HIGH SCHOOL SWEETHEART

Here's a host of suspension upgrades to wake up your second-gen Camaro

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There's a long list of reasons given for building and personalizing a car. It may be a sentimental attachment, it might be related to the business you're in, or it could be the thrill from whacking the throttle on something with lots of horsepower. Or, in the case of Trent Goodwin, it could be all of those.

In 1998, when Trent was 14 years old his Dad gave him a very special gift: a 1979 Z28 Camaro. As you might guess, by the time Trent had driver's license in hand the Second-gen had been polished from one end to the other and was the subject of a long list of future plans.

The Z served Trent well through high school. It was still faithful transportation when called on during college and when he joined the workforce where he started at a car wash. Today, Trent is the Marketing/Media Coordinator for COMP Cams, and the Camaro's station in life has improved as well. It's now powered by a COMP-cammed, fuel-injected 501ci big-block churning out 670 horsepower at the rear wheels.

For many of the Camaro's modifications, Trent has enlisted the talents of Ronnie Geesin of Ronnie's Hot Rods in Senatobia, Mississippi. Ronnie's family operated Performance Automotive, opened in 1990 to do general automotive repair, but soon the reputation gained from building cars on the side led to the opening of Ronnie's Hot Rods in 2006. Ronnie's was responsible for a number of modifications to Trent's Z, including the installation of a six-point rollbar and subframe connectors, a new interior, as well as the brilliant blue paint. This time they turned their attention to the suspension and installed Viking double-adjustable coilovers up front and Viking double-adjustable shocks in the rear.

Viking Performance's double-adjustable shocks provide 19 positions for compression adjustment and 19 for rebound, which provides 361 different valving combinations. If you can't dial in your suspension with that many choices, it can't be done.

Made in the USA, Viking shocks are aluminum with a clear anodized finish, they have 5/8-inch centerless-ground, hard chrome-plated piston rods with precision-machined pistons. Each one is dyno tested, serialized,
With the new CPP 2-inch drop multi-leaf springs in place, replacement isolator pads were slipped into the axle brackets.

To accommodate the larger-than-stock CPP U-bolts, the holes in the axle brackets had to be drilled oversize.

The new bottom spring plates/shock mounts came from YearOne. The Wilwood disc brakes were part of an earlier upgrade.

In the rear, Rennie's installed a pair of double-adjustable Viking smooth-body shocks. This will enable plenty of adjustments to dial in the car for the best performance at track days, yet dial it back for a smooth ride home.

CPP's rear Pro Touring antiroll bar mounts to the axlehousing with a pair of billet aluminum clamps.

With the clamps secured to the axle, the brackets and bushings holding the antiroll bar are bolted to the clamps.
Threaded plates are then slipped into the rear subframe. They will be the attachment points for the antroll bar endlinks.

Included in the CPP Pro Touring line are tubular upper and lower control arms, antiroll bar, and endlinks and comes with a two-year warranty. Coilover versions have threaded bodies to provide spring preload and ride-height adjustments, and smooth-body versions are available for non-coilover applications.

Along with the shocks, Trent had Ronnie’s add front control arms, rear springs, and antiroll bars on both ends from Classic Performance Products (CPP). CPP supplies a vast array of restoration and performance parts for GM cars and other makes.

In the suspension category, CPP offers individual parts or all-encompassing packages, such as their Pro Touring kits. As his Camaro had already been given a brake upgrade, Trent elected to go with Stage II components.

Trent’s Camaro started out as a cool way to get back and forth to high school, but today it has to work on the street, strip, and autocross course. There's certainly plenty of horsepower available, and now with the upgraded suspension to match, Trent’s high school sweetheart just keeps getting better with age.
Replacing the stock front springs are Viking coilovers. They provide ride height as well as compression and rebound adjustability.

With the coilovers in place, the CPP lower control arms were installed.

Next, the upper and lower CPP tubular control arms were installed along with new ball joints.

CPP has three trick aluminum antiroll bar mounting brackets available as an upgrade, should you want to go that route.
19 | CPP’s Pro Touring front antiroll bar will help keep the Camaro more level during hard cornering while offering improved driver feedback.

20 | Along with all the other new parts, this was a great time to install new tie-rod ends. CPP has those, too.

21 | The last step was to connect the antiroll bar to the lower control arm with the supplied endlinks.

22 | There’s no question Trent’s Camaro is now more impressive to drive off the line as well as into corners. And this relatively affordable suspension upgrade didn’t break his bank in the process.