

DRIVING OLD CARS

'38 PACKARD FRONT SEAT RESTORATION Page 4

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SOUTHERN WHEELS



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Pontiac

'65 GTO 2 dr, 389, auto, 703-727-4935



Chevrolet

'51 Bel Air, 2 dr, 350, 818-591-1313



Thunderbird

'57, 312, auto, \$29,500, 740-949-2217



Studebaker

'56 Golden Hawk, 352, 818-591-1313

42nd YEAR

42nd YEAR

42nd YEAR

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42nd YEAR

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SOUTHERN WHEELS



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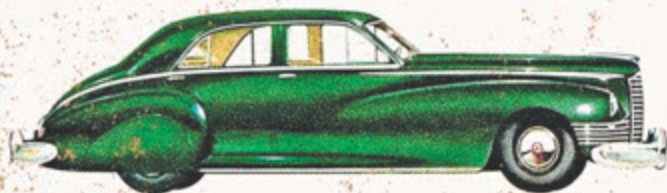
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ASK THE MAN WHO OWNS ONE



PACKARD
Super Clipper

42nd YEAR!

SOUTHERN WHEELS

MAGAZINE



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JOHNSON PUBLISHING

And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you: That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing. 1 Thess. 4:11, 12

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- ANSWERS TO CAR QUIZ : 1. True, 2. True 3. True 4. True 5. True 6. True 7. False (1926), 8. True, 9. True, 10. True
- ANSWERS TO MATCH GAME: 1-F, 2-C, 3-A, 4-D, 5-E, 6-G, 7-B, 8-H, 9-I, 10-J
- ANSWER TO "POP'S GARAGE": The rear brake hoses weren't replaced. The right rear hose had collapsed internally and was allowing the fluid to go one way, but not return!

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MAY 2026


SOUTHERN WHEELS 1

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1938 Packard

Restoration of the FRONT SEAT

by Ron Carpenter



I have by now, pretty much finished the 1938 Coupe with the exception of the front seat. It is original and needs far more help than I can give it. Needs a real upholster to finish the job. I am currently using a 1940 front sedan seat and it barely fits in the car. I just have to wait until Armand has time to devote to the seat. This is not something that you can just stop anytime and start up again and when it is done I know it will be beautiful.

Number 1
The front seat is a split seat where the seat backs bend forward so you can get in to the back. So I will start with the front seat frame and have it ready when the seat backs and cushions are ready I can install it.



Number 2
I started on the seat base by having it sand blasted. I inspected it for cracks before I primed and painted it. The seat frame has a number of pieces attached to it. Some of the pieces are painted and

some covered are in fabric. I had previously removed all the upholstered pieces off the seat and I am started to cover the pieces.

Number 3
I have pictured two pieces for the seat frame. I am covering them with the material that will be on the seat when it is finished.



Number 4
I have a number of the pieces on the frame and you can see that a lot of the frame is finished.



Number 5
I have placed the seat release in the frame and this is what it looks like. It is held in with a screw and a cotter pin attaches it to the track.



Number 6, 6A
I have the everything painted now and the metal pieces are attached. All ready for the seat backs to be installed.



Number 7
The first thing I have to do is make some bolts for the seat to pivot on. So I start with a piece of 3/4 inch cold rolled steel. I chuck it up in the lathe and start getting the basic dimensions cut out.



Number 8
I have the sample bolt out of my 40 sedan seat and I have the blue die on the rolled steel material. I made sure that I have the same bolt for both the 1938 and 1940.



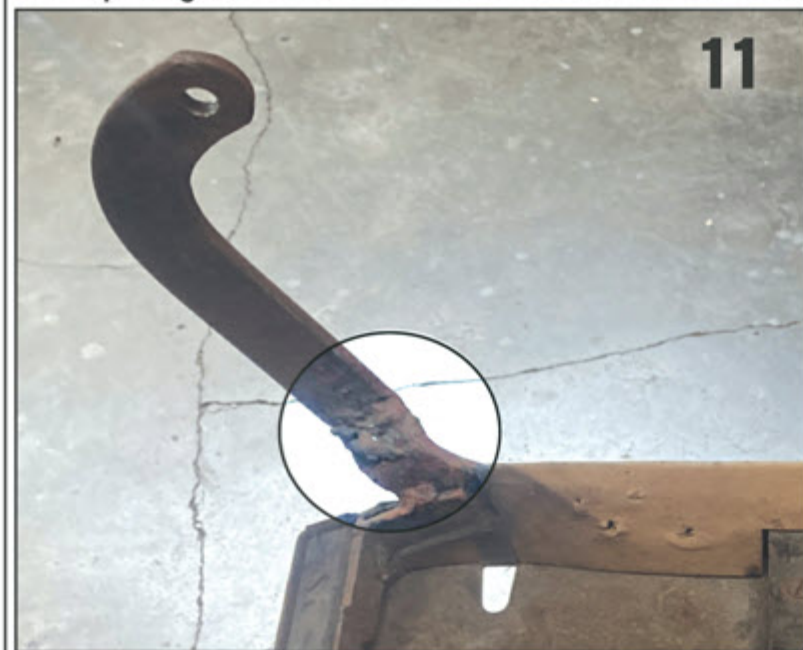
Number 9
I have added the threads to the sample and I will need to test it first before I finish the bolts.

Number 10
I am testing to see if the bolts have the right clearance on them before I finish them.



I want to be sure that the seat backs are lined up once they are upholstered so I need to put them on the seat back. I had previously noticed that the arm on the drivers seat back had been broken and then welded. I had already surmised that the coupe had been hit very hard one time in its life. That was when I

was repairing the left rear side of the car. I had extensive repairs to do the car rear quarter. When I put the two (passenger and drivers seat backs) together they were way off so I had some more repairs to do.



Number 11
The left rear quarter was hit hard sometime in its life and apparently it had broken the seat back. SO, I have to repair the drivers seat back arm before I can continue.



Number 12
I am testing to see if the seat back line up and using a big screw driver as my pivot point and I will have to make this bolt also. Things do get lost when you take a car apart and it is put together 40 years later.

Number 13
The arms did not line up so my solution was to adjust the stops on the seat frame where the arms rest on the seat frame. The passenger side is just a

piece of rubber screwed to the seat frame like normal.

Number 14
The seat backs do not line up so I have to figure out a way to get the seat backs to at least line up at the top of the seat. I have made a metal and sandwiched it between the rubber stop and the frame. The rubber is to cushion the back when it comes down.

I have been driving the coupe with a sedan seat until I get my coupe seat finished and it just takes a while to have that happen but I have the seat in the upholstery shop now so getting closer now.



When I did the front suspension I made a change for the upper outer bushings. The original bushings were steal clad rubber inside and they have to be pressed in. I consulted my good friend Don Figone, who has been dealing with Packards for over 60 years and he said the only difference in the part numbers for the 1938 wheel support is that the 1940 used a rubber bushing and a steel sleeve. So when I put the 1938 together I made my own bushings just like the 1940 Packard suspension bushings..

Number 15
This is usually all that is left when you start on the upper outer bushings. The steel clad portion is still in the arm.

Number 16

The lower inner bushings are the same kind and I will also swap them over to the later 1940 bushings as well. All of which are replaceable and don't require using a press to press them in and out.



When using the original steel clad bushings you have to identify when you install them where the "Flat" surfaces are going to end up, so that you don't tear the bushings up when the bushings find the "neutral" position. The pins in the steel clad bushings need to be in a neutral position so when the suspension flexes it doesn't over twist the bushings. Think about when you hold your index finger with you other hand and twist the finger it wants to come back the the neutral position... where it is not being twisted.

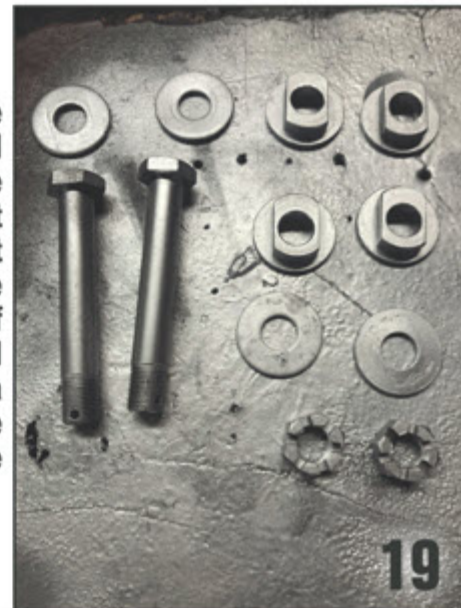
Number 17
These are what I am going to use. You can buy these bushings and I like to make them out of urethane.



Number 18
When I was doing a lot of work on these series of Packards I would buy the bushings in bulk from Suspension Restoration Parts in Modesto California. Their phone number is 209 578 5101. For the upper outer I would order the part number 2102 and machine them down to make them look like the 1940 part. They supply a lot of urethane bushings and have them in various sizes so just ordered what I could machine down. Replacing these bushings are a lot cheaper this way.



Number 19
These are a full set of the upper outer bolts, washers and camber adjusters. These are original upper outer bolts but I have used a 5/8 grade 8 bolt as a replacement. The adjusters have a hole that is off set and they can be a Neutral setting or offset 1/16 inch for a total of 5/16 offset for alignment purposes. For every 1/3 degree of alignment you change the adjusters to make it right. These are what I used on the 1938 front end.



Number 20

I have laid out all the individual offsets that are available. The difference between the small washers and the large is that they use the small washers on the earlier cars. The washers are spot welded to the adjusters. Sometimes the washers come loose from the spot welds and that does not matter as the bolt centers it anyway.



Number 21

For extreme offsets needed they had this one. Sometimes when you're taking the upper outers out they rust together and you have to use the "Saw All" to cut the bolt. That is what the mark in the adapter is from, Saw All blade. When this adapter is used it always makes me think that there might be a bent wheel support.



Number 22

I make up the sleeves on the lathe as I need them.



Number 23

I always try and do the initial adjustment on the front end before I put the front clip on the car. I do this as there is nothing in the way for me. I find all the heavy metal I have in the shop such as the starters and generators and a couple large logs and just put as much on the front of the frame rails as I can. I am protecting my radiator with cardboard.



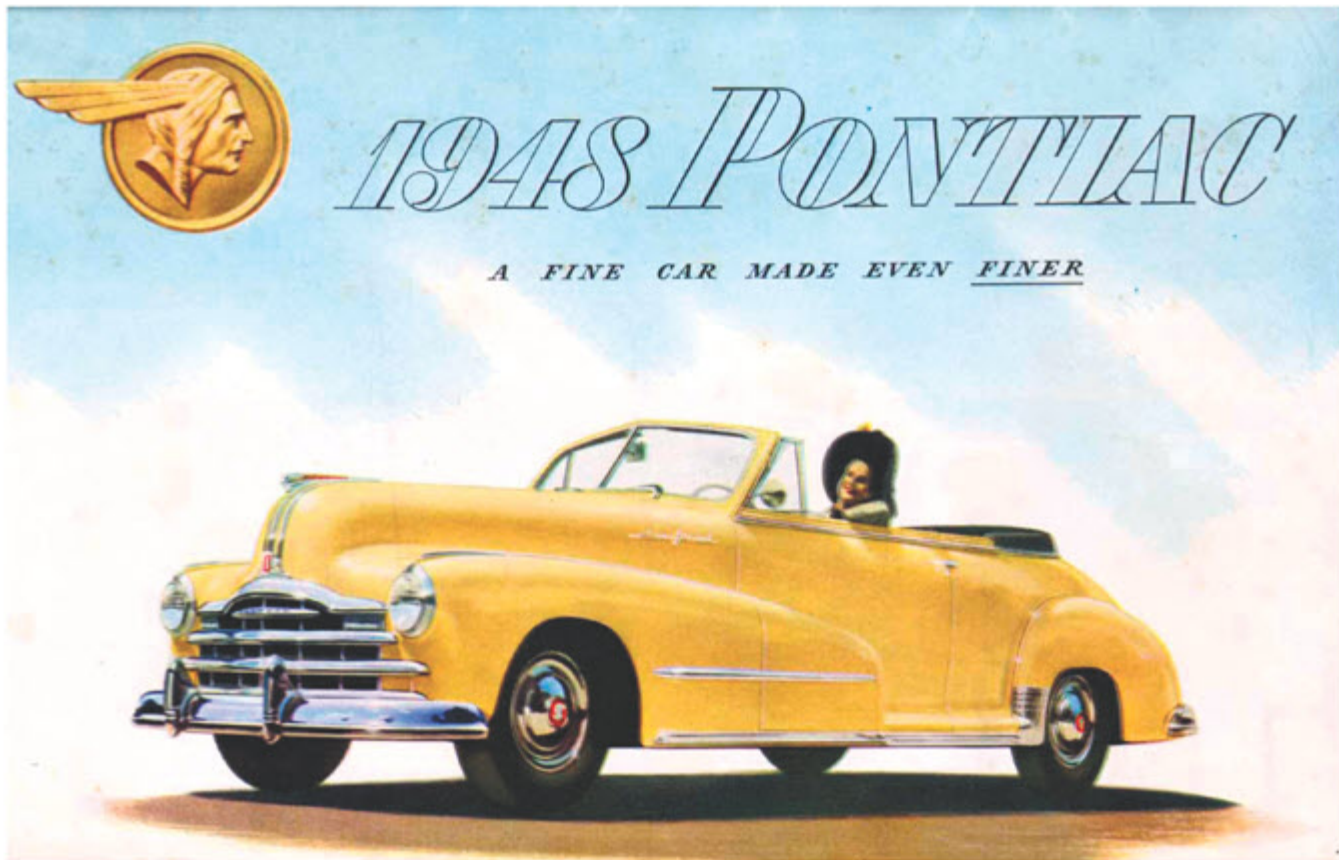
Number 24

Once I get set up I level my Fowler electronic protractor magnetic on the wood (that is level with the frame) and then I can just set the magnetic protractor on the face of the brake drum. This is what I will use to set the suspension to a positive 1/2 to 3/4 to 0 degrees. What I read from this is that means to me 1/2 degree plus or minus.

When I started working on these cars, years ago, I had a frame shop in Burlingame California that told me that they could align the front end on my 1938 4 door sedan (that I had at the time) and if it needed correcting they had a 20 ton jack that could bend the wheel support. Well, I learned very quickly that was not the way to align the car, it fixed one problem but creates other problems.



Once I had the 1938 on the road I took the car to my local alignment shop and told him to set the TOE and let me know what the upper camber was. The computer printout gives me the camber information. If I need to change the upper adjusters I can take the car home change the adjusters and put it back on the rack to once again set the toe. Changing the camber always affects the toe. I found that I was with in a third of a degree when I went in for alignment. I figured that I could just drive the car the way it was, close enough. Besides, once it had a few thousand miles on it it might change a little anyway.



Car Buddies

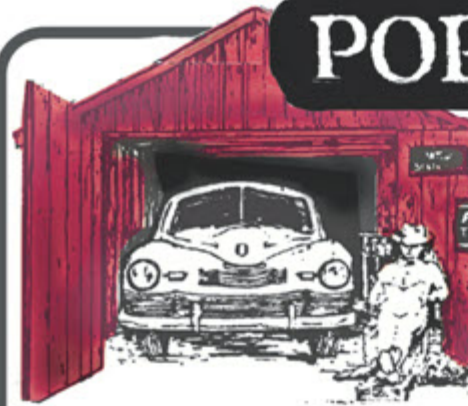


Brian Lane
Chickamauga, GA

Brian Lane has been a car buddy of ours for years! He gets his love of cars from his dad, Robert Lane, who has owned everything from a PT Cruiser to a '63 Studebaker Avanti! Brian came by to show us this great find—a 2023 Corvette Z06 with just 1500 miles! (He has clocked a few more already.) The car boasts 670 HP, with a 5.5 flat plane crank, 0-100 in just 5.9 seconds. He worried that his 6'4" would have trouble fitting into the Corvette, but he says it has good leg room and enough head room for him to wear a racing helmet as he took it around the Barber Motorsports Track in Birmingham, Alabama. After giving Bill a ride around North Georgia, Bill says it's the fastest car he's ever been in. Congratulations, Brian, and keep 'em driving!

POP'S GARAGE

... a few years back ...



It was early morning with the sun just coming up. Pop could hear his wife Bobbie fixing breakfast. It was peaceful, hearing her and listening to the cars with their drivers on their way to work. He could hear the sound of an early '50's Chevy singing as the driver shifted through the gears, and a rumble of a '53 Buick V-8 exhaust as it waited at the stop light in front of the house. *All the cars are unique. They all have their own sound and look. I hope it will always be that way,* Pop thought, as he sat down at the breakfast table.

Soon he was out at the shop and talking with Sandy, Tom, Jim and Ron. They were talking about when Tom and Sandy changed a clutch out in a '47 Nash 600 Super.

"It was before we started working here, and we had just a few tools and some cheap jack stands. You know the '47 600 had a torque tube and we had to pull the rear end back to release it from the transmission to get the clutch out. The car was jacked up and the jack stands were at each back wheel. We completely disconnected the rear end assembly and pushed it back from under the car," Tom said.

"Were you working on pavement?" Jack asked.

"Yes, it was Sandy's parents' driveway, which was blacktopped. Anyway, as we were removing the clutch disk, we heard a 'r-r-rkkk' sound and looked back as the rear of the Nash gently fell to the ground. One of the straps on the right jack stand's weld had pulled loose and the car came down. Fortunately, we rolled out from under just as it was coming down. No more cheap jack stands! We came over and got some good ones from you Pop, and finished the job!"

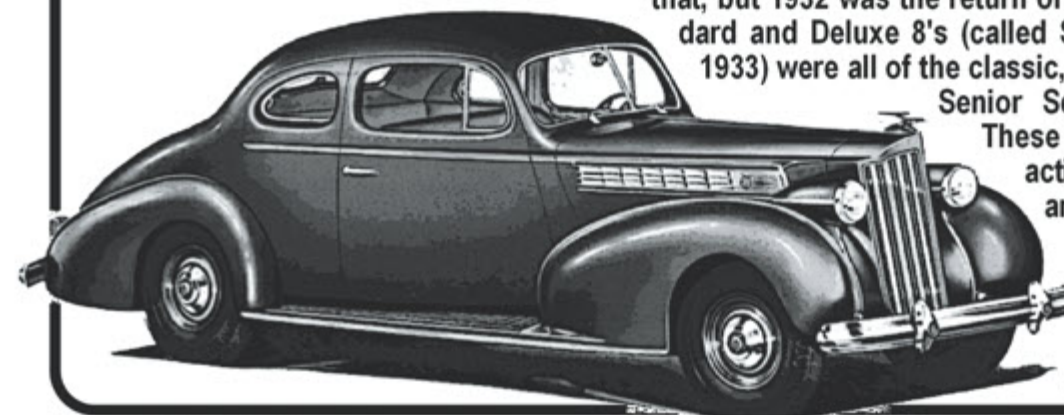
"I remember you getting those stands and now I know why!" Pop said. "Let's grab a Coke before we start on today's car."

"What's coming in today?" Tom asked.

"We're going to work on Jack's '39 Packard Super 8 Coupe," Pop said, as Jack pulled into Bay One. He got out and shook hands with his friends who were all admiring the car.

"I remember buying it after I got back from the Philippines after World War Two. It was on a car lot on Rossville Boulevard with \$250 on the windshield. I got it for \$175. It looked and ran new and had belonged to a family on Lookout Mountain. It was Packard Blue—a color Packard used for years. It looked black until you got it in direct sunlight, and then at the right angle, you could see some blue."

"It's a deep, strong color," Pop said, "and I still use it today. The '39 Super 8's and 12's symbolized the end of an era. In the '30's they were the 'big' Packards, known as the Senior Series. The Junior Series was made up of the smaller series Packards in a 120-Small 8 and a 115-Six. The '30's Senior Series could be broadly defined as 1932-1939. Big 8 Packards were built before and after that, but 1932 was the return of the V-12 and the Standard and Deluxe 8's (called Super 8's beginning in 1933) were all of the classic, Gothic design that the Senior Series was known for.



These cars were built to exacting standards in a separate assembly plant from the Junior Series. Both plants were on East Grand Boulevard in Detroit, but

(Continued on Page 23)

EVENTS

OH: Fairfield, July 11, Cincy Cool Cars Club Car Show, 301 Wessel Dr, Fairfield, OH, Rain or shine, each vehicle is \$20 to enter, Door prizes, Food truck, Music by J D Hughes, Trophies, in conjunction with Cincy Blues Fest. INFO: 513-795-3328.

TN: Pigeon Forge, September 17, 18, 19, at LeConte Center, presented by Atomic Speed Shop. Registration info can be found by visiting rodrunpigeonforge.com. Huge Swap Meet, Hundreds of Show Cars and Car Corral. Awards and Cash Giveaway. INFO: 865-687-3976.

IA: Monticello, Oct. 11, 7:30 AM to 1:00 PM, 42nd Annual Fall Auto Parts Swap Meet and Cars for Sale Corral, 7:30 AM to 1:00 PM. Fairgrounds Parking Lot, 700 North Maple St. Open to High Performance, Custom, Stock and Antique, (Domestic & Foreign parts, cars, truck & motorcycles) INFO: 319-465-5119.

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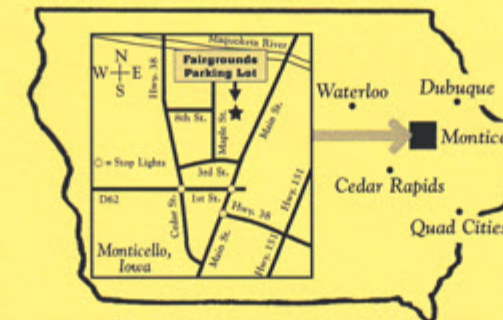
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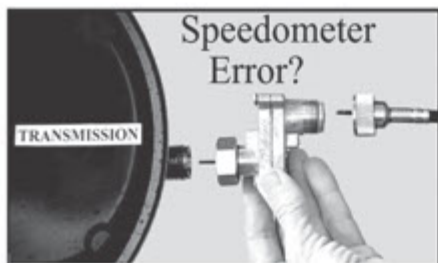
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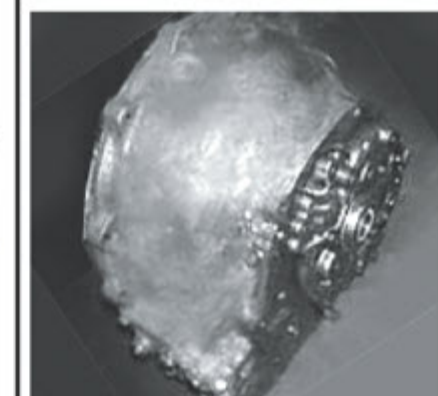
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CAR QUIZ

True or False:

1. The Packard 115 (six cylinder) was first introduced in 1937.
2. The last year for LaSalle was 1940.
3. The first year for Mercury was 1939.
4. Cord's last year was 1937.
5. The first year of Chevy's 216 six was 1937.
6. Packard's big 356 9-main-bearing straight 8 ran from 1940-1950.
7. Pontiac's first year was 1925.
8. Chevy trucks changed their pre-war vertical grill bar design to the new "Advanced Design" in mid-1947.
9. Ford's new "Y" block was introduced in 1954.
10. Ford's retractable top was new for '57.

(Answers on Page 1)



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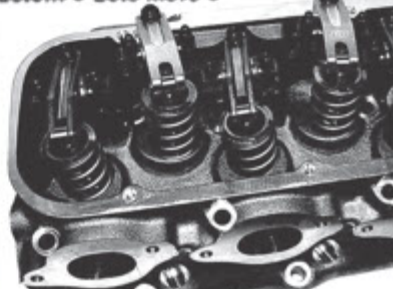
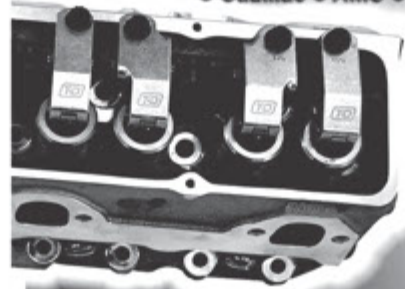
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