

Monthly Newsletter March '09

Newsletter No. 0015

What's in This Month

Topic: How to Take Good Photos of your Ride

Tip: Don't Forget the Little Things..... Part 2

Spotlight: Spotlight of the Month March 1979 Trans Am

Spotlight: Performance Years

Classifieds



How to take good photos of your Ride

Last year for the end of 2008 I did a photo entry contest for inclusion in the Trans Am Calendars for 2009. There were a lot of good photos submitted, but there were also a lot of good cars submitted, but the photos had one thing wrong or another. Now the photos that were submitted and not used was not to a lack of using a good digital camera. In fact, most digital cameras out there today from entry level to more advanced can take a pretty good photo of your car... if you follow a few simple rules. So don't worry about if you only have a \$99 2 megapixel camera at your disposal, it can still work fine.

One of the very first things that you should do when taking photos of your car is to turn off the date. Now, unless you are taking a photo for documentation purposes, this should always be turned off. This only gets in the way of a good photo shoot. Some cameras have that turned on by default and comes on every time you turn on the camera, so

make sure it is off every time you use it.

The next item you want to take a look at is the car itself. Make sure that anything extra is removed from the car both on the interior and the exterior. So make sure you remove any item that is not part of the car such as items hanging from your rear view mirror or music CD or camera bags on the seat. Again, there can be a great photo, but if you have big fuzzy light up dice hanging in the window, it really detracts from the overall appearance.

The next thing you want to do is make sure the car is clean. If you go dashing around through mud puddles or have burnt rubber on your quarters from doing burn-outs on the way typically does not do well in photos. And take that one step further and make sure the car is clean. Wipe down the car, all over the tires, wipe the rims clean, and get any bug or road debris from the front nose of the car. Also, on the inside, take some time to armor all the interior and vacuum the car out. Now, these are all common sense items you may be telling

yourself, but sometimes you overlook the small stuff.

The next item to consider when taking photos is probably the most important, sometimes the most overlooked, and more than likely the hardest to find..... the proper background setting. This is one of the hardest things to get right, but when you do get it right it makes it so worth it in the end result. The things you want to steer clear from is the taking of photos at car shows or in your driveway at home or a friend's house. When you take photos at a car show, there are other cars in the photo, maybe people standing around, and generally a lot of clutter detracting from your car... which is of course what you are trying to take a photo of the most. The photo of your car sitting in the driveway is another thing to stay away from. Sure, maybe you have a beautiful home with nice landscaping... but when you see the photo you sometimes ask yourself "What is he really showing us?... his car or his house?". The one exception to this rule is if you are

taking photos of your car in front of a recognizable landmark. I mean taking a photo of your car on the steps of the Capital building in Washington or on the Golden Gate Bridge may turn out to be an interesting shot. Generally you want an open "park-like" setting or an open country road. I know if you live in the city it might be tough to find such a place... but hey, these cars are meant to be driven, so take your car for a nice long ride into the country.

The next thing to take a look at once you find your location is what is sitting around your car in the photo. I had a few good possible shots, but then there were big black tire marks on the concrete from the photographer parking the car. Other had some nice open roads, but some mail boxes or power lines in the background. So make sure you check what is in the frame of the shot.

I will have a full write up on taking photos of your car with examples of what I have listed so far so keep an eye out on the website for the complete article.

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Don't Forget the Little Things.... Part 2

Last month I talked about taking care of some little things like the vacuum lines in your engine compartment. Another area that is sometimes overlooked is the rubber and bushings for your car. Again, this is a little thing that can help out greatly with the ride of your car and also cut down on the "rattles" of these 30-something year old cars.

One of the first things to look at is the weather-stripping in the car and the rubber body bumpers. The weather-stripping that runs around the bottom of the door usually wears out and creates more rattles in your car as you are going down the road. Now the weather-stripping for the door is a simple and inexpensive item to replace. It is about \$60 for the pair to replace on the doors and will take only about an hour or so to complete. By replacing these seals, you will help cushion the door against the body of the car cutting down on some of the rattling noise you hear. It is also a good idea to replace the window felt guides and also the windowfelt (window runs) on the top of the doors. The windowfelt guides will run you about \$16 for the set of 6 and the windowfelt will run you about \$80 for aftermarket or \$150 for the GM original. Just by

replacing these items, you will greatly cut down on the amount of noise that is created when these parts wear down over time.

Another simple one to replace is the rubber weather-stripping around the trunk. Again, by replacing this seal and rubber bumpers, you will cut down on the rattle created by worn out original seals. The trunk seal is about \$15 and the rubber bumpers are about \$4 for the pair and take about an hour to replace. With replacing the trunk seal, you need to remove the old one and clean out the channel that the seal rests in. It is fairly easy to clean out with a small flat screwdriver and razor blade. Be careful not to scratch the paint when doing it. Once you have cleaned out the channel, then you can measure and cut the new seal, apply a small bead of weather-stripping adhesive and install the new seal. So, for less than \$200, you have just cut down on a lot of the rattling created by these worn out seals and bumpers.



The next thing to take a look at is all of the body bushings and suspension bushings for the car. Now this isn't as cheap and easy as some of the previously mentioned projects, but it will gain you the most benefit for what you do. You might want to break these projects up into different sections and tackle them one at a time. Maybe spread it out over the next two years or maybe just a few months. You probably want to break this up into three different sections:

1. Front Bushings
2. Rear Bushings
3. Body Mounts

Now you can do these all at once or break them down into those sections for either maybe time constraints or constraints on the ole' wallet. The front bushings and rebuild kit will run you about \$200, the rear bushings will run you about \$140, and the body mounts will run you about \$130. So you can complete it all for about \$500 all at once, or tackle a little at a time. Now if time is your biggest problem, these projects will take you about 3 to 4 hours to complete each task.... that is as long as your car's bolts and nuts aren't badly rusted.

Now you may be thinking to yourself... "Well, my car only has 25,000 original miles on it, so why would I need to replace these parts?". Well, it is not only wear and tear on the parts, but it is also time that takes

a toll on these rubber body parts. Just the mechanism of time and the car sitting there in storage or sitting for extended periods causes these parts to break down.



Next month I will take each of these sections and break them down and let you know what is involved not only price wise, but time and tool wise as well. This is something that can be done in your driveway and you do not need a professional to do it. I will describe each of them and hopefully help you make an informed decision on what to do and maybe even in what order to do them in.





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Spotlight of the Month - 1979 Trans Am of Helter80

Here we are in March and getting ever so closer to that Spring Time when most of us can pull our cars back out of Storage. So as a little boost to help get out motors started, I choose the 1979 Nocturne Blue Trans Am of Helter80. Robert has had his Trans Am for about 7 years now and just about everything has been done to the car. Robert bought his car for only \$700 off of a friend and has gone through about every inch of the car restoring it to the beauty that you see before you today. It wasn't an easy road, but he brought it back to what these Muscle Cars should be. Here is a little bit of his story.....

I bought my 79 t/a off of a friend of mine, and when he had the car, it had the original engine in it, and he blew the original engine because he cut open the back of the shaker scoop to let air in for more power. ---he drove the car in the rain, and the rain was sucked into the carb into the engine and killed the engine. So, when I bought the car, I took a small piece of sheet metal and sealed the back of the scoop up when I got the car re-painted. --I also put a new 403 engine in it too. Its a 79 T/A, Nocturne Blue, T-Tops, 403, with camel tan deluxe interior. mostly stock except for holley 650 carb, headers, and straight dual exhausts. I'm 28 years old and its my 2nd musclecar. I also have

a 70 Chevelle SS454, but figured you guys would just want to see the T/A. I do most of the work/restoration projects myself. I've had the T/A for 7 years. Robert has been a member of this Forum for some time now and is always eager to help out. His Family business also specializes in Suspension parts for these Classic Muscle Cars. As a hobby Robert also does a little bit of photography work and also dabbles a little bit in Music.



You can check out the full story on the Forum.

Spotlight of the Month - Performance Years

Performance Years (PY) was founded by Chris Casperson in 1983 when he began to sell Pontiac parts out of his basement via a newsletter called the GTO Journal. His first reproduction (65-66 wood wheel center cap) was made in 1984. In 1987, a catalog of his reproductions was created. In 1991, PY introduced the first Classic Pontiac online community. Today the PY Online Forums is the internet's largest such community. PY has full color catalogs for GTO and Firebird and an online catalog for Fullsize cars and parts are

distributed worldwide. They can be seen on the web www.performanceyears.com or at national Pontiac events and large swap meets.

I have been using Performance Years for a majority of the parts that I purchase. When I was restoring the Trans Ams, I would get about 90% of my parts through PY. If you get a chance, check

out their website and get a catalog from them. And when you call for parts, their highly trained staff are always glad to help. I have been dealing with Stacey for a long time there and is a great help when I am looking for parts. Make sure you mention 78ta.com when you call. Performance Years 1-800-542-PART

Classifieds

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Want to sell your car in the Monthly Newsletter here at 78ta.com? Send an email to Sales@78ta.com for more information. List your car for sale that reaches over 100,000 people each and every month.



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Here is a brand new reproduction Hurst Hatch storage bag for your 1976 to 1978 Trans Am with the Hurst T-tops. These bags would be nice for any Y82 Special Edition Trans Am. This is a brand new reproduction storage bag for your Hurst T-top panels. It is made of heavy duty quilted vinyl to help keep the panels safe in your trunk. They have the same cotton separation for the panels to keep them apart from each other to prevent scratching and also have the "HH" Logo on the flap. This bag was patterned after an Original bag, so it has all of the exact same dimensions as the originals. These are extremely hard to find and expensive if you can find GM Originals. So if your Trans Am with the Hurst T-top roof is missing the original storage bag or your Original storage bag is in need of replacement, then this is the reproduction for you. Visit store.78ta.com for more details. \$159.00

