

SOLID FOUNDATION

by: Matt Baldwin (#1955)

As kids we were taught that a wise man always builds his house on a solid foundation. This same lesson should be used to guide how you prepare the foundation of your Tri-Five build. Whether you are beginning a project or just looking to greatly improve the handling and enjoyment of your current Tri-Five without breaking the bank, we have put together a great DIY suspension & brake upgrade kit that will give your 60 year old chassis new life.

As the General Manager at Woody's Hot Rodz I get to see a lot of new products get developed for Tri-Fives. Over the past several years there has been a huge push towards upgrading factory suspensions. In years past you could add sway bars and better shocks to help the car handle and you could upgrade the brakes with a simple power front disc kit... but beyond that, there weren't many options.

Many of our customers have chosen to go all out and upgrade to an aftermarket chassis. This is definitely an amazing upgrade but it's also a very expensive endeavor. We specialize in and promote Art Morrison chassis whenever our customers want to go this route. Art and his team have led the charge in producing the best aftermarket chassis for 55, 56 & 57 Chevys. In fact they've sold over 1,500 of them over the past 10 or so years. This is a true testament to their product. For those of you like me who unfortunately can't stick an aftermarket chassis under our ride... I have the perfect answer.

We've put together what we feel is an excellent chassis upgrade package using components from several vendors to make a very solid foundation for your Tri-Five to ride on. Keep in mind as you read this, not all of these items are needed to improve upon an OE chassis, but the combination of all of them will give you a chassis that will handle, stop and perform worlds apart from your stock chassis.

We begin by adding rigidity to the frame by installing

our tubular cross-member kit. This will tie the frame rails together and help eliminate chassis sway. This kit is fully adjustable. It can be installed in a variety of ways taking into account your vehicle's body type, exhaust routing and includes a transmission mount that can be set up for your specific transmission position. Our kit has been designed to allow you to easily remove your transmission by accessing the trans-mount bolts. This feature has been

looked with various other kits on the market. In addition to the cross-member kit we always install one of our rear shock mount bars. This is something that should be done on every Tri-Five that is on the road. It is an inexpensive item that makes a huge difference. From the factory our shocks mount to the trunk floor. This isn't an ideal surface to take the repeated pressure of shock compression over time. Especially over 60 years!

Once we strengthen the stock frame we move onto upgrading it. First by welding in new engine side mounts. *Hint: Use the front mounts as a guide when doing this on a small block car. They will position the engine perfectly. On an LS or big block we recommend positioning the mounts with the body in place to allow for the proper firewall clearance.* We also install a rear leaf spring relocation kit. This is a relatively simple kit to install if you can weld. If not, that is what friends are for! The nice part of this kit is that once installed you

can run up to a 10" rear wheel without clearance issues. John's Industries is our choice when it comes to rear ends. John and his team pride themselves on building bolt-in Ford 9" rears for Tri-Fives. These truly are bolt-in. No matter if your springs are in the stock position or have been in-boarded, John's has a bolt-in rear that is ready to go. One of the main reasons we love these rear ends is that they are so quiet. This is not the case with some 9"s that are on the market. In fact John tests all the center sections we buy in his own "shop truck" prior to shipping them to insure that they are quiet and operating properly. John's now casts their own center sections and makes their own housings and they stand firmly behind their products. If you're thinking of upgrading a common weak spot on a Tri-Five, consider a 9" from John's Industries. We include them in this package.

One of the biggest improvements to the handling comes from the combination of our Tubular A-Arms combined with new spindles and Viking Coil-Over

any modifications other than drilling the threads out of the lower control arm where the shocks mount. The Coil-Overs mount with through bolts. We also use Viking rear shocks. Both the front and rear shocks are dual adjustable. This means that you can adjust the compression and the rebound on all four corners. Viking gives guidelines for three different ride types, cruising, handling or drag strip and trust me, this works very well. The Coil-Overs also can be adjusted for ride height. Viking offers these in stock height, lowered or even raised for the gasser look.

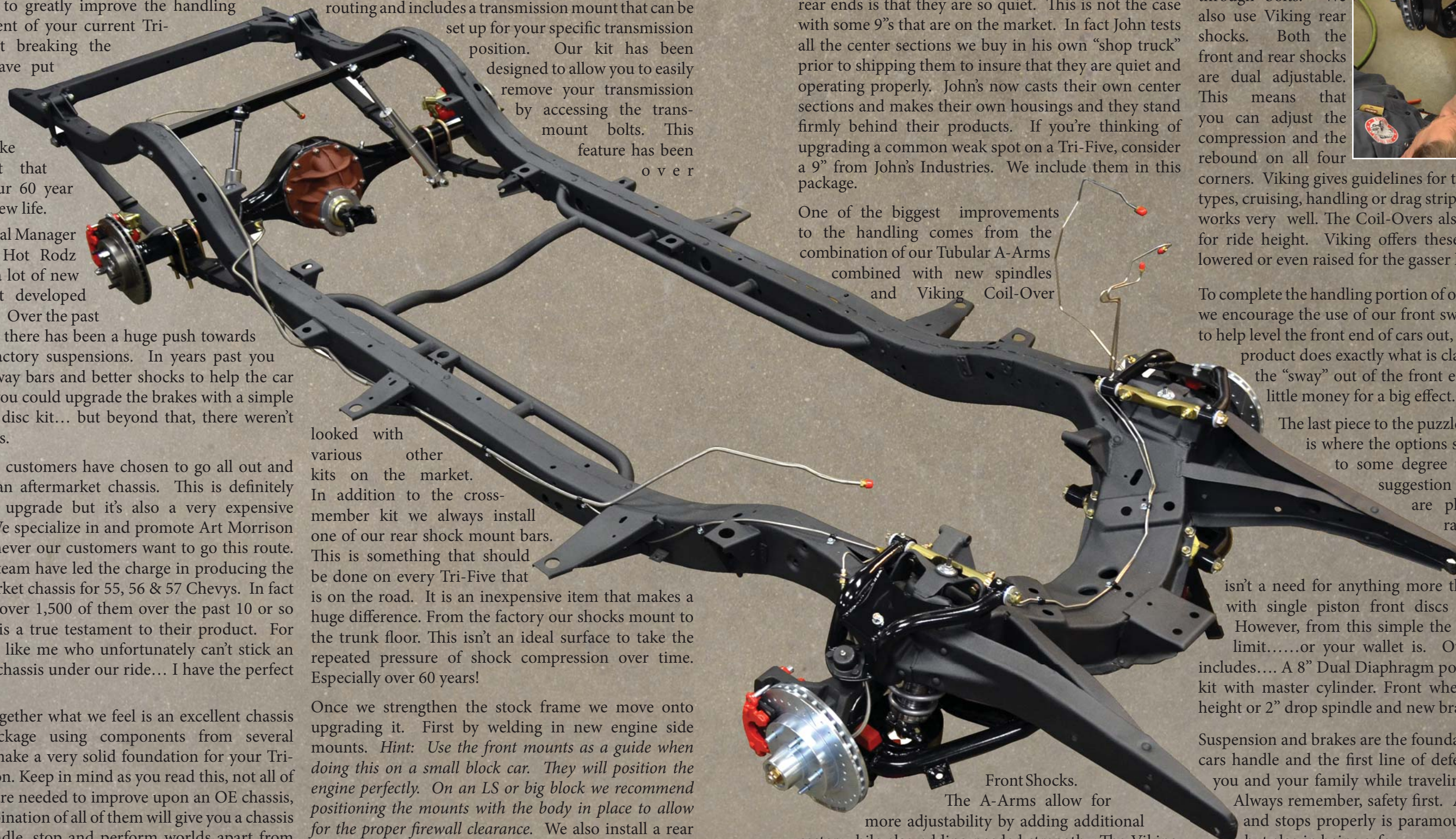
To complete the handling portion of our chassis package we encourage the use of our front sway bar. Long used to help level the front end of cars out, this tried and true product does exactly what it claims to do...takes the "sway" out of the front end. Again, this is little money for a big effect.

The last piece to the puzzle is braking. This is where the options seem limitless and to some degree that is true. My suggestion is this, unless you are planning on road racing or even auto

crossing your car, there really isn't a need for anything more than power brakes with single piston front discs and rear drums. However, from this simple the kit, the sky is the limit.....or your wallet is. Our base brake kit includes.... A 8" Dual Diaphragm power brake booster kit with master cylinder. Front wheel discs for stock height or 2" drop spindle and new brake hoses.

Suspension and brakes are the foundation in which our cars handle and the first line of defense in protecting you and your family while traveling in your classic. Always remember, safety first. A car that handles and stops properly is paramount to having fun, but also in being safe.

From my toolbox to yours.....



Front Shocks.

The A-Arms allow for more adjustability by adding additional caster while also adding needed strength. The Viking Coil-Overs are truly amazing. They utilize the upper spring pocket and lower shock mount, installing without

CHASSIS UPGRADE OPTIONS

TUBULAR CONTROL ARMS - \$549.95

CROSSMEMBER - \$439.95

FRONT SWAY BAR - \$144.95

JOHN'S 9IN BASE POSI REAR END - \$2829.95*

COMPLETE 4 WHEEL DISC
CONVERSION KIT - \$1549.95

NEW FUEL LINES - \$57.95

NEW BRAKE LINES - \$89.95

ENGINE SIDE MOUNTS - \$109.95

HARDWARE: A-ARM NUTS - \$16.95

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on non freight* items.**

