



By Larry Weiner with Steve Temple
Photos by Steve Temple and Larry Weiner

A famous writer once claimed you can't go home again, referring to all the changes that take place in the unfair passage of time. Well, that might not always be true, at least in the case of my 1967 Camaro SS350.

As a lifelong muscle car enthusiast who came of age in the mid 1960s, I can personally vouch for the fast-growing trend to restore classic muscle cars in authentic day-two style. The fact is the vast majority of us who purchased a muscle car either new or used in the 1960s and early 1970s modified it as soon as possible. We couldn't wait to remove the stock parts and replace them with aftermarket accessories as fast as our budget allowed. Since many of us were still in high school or recent grads, with limited funds and oftentimes equally limited mechanical knowledge and tools, we found ways to add parts and accessories like those we saw in car magazines. Adding these parts not only differentiated our pride-and-joy from garden-variety cars, but also showed that our cars were cool and, by extension, so were we.

Custom wheels (we called them mags); larger, wider tires; traction bars; and even custom hoods were reasonably affordable and didn't require specialized tools or talent to install, so they were popular modifications, especially since they made such a strong visual statement.

THE WAY WE WERE

Reliving the Journey From Day One to Day Two



■ Here's my first 1967 Camaro, with which I sadly parted ways when I was called up for duty during the Vietnam War. But I was able to find a suitable replacement decades later.

Under the hood, finned aluminum valve covers, custom air cleaners and chrome accessories, and brightly colored spark plug wires were surefire ways to gain real street cred in the eyes of our peers. For hardcore performance, headers, aluminum intake manifolds, and larger carbs were proven ways to increase power. And no self-respecting muscle car would have been complete without a set of Cherry Bombs, Thrush Turbo Mufflers, or glass packs.

It's important to remember that in many cases, these accessories were added incrementally, one or two at a time. We had to save the money before we could purchase parts and accessories, so most day-two cars were a continuous work in progress.

The Journey Begins

My day-two journey started in earnest when I purchased a Tuxedo Black 1967 Camaro SS350. A very early Norwood, Ohio, car built in August 1966, the Camaro was bone stock when I bought it from the original owner in the spring of 1969. It didn't stay stock very long. As fast as my modest budget allowed, I equipped it with many of the same parts and accessories that Nickey, Yenko, and Baldwin-Motion used on the cars they built.

I had a lot of good times with my Camaro, but like many of us during the Vietnam War who got "welcome letters" from Uncle Sam or had the misfortune of drawing a low draft number in the lottery, I had to sell it prior to leaving for basic training in the Army in the fall of 1971. Talk about seller's remorse! I knew that I had made a mistake letting it go as I watched the new owner drive it away.



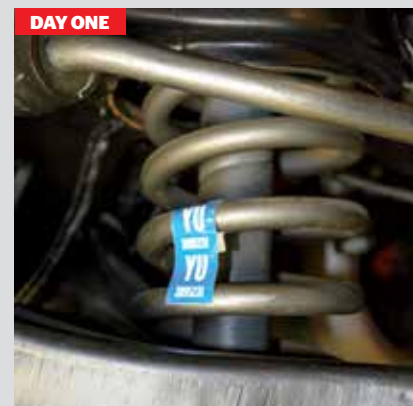
Traction Bars

■ I bought a set of traction bars at Nickey Chevrolet back in the summer of 1969 after breaking the factory spring plates and T-bolts on my first Camaro SS while racing a 1969 GTO. The Nickey traction bars eliminated the wheelhop that plagued first-gen Camaros, especially those equipped with monoleaf springs. The Nickey Camaro traction bars have not been available for nearly 50 years, but with the rising popularity of day-two muscle car restorations, demand has resulted in the reissue of the original Nickey traction bars. Working with Nickey Performance, GSS Supercars now produces an exact replica of the long unavailable originals (first with T-bolts and later with the stronger Eaton U-bolts). They look just like the originals, are period-correct, and work just as effectively today as the originals did back in the fall of 1966 when Nickey first developed them.



Shock Absorbers

■ Replacing the factory Delco spiral rear shocks is a set of Gabriel Dual Duty shock absorbers. These N.O.S. shocks are hard to find and period correct. They offer dual damping via easy-to-adjust settings for "drag and drive," making them real two-in-one shocks. While the rear Gabriels provide a stiffer setup, the fronts have a softer setting.



"We couldn't wait to remove the stock parts"

DAY ONE



DAY TWO



Diff Cover

■ This Cal Custom finned aluminum differential cover for the 12-bolt rearend is a part from the late 1960s made in Gardena, California. It holds more gear oil than the original factory stamped-steel differential cover, dissipates heat better, and looks way cool!

DAY ONE



DAY TWO



Carb/Air Cleaner

■ The factory air cleaner with the small single snorkel on the 1967 Camaro SS was never known for high airflow, and most performance enthusiasts quickly replaced it with a freer-breathing, open-element-style air cleaner. Back in the day, I went with a Cal Custom 12-inch Fly Eye air cleaner. I chose the same air cleaner for this Camaro, one I found on eBay. It's a bolt-on deal for a Holley 780 or 850, but with a Rochester Quadrajets, it requires the use of a 1-inch spacer that is available from Mr. Gasket (PN 9341).

“Not one permanent modification or change has been made”

About 15 years ago, I started looking for a replacement for my long-lost Camaro. After an extensive nationwide search, I found a numbers-matching time capsule certified by Jerry MacNeish that, other than the color, is nearly identical to my long-gone original.

After enjoying nearly a decade of ownership of this suitable replacement in stock form, I had an itch to relive my youth. I wanted to have the same fun with this Camaro that I did with my first one. So what follows is a trip down memory lane, retracing the same path many of us gear-

heads took back when muscle cars ruled the streets.

Many of the same parts and accessories I had added to the Camaro in 1969 went on this car, along with some that I couldn't afford back then. Note to purists: Not one permanent modification or change has been made to the Camaro. In fact, I did not drill even one hole. Every aftermarket part is a pure bolt-on and could be removed as easily as it was installed. Each of the stock parts has been carefully boxed and labeled, and could be reinstalled at any time.

Satisfaction

Building this 1967 Camaro SS into a day-two muscle car has been a deeply satisfying and relatively easy project. Every item was able to be installed with simple handtools right in my own garage or driveway, and none required any modifications. The result is an accurate reflection of what enthusiasts and high-performance Chevrolet dealers were building back when the first-generation Camaros were brand new. So you really can go home again!

Valve Covers

■ Cal Custom nine-rib aluminum valve covers replace the stock valve covers to add a very popular custom touch to the engine. Also, fins in the valve covers aid in heat dissipation and offer the addition of a breather per side to reduce crankcase pressure.



DAY ONE



DAY TWO



“This hood basically just fell right on the Camaro”

DAY ONE



DAY TWO



Stock/Stinger Hood

■ Classic Industries offers a 1967 427-Corvette-style Stinger hood for 1967-1969 Camaros in either steel or fiberglass. It has the same design as the original A&A fiberglass hood, and is a direct replacement for the original factory Super Sport hood. It has a functional cowl induction inner panel that provides cooler air directly to the carb from the high pressure point at the base of the windshield. It's designed to accept the factory 1969 Camaro cowl induction flapper door, seal, and solenoid. I went with the steel version so I could retain not only the stock hood hinges and hood latch, but also the springs. This hood basically just fell right on the Camaro when installed prior to paint and striping. In addition, a big plus is that it utilizes a factory cowl induction inner, so not only is it cool looking, but it also provides cool air directly to the carb.





DAY ONE

Spark Plug Wires

■ ACCEL 8.8mm spark plug wires were a popular ignition system upgrade when they were released in 1969. They were far superior to the

stock Packard 7.7mm spark plug wires. What's more, the bright yellow wires added a splash of color to the engine, further distinguishing it from stock.



DAY TWO

Shifter

■ The original chrome-ball knob shifter was replaced with a Hurst Competition Plus Shifter for the Muncie M20 four-speed transmission. The billet T-handle offers better control for hard shifts and also has a pushbutton for the Gear Vendors unit. A robust driveline component, the Gear Vendors under/overdrive is designed to handle as much as 1,500 hp and will easily handle the torque produced by a vintage muscle

car. It offers a 22 percent overdrive when engaged, turning this Camaro's 3.73 final drive into a freeway friendly 2.90:1. In addition, the Gear Vendors offers the ability to split gear ratios, turning a Muncie four-speed into a six- or seven-speed. Other than a small button to electrically actuate the unit, it is invisible until you crawl underneath the vehicle, where it is mounted to the rear of the factory transmission.



DAY ONE



DAY TWO




DAY TWO

WHEELS & TIRES

A cool-looking set of mag wheels was on everyone's wish list on day two. While the 14-inch Rally wheels and Firestone Super Sports redline Wide Ovals were correct for the Camaro, they were . . . well, stock. I chose a set of 15-inch Cragar S/S mags because that's what I had on my first Camaro. They looked great then, and they still look great today. Besides, they're what Bill Jenkins ran on his Camaro, and to say that he was a big influence on those of us in the Bowtie brigade would be an understatement.

As for tires, safety is paramount. While 50-year-old Goodyear Blue Streaks look really cool (and yes, I had a set of those back in the day for quarter-mile runs), they are way too antiquated by today's standards. Besides, DOT street-legal tires with tread are far more practical on public roads.

Up front is a pair of BFGoodrich Silvertown tires by Coker. The rear meats are a set of Mickey Thompson Sportsman Pro tires with a period-style square-shouldered appearance. Plus they are wrinkle walls, making them ideal for some quarter-mile action. Yes, Mickey Thompson Sportsman Pro and BFGoodrich Silvertown are bias-ply tires. Modern radial tires ride smoother, but if you want "the look," bias-plys are the way to go. 



“They’re what Bill Jenkins ran on his Camaro”

SOURCES

AVS

Parts installation assistance
760/795-9031
avsfab.com

Classic Industries

Stinger hood
800/854-1280
classicindustries.com

Coker Tire

BFGoodrich Silvertown tires
cokertire.com

Discount Tire

Mickey Thompson tires, Cragar SS wheels
discounttire.com

Eaton Detroit Spring

U-bolts
313/963-6820
eatondetroitsspring.com

Gear Vendors

Hurst T-handle with switch
619/562-0060
gearvendors.com

GSS Supercars

Nickey traction bars, Hurst console warning label, simulated hoodpins and lanyards
760/630-0547
gss-supercars.com

Hurst Shifters

Competition Plus shifter
707/544-4761
hurst-shifters.com

Nickey Performance

Nickey traction bars
630/377-1222
nickeyperformance.com

These vintage muscle car parts are no longer in production and were sourced on eBay: Hurst/Gabriel Dual Duty shock absorbers; Cal Custom 12-inch Fly Eye air cleaner; Cal Custom nine-fin aluminum valve covers; Cal Custom E-T finned aluminum 12-bolt differential cover.