



That Nostalgic Feel

It's no secret that the popularity of older vehicles has gone through the roof over the last few years. Everything from the late 60's and early 70's muscle cars to classics like the tri-five ('55, '56 and '57) Chevy's and don't forget hot rods like the '32 Fords. Everyone has their favorite. But what makes these cars special to us? Maybe it's the car we learned to drive in. Or the car we drove in high school. Or the car we *wish* we had driven in high school.

The design of some of these cars is timeless. Who would have thought, back in 1957, that a '57 Chevy would still look so good to us 50 years later? Unfortunately, people forget how they actually drove. These vehicles may look great but get behind the wheel and you may be surprised. A '57 Chevy, as it came from the factory, drives like a truck! An old truck. Any pickup truck made in the last 10 years or so will ride, handle and run far better than a stock '57 Chevy.

We talk to people all the time who have had an older vehicle restored to immaculate factory condition and are disappointed in how the car runs and drives. It's likely not the fault of the restorer. Modern vehicles that have such huge technological advantages over a 30+ year-old vehicle have spoiled us. Some of the vehicular breakthroughs that account for this are the advent of power disk brakes, electronic ignition and, of course, electronic fuel injection.

All the great technology available today makes it possible for GM to build a Corvette with over 500 smooth-as-silk horsepower that still gets 26MPG on the highway.

So you just bought your dream car: that '69 Camaro you've wanted for as long as you can remember. And you want to drive this car but frankly, it's kind of a pain to get it started on a cold morning (our Arizona readers, will remember that cold morning we had back in January!), it doesn't handle that well and the brakes leave something to

be desired. In fact, it's a lot nicer to drive your 2000 Chevy Tahoe.

What can be done to make that classic muscle car as fun to drive as it is to look at? If your dream car still has the old style points-and-condenser ignition, you can make a dramatic improvement in drivability simply by converting to electronic ignition. In a GM vehicle, converting to a more modern HEI distributor will deliver a stronger spark to the spark plugs and save you from having to constantly adjust or replace the points.

Remember when cars needed a tune-up every 6 months? This is one of the reasons why. From the moment you adjust the points in a car, they will begin going out of adjustment because of the wear that occurs to the points every second that the engine is running. That's inherent in their design. An electronic distributor eliminates this wear so the ignition doesn't require adjustment.

Of course, being Arizona TPI, one of our favorite upgrades is to get rid of that pesky carburetor and install a fuel injection system. There are a variety of options available, but any will give you much better drivability than the original carburetor. And, by the way, upgrading to fuel injection includes the previously mentioned electronic ignition upgrade!

Stopping your vehicle is an important but surprisingly often-overlooked feature. Drum brakes just don't have the stopping ability of modern disk brakes. We've performed a number of disk brake conversions, two-wheel as well as four-wheel. We often convert to a factory disk brake system from a more modern vehicle but can also install a truly high-performance system from manufacturers such as Wilwood and Baer. Either way, you'll have much better stopping power, which just might prevent a crash of that car that you've spent so much time and effort on.

If the car you love isn't as easy and fun to drive as you'd like, call or come by the shop. We have solutions for you!

Timing is Everything

It's common for us to get a vehicle in the shop with the complaint that it doesn't run well and doesn't have much power. This symptom can have a number of different causes but every couple of weeks we'll encounter one where the ignition timing is retarded by 10° or more. This situation invariably involves a TPI ('85 - '92 Camaros, Firebirds and Corvettes) or TBI ('87 - '95 GM trucks and some cars) vehicle. We believe the reason that the timing is so far off is that it was set by someone who didn't understand the procedure for setting the timing on these vehicles.

To set the timing on TPI and TBI vehicles, first locate the timing disconnect. This is a single wire Weatherpack connector, typically on a tan wire with a black stripe. On many of the trucks, this can be found on the passenger side of the firewall near the relays but its location varies by vehicle so you may need to consult a shop manual. The Painless fuel injection harnesses we sell for these vehicles include this connector too. It's normally found about a foot from the ECM.



Weatherpack Timing Disconnect

Once the connector is located, disconnect it, causing the computer to no longer control the timing. Connect a timing light to the vehicle, start the engine and set the timing in the usual way. The ignition timing setting is typically on the emissions sticker under the hood or can also be found in a shop manual.

Once the timing has been set, reconnect the timing connector and you're done! By the way, it's normal for the check-engine light to come on while the connector is disconnected. It will turn off once the connector is reconnected and the vehicle is restarted.