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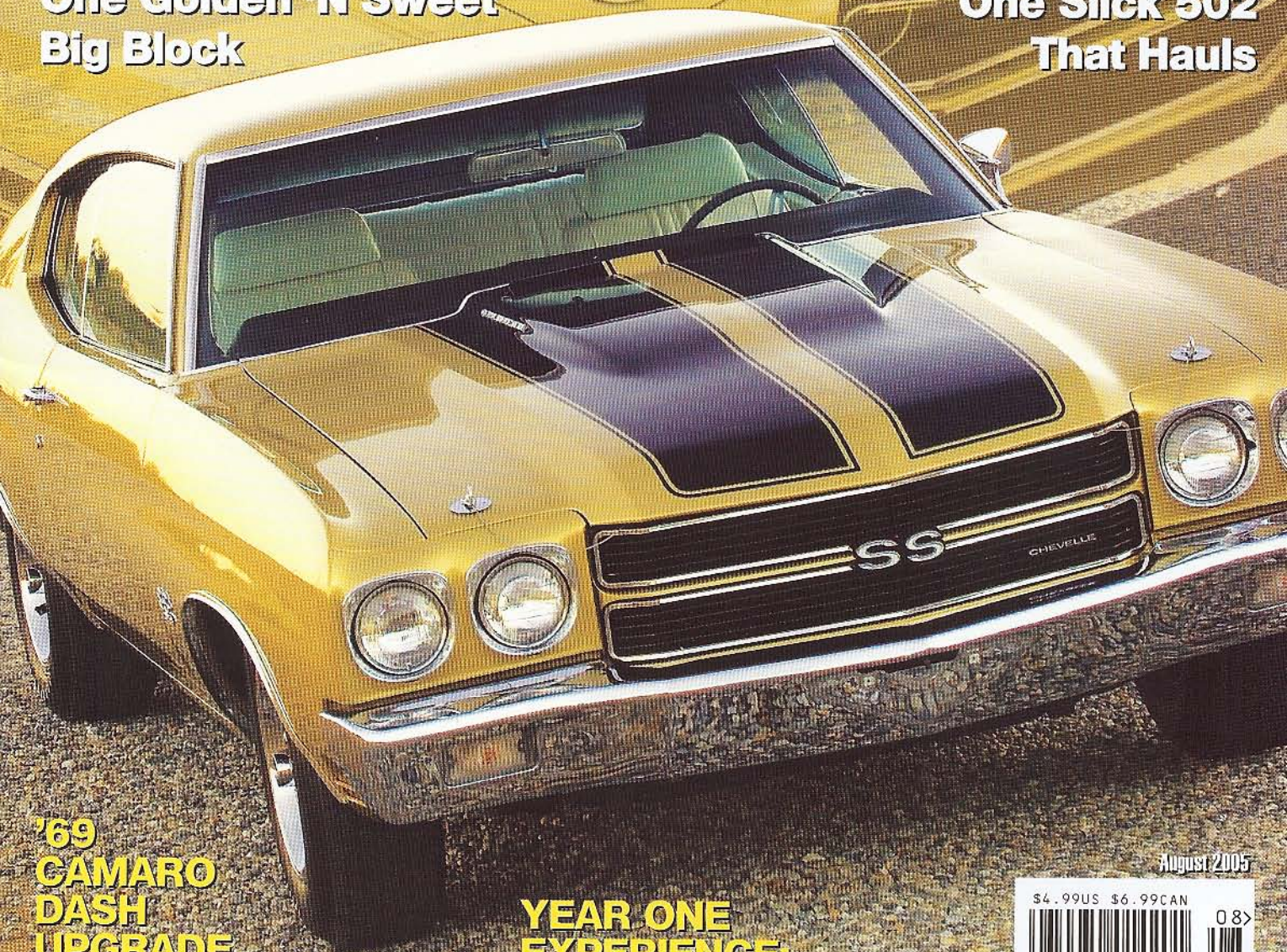
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CUSTOM LINES

Plumbing a Custom Chevy

Over the course of time, many of us have had to repair or replace a factory fluid or hydraulic line on our Chevrolets. Further, many of us who have totally resurfaced or modified our Chevys in one way or another have had to address its upgraded plumbing needs. "Should I leave the brake lines as they are? What about the airbag suspension lines—should they be hard-plumbed or soft lines? And what about those power steering lines, transmission coolant lines and the all important fuel delivery and/or return lines?"

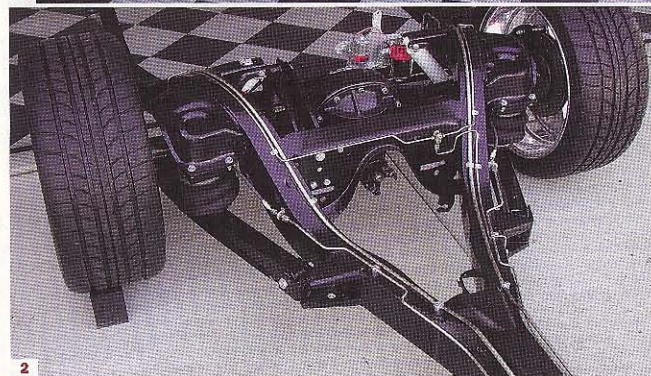
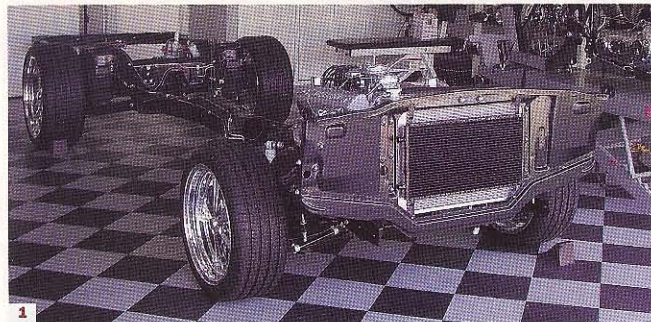
All in all, this is a fairly easy subject to grasp, and you would think it that it would be relatively easy to do and make the proper decisions. Well, think again. It takes tooling, a complete array of pipe-bending tools; perhaps a machine or two to make custom line brackets and persona gray matter full of knowledge. And in no way can one magazine article cover it all. It takes many such topics to cover the wide array of possibilities and safety and performance tips. Here are but a few, and we will be back with many more.

Thanks to Fab-Tech Race Shop & Fabrication, we got the inside word to check out a top facility, which does nothing

but automotive, boat and motorcycle plumbing. These types of shops are hard to find, so write this one down. Locally, guys are so blown away that someone actually does this work that owner Mark Bohlen has become very busy. He does special fuel lines for all sorts of installations—tunnel ram intake manifolds, semi or completely hidden lines and custom lines for every engine accessory, both factory-installed and aftermarket. If you've tried this on your own, then you understand the thought and patience that it takes to get all of the variables just right, and when you don't, you do it over.

After a series of visits, we came away

with a better understanding of exactly what machinery and different tooling were necessary for Bohlen to create virtually anything out of one form of tubing or another. From re-creating badly engineered aftermarket air conditioning lines, to creating polished stainless steel transmission and fuel lines to large diameter/tight bend tunnel ram lines from scratch, there isn't anything that Bohlen hasn't seen or done when it comes to plumbing. In business for a number of years, Bohlen also mentioned that he can create just about anything for anyone anywhere, and he already has. FedEx and UPS can ship the stuff



1 This is one-half of Bill Gannon's superb garage. A Harley soft tail shares space along with a Moto-X two-stroke bike. 2 The '61 frame was rust-free. Gannon had it bead-blasted then painted satin black. Every line was placed with exact purpose and precision placement. The airbag suspension allows for about nine inches of suspension height adjustment.

throughout the USA to wherever it is needed.

Many plumbing jobs can be done in a number of ways. All you really need to know are pipe and thread sizes. You can sketch exactly your needed line on a long tubular roll of paper, or make an angular-exact duplicate out of coat hanger wire or an equivalent. Dimensions, length and a photo of going from "A" to "B" are what Bent Fabrication needs to create a custom line (or lines) for a mail order customer. Also, their multi-door facility is plenty big enough for customers to bring their entire frame and/or chassis in for precise line fabrication. This is exactly what this '61 Impala Sport Sedan owner did. Bill Gannon brought his super rare two-door with rear window overhang in for a complete makeover, and it is now in its final stages of completion. Here are some photos taken at both Bent Fabrication and Gannon's home garage.

Gannon's idea of custom lines fell under the "Do It Right" category. And we expect that plenty of you fall into this same

category. Seldom do we see a nice Chevy today with funky, poorly-done brake, fuel and accessory lines. So for those of you contemplating a Chevy refurbishment, we think this story may be an eye-opener and a learning tool to ensure that you approach this important element of car building properly. If you plan to soon sell your Chevy or enter it in a car show, this custom plumbing work adds nicely to your Chevy's resume. For plumbing questions, feel free to contact Mark Bohlen at Bent Custom High Performance Fuel & Brake System Fabrication. He's loaded with information. **CR**

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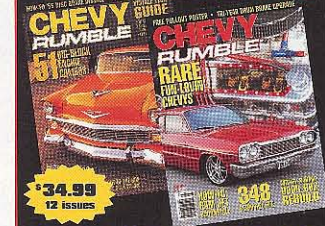
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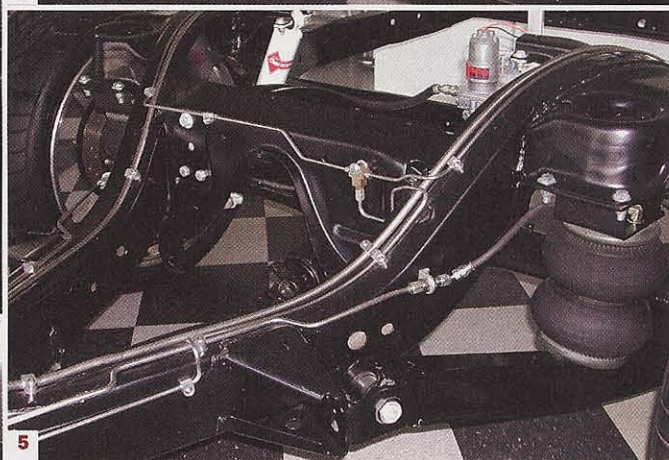




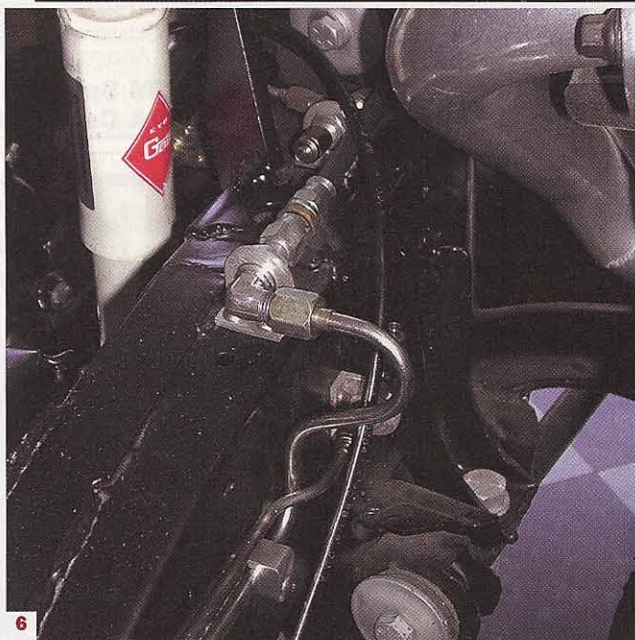
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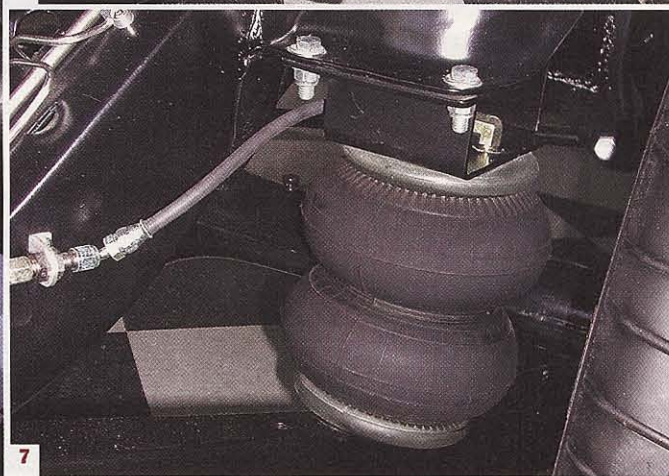
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3 Gannon went with polished stainless steel transmission cooler lines to the aluminum radiator. **4** There is no book-on line or bracket placement. What you see here was Mark Bohlen's creativity. No doubt, line creativity has been taken a few rungs up the creativity ladder. **5** After admiring everything, note the airbag line and its exact placement. Total travel has to be taken into account so the line does not tear apart or bind. **6** This photo reveals the type of work and tubing bends that Bent High Performance Fabrication is capable of. Look Mom, no kinks! **7** Gannon did a nice job installing his airbag suspension. We've seen them lots of ways, even crooked, and have also seen the tire so close it could (and they have) rub the airbag when turning a corner. This, as you know, will result in a flat bag with no air. The recent move is to hard-line them. **8** The long stainless steel line goes from the onboard air compressor mounted in the trunk to the airbags. This makes for a very nice and safe installation.



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