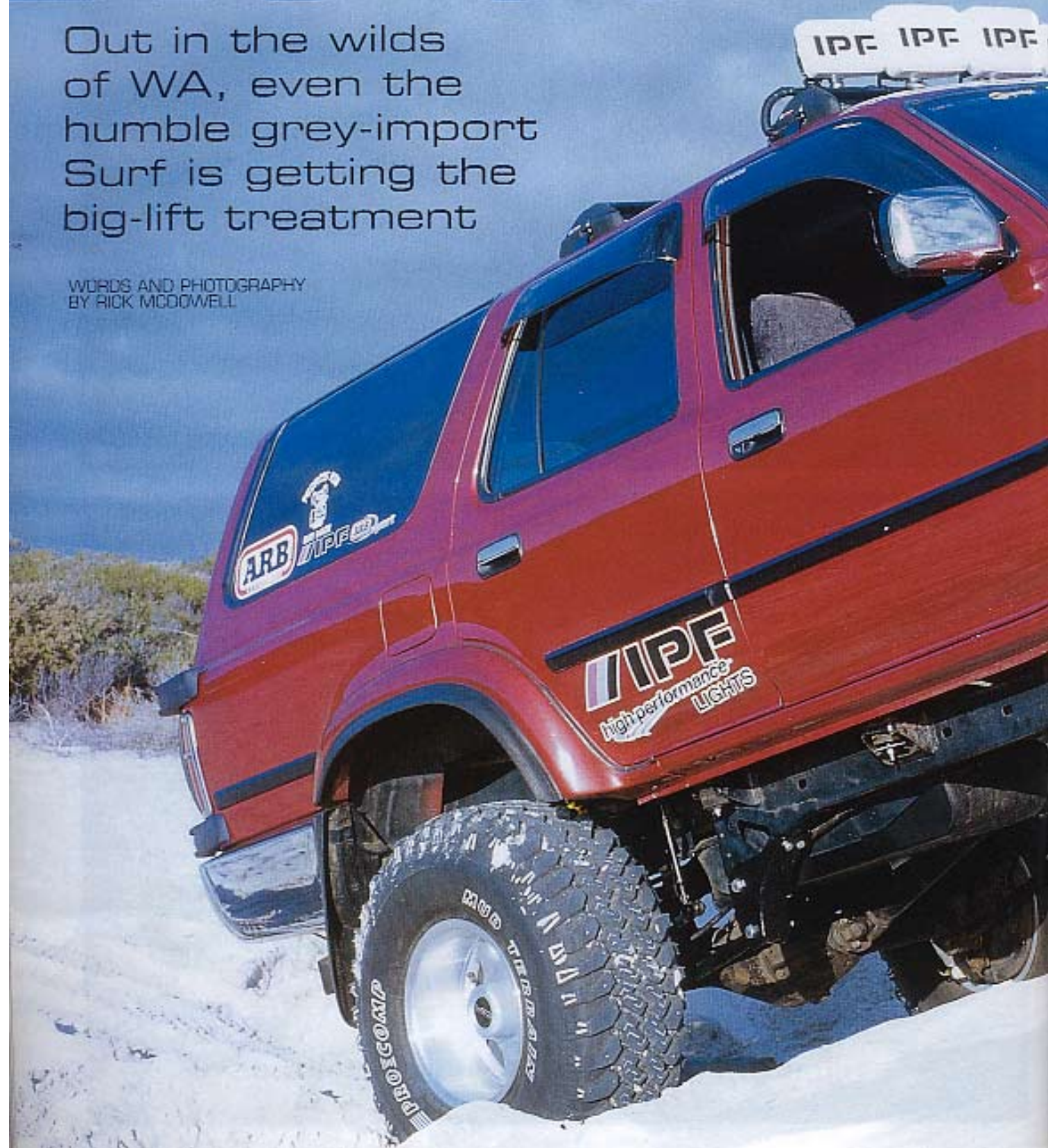


BIG SURF

Out in the wilds of WA, even the humble grey-import Surf is getting the big-lift treatment

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY
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CUSTOM 4WD





Love 'em or hate 'em, grey imports are here to stay. On the 4WD front, there has been a fair amount of import variety in recent years, with models such as Mitsubishi's Challenger and Nissan's Terrano hitting the roads of Australia in decent numbers.

Yet, when all is said and done, the most popular 4WD import would have to be Toyota's Surf.

With the number of Surfs driving around suburbia these days, it'd be easy to believe that it is yet another 'pretend' 4WD. Indeed, the Surf does have quite a number of luxury and comfort features, which make it a great family transport option.

Still, you only have to look at Peter Bonusink's Surf to see how this popular suburban workhorse can be turned into a serious off-roader.

Thanks to a virtual smorgasbord of Superlift componentry from the US of A in the undercarriage,

this baby reaches for the stars and commands an on-road presence that is pure intimidation.

For starters, there is a 3-inch separation between cab and chassis, and then an extra six inches are attributable to suspension modifications. Finally, there's a further three inches thanks to those 35x12x15-inch Mud Terrain tyres. All told, that's a proud 12 inches taller than any standard Surf.

Peter's package was put together under the direction of Paul and Grant at Track Torque, in the northern Perth suburb of Wangara. Track Torque are also ARB agents and just about all company employees are serious off-roaders. Have a look at the home videos that are constantly played in the showroom and you'll get the idea.

Peter went to Track Torque after several months of 4WD drama with his Surf, which was bought privately with 63,000 clicks on the dial. To begin with, a Suzuki

Above: That it looks good on the big Surf

Below Left: Interior is smarter than Oz-market 4Runners. Note wood trim and non-standard wood-rimmed wheel



BRIEFLY

Vehicle:	1996 Toyota Surf
Engine:	Toyota 1KZ-TE 3.0-litre turbo-diesel non-intercooled
Gearbox:	Four-speed automatic four-wheel drive
4WD activation:	Electronically via a cabin switch on the move.
Suspension:	Front: Toyota independent with Superlift suspension kit
	Rear: Toyota beam axle with Superlift suspension kit and adjustable Panhard rod.
	Superlift kit gives six inches of lift over stock specification
Brakes:	Stock Toyota disc brakes all around
Wheels:	American Racing alloy rims 15x10-inch
Tyres:	Pro Comp Mud Terrains 35x12x15-inch all around



Sierra decided to have a head-on collision with Peter and his Surf on a narrow sand track.

Thankfully, Peter wasn't badly hurt in the accident. However, shortly after the repairs were completed, a Kangaroo figured it would wipe out the bonnet, driver's side door and some other panels.

Undeterred, Peter again had the Surf repaired, as he'd grown to appreciate the vehicle's potential (not to mention creature comforts). As can clearly be seen, one thing led to another.

It's worth pointing out that the Surf's chassis is virtually identical (at least with regards to major dimensions) to the 4Runners and HiLuxes available in Australia. As such, Superlift body and suspension kits are available for all of these variations.

The Superlift bodykit for the Surf uses a total of eight blocks, yet it's all the little extras and quality of workmanship with the components that makes the difference.

As anyone who's ever done a body lift can attest, there's the backyard method with lots of frustrating custom engineering. Alternatively, there are the American off-the-shelf kits with everything ready to go.

The little extras in this case include radiator drop supports, an adjustable steering extension piece and the exact amount of Nylux nuts and bolts to finish

the job. Of course, the Superlift suspension upgrade is more complex, but again it has been well designed and manufactured.

Like many vehicles with independent front suspension, the Toyota Surf uses upper and lower control arms. Although, Toyota's design is a little one-off, as the torsion bars run along the top of the chassis rails.

"No big deal" you might say, except that the Surf's torsion bars connect directly to the upper control arms, so all of these items must stay in their factory locations. The Superlift suspension kit therefore moves the lower front control arms downwards, and these are relocated using a one-piece crossmember assembly.

Obviously, the increased distance between the upper and lower arms must be compensated for. This is taken care of by a combination of cast and machined extensions.

At the back, meanwhile, the non-independent rear diff assembly is moved away from the chassis by the use of longer Superlift coils and shocks. Naturally, there are the obligatory relocation brackets and spacers. However, braided stainless brake line extensions are also included for the front and rear of the vehicle.

Peter's Surf was given a few optional extras in the form of an adjustable rear Panhard rod and shock limiting straps. These prevent the shocks from

Above Right: Lift certainly improves the departure angle

Above Right: Sataler snorkel and a battery of IPF driving lights are just some of the accessories

Below from Left to Right:

- Shock retainer straps prevent the shocks drooping too far at maximum articulation
- ARB winch bar, Warn winch and IPF driving lights at the front
- Superlift shocks and adjustable Panhard rod plus extended coils equal 6-inch lift



CUSTOM 4WD



This lift requires an extension to the steering column

'pulling apart' under the rigours of serious 4WD adventuring. Make no mistake about it; this sky-high Surf is regularly used off-road.

To this end, there's a fair amount of ancillary bolt-on gear from Track Torque to make the off-road excursions easier and safer. Up front, an ARB Deluxe front winch bar was added, and this was modified due to the body lift. The Safari snorkel needs no introduction, whilst an IPF light rack turns night into day.

Incidentally, the lights up top are using the new IPF HID 65-watt bulbs, which give the same candlepower as conventional 130-watt bulbs.

The cabin of Peter's Surf is basically standard, apart from the addition of a mild aftermarket sound system and an ARB roof console, which was fitted with separate Uniden UHF and 27MHz radios.

Under the bonnet, the original 3.0-litre turbo-diesel engine hasn't been touched. Although, Greenwood Exhausts added a whole new stainless steel system that includes a 2.5-inch dump from the turbo and a high-flow muffler.

These motors have a solid reputation, but elsewhere in the engine bay are a few little extras in the form of a second battery and an ARB compressor.

Having now lifted his Surf into the stratosphere, Peter is apparently having thoughts about giving the vehicle some extra grunt. A 5.7-litre EFI Chevy engine is on the wish list, which is a stroker motor that is found in US late-model Corvettes.

The drivetrain, including automatic gearbox, remains unchanged from the factory, except for the addition of an ARB air locker to the rear diff. All told, the work done to this Surf is yet another example of how an everyday 4WD can be turned into something truly special.



3.0-litre Tdi engine, Japan market only