



That first drive of a rescued barn find is like nothing else. It combines the emotion of driving a new car for the first time, a rush down Memory Lane, and the satisfaction of knowing you've put a classic muscle car back on the road. Unlike a complete restoration, the car will likely have some quirks that have accumulated naturally with age, and it will definitely have the look, feel, and smell of an old car, not one of fresh paint and a new interior.

If you've followed this barn-find revival for the past two months, you know that we are showing the typical steps needed to put a car that has been

BARN REVIVAL

Part 3: Taking the First Drive in Our Rescued Barn Find



1 Just above the '60s-era aftermarket gauges is a piece of paper noting the car's last oil change: June 14, 1987, at 74,125 miles. The odometer now reads 74,403, and the registration for the car was last renewed in 1987, so the car sat in hibernation for 25 years.



2 This car was last driven before GPS was within the reach of the average American, sporting instead a compass screwed to the dash. These pieces of history and the driving experience from decades gone by are part of the appeal of a barn find.

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sitting for 20-plus years safely back on the road. The car we are using is a '63 Chevy II. In addition to repairing decaying and defective parts, we also upgraded the rear axle from four lugs to five and replaced the front drum brakes with disc brakes.

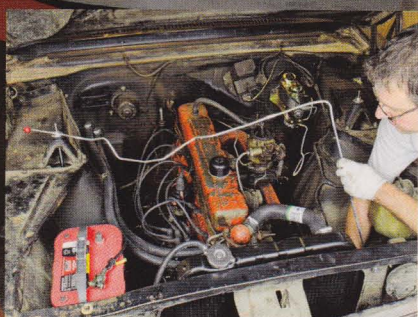
Last month we wrapped up the front suspension rebuild with new components from Classic Performance Products (CPP), installed the new disc-brake spindles and brake assembly (also from CPP), and measured the car for new wheels and tires. We placed an order with Coker Tire for a set of Chevrolet Rally wheels, trim rings, Bowtie police caps, and BFGoodrich Radial T/A tires.

With all of this in motion, it was time to return to the engine. We needed to discover what stopped working in the first place, turning the Chevy from a daily driver into a parked car 25 years ago. Naturally, this revival required more time and budget than originally anticipated, but all of that angst went right out the vintage wing window as we made a left out of the driveway for a trip down Memory Lane.



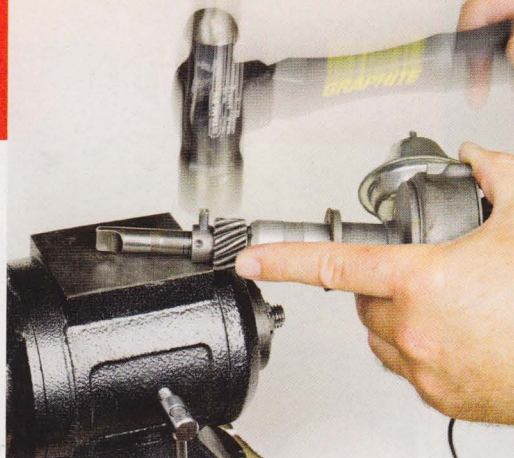
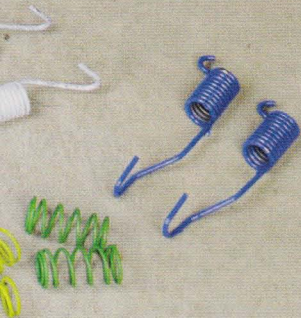


3 To finish the front disc brake conversion we started in last month's issue, we installed a new master cylinder, proportioning block, and brake lines, all included with the Classic Performance Products (CPP) kit. This is the most complete disc brake conversion kit we've ever installed, not requiring a single additional part, fitting, or adapter.



4 The brake lines supplied in the kit combine with the original lines and junction blocks to convert the former single-line system into one that feeds the front brakes and the rears with separate supplies of brake fluid and pressure. The only faux pas we found is that the new primary brake line is bent assuming you have a power booster. This required some rebending of the line near the master cylinder for our non-power brake system.

5 Last month we converted the axleshafts and brake drums to five-lug to match the front. The original wheel cylinders were seized with rust, and the brake shoes were one good stop away from vaporizing. We replaced the wheel cylinders, shoes, and hardware with new components from AutoZone. Before we disassembled the original system, we took a photograph to help us put everything back in the correct location.



6 With the brakes done, we returned to the engine to figure out why the car was parked in the first place. It didn't take much detective work to notice that the distributor wasn't spinning when the engine was cranked. We pulled the distributor out and found that the roll pin that was supposed to hold the drive gear on the distributor shaft was sheared. We replaced the \$1.10 pin with high hopes that this was the only problem.

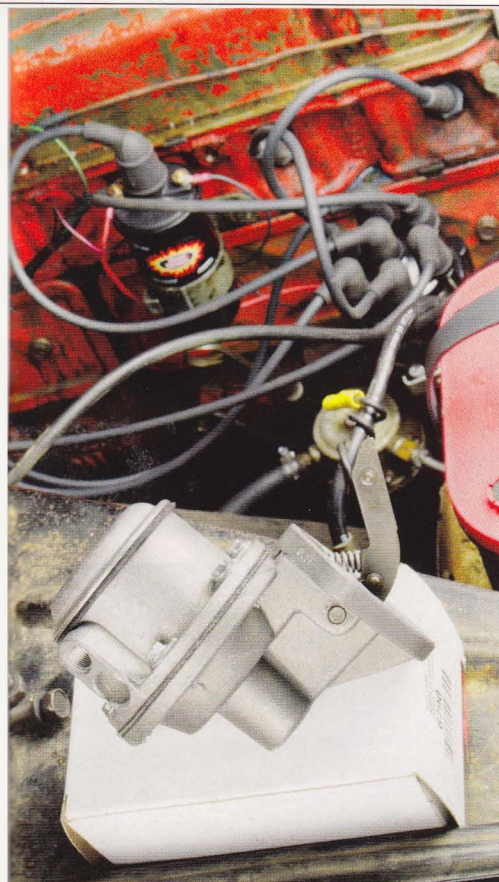




9 The driveshaft had been removed from the car, perhaps when it was flat-towed back to the previous owner's house on the day it quit running. We had the shaft balanced and new U-joints installed in both ends. This is a good idea with any car that has been sitting, especially if the driveshaft has been removed.



7 While we had the distributor out, we replaced the ignition points with a PerTronix Ignitor electronic ignition system. This is a completely hidden system, giving you the reliability and efficiency of electronic ignition while retaining a stock appearance. We also used a set of black PerTronix Flame Thrower ignition wires and a Flame Thrower coil.



8 When we cranked over the engine with the ignition system repaired and upgraded, we quickly realized that the ancient fuel pump was leaking far more fuel than it was pumping. AutoZone was able to get an exact replacement within a day. The new pump even had the correct-size port fittings so we didn't have to modify the fuel lines.



10 You should replace tires older than seven or eight years. Ours were far older than that, and the change from four lugs to five necessitated new wheels. We ordered painted 15x6 Chevrolet Rally wheels with 4-inch backspacing from Coker Tire. The new wheels came wrapped with 195/60R15 BFGoodrich Radial T/A tires for the front and 215/65R15s for the rear, which will greatly improve the driving experience.

READY FOR THAT FIRST DRIVE?

You should be nervous and alert during that first trip in your newly revived barn find. If something will go wrong, it will likely happen in the first 500 miles as the parts of the car you didn't replace or rebuild get used to functioning again after a long snooze. Question every noise and odd feel. Better to track it down now than to wait until something breaks and risk a wreck.

It is a good idea to pack tools, extra coolant, a fire extinguisher, and perhaps a battery jumper box in case you run into trouble. It is also a good idea to have someone waiting to come rescue you if something fails that you can't fix on the roadside. Hopefully that first trip and many more after it will be trouble-free and you can enjoy both the driving of your rescued barn find and the satisfaction of putting another one back on the road.

11 The new wheels and tires came from Coker mounted and balanced, so all we needed to do was bolt them on. We opted for the Bowtie police car center caps to match the smooth look of the side of this car. Coker offers a variety of Rally wheels, trim rings, and center caps.



12 We even gave the 49-year-old original paint a thorough cleaning and waxing. The paint is far from perfect, but the car has earned every nick and ding, and it definitely looks good enough to drive and enjoy! **MCR**

