



With its Lenin Cream finish, the inside of the box looks like it just left the factory on our featured 1979 Palomino. The pickup also features the optional sliding rear window.



You could not miss a Dodge Palomino pickup from the rear. The name was prominently featured on the tailgate.



The intricate stripes on the sides of the Palomino's Sweptline box showed a very definite "Southwest Americana" theme.

the success of Dodge Trucks, Chrysler Corp. found itself on shaky financial ground by mid-year 1979 because of poor economic decisions and market miscalculations it made during the 1970s. Soaring gas prices brought Walter P. Chrysler's company to its knees. Only through Lee A. Iacocca's leadership and extensive credit arrangements was the company able to bring a new line of fuel-efficient cars and trucks to the market. That, however, is another story entirely.

During the heady days of early February 1979, when Dodge Truck was on top of the world, Bledsoe's Palomino was built at Dodge's Warren, Michigan, truck plant. When it arrived at Bledsoe's home 20 years later, the pickup was in derelict condition. Bledsoe went to work sourcing parts for a complete rebuild and upgrade. A new box came from a 1978

two-wheel-drive Dodge. Doors were pulled from a Plymouth Trailduster. He found one perfect junkyard left front fender and one NOS right front fender. Since Bledsoe lives in the California desert, he upgraded the Palomino with factory air, along with a tilt steering wheel, cruise control, and electric door locks. He upgraded the interior from an Adventurer to an Adventurer SE. Along the way, the full-time four-wheel drive turned into a later-model, part-time system with an NP 241D transfer case. The new system's front hubs have a larger bolt pattern, and Bledsoe found factory rims with that pattern. The original NP 435 4-speed transmission was retained, along with the 360ci V-8. The truck still sports 3.55:1 gearing with a Sure-Grip no-spin rear differential.

Reproducing the Palomino stripes was a real problem, though. Bledsoe

found an Iowa truck with near-perfect stripes, and a local shop copied them to make the needed decals. Since then, an actual factory stripe kit has been located and Bledsoe can now recreate copies of the factory originals. The first reproductions that adorn his truck are not entirely correct—a point he readily concedes when asked. An NOS 1979 Dodge dual headlight grille rounded out the project along with a near flawless paint job. The engine is California legal with *all* of its factory-installed emission equipment intact.

According to Bledsoe, the Palomino is now "just like I would have ordered it had I been able to sit down and do so in 1979."

Bledsoe loves to discuss anything related to Dodge pickups of the mid- to late-1970s and early-1980s and can be contacted at dynotunelilred@aol.com. 