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All the lines you see on this Tom Nelson racing engine were Mark Bohlen-built from scratch. Regular metal lines do not have the molecular structure for polishing. Stainless steel lines do, and they have the added benefit of retaining a shine.

THE ART OF CUSTOM PLUMBING

FROM AIRBAGS TO TWIN TURBOS, HERE'S HOW IT'S DONE.

By Doug Marion Photos by the author

Most of us have, at one time or another, installed an aftermarket carburetor fuel line of some sort—plus all the springs, brackets, rubber and steel hoses, and special ends. This story goes several steps above that.

That's because we seldom get to see a custom frame on a hot Chevy and one-off fuel lines on fuel-injected, mega-horsepower engines. To begin with, you might think the task of fabricating custom, aircraft stainless steel, seamless lines would be fairly easy. Think again.

It takes a complete array of pipe-bending tools, a machine to craft custom brackets and yes,

some experience wouldn't hurt either. Come with us as we visit a full-on fabrication shop that does all of the above on a daily basis.

Bent Custom and Performance is the company, and Mark Bohlen is the owner and head craftsman. BCP is actually a full-service, custom facility covering everything—mostly for modified vehicles—where custom work is, of course, the norm. This includes fuel

lines for tunnel ram intake manifolds, as well as semi- or completely hidden lines on customs for every accessory, both factory and aftermarket.

After many visits over the years, we've seen Bohlen do everything from re-engineer badly designed aftermarket air-conditioning lines to creating polished stainless steel transmission and fuel lines to large-diameter/tight-bend tunnel ram induction lines. From scratch.

He also does exposed or hidden nitrous oxide induction lines. Specifically, Bohlen says, there's not a whole lot that he hasn't seen or done, and he claims he can create anything for anyone, anywhere.

Most automotive plumbing jobs can be done in a number of ways. First, you need to know the pipe and thread sizes. Then you can sketch your metal line on a long roll of paper, or make an angular-exact duplicate out of coat hanger wire or an equivalent.

Dimensions, length and a photo starting at "A" and going to "B" is what Bent Fabrication needs to create these lines. Its facility is also big enough for customers to bring their entire frame and/or rolling chassis in for precise line fabrication.

That's what '61 Impala sport sedan owner Bill Gannon and '57 Bel Air owner Curtis McDowell did. Work on their rides is shown in this story. During our latest visit to Bent Custom and Performance, we also saw two street rods, a trick '64 Chevy pickup, two '66 Chevy IIs, and a '53 Chevy, all in for serious, custom work.

Nelson Racing Engines is located close by, and Bohlen has been known to work around the clock to fabricate—from scratch—fuel injection lines, twin turbo oil lines, and much more on street engines with more than 400 hp, up to 700 ci race engines with more than 4,000 hp.

Enjoy our photos. They best tell the tale about Bent Custom and Performance and its engine and chassis custom line fabrication.

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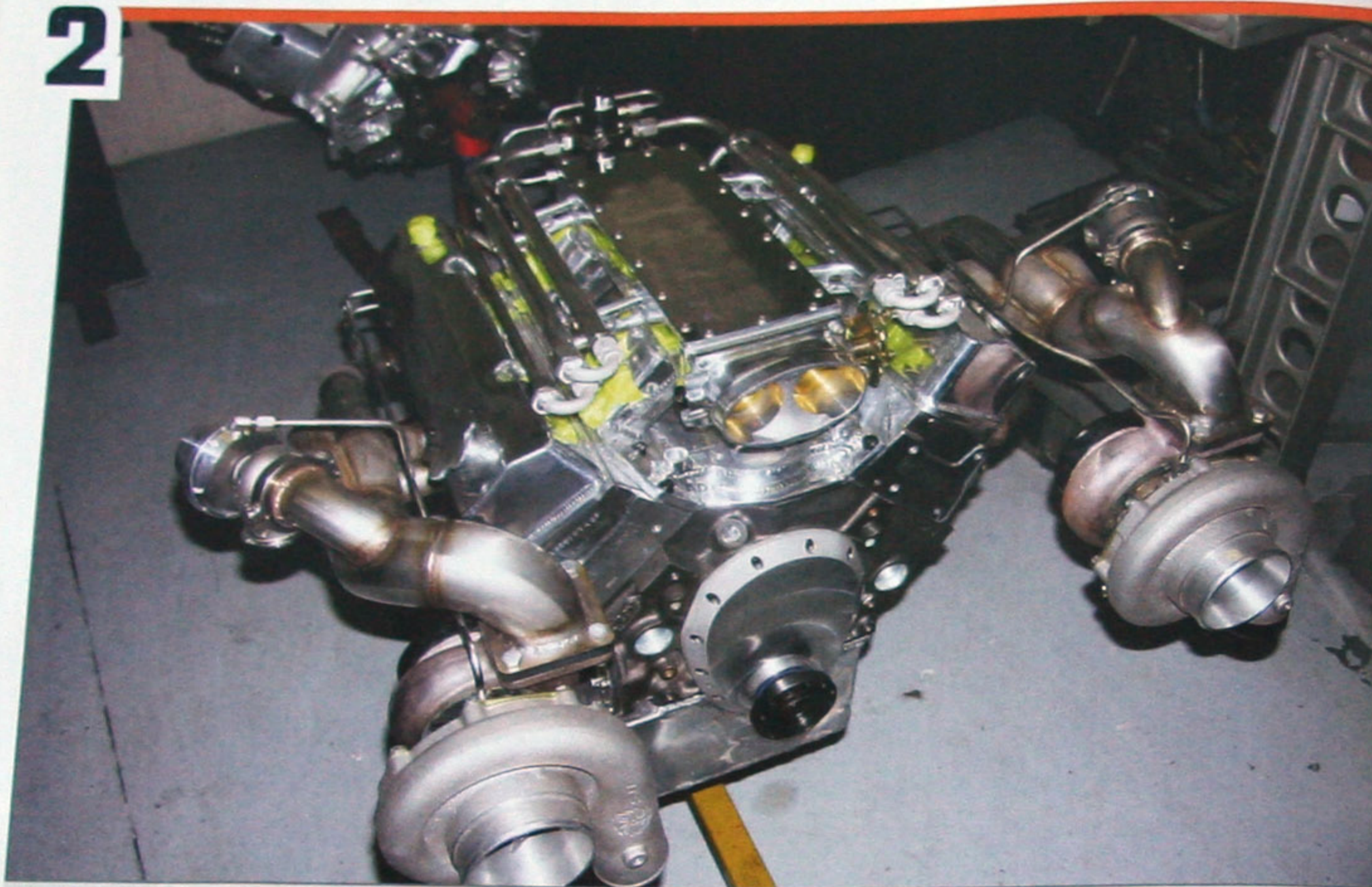
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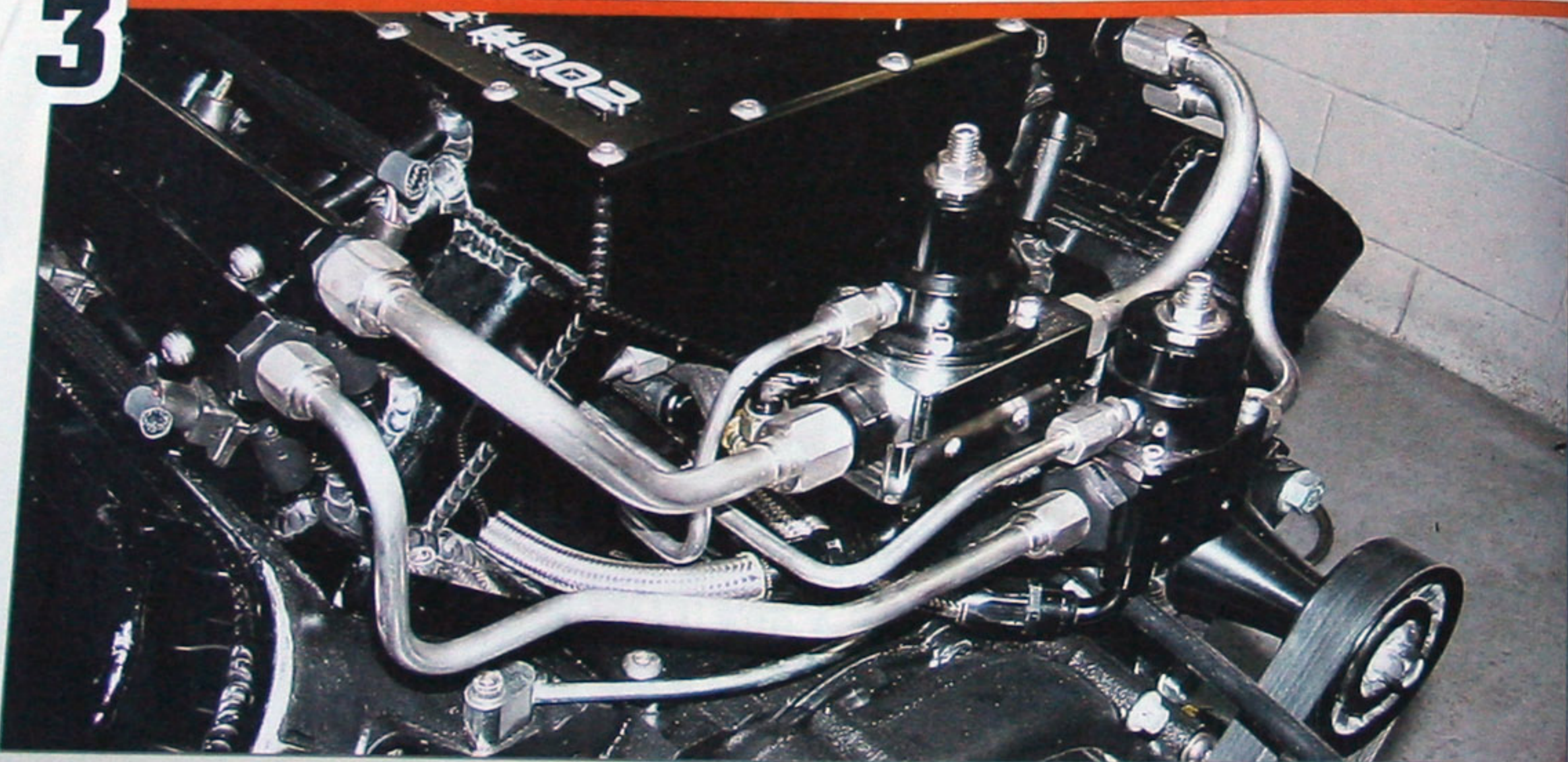
70 Series™ Big-Block II™

2



The Tom Nelson engine features twin turbochargers with Bent Custom and Performance oil lines and more. It will produce around 800 hp with only 6 psi boost pressure. Nelson said it could handle up to 20 psi.

3



Here are Mark Bohlen-built lines on the Tom Nelson Racing Engine LSX 427 Chevy #002.

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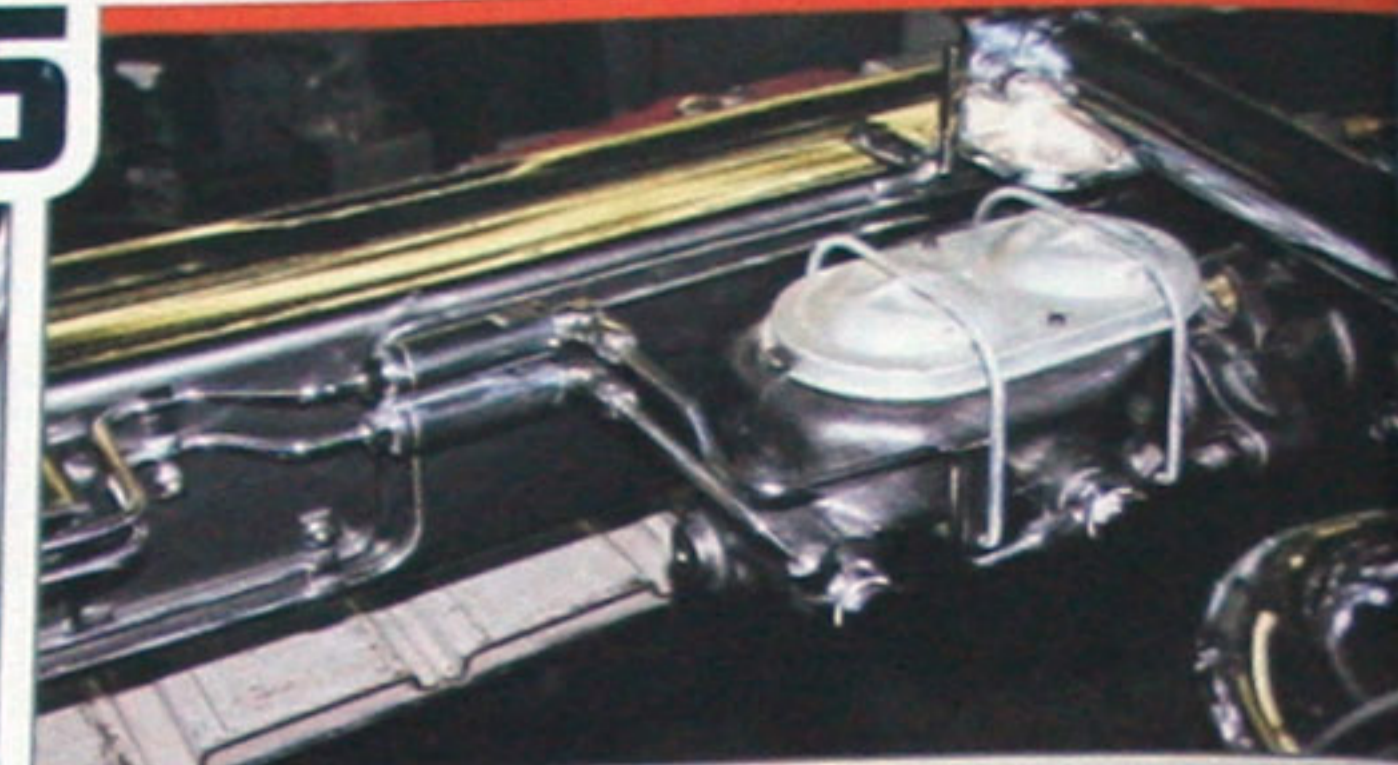
TECH CUSTOM PLUMBING

4



This photo of Bill Gannon's '61 "X" frame fully dramatizes Bent Custom and Performance's brake, fuel and airbag lines. We feel your mental gears starting to roll.

5



Because the master cylinder sits lower than the rear brake calipers, two round side-by-side fluid-check valves were installed to keep the fluid from flowing back into the master cylinder.

6



All three metal lines run parallel—even during bends. Notice the custom brackets.

7



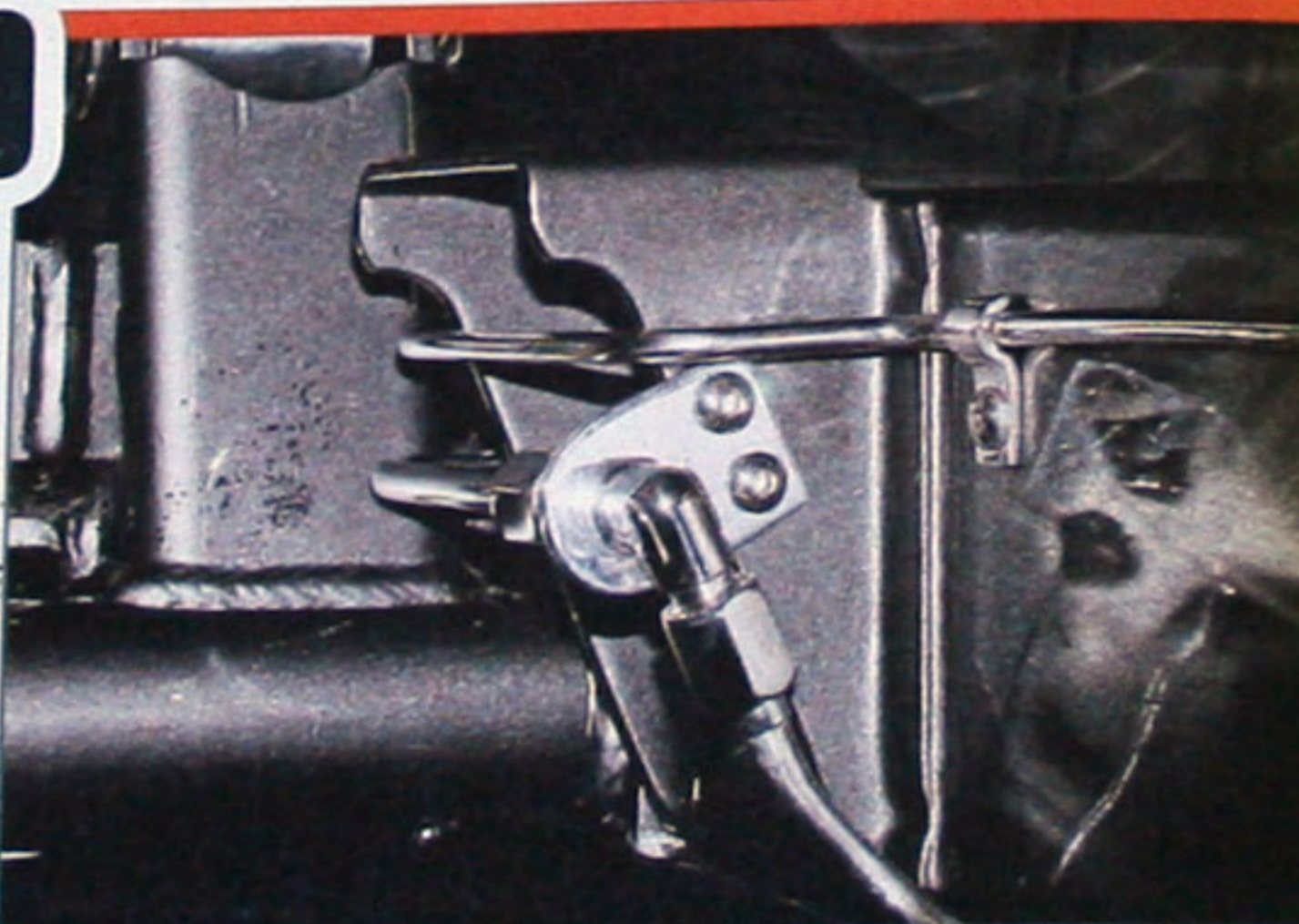
Gannon's automatic transmission has to/from Bent Fabrication metal lines attached to the radiator-side cooling tank. Note that everything is expertly positioned and exact.

8



Curtis McDowell's '57 Bel Air frame is a powdercoated work of art. See how the lines were created and positioned to visually fit to perfection.

9



McDowell's stainless steel lines are polished while the fittings are chrome plated.

SOURCES

BENT CUSTOM AND PERFORMANCE
818/701-6147
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NELSON RACING ENGINES
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