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# PRO-TOURING ON AIR, PART 2

## Installing Air Ride Technologies' AirBAR Suspension Package on a '69 Camaro.

by Arvid Svendsen • photographs by the author



Rt. 66 Motorsports of New Lenox, Illinois, is building this '69 Camaro for Frank Militello. The car features a Chris Alston's Chassisworks front subframe, smoothed firewall, an LS2, and a custom interior.

In the last issue of *Camaro Performers* we covered putting in most of the suspension pieces necessary to install Air Ride Technologies' AirBAR package for first-gen Camaros. Frank Militello's LS2-powered '69 Camaro has since received a striking slathering of 2007 GM Impulse Blue with Pearl White stripes, and is now in the midst of assembly. At this point the car is ready for the installation of the Air Ride air tank, compressor, solenoids, switches, and airlines.

A recent cruise in a leaf-spring pony car reminded me of the primitive ride and handling characteristics found in

our beloved, but archaic, '60s era musclecar. Unless a chalk mark restoration is the goal, upgrading the suspension should be a consideration as advancements in these components provide a major enhancement in safety, drivability, and performance.

Since Frank's '69 will be a Pro Touring-style build, Air Ride Technologies' AirBAR system made the most sense.

The bolt-in installation process of this system for first-gen Camaros is relatively simple. In fact, the most challenging aspect will be removal of the old corroded and rusted parts.

Recent trends are showing '67 through '69 Camaro builds as looking stronger and more aggressive than ever before. Outrageous tire and rim sizes are FINALLY being installed properly. There are so many cars out there that look just plain wrong. These monstrosities can be easily fixed by installing an Air Ride suspension system.

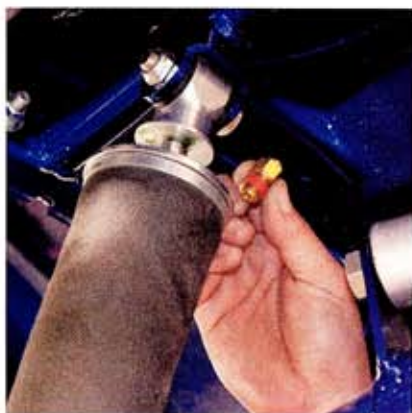
We here at *Camaro Performers* fully understand that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and everyone has their own idea of what looks "good" to them, especially when it comes to wheel size, tire selection and stance. With that be-



The AirBAR kit for first-generation Camaros includes all the wiring, fittings, switches, solenoids, sending units, brackets and hardware necessary for proper installation. Also included is a three-gallon air tank, an ARC5001 compressor and easy-to-follow instructions with helpful explanations on setting pinion angles.



The ShockWave 7000 is specifically designed for the lightweight Camaro. The Firestone sleeve-style air spring offers more travel and a softer spring rate, shown effective for the solid axle rear suspension.



The crew at Rt. 66 Motorsports goes to work installing fittings to the ShockWave on the driver side. The fittings allow for lines to simply push in and seal.



Matt Duque of Rt. 66 Motorsports knows these systems well. Fittings are tightened with extra care to avoid scratching the GM Impulse Blue paint.



Matt attaches the supplied 1/4-inch line to the ShockWave. The 16-position shock adjuster allows the driver to dial in the exact level of ride stiffness and performance.

ing said, we'll be starting with 18-inch wheels up front and 19-inch, or possibly 20-inch, wheels out back. But before we make the final decision we use a couple of tried-and-true techniques to make sure we attain the "look" we want.

First off, we'll get in front of the car and stoop to eye level with the hood. From this angle the lip of the front rim should touch the top of the front fender's wheelwell. Out back we'll try the same thing, only from the rear. The trick is to get down to about the beltline and check to see that the wheels tuck

WAY up inside the wheelwell so about one-fifth of the rim is hidden by the top of the wheelwell's lip.

This suggested look is best accomplished with Air Ride, possibly adding mini-tubs if a wider footprint is desired. Not only does Air Ride accomplish the need for that righteous stance, it also creates the most versatility between ride comfort, responsiveness, and cornering.

Air Ride Technologies suspension packages are no longer installed just for show. Their performance suspension systems are among the strongest

and most versatile packages on the market today. For those who wish to slam it down at the local car show, you can do that too.

Check out their website at [www.ridetech.com](http://www.ridetech.com) for some notes on a '67 Chevelle that pulls 1.12 g's on the skidpad! Whether it's low for show or stiff for go, when the day is done, a couple hits on the Air Ride RidePro switch returns the car to daily comfort, driver mode. So, let's get that Air Ride hooked up at Rt. 66 Motorsports in New Lenox, Illinois, with owner Bill Jelinek leading the way. ■



The airlines are cut to length allowing for a clean installation.



Referred to as a two-way system, one switch will control pressure in the front Shockwaves, and one switch will control pressure to the rears. Matt attaches the airline to the supplied T-fitting. Pressure is then routed to both the right and left sides.



The airlines are also attached to the driver's side ShockWave 7000. With the lines tucked up along the AirBAR, they virtually disappear.



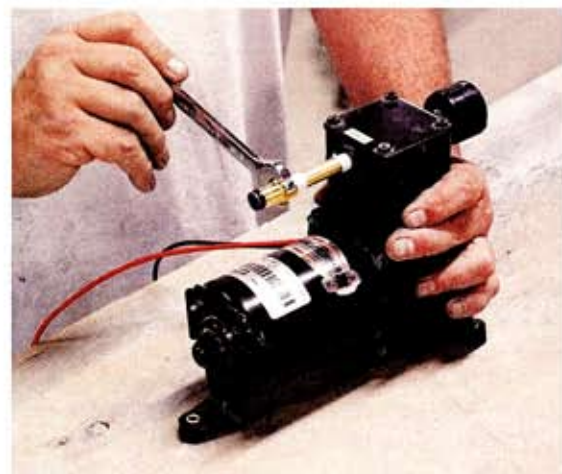
An existing hole in the trunk is used for running the front and rear airlines. Matt enlarges the hole slightly to make room for the lines.



The hole will eventually be fitted with a grommet for a nice tight seal.



The compressor is fitted with the air screen at the inlet.



The fitting for compressed air outlet is then installed.



Compressors and tanks are sealed for protection from dust and moisture. A 130-psi pressure switch is installed to the tank to send off/on signals to the compressor when desired pressure is reached.



Holes are drilled into the wood and grommets are used as isolators between the wood and tank. Mounting all parts on the board allows for ease of installation and removal.



The compressor is also attached to the board. The grommets and board help protect the equipment from road vibration.



Matt uses Teflon tape on all threaded fittings to insure a complete seal.



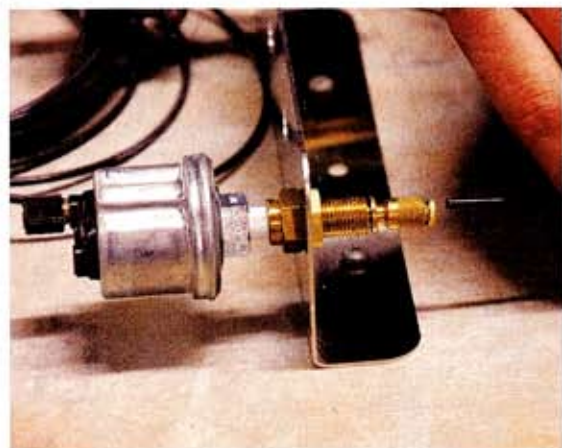
The RidePro Airvalve assembly is treated to fittings that attach airlines.



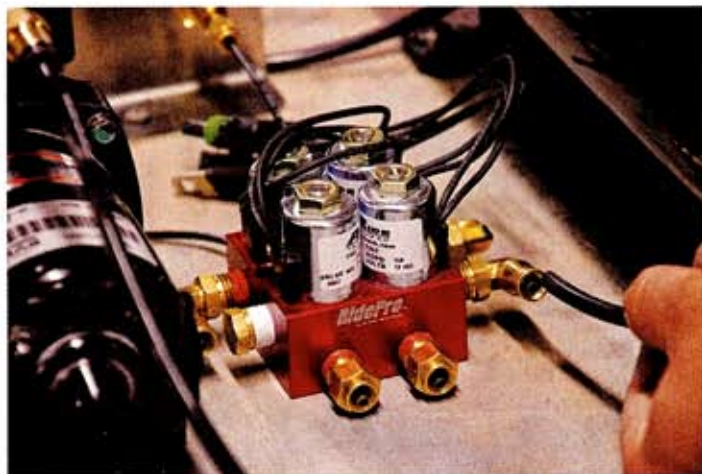
Two sending units are used to measure pressure in the Shock-Waves, one for the front, the other for the rear.



The adaptor for 1/4-inch line to 1/8-inch line is inserted.

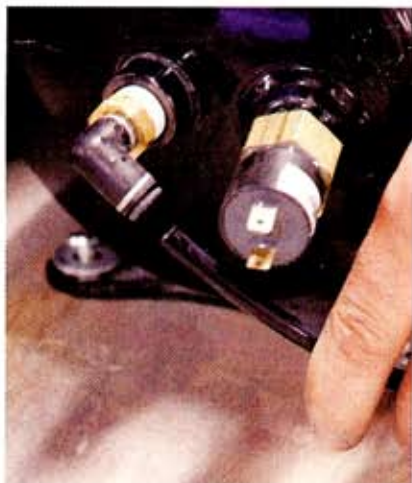


A 1/8-inch airline is attached to the sending unit and routed to the RidePro Airvalve assembly.



With the Airvalve assembly firmly in place, airlines are inserted into their respective fittings.

# TECH



Inlet and outlet airines from the tank are installed.



Bill and Matt show off their nicely completed Air Ride mounting board.



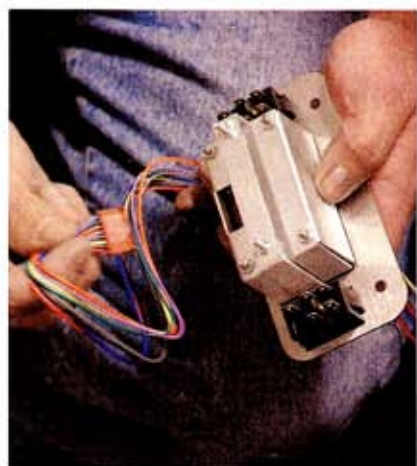
Wires from the solenoid are simple weatherpack-style plug-ins. Now the airines from the ShockWaves can be installed.



The mounting board slides into the area under the package shelf and will eventually mount the CD changer and other electronic equipment. The board itself will be covered with material matching the rest of the trunk area, completely hidden by a removable panel.



The RidePro controller mounts the two switches, which regulate the ShockWaves. Assembly is simple and requires very little space for mounting.



This plug is used to send pressure readings to the gauge while two separate switches also receive plug-ins.



The custom interior includes a shaped console and metal dashboard. Jelinek estimates where the switches will be mounted. We'll show you the final install of Frank Mitello's '69 in the next issue of Camaro Performers.

## SOURCES »

**AIR RIDE TECHNOLOGIES INC.**  
812.482.2932  
[www.ridetech.com](http://www.ridetech.com)

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