

GM Performance Parts Cover Stars



Dealership-created performance packages were an important part of Chevrolet's muscle car heritage. Names like Yenko, Nickey, Berger and others helped drive high-performance options, while enhancing the mystique of one-off collectables decades later. In fact, it was creative ordering on the part of dealers that created the infamous COPO Camaros of the late 1960s – cars available from those enterprising dealers, but not offered in any regular catalog or order guide.

More than 40 years later, a couple of dealers – DeNooyer Chevrolet in New York and Georgia's NeSmith Chevrolet – have rekindled the concept of using Chevrolet's own parts to create specialty Camaros that simply aren't offered in regular production. DeNooyer used GM Performance Parts' LSX cylinder block and other GMPP engine components to build a modern 454 engine for the Camaro SS, while NeSmith transplanted the supercharged LS9 engine from the Corvette ZR1 into their Camaro.

"These great Camaros exemplify the spirit of dealer-built super cars that grew out of the muscle car era," says Dr. Jamie Meyer, product integration manager for GM Performance Parts. "They are the COPO Camaros of the 21st century."

Both cars are featured on the cover the 2011 GM Performance Parts catalog.

The DeNooyer 454 Camaro, dubbed the HTR-SS454, takes the GMPP LSX454 crate engine (P/N 19244611) and adds a port fuel injection system to its LS7-style LSX six-bolt cylinder heads. The engine has an all-forged rotating assembly and an 11.0:1 compression ratio. A front end accessory drive system was added, too, along with a custom flywheel and ZR1 clutch matched to the six-speed manual transmission.

With the custom engine installed in the Camaro and properly tuned, chassis-dyno tested delivered a strong 515 horsepower and 513 lb.-ft. of torque at the rear wheels – or right about the

620-hp/590-lb.-ft. estimates from GMPP for the basic crate engine. The car's driveline was beefed up to handle the 200-hp increase over stock, too, with stronger axles and stiffer bushings throughout.

Using the engineering and building experience of Redline Motorsports, DeNooyer is offering the HTR-SS454 through its Albany, New York store. More information is available from Dan Carlton: 518-526-0412 or topgun1ice@aol.com

While the DeNooyer 454-powered Camaro evokes memories of yesteryear, NeSmith's LS9-powered "Storm" Camaro is pure modern performance, with the world-beating power of the Corvette ZR1 under the hood. It was created within the dealership's in-house customization facility, NeSmith Customs, with assistance from nearby Jim Jac's Restorations. NeSmith also happens to be one of the largest GMPP dealers in the country.

The LS9 is offered as a crate engine from GM Performance Parts (P/N 19201990) and, because of its similar LS-family architecture to the Camaro's original LS3 engine, easily slipped into the engine compartment – although some fabrication was necessary to accommodate the unique placement of some accessories, as well as the LS9's dry sump-style oiling system. But when the installation was completed, the engine looked factory-installed. And with a few minor upgrades, the engine is producing about 700 horsepower.

Like the DeNooyer HTR-SS454, the NeSmith Storm Camaro matches its greater performance capability with complementing drivetrain parts, including stronger axles and a Brembo brake system featuring six-piston calipers, front and rear.

NeSmith is offering the LS9-powered Storm Camaro as a special model through its dealership. More information is available from Steve Gordon: 912-739-5305 or sgordon@nesmithnow.com.