

# ThunderEnlightening<sup>T.M.</sup>

Classic Auto Supply Co., Inc.



A NEWSLETTER FOR THE CLASSIC THUNDERBIRD OWNER AND RESTORER

ISSUE NUMBER THREE • DECEMBER 1990

## CTCI National Convention

The Williamsburg meet was a great convention!

It was the largest T-Bird convention ever. Over 180 Classic T-Birds were judged on Concour Day, I can tell you that seeing this many beautiful T-Birds in one place at one time was, to say the least, impressive.

The 1992 National Convention will be in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It's not too early to start thinking about attending. The Tulsa folks are promising a great show and I have no doubt that they will make good on this promise.

But you don't have to wait until 1992 to attend a CTCI convention because in 1991 there will be regional meets in Pisataway, New Jersey; Dayton, Ohio; Sonoma, California; Asheville, North Carolina; Breckenridge, Colorado; and San Diego, California.

## Restoration Tips

### Correct Engine Color

The new concours rule book states that the original color for the T-Bird engine block was a red - orange. It goes on to state: "The common Ford red available today will be accepted as original until 1995 which should provide an adequate phase out period."

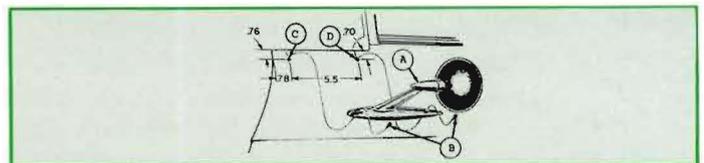
CASCO came to grips with this question a number of months ago and at that time sent paint panels to many of the authenticity experts around the country to get their opinion on the "correct" shade of red - orange.

As a result of this survey we have found a paint which we and others believe is the correct shade of red/orange. It is Hi-Tech engine paint Ford/Chrysler Red #EN44 by Seymour and is now available from CASCO. Our ordering number is 19000B. \$4.25/can.

### Outside Mirror

Classic T-Birds were manufactured with an outside mirror on the drivers door only. We are often asked "where, exactly does it go?" The sketch shows the correct location.

The 1955 T-Bird mirrors were mounted with the forward screw pointing upward from below the door skin into the mirror base and the aft screw pointing downward through the mirror base into the door skin. Since only the rear screw head shows this is why the '55 mirrors are often referred to as "one hole mirrors". In '56 & '57 both screws point downward and both screw heads show.



A. BF 17682 Mirror Assembly - Rear view outside.

One required left side of body only.

**TWO HOLE BASE** is secured to left door with B. 2 oval head tapping screws - holes C. & D. are located as shown and are to be .135 inch diameter (#29 drill).

**ONE HOLE BASE (1955 ONLY)** is secured to left door with 1 pan head screw from underside of door - hole C. located as shown and .204 inch diameter (#6 drill) and 1 oval head tapping screw hole D. located as shown and .135 inch diameter (#drill).

While we're on the subject you should know that originally there was no gasket between the mirror base and the door. Yes folks it sat right down on that beautiful paint.

Because many of our customers want some protection between the mirror base and the paint we do supply a paper gasket with our mirrors. For those who want even more protection, we offer a rubber gasket.

Finally, those who want to "balance" their T-Bird by putting a mirror on the passenger door should know that if mounted the same as on the drivers door the driver won't be able to see it because the windshield pillar is in the way.

## Shop Tips

### Engine Paint

Ron Bussiere - Cynthiana, Kentucky

Never paint a block, cylinder head or any cast iron part with engine paint without some sort of surface preparation. Sure the paint will stick, but it won't have the correct finish. The cast iron being rough, will allow the paint to flow away from the "peaks" of the metal.

The solution? Simple! Use high temperature "cast blast" paint as a primer (Cast Blast 1200). The paint was made to be used on virgin cast iron, sticks excellent, and is heat proof. In addition, it dries almost instantly. When your color coat is applied, it will now be in a uniform layer, giving more gloss and smoothness than you could get with 20 coats of engine paint.

Cast Blast 1200 will NOT burn off. The exhaust headers on my big block Chevy race car get RED hot near the heads, down about 8 inches or so. They have been through many cycles and are still the same overall color and no sign of peeling.

*Editor's Note: As a result of the above shop tip we ran some tests in our shop and found that there was some improvement in "fill" of the cast iron peaks but not as dramatic as Mr. Bussiere suggests.*

*However, also as a result of these tests we also found (as he reported) that Cast Blast 1200 is an excellent manifold paint. The gray color is very authentic and it does not seem to burn off as so many other so called high temperature paints do. We really like this product.*

Cast Blast 1200 in 1 pint spray can size has been added to our product line. This is more than enough to do a pair of manifolds. Our ordering number is 19000P. \$5.75/can.

### Installing a New Steering Worm Gear

If the time has come to replace the worn worm gear in your steering box here are some tips that should help.

Removing the old gear from the shaft is done by pressing the shaft out of the gear using a hydraulic arbor press. We have never found it necessary to heat the gear to remove the shaft but we have heard that this is sometimes necessary. Heating, if done at all, should be in moderation.

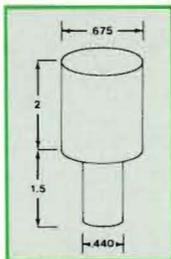


Figure 1.  
Steel tool used to press the steering shaft from the worm gear.

We do recommend that a pressing bushing which pilots into the ID of the shaft to be used to prevent damage to the end of the shaft (see figure 1). Be sure to prevent damage to the shaft splines by "catching" the shaft when it breaks loose.

When pressing on the new worm gear it is best to press the gear onto the shaft. Use an old bearing race against the gear so that you are actually pushing on the race and not the gear. This will distribute the pressing load on the gear and minimize the chance of damaging the gear.

Thoroughly lubricate the ID of the gear before pressing and set up the press with the shaft as parallel as possible to the axis of the press ram. In addition, since considerable force will be used, be sure to support the shaft near its' center so that it does not get bent.

Press slowly until the key on the gear bottoms into the keyway of the shaft. At this point the end of the shaft will be close to even with the end of the gear.

Because the replacement gears are keyed differently than most of the original gears you will likely find that after installing a replacement gear the steering wheel will be upside down at the center of the steering travel.

To correct this you will need to remove the steering wheel (use a puller) and rotate it 180 degrees from its' original position. In order to do this however it will be necessary to file the locating key from the inside of the steering wheel hub or file a new keyway into the steering shaft where the wheel attaches. We prefer the latter alternative.

Special thanks to Paul Norder of Fairport, NY for his help on this subject so many years ago.

### Replacing inner and outer rocker panels

Douglas Cook - Nostalgia Restorations - Woodbridge, Virginia

When replacing the inner and outer rocker panels start with fitting the doors to the car body and paint the inside of the rockers except where they are welded together. Drill 5/16" holes every three inches in the inner panel about 1/4" up from the bottom.

Then loose clamp the outer and inner rockers together and do a final adjust fit into proper position against the floor pan. Tighten clamps, remove rockers and fill-weld the 5/16" holes in the lower part of the inner to the outer panels.

Because you are welding from the back, there will be no welds to grind off and fill on the outer rocker. Spray the inside of the rockers with undercoat or more paint taking care not to seal the weep holes. After fitting against the floor boards and ensuring the doors will fit over the sills, weld rockers to the floor pan.

Final welding will be the upper lip of the outer to the inner after positioning the outer panel so that it fits the lower door curve. Note: using the thicker gauge CACSO inner panels will ensure a better weld and longer life of the rockers.

*Editor's Note: Be sure everything fits properly before welding. This is particularly important if using this technique.*

# ADDENDUM TO 1990 CATALOG

## NOVEMBER 1990

ITEM NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PRICE	ITEM NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PRICE
New 01642A	RETAINER CLIP-EMERGENCY BRK COVR	4.95	New 19000P	PAINT-EXHAUST MANIFOLDS-1200 F.	5.75
New 01820	SCOOP OR REGISTER-AIR VENTS	14.95	New 21952	CLIP-DOOR LOCK ROD RETAINING	0.50
New 02176	HINGE-SIDE VENT DOOR	20.95	◀ 22600A	HANDLE-DOOR-INSIDE-55/56	14.35
New 03178-9	RETAINERS-WINDSHIELD HEADER TRIM	19.95	◀ 23342A	HANDLE-WINDOW REGULATOR-55/56	19.60
New 03654	CLIP-INSIDE LOWER WINDSHLD MLDC	13.95	X 27840AT	REAR QUARTER-RH-55/56-SORRY N/A	0.00
New 04438C	DASH TRIM-INSTRUMENT CLUSTER-57	79.00	X 27840BT	REAR QUARTER-RH-57-SORRY N/A	0.00
New 04454A	SPACER KIT-SPEAKER GRILLE-57	1.95	X 27841AT	REAR QUARTER-LH-55/56-SORRY N/A	0.00
New 10002A	GENERATOR-REBUILT-6 VOLT-55	110.70	X 27841BT	REAR QUARTER-LH-57-SORRY N/A	0.00
X 10005B	ARMATURE-GENERATOR-SORRY N/A	0.00	New 351124S	NUT-GENERATOR PULLEY	0.75
New 10854	DASH KNOB - WITH BUMPS OUTSIDE	17.95	New 351496S	LOCK WASHER-SPL-GENERATOR PULLEY	0.40
◀ 11215P	PLUG-WHEEL WELL-57	0.95	◀ 352285S	PLUG-FLOOR PAN-I 13/16 DIA	0.95
New 1130G	CENTR PAN & BLK SPINNER-WIRE WLS	53.95	New 352802S	DRIVE NAIL-CARPET TO FLOOR BOARD	0.20
New 12177	RETAINER-DISTRIBUTOR CAM-57	0.73	New 356164S	NUT-TRUNK LOCK SLEEVE	1.45
New 13304A	PLATE ASSY-TURN IND. SWITCH-55	38.95	X 356687S	CLIP-PARK LITE WIRE-SORRY N/A	0.00
New 13304B	PLATE ASSY-TURN IND. SWITCH-56-57	44.95	New 358463S	WINGNUT-AIR FCLEANER-55/56-CHROME	3.00
New 13309	PAWL-TURN INDICATOR SWITCH PLATE	6.80	▶ 3A650B	SEAL KIT—PS CONTROL VALVE-57	8.30
New 13434B	HOUSING—TAIL LIGHT-CHROME-56	34.95	X 3A764AA	SEAL KIT-EARLY 55-SORRY N/A	0.00
New 13668	GASKET-LISC LIGHT TO BODY-57	0.50	New 7153A	GASKET SET-312-S/T 57-O/D 56/57	7.95
New 13833	HORN-REPLACEMENT-LO PITCH-56/57	17.56	X 7521R	ROD-CLUTCH ADJUSTMENT-SORRY N/A	0.00
New 14301D	BATTERY MASTER SWITCH-BRASS	12.95	X 7A651	RELAY-OVERDRIVE-12 V.-SORRY N/A	0.00
◀ 14685R	BEZEL-POWR SEAT SWITCHES	33.95	◀ 8600B	FAN-6 BLADE-NO THERMAL CLUTCH	33.50
New 15839	BRACKET-FORDOMATIC NEUTRAL SWITCH	19.95	New 9784	ROD ASY-ACL TO TRANS CONTL-57 AT	29.95
New 16916A	CABLE-HOOD RELEASE-LIKE ORIGINAL	27.75	New ARFMWH	RUBBER FLOOR MATS-PAIR-WHITE	29.95
New 16930B	BRACKT-HOOD REL CABLE-BLACK-57	7.95	New RULES	CTCI CONCOURS RULEBOOK	3.00
New 17279	ANGLE DRIVE-SPEEDO CABLE-55 & 56	119.95	X TBIRD2	"THUNDERBIRD"-BY BOYER-SORRY N/A	0.00
X 17450R	RETAINER-WIPER ARMS-SORRY N/A	0.00	New TLI	TOOL-SPECIAL FOR BEZEL NUTS	5.95
New 17537C	CLIP-WASHER PEDAL RETAINER	1.00	New TRUCK90	CTCI WINROSS TRUCK-1990	55.00
New 19000B	PAINT-ENGINE-CORRECT RED/ORANGE	4.25	New YBLOCK	Y-BLOCK BOOK	12.95

**Key -**

X = NOT AVAILABLE  
 ◀ = PRICE INCREASE  
 ▶ = PRICE DECREASE  
 NEW = NEW ITEM



## Parts Problem

### Non-Vented Gas Caps

The T-Bird gas cap must be vented to allow air to enter the tank. If air cannot get into the tank a vacuum will be created which will stop the flow of fuel to your engine and in it's worse case will actually collapse the tank.

You can be sure you have a non-venting cap if, when you remove the cap after running your engine for a while, you hear a sucking sound as air rushes into the tank. Modern cars do this and it's not a problem apparently but with the little Birds the cap must be vented.

The '57 T-Bird caps have a small hole drilled into it and the 1955 and 1956 caps have a rib stamped into the surface which will allow air to enter from the outside edge of the cap to the center.

Years ago we saw reproduced '57 caps that were not drilled and lately we have seen some '55 & '56 caps where the inside diameter of the gasket is so small that it prevents the vent process.

These '55 & '56 caps are easily fixed by removing the gasket and increasing it's inside diameter by simply cutting it with a pair of scissors. Removing just a little bit should do the trick.

## ThunderEnlightening Back Issues

Here we are doing only issue #3 and we are already getting requests for copies of issues #1 and #2. Yes we do still have some available. If you want one just let us know and we'll be glad to send it along with your next order as long as the supplies last. No charge of course.

## Unadvertised Special

**Free** UPS SURFACE SHIPPING FOR ALL ITEMS EXCEPT WHEELS AND TIRES TO ALL POINTS IN THE U.S.A.

DECEMBER 1990 SHIPMENTS ONLY.

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This publication is prepared and published by Classic Auto Supply Co. Inc. for the owners of 1955, 1956, & 1957 Ford Thunderbird automobiles. It is provided without cost to its current active customers.

Readers are encouraged to submit shop tips and articles for publication. Each submission printed will earn for its author the gratitude of Classic T-Bird owners around the world and a \$20.00 gift certificate from Classic Auto Supply Co. We reserve the right to edit any submission.

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