



SUICIDE SOLUTION

What, you've never seen a chopped-roof, suicide-door V-8-powered Fiero before?

BY JEFF KOCH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE AUTHOR

He built one for himself 17 years ago, and liked the results so much that he decided to offer the kit to the public. C. Archambault, V-8 Archie, as he is known to friends and customers, will be happy to sell you a kit to drop a small-block beneath the engine cover of your Fiero (www.V8archie.com). Don't laugh: he's sold 1,700 of these kits thus far, and has built another 200 vehicles at his Barrington, Illinois, shop. As he likes to point out, he's been building Fieros longer than Pontiac did. Fours,

sixes, no matter Archie converts 'em all.

Each calling card he builds for his shop has to outdo the last, he believes—and it only makes sense. You've got to continually top yourself, to evolve, if you're going to continue to be noticed in an increasingly crowded performance field. V-8 Fieros, the core of his business, are plenty potent but old hat to an extent: from a sheer surprise standpoint, he's been there, done that—and still doing it. Why, he even built a chop-top Fiero 4 years ago—and made everything look sufficiently smooth that you had to look twice to register what you were seeing. Clearly not factory... but not the sort of

crude thing that the aftermarket has been known to barf up every now and again, either. So what to do for an encore, Archie?

Ladies and gentlemen: the world's only suicide-door, chopped-top V-8-powered Fiero built from a '87 donor car.

We'll start with the mechanicals. The engine itself is a '96-vintage corporate LT1 crate engine: factory fuel injection, roller cam, and rated 300 hp net at the flywheel...or roughly triple what a stock four-cylinder Fiero was born with in its cradle. Only a Lingenfelter throttle body, a Buick Grand National fuel pump, and coated 90-degree, 1 5/8 Sanderson headers

(blowing three-inch pipes, cats and two you're not looking for) Firebird. We say Corvette that power five-speed, hardened shifter, that's supplied. That's a lot stock gearbo... "I've never... "Usually the