

Monthly Newsletter October '09

Newsletter No. 0022

What's in This Month

Topic: What do I have?

Tip: Recovering your Seats II

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What do I Have?

This is a question that I get time and time again via email and also posted on the forum as well. People will ask by using their VIN number or Cowl Plate data "Hey, do I have a Special Edition?", or "Hey, How do I know if I have the W72 Pontiac 400?". This is a question that cannot be answered simply by using



the numbers from your VIN or Cowl Plate. These question can only be truly and correctly answered either by finding your original build sheet or getting the PHS Documents for your car.

The VIN number alone will tell you what model your car is (Firebird, Esprit, Formula, or Trans Am), it will tell you what year your car is, it will tell you what engine your car came with (but not specific), and it will also tell you where your car was built. That is the only information you will get from your VIN number.

Regarding the engine specifications for example, the VIN might have a "Z" for the Pontiac 400, but it will not tell you weather it is the W72 400 or the L78 400.

The Cowl plate will give you information, some of which is the same as the VIN number with model type, build location, etc. But the Cowl plate will also tell you the original exterior (exterior paint, but not the color of decals) and interior colors and style of your car as it was when it left the factory. It will also let you know (within a week time frame) of when your car was built for that model year. The last thing that your the cowl plate data will tell you is some of the misc. options that your car came with. It will not list everything and even sometimes the list is not always equal. What I mean by that is that GM and Pontiac were not always consistent or did not have set guidelines that they followed for putting information on the cowl plate.

For Example, the infamous WS4 code for "Trans Am" model was stamped if your car came from the Norwood, OH assembly plant, but was

not stamped (typically) if your car came from the Van Nuys, CA assembly plant. The reverse holds true for the "Y" codes for Special Edition. Typically if your car was a Special Edition, sometimes it would get the "Y" code stamped if your car came from Van Nuys, but not stamped if it came from Norwood. It is really any ones guess to how and why they did the things that they did back then, but we just now have to pick up the pieces and live with what we have. Some of the other codes that were typically listed also did not follow any sort of pattern. Sometimes an option was listed and some ti ems it was not.

So where does that leave us to try and help decipher what our car came with from the Factory? Well the two best (and only) options we have are for you to find a copy of your factory build sheet, or to order the PHS (Pontiac Historical Services) Documents for your car.



The build sheet is the ultimate find for you car because it will have everything listed... and I do mean EVERYTHING listed of how your car left the Factory. It will tell you every option your car came with, every color and style both outside and inside the car. It will also tell you exactly what date your car was finished being built as well. It is the complete list of what your car came with.

The PHS Documents that you can order from www.phs-online.com will give you just some of the information about your car and how it came from the factory.



I will cover both the build sheet and PHS Document in detail next month.

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Recovering your Seats II

Reassembly of the Front Seats

Now that the seats have been recovered you simply need to reassemble them. Take the seat top and place it over the seat bottom. Spread the seat top legs a bit to get them over top of the seat bottoms and position them to put in both seat bolts. Once the seat bolts have been put into place with the metal inserts to hold the seat plastic sides secured the seat bolts. You will need to secure the seat travel wire so the seats can only travel so far on one side of the seat. Depending on which seat you are putting back together it will go under only one of the securing seat bolts. Once this is complete you will need to find the two small screw holes in the seat belt hold downs at the top cover of the seat. Use an awl to make the hole screw holes large enough, but not too large, to put the seat belt hold down brackets back on with the two Phillips screws and attach to the seat frame. The plastic seat back can be applied to the seat by sliding the seat back guide catches in the seat back guides, pushing down while applying it and then securing the two lower Phillips screws at the bottom of the seat panel. Then the two side screws can be secured to the plastic back as well. This should complete the process

of front seat covers. Rear seat covers are easy to recover. They cover the entire seat and secure to the backs with hog rings. The new cover material will need to be stretched and center for both the large upper rear seat as well as lower rear seats.



The upper seat must be put on straight and centered over the seat foam and seat frame. You must start with the hog ringing in the center of the seat and will alternate from top to bottom until complete. The rear of the upper seat has many holes in it for hog rings. First secure two hog rings at the top of the seat center and then two at the bottom working out further on both sides until the sides are all that needs to be secured. Steam is helpful at this point to keep the material pliable to stretch into place before securing the sides. Again work from the center from side to side out. When this is complete you will need to secure the corners to keep the material taut. The material in the covers only goes so far, meaning the bottom of the seats has

a burlap type of material that will not be seen. This completes the process for the upper portion of the back seat.



The lower seat covers are just as simple. Take the seat cover and put it over top of the seat foam and the seat frame assuring it is centered. Use the opposite side as a visual reference as to where to secure the hog rings on the lower rear seat. Start at the front of the lower seat with two hog rings and then alternate two hog rings in the back while working the outward to secure the front and back.

Secure the sides much in the same manner and use steam to keep the wrinkles out while securing the sides while alternating the hog rings from side to side. The other seat bottom is always a good visual reference. Again you will need to turn the seat cover inside out. Put the seat foam on the seat frame. While taking the seat bottom cover and placing it over the top of the seat foam while on the seat frame, slowly try to get each corner of the cover over its edge. Once the cover engulfs the seat foam and frame you will see that the rear of the cover has much the same metal seam as the seat tops. The metal will need to be put though this seam as instructed above for the seat top covers.



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Recovering your Seats II

The seat bottoms also have a plastic square around most of the seat bottom. This plastic ring must be inserted into the rim in the frame and tucked up under them. If you apply pressure to the seat top while turning the plastic square piece under it will fit nicely around the seat bottoms. You should use the old seat bottom as a reference. Once this is complete around the three sides of the seat bottom you can secure the seat bottom seam with the metal to the rear of the seat frame. Steam would be good to use here to keep from wrinkling before securing with hog rings in the back of the seat.



There are 4 locations for hog rings within the seat bottom springs that attach to the seam metal. The rear flap of material will secure under and around each side of the seat legs to the back of the seat bottom corners. Use the old seat cover as a reference to help. The seat bottoms have four bolt holes that will need to be cut away so

the sides of them can access the seat posts and bolts. If you use a razor blade and make an X in the middle of both areas this works well. Secure the seat bottom plastic cover to the seat and secure both T-50 bolts back into the seat bottom with the big flat washers on the inside nearest the new seat material.

Now that the seats have been recovered you simply need to reassemble them. Take the seat top and place it over the seat bottom. Spread the seat top legs a bit to get them over top of the seat bottoms and position them to put in both seat bolts. Once the seat bolts have been put into place with the metal inserts to hold the seat plastic sides secured the seat bolts. You will need to secure the seat travel wire so the seats can only travel so far on one side of the seat. Depending on which seat you are putting back together it will go under only one of the securing seat bolts. Once this is complete you will need to find the two small screw holes in the seat belt hold downs at the top cover of the seat. Use an awl to make the hole screw holes large enough, but not too large, to put the seat belt hold down brackets back on with the two Phillips screws and attach to the seat frame. The plastic seat back can be applied to the seat by sliding the seat back guide catches in the seat back guides, pushing down while

applying it and then securing the two lower Phillips screws at the bottom of the seat panel. Then the two side screws can be secured to the plastic back as well. This should complete the process of front seat covers.

Rear seat covers are easy to recover. They cover the entire seat and secure to the backs with hog rings. The new cover material will need to be stretched and center for both the large upper rear seat as well as lower rear seats.

The upper seat must be put on straight and centered over the seat foam and seat frame. You must start with the hog ringing in the center of the seat and will alternate from top to bottom until complete. The rear of the upper seat has many holes in it for hog rings. First secure two hog rings at the top of the seat center and then two at the bottom working out further on both sides until the sides are all that needs to be secured.

Steam is helpful at this point to keep the material pliable to stretch into place before securing the sides.

Again work from the center from side to side out. When this is complete you will need to secure the corners to keep the material taut. The material in the covers only goes so far, meaning the bottom of the seats has a burlap type of material that will not be seen. This completes the process for the upper portion of the back seat.

The lower seat covers are just as simple. Take the seat cover and put it over top of the seat foam and the seat frame assuring it is centered. Use the opposite side as a visual reference as to where to secure the hog rings on the lower rear seat. Start at the front of the lower seat with two hog rings and then alternate two hog rings in the back while working the outward to secure the front and back. Secure the sides much in the same manner and use steam to keep the wrinkles out while securing the sides while alternating the hog rings from side to side. The other seat bottom is always a good visual reference.





78ta.com Forum:

<http://forum.78ta.com>

Check out the Calendar

for upcoming shows

and events for

2009/2010.

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Spotlight of the Month - 2010 Trans Am of Kevin Morgan

Well, here we are in the Month of October and what better way to kick off the Halloween Month than with the new 2010 Concept Trans Am from Kevin Morgan. For those of you who haven't heard about this or haven't seen the drawings.... WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN ! ? ! It has been in over 7 National and International Magazines not to mention Kevin himself

being at the Trans Am Nationals for more than three years now and at this year's 2009 25th Annual Trans Am Nationals was the Official Unveiling of this beautiful Concept Trans Am soon to be in production.

This car has been in the works since 2006 at first as rendering and drawings on the PC, to models, to now the full blown production roaming the streets.

Like its mythical namesake that rose from the ashes to a new life, the Trans Am of yesteryear has been born again... the Phoenix T/A. If it is true that good things come to those who wait, then we have surely been rewarded for our patience. Trans Am Depot is pleased to announce our partnership with designer Kevin Morgan in turning a three-year dream into reality. We, like many of you, have lusted over Kevin's retro interpretation of the '77 - '78 Trans Am based on the 2010 Camaro platform. We began early last year discussing the idea of how we might work together to bring this vision

to life.

So my hats off to you Kevin for sticking with this and making your dream into a reality. You show great dedication to the Trans Am Community and I thank you for that and continuing to keep your dreams alive and making them into reality for all of us to see and aspire to. You can find out more information about Kevin and the new Concept Trans Am by visiting his website here: www.kevinmorgandesigns.com



The Forum

One of the things that I wanted to Spotlight this month was the Forum located here on www.78ta.com. With almost 4,000 members and growing every day, the forum is also an invaluable tool to have at your disposal. If you can't find the answer on the website or on other websites, then what better way to help find you answer than to ask the public. It is amazing what you can find out from others that have done or are doing the same things you are. It is a great place to find information or even bounce ideas off of others and get their input as well. All in all, it is a place with almost endless possibilities and answers. Go check it out at <http://forum.78ta.com>

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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1978 Trans am. 6.6L Pontiac 400. Super clean with no rust, or dents. Paint (red) is spectacular and inside is 8/10. The motor has been completely re-done .30 over and has about 375 HP. I have all receipts from pretty much the day it was new. It has been in my family for over 30 years. I have a ton of pictures. You wont find a cleaner car. 16K OBO. bluelego42@yahoo.com or call me 810-449-9502. Thanks



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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. This will work for any of the cars that had the Hurst t-top roof like the Firebird/Trans Am, or the Olds 442, or anything with the Hurst T-top roof. \$159.00

