



Dave Sperry's 1979 Li'l Red Express Truck

In 2009 I just started falling for Li'l Red Express trucks. Logic didn't have much to do with it, I just wanted one. That is not a sane, logical thing to do, but you know how fast that goes out the window.

I began searching around. I was looking for a truck that was in good shape. A good place to look was the nearby Volo Auto Museum in Volo, IL. They are a very large museum with in house & consignment vehicles. As my son & I walked through, there it was, a 1979 Lil Red Express. The body looked very good with fresh paint, chrome, upholstery, trim pieces, AC and more. The Volo ads said body off restoration. It did look good. The story was that the owner had rebuilt the body & engine and then put it on display for 14 years.

I had them put it on a lift where I did notice a few things such as caked grease around the front suspension. I took it for a short(?) drive where a few of the gauges were not working too well. What can you tell on a short drive? I negotiated some but there was not much wiggle room. I still felt the truck was worth the cost. If you have any major repairs, they are costly, so you try to buy after they're done when you won't shell out (you hope) as much.

So now I had my own Li'l Red. And the adventure of making it mine began. The truck needed quite a few repairs and changes. They were for safety and looks. Some of them included spray painting the radiator support flat back like the factory did. Putting in a power steering brace, new gear & hoses. Brake lines and master cylinder. Bypass the ammeter, a new alternator and lots of wiring.

(My wife loves to have me work on wiring. It doesn't cost much and it takes forever.) Turbo mufflers in the new exhausts, a Trutrak differential. A new oak bed. It's been a lot of work. But it looks and sounds good!

End Results; 10K + miles driving, fellow Li'l Red Express owners have become some of my best friends, taking a ride with my wife and watching heads turn. Finally, at a car show seeing the look on a child's face as they sit behind the wheel while mom or dad takes pictures, and the look on their face too.

Dave Sperry, Batavia, Illinois