

# YOD, DAWG

Thomas Edison said genius is part inspiration and part perspiration, and there is plenty of both applied at TLC, known for its ICON FJ vehicle series based not so much on the Toyota FJ Cruiser, as on the concept vehicles that preceded it—which they built—in turn based on the original FJ40.

CEO and Lead Designer Jonathan Ward first conceived the company in response to the direction he had seen the collector market heading, as demands and expectations on classic cars headed toward a preference for modern performance married to classic styling. He and his wife started TLC, a leading Land Cruiser sales, service, parts and restoration center, in southern California in 1996.

As that company's "Handmade in Los Angeles" reputation grew globally, Ward began to

work as a consultant for Toyota, Lexus and other OEMs. TLC began to handle special projects for Toyota and Lexus, ranging from outfitting prototype and show vehicles for special events, to eventually building three running and driving prototypes of what would evolve into the 2007 Toyota FJ Cruiser.

Their original prototypes had paid more direct homage to classic FJ40 Land Cruiser tradition than did the production FJ Cruiser, leading them to revisit the original FJ40 themselves. The result was the ICON FJ series, which combines classic styling, modern performance and timeless utility in three models.

Their newest project is the ICON CJ3B, also known as The Dog, because of the floppy-eared look given by its flat fenders (and because many see this vehicle as man's best friend).

While the current ICON FJ models trace their heritage to the vintage Land Cruiser, the ICON CJ3B was inspired by the venerable Willys CJ3B. Immediately following WWII, the civilian flat-fender Willys was quickly covering terrain around the world. The ICON CJ3B follows the fundamental design ethics of simplicity, value and utility infused in the original. ICON has designed its own state-of-the-art chassis, based on 2"x4" mandrel bent steel rails featuring coil-over suspension.

The engine is a highly efficient variable-valve-timing GM Ecotec 2.4 fuel-injected four-cylinder, producing over 200 hp and delivering an estimated 28 mpg. Power is delivered through an Aisin-Warner AX15 five-speed transmission and NP231 transfer case to modified production Jeep® Rubicon axles with four-wheel disc brakes and locking differentials. Variable-ratio power steering is standard, as are 31" tires with optional 33" tires for more aggressive uses.

The CJ3B will be built with an emis-

## ICON FJ43



sions package (2009 GM HHR application service reference based) that retains performance while providing stellar reliability, exceptionally low emissions, and high fuel mileage ratings. The ICON CJ3B is all business and utility, with a significantly reduced wheelbase and vehicle weight (when compared to other ICON models).

ICON is currently building a first batch of ten CJ3B Limited Editions, all by hand. From those, they will fine-tune the design before entering full production. This Limited Edition batch starts by recycling vintage Willys, so each will maintain its original title and registration. Future production will fall under the Specialty Construction Vehicle titling process.

## ICON CJ3B



Full production is anticipated by the first quarter of 2010, with a starting price of about \$50,000 for a turnkey vehicle.

The Limited Edition batch will be serial sequence tagged, with special trim, extensive options and unique details, all developed and built personally by Jonathan Ward. Each one specially equipped and born rare, these ten will be priced at \$79,000.

The ICON CJ3B will also be available in

Engineered Component Vehicle form (which may be a kit by another name, but the company tries hard to avoid that word), through established distribution channels in the 4x4 and outdoor lifestyle markets. Various ICON CJ3B kits are expected to range in cost from about \$15,000 to \$27,000.

The existing production ICON FJ vehicle line set the standard for detailed re-creation with classic American craftsmanship and top industrial design. The average ICON FJ sale price is \$130,000. The primary goal of the CJ3B is to offer a less expensive vehicle with the same high level of engineering and construction quality, by putting the focus on simplicity, while maintaining utility and longevity.

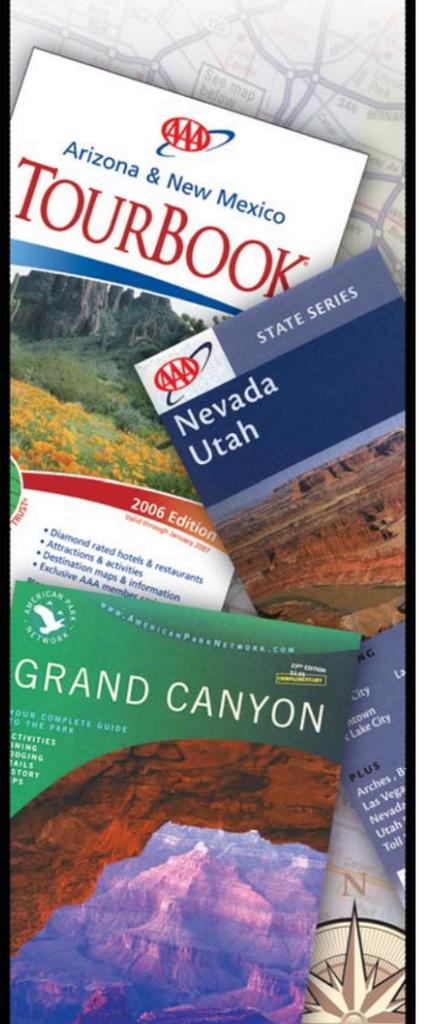
Other development efforts in the works include a four-wheel-drive pure electric version with in-wheel hub motors and a variable crawl ratio for optimum off-road performance. That prototype was still under construction as we went to press, scheduled to debut at the SEMA show in Las Vegas, in early November.

ICON is US-made, designed and built in California. To find additional information on the ICON FJ series, visit [www.icon4x4.com](http://www.icon4x4.com). For more information on the ICON CJ3B Limited Edition, call 818-785-1728. ■



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