

INSTALLATION OF INDEPENDENCE

THE REAL DETAILS

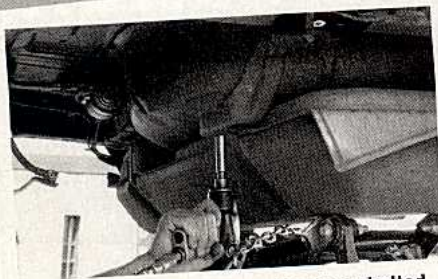
Because the IRS assembly arrived at Currie's just one day before we shot the installation, Currie did its research on what's required to make this swap happen while we were actually installing it in the car.

The existing Eibach springs that were in the car wouldn't work with the IRS, because the bottoms of them were too narrow to fit the IRS perches. Eibach already offers a spring for the '99 Cobra, or the factory '99 Cobra springs might be obtainable from Ford.

Obviously, the exhaust from the mufflers back that was in place with the solid-axle 8.8 won't work with the IRS. You have two obvious options here: turndowns off the mufflers as an expedient or replicating the '99 Cobra system at a good muffler shop.

If your car has ABS, the sensors for the '99 Cobra are different from the ones we encountered on this '95, so you'll need the later style to make the ABS functional. The IRS does not include brake lines, so Currie is working on replacements, hopefully with some of the lines already on the 8.8 live axle. Also not included is a parking-brake cable. To facilitate the swap, Currie ordered a '99 Cobra cable from Ford. Not to be overlooked either, a special bolt is required to attach the shock to the lower suspension arm on the IRS.

Finally, the IRS comes unadjusted so once you get the car back on the road, you'll need to get the IRS aligned at a shop with four-wheel capability. At press time, Currie had the exclusive for offering the IRS to the aftermarket, so many of these details would be handled by them in an in-house swap. —Miles Cook



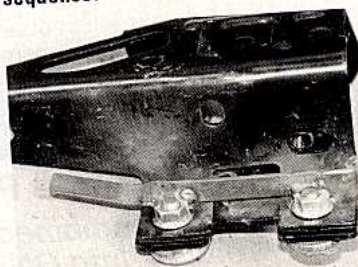
8 The gas tank straps need to be unbolted and the tank slightly lowered to allow room to drill two holes in the framerrails on each side. However, the tank need not be entirely removed, so you're spared from the hassle of having to disconnect the fuel lines and removing the tank from the car. As you can see here, we used the IRS assembly to support the tank while drilling the holes.



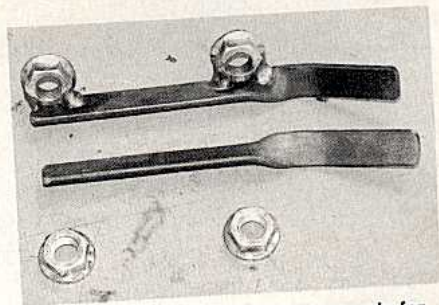
9 A special bracket on each side attaches the IRS to the car. It installs directly in place of the bracket for the quad shock. Unlike the quad shock bracket that uses only two bolts to attach to the car, the IRS piece uses four bolts. Therefore, two additional holes need to be drilled on each side. Using the bracket as a template and with the gas tank lowered out of the way, there's enough room to get a drill in there and get the holes in the framerrails. The Currie crew pointed out that merely bolting on the bracket and welding a bead around the edge of the bracket is one way to install it. However, they wanted to do it correctly and install the bracket as you'd find it on a '99 Cobra.



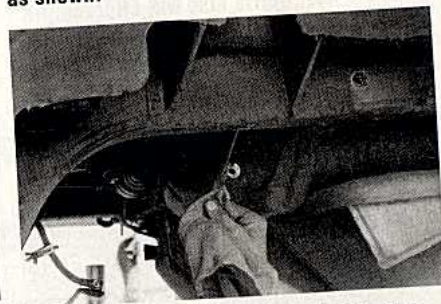
10 A number of options were considered for getting the nuts up in the framerrails, including windows in the sides of the framerrails. The sano solution was to open up an existing hole in the framerrail enough to install the nuts inside the rail. The nut setup we used is shown in the following sequence.



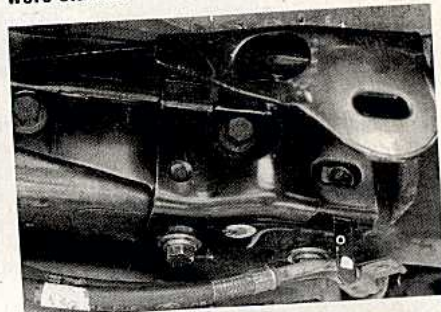
11 Again, using the bracket itself as a template, the Currie crew installed the nuts and bolts together on the bracket. Next, a metal bar was welded to a flat side on each nut to positively place them once they were up in the framerrail. The extra length of bar on the left served as a handle to place the nuts in position and get the bolts started. It turned out to be a fairly slick setup, and the Currie crew told us that they would be able to offer this as a production piece on future IRS retrofit setups. Cool.



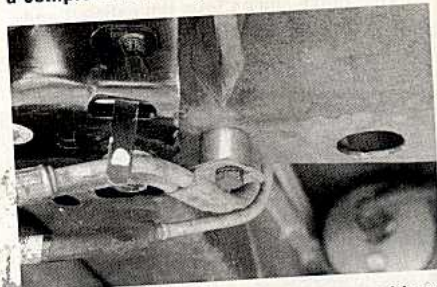
12 The finished piece above is ready for its permanent placement inside the car's framerrail. The nuts are spaced about 3 1/4 inches apart, and Currie bent the piece of bar stock on the end to create the handle as shown.



13 Once the nut setups were built, they simply slipped inside the framerrail and could be held in place while the bolts were started.



14 This is how the bracket looks once permanently installed on the car. The two bolts on the side are the same ones that held the quad shock in place. The bolts on the bottom are attached to the welded nuts as previously shown. Some of the fastening hardware had to be obtained from a local auto parts store, but we'd imagine that future IRS deliveries might be more complete. In any case, an IRS installed by Currie will address all the small details for a complete and ready-to-go deal.



15 The fuel lines on the passenger side of the car need to be slightly moved to make room for the IRS mounting bracket. An existing hole in the framerrail combined with a spacer and existing fuel-line mounting bracket provided an ideal way to positively reposition and secure the fuel line.