

LIKE-MINDED CAMARO

Q I was checking out your car online the other day and it's very similar to what I want to produce and how my car started.

I recently picked up a '68 Camaro SS clone. The car has a '81 Corvette 350, Edelbrock intake and carb, Hedman headers, 40-series Flowmaster mufflers, Mallory ignition, four-speed Muncie, manual steering, and manual brakes with discs up front and drums in the rear. The car is real slow off the line. I believe it has 2.56 gears in it.

What was the first thing you did to your car when you started your upgrade? I'm unsure if I should get a 12-bolt rearend with 3.55 gears, or do the brakes and steering upgrade. I think that I'd like the rearend to be something similar to what you have. Any thoughts or help would be much appreciated.

Troy

Via the Internet

A You are right, your car is almost exactly how mine started out, but I had some junk mufflers on when I got it—so at least you're one step ahead. If you're like me you got stuck with an actual California '80 Corvette engine that was really a 305, while the other states enjoyed the 200hp 350. Either way, they were gutless. Even with an upgraded intake and exhaust, they still didn't put out much. Without doing a heads and a camshaft upgrade, getting your car to feel quick, even with the four-speed will be difficult. Gears are sure to help, but they come with their disadvan-

tages, especially with a non-over-drive transmission like you have. Many guys swap their sub-3.00 gear sets for 3.73s or even 4.11s, but high revving on the freeway can get old if you drive the car a lot. If you decide to do a gear swap, 3.73s would be a good upgrade, and an even lower (numerical) gear would be better if you upgraded the engine, since the increased power will help you accelerate through the gears without the need for the ratio's advantage. Getting a good solid rearend will make the car feel faster and is a good thing to do if you plan on adding power later.

When I started my car, I worked on the drivetrain first, but now that I know better, I would have started with the suspension. I suggest you get the suspension, and especially the steering up to snuff before attempting to make the car go any faster. A couple of years ago I bought a steering box by Lee Engineering. It's a power unit that has improved valving to make it feel like rack-and-pinion, and it does. I had already replaced everything else in the steering system so with the new box, there was no play and a nice heavy wheel, even at speed. You don't need to get all crazy in the suspension to make it safe, just replacing bushings, ball joints, and shocks can make the car feel a lot more stable. A larger sway bar in the front will keep the front end more level in turns, which is also a safety benefit. One good example is Detroit Speed and Engineering's 1 1/2-inch sway bar kit for \$210.

This should be more than enough stuff to get you started. I hope you send in photos when

you're done, maybe we can get it into our Hometown Hot Rodding pages!

SOURCE:
**DETROIT SPEED
AND ENGINEERING**
704-622-3272
www.detroitsspeed.com

WET SANDING

Q I've been watching the muscle car shows on TV for years now. When they are doing bodywork, I notice sometimes they sand with water and sometimes without. Why do they use water for sanding, and why do they only use it sometimes?

Steven Rowlings

Austin, Texas



A Wet and dry sanding are both really important parts of bodywork. When you're looking to remove a lot of material, you would use a low grit-per-square-inch grade, identified by the number on the back of the paper. These coarse papers aren't usually made to be used with water; the paper will start to fall apart. The reason they aren't made for use with water is because when you're doing rough cutting, you don't need it. The water, usually mixed with some sort of soap to act as a lubricant, is to keep the material that's being sanded from sticking to the paper and loading up. If there wasn't water on the finer grade sandpaper the particles would clog the paper and end up scratching the paint that you're trying to smooth. So

the water does two things: It helps the sandpaper glide over the surface smoothly, and it keeps the sandpaper clean. You'll most commonly see wet sanding on the last coat of primer before the basecoat, the last coat of basecoat before clear, then on the last coat of clear.

STAINED GLASS

Q I have what appears to be acid rain spots on the windows of my car, or so I've been told.

What is the best way to remove these spots?

Tony Macanudo

Melbourne, Australia

A I doubt that what you've got is acid rain spots, but more likely plain water spots. Acid rain actually etches the glass, in which case it would need to be replaced. Water spots are deposits left from the minerals in the water after it has evaporated. The common household trick is to use a solution of equal parts water and white vinegar and rub away the stains. If that doesn't work, I would take a trip to the local hardware store and look for something like CRL to remove hard water stains. Best of luck to you! **PHR**



WE'RE WAITING TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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