench module hoping to keep everything compact. The design had 3 tool surfaces on a center pivot. Just rotate the one you want into place when you need it. Yup, collected a bunch of stuff on top, and basically bogged it down in garage crap. The side pieces on top had to slide out for the tools to pivot, which made it worse. I liked the idea but wanted a better way to make something useful that still saves space.



The new plan was to build a tower that stored bench tools vertically. I measured the tools to make sure it was going to be wide enough, and then built a column to house it all. The very top would be for a TV, the next is for the bench top sander and bench grinder, both mounted on a lazy susan. The next level down was for the miter saw and the bottom space was taken up by the Shop Vac and accessories. This setup actually worked well, but was crude. It didn't use any extra bench space, but didn't create any either.



Fast forward to this summer when John D revamped his 40 Watt garage. One of the many cool things was how he designed his workbench. Unique to his design was the inset sandblaster and flush mounted parts washer. Since I have been in this house (now my third) for a couple years, I have found my current “workbench” to be lacking. I was working with an old kitchen base cabinet for the main bench, while the other was a childhood bedroom dresser. With spare time between Cruise for Troops and the start of travelling basketball looming (I am coaching this year), I took his inspiration and decided to start the winter project a little early. I also poked around [GarageJournal.com](http://GarageJournal.com) for ideas, it’s a great resource.



Like all good low-tech project planners, I took pencil to paper and drew out my design to scale. I measured out all my bench top tools and other items I would need to store, measured out the space, and started laying out what tools I wanted in which places. My main concern was the large pieces that aren’t used a lot but take up valuable counter space. Things like the miter saw, chop saw, band saw all needed to be stashed out of the way. Next were the smaller handheld power tools like the circular saw, jigsaw, framing nailer, etc.

3 main pieces I wanted to keep out and always accessible were the bench vice, bench top sander, and bench grinder. There were 5 major pieces which would require the bench to be built around them: 1) sandblaster, 2) 60 gallon stand-up air compressor, 3) table saw, 4) drill press, 5) sawhorses. Each had their own considerations due to awkward shape. Special consideration came for a removable part of the bench top at the drill press so it could be fully useable when needed. This is why drawing out your plan carefully is so important.

With my plan set, I headed to Menard’s for lumber and supplies. After completely emptying the space and assembling the leg pieces, things took a (typical for me) twist. Whooda think that the garage floor would be up higher in the corner? This made the top sit too high to fit under the fuse panel, so I had to cut the legs shorter. Doing that now meant that the cross braces in that area are now going to lay too low to accommodate my table saw

which will sit underneath. This normally wouldn’t be a problem to trim them, but since my 60 gallon air compressor sits on top of this area (another John D inspiration), I needed to be careful. I cut the legs 1-1/8” shorter planning on adding another piece of plywood across the top. The compressor would already be sitting on a rubber pad, which now will be sandwiched between the plywood pieces. It didn’t need to extend back as far in the fuse box area, so I could make up the height in that area too. This then would have made the area for the saw horses too short, so I kept the legs in that area the same height and shimmed the top midway between those areas. Another tweak happened when I found that the neighboring built-in cabinet was not built square to the wall, so my front to back measurements were off. Easily fixed, but a little more work.



This is how all my projects seem to go. The best of intentions, decent planning, and then some sort of hiccup takes it sideways which results in some creative resolution. I'm sure I'm not the only one. There's still work to do, like putting a door over the areas below the sandblaster, drill press, and band saw (between tool box and table saw). The old base cabinet will be separated into two halves and become smaller workspaces in other parts of the garage. The vice will be moved to one, along with the bench grinder for a dedicated metals area, while the other will be in the back garage where it will probably be used to gather crap.



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## MusclecarFilms

How often have you gone on YouTube and ended up finding something really cool that you weren't even looking for? Check out [musclecarfilms.com](http://musclecarfilms.com) if you're interested in watching vintage Indy or NASCAR racing, Can Am or drag racing, or vintage TV commercials and promotional videos. They have compiled a ton of footage, edited it and put it in CD form for you to buy. It sounds like their focus is on the video quality themselves, admitting they don't have fancy packaging, but their price seems quite fair for the work involved.

I clicked on the Vintage promo films and TV commercials and then again on the "**Chevrolet : 1961-1972 - The Musclecar Era**" tab. For \$17 and free shipping, you'll get 134 minutes of commercials (Camaro, Chevelle, etc), promotional videos of the 1968 Corvette, 1967 Camaro, the 66 model lineup, and others. There's even 13 minutes of segments from the game show Let's Make a Deal from 1970-1972 where they were giving away various Chevrolets. It looks like they have footage for different DVDs going back into the '50s, tons of vintage racing including segments on specific years, and specific personalities. I haven't bought one, so I can't vouch for it, but it looks like they have done some deep digging for good footage. In fact, these aren't copies of modern shows that show footage, this is the actual footage itself.



## Quick hits:

SEMA is here this week, and that means a ton of new project vehicles will get coverage to show off their high-dollar builds. Among those this year are a 1966 Chevelle built by the Ring Bros called “Recoil”. Sporting a supercharged 980hp LS7, and being called a “refined racecar” blending power and sleek details, this Ring Bros Chevelle will fall somewhere between wild and extreme. Look for it in upcoming magazines and websites. For now, all you get is the rendering.



Look at the picture to the left. Now look at it again and notice that it's actually a hood. See how the eyes light up? That's because they really DO light up. The logo is from the newly finished Viking Performance Bezerker Camaro.



Built to help promote their new line of Active Shock Management (ASM) products, Viking (Lakeville, MN) had Classics Plus in Savage prepare the car for show duty and TPIS (Chaska, MN) built the 408cid, 660hp engine complete with custom TPIS/Classics Plus metal intake. Look for it on the track too.



Last week I got a call from Everett Jasmer, owner and original builder of USA-1 4x4. He was calling to tell me about a new series of Monster Truck racing that he's going to be part of. It's been top secret for quite a while now, and some details can't be released yet, but it involves true Monster Truck racing (not the WWE style stuff there is right now) and will feature the return of the original rivalry of Monster Truck racing. BIGFOOT® and USA 1 4X4® will go head-to-head for the first time in over 20 years. Though the driver remains top secret, Everett did say that there is an ALL-NEW USA-1 truck built to race. Keeping the “new mission” theme and his original Stars and Stripes paint scheme, Everett's new truck is a throwback to the good old days of real trucks that look like trucks. You can read the official press release at [MonsterXtour.com](http://MonsterXtour.com) and follow [USA-14x4.com](http://USA-14x4.com).

