



STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY KAY BAUER

**K**ay Bauer claims that it all started with a planned trip to Iceland. Kay lives in Germany and as an avid outdoorsman, he has traveled the world looking for off-road adventures. His upcoming trip to Iceland confirmed what he already knew. Kay and his family needed a big, inexpensive 4-wheeler for this trip. Coincidentally, a neighbor knew of a 4x4 (brand unknown) that could be had for very little money. Kay recalls viewing the Jeep and immediately liking it. He bought it and began researching the origins of this big American 1978 Jeep Cherokee Chief.

Equipped with previous owner service documents, Kay's research discovered that the Chief was originally custom ordered from Eastland AMC-Jeep in Warren, Michigan. Original sticker price - \$6900. The first owner lived in Pitman, New Jersey and requested a black and white paint job, 6-cylinder 256 CUI engine with a 3-speed manual transmission. After 6 years of ownership and 55,000 miles, the Jeep was sold and exported to Germany where it was driven until 1986. From 1986 to 1996 (the year Kay took ownership), the Chief rested in a back lot destined for the wrecking yard.

Kay tells us that he was impressed to see that even after 10 years of storage, the engine started at once, but that was about the only thing that was still working. Regardless, Kay was determined. Every spare minute was spent working on the Chief. Fortunately, he was a student at the time which provided him with spare time. Moreover, Kay's father helped out a lot. Kay and his father repaired and replaced almost everything themselves - brakes, 2.5-inch lift, wiring, interior and of course, the body which was really rotten. With replacement body panels in place, the Chief finally got it's yellow color. With two weeks to go before their Iceland holidays, all that was left to do was to get German registration documents. And off they went! 4 weeks in Iceland where the Jeep out-performed. With only one paved road in Iceland, the Jeep allotted Kay and his family the opportunity to traverse rivers and explore the unpaved highlands.

