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1985 Pontiac T1000 - Stop Giggling, Spectators
The Advantage Of A Favorable Power-To-Weight Ratio Is Personified In A 301-Powered '85 T1000

By Kevin DiOssi
Photography by Don Keefe, Thomas A. DeMauro

One look at the Pontiac T1000 is enough to bring a chuckle to any hard-core Pontiac performance enthusiast-including its owner.



Built off the Chevrolet

Chevette platform, it's not regarded as a killer performer by any means. That's because its motivation came from a series of inline-four engines, none of which made respectable power. There are, however, two upsides to this subcompact-it's a featherweight, and it has rear-wheel drive. In the wrong hands, the T1000 can become pretty crazy. Enter Bob Humbrecht.

As owner of Casual Restorations in Hatfield, Pennsylvania, 42-year-old Bob is no stranger to building spectacular Pontiacs, although the T1000 is a departure from his normal creations. A touch of humor was invested in this three-week project. "It was built for the fun of it-you have to laugh at yourself," he says. Along with the chassis of choice getting little respect, the same can be said for the powerplant, a Pontiac 301, which is not known for being the strongest engine (Bob has several snapped crankshafts as proof). Nevertheless, he was intrigued by the idea of cramming the small-journal V-8 into the tiny engine bay.

A common swap for Chevettes has been small-block Chevys. Knowing that these were capable of fitting, Bob began doing his homework and taking measurements. He found that the Pontiac engine wasn't larger than a small-block Chevy by more than an inch in any direction.

According to Bob, very little was actually required to fit the 301. The motor mounts for the inline-four were cut out and replaced with those from a First-Gen Firebird. Spacers were made to lower the steering rack and sway bar in order to clear the oil pan, and a custom alternator mount was employed. It's a tight squeeze, but it clears.

Finding a healthy engine wasn't hard. "I owned a 'little-old-man car' '79 Grand Prix, and I was about to swap the 301 for a 455 anyway," he says.

Because of the light weight of the T-Body-2,225 pounds to be exact-Bob didn't feel the need to enhance the power of the 301 much. Even in stock trim at 150 net horsepower, the 301 pumps out considerably more grunt than the inline-four. To that end, aside from the installation of a used 273/289-degree duration 067 cam with 0.410/0.413-inch lift on a 113.5-lobe separation, the internals are entirely stock. Topped off with a pair of as-cast No. 01 cylinder heads with tiny 1.72/1.50 valves, 1.50:1-ratio rockers, and stock chambers, the engine produces 8:1 compression.

A 600-cfm Edelbrock carburetor was mounted to the factory intake via a Q-jet to Holley adapter that was milled to match the stock manifold angle and installed upside down. Jets are 0.098/0.095 inch, and the metering rods are 0.075 inch. The air cleaner is from a '67 GTO; it may be the most valuable part on the car given today's collector market. A pair of log-style exhaust manifolds flow into a custom 21/2-inch Y-pipe exhaust that runs a single muffler on the street, which is removed at the track.

For the spark delivery, an MSD Pro Billet distributor, a Crane Hi-6 amplifier, and an MSD coil fire things up via Taylor wires and Autolite plugs. Timing is set to 32 degrees total. The radiator support was trimmed to fit a larger radiator, and an electric fan was installed to cool things down.

Sitting behind the Pontiac mill is a rebuilt Metric 200 three-speed automatic transmission with a used 2,000-stall Level 10 torque converter out of a Grand National. The spider gears were welded inside the stock 6.5-inch 3.36:1-gearred rearend to create a "poor man's posi." This worked fine until it sheared off the yoke at the pinion. Bob repaired it, and the car still runs the same setup as he rolls the dice.



The Turbo 4.9 decals



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don't lie. A custom turbo setup will soon find a home under the hood.

synonymous with big power numbers, the light weight of the T1000 offsets the engine's inherent asthma. The heater core was retained, allowing Bob to drive the car comfortably during the winter, if it happens to see the road.

moved to the rear of the car to save space for the V-8. Because of this, an NHRA battery cut-off was installed and is seen poking through the rear bumper.

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Weighing 2,500 pounds with driver, this '85 T1000 ran 14.41 at 92.09 mph- its best of 12 passes- at an HPP Shootout. The Pontiac was launched at idle, short time was 2.10, shift point was 5,300 rpm, and the homemade posi was failing. Bob Humbrecht reports it had run 13.87 at 97.15 at Atco prior to this outing.

There's not much to see here. Everything has been stripped; only the driver seat remains, greatly reducing weight. An Auto Meter tachometer lets Bob know when he's getting close to the 5,300-rpm shift point.

Konig Helium wheels measure 15x6.5 inches and wear Falken Aenis 205/50R15 tires. Sitting behind them are stock 9.69-inch disc brakes up front and 7.87-inch rear drums.

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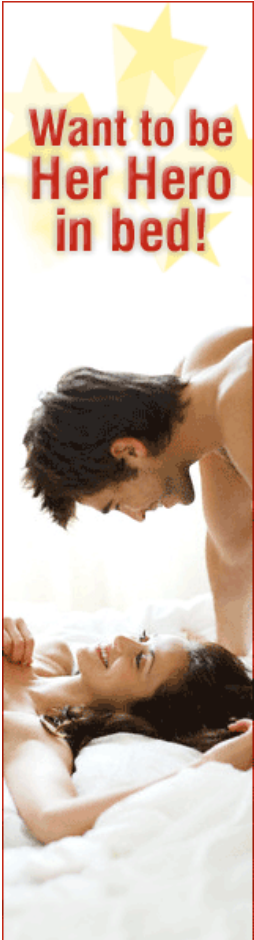
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Home » 1985 Pontiac T1000 - Stop Giggling, Spectators » body chassis



Want to be Her Hero in bed!

1985 Pontiac T1000 - Stop Giggling, Spectators

Suspending the T1000 is a mostly stock chassis with springs pilfered from a four-door A/C donor car. The front shock towers were moved inward to clear the tires, and Car Quest shocks were bolted in all around. The first time out at the track, Bob wasn't able to keep the back end from feeling like it wanted to swap places with the front. His solution came from a most unorthodox source: a modified BMW rear sway bar.

The body is all stock and painted similar to an '80 Turbo T/A Pace Car; a turbo T/A scoop was even added to the hood. Bob says it certainly hints at the future plans for the T1000, which involve a custom turbo setup to increase the output a tad. As if it doesn't already garner loads of attention, the addition of a turbo under the hood would most definitely please the swarm of curious spectators at the track.

"When I race, I get laughs and sneers-at first," Bob says. "My buddies tell me about some of the comments and jokes they hear while sitting in the stands. These usually end when I do a burnout and you hear the throaty V-8. By the time I come back around and park the car, there's a group waiting to greet me and ask questions."

The interior was stripped, leaving only the bare essentials, such as the factory driver seat, while an Auto Meter tachometer relays an accurate engine speed back to Bob.

While 95 percent of the work was performed by Bob, Tony DiMatino did the welding. Things came down to the wire as they rushed to complete the car before racing at Norwalk a few years back. It was finished at the track thanks to the hands of many racers and friends, including Kevin Mohan and Darin Stein. Paul Spotts helped Bob literally tie up a few loose ends in the wiring as well. Countless others were there to offer their help, including an anonymous person who left the track, bought parts, and refused any form of payment when he returned. "Pontiac racers rock!" Bob says.

His car fired up for the first time at the track and ran a pitiful 17.9-second e.t., banging off the 6,000-rpm rev limiter three times. By Sunday, Bob had figured out a few things. He was able to outrun a 400-powered Grand Prix in time trials and even went a round in the race.

Today, Bob's Pontiac is dialed-in as a consistent 13- to low-14-second ride. He loves the attention and reactions from people at the track as much as he enjoys racing the car. "My favorite thing about it is that it actually works," he says. As you can see, Bob's T1000 is no laughing matter once it hits the traps.



Here's the proud owner, Bob "Hot Lap" Humbrecht.

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