

Xtreme Measures

Part 3: The Finishing Touches

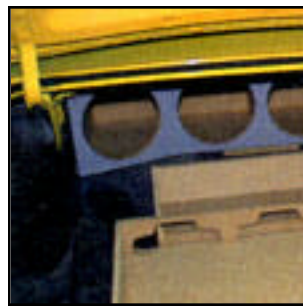
By Paul Morton

Photography By Shane Reichardt & Damon Lee

What better issue to finish off our biggest and baddest install ever than our August installation extravaganza. In part one of Xtreme measures (June 1999) we covered the sound deadening of our classic Chevelle, while part 2 (July 1999) had Mike Chang and the crew from Xtreme Audio building a set of fiberglass kick panels and installing a Pioneer source unit in an overhead console. We will be finishing off this trio of high-end how-tos with the bulk of our install that takes place in the trunk.

With a quartet of Alumapro Alchemy subs, a trio of Tube Driver amplifiers and a host of accessories from Lightning Audio, this muscle car was about to be put on psychacoustic steroids. Mike and the owner of the car were looking for a subtle install that would highlight all the trunk-mounted 12-volt gear nicely while still leaving room to haul tools, groceries and the like. Thus, with a little installation ingenuity, Mike was able to achieve his goal and in the end he created a competition quality sound system that looked right at home in our classic Chevrolet.

Follow along as the team at Xtreme audio finishes off our installation endeavor, and keep in mind that this sound system, or one like it, can be installed in any type of vehicle whether it's a stock commuter car or a classic Chevrolet like this one.



1 - The initial MDF speaker enclosure, amplifier rack and accessory trays were designed to house their respective products while fitting neatly into the trunk of our Chevelle.



2 - Constructed from 3/4-inch MDF, the sub enclosure was designed to house four 10-inch Alumapro Alchemy subwoofers. These speakers were chosen not only because they create immense amounts of bass with almost no enclosure, but also for their aluminum cones. All of the speakers in the vehicle have aluminum cones and this blends nicely with the car's nearly all billet aluminum power plant and the Tube Driver amps.



3 - Next, the initial base for the amplifier rack was taken back out of the car and lined with black carpet.



8. – Mike's crew was careful to fuse all the necessary power cables by way of various Lightning Audio products.



4 - Contact cement was applied to both the carpet and the amp rack. After it was set up (it only takes a few minutes) the rack was upholstered for good. Notice how the scrap piece of MDF was used to catch any overspray.



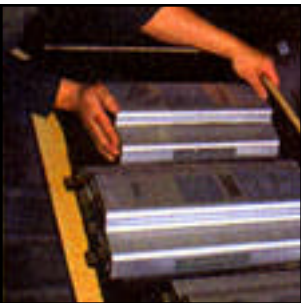
9. – They make all the hot gear.



5 - A sharp razor blade makes trimming the non-backed carpet a snap—although safety should always be an installer's first concern. This part of the amp rack sits toward the front of the vehicle and as you can see by the shape, the Tube Driver amps will actually protrude through this part of the rack.



10 – From the fuse and ground distribution blocks, 8-gauge cables were wired in and cut to length so that they could be wired directly to their respective amplifiers. Lightning makes this gorgeous silver cable, one with a clear jacket and another with a translucent blue jacket; it complements any installation.



6 – Next, the amps were pushed into place. The larger 4-channel TD-4100 powers the front stage speakers (a System Six component set also by Tube Driver) while the remaining TD-1500s are split up between the four 10s.



11 – Several of the larger-gauge cables were terminated with gold connectors from Lightning Audio. These larger terminals require a special crimp tool to insure a long-lasting union.



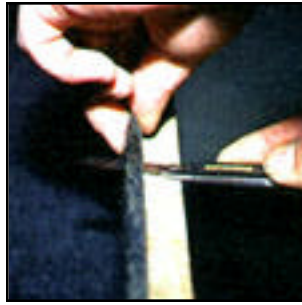
7. – With all the big gear in place, it was time to start running some of that Lightning Audio cable.



12 – One by one each of the terminals on the amps was filled with the appropriate wire.



13 – For added ventilation, a couple of fans were installed in each side of the amp rack in a push-pull configuration. This way heat drawn out of the amp rack and cool air directed in.



18 – This thin razor knife blade is made up of snap away sections to insure the user always has a sharp tip. You can find them at any home improvement store, but just know that these babies are SHARP!



14 & 15 – After the amp rack was complete, the capacitor tray was upholstered to match the amp rack.



19 – With the upholstery complete, the Lightning Caps were set in place and the mounting holes for their brackets drilled out. It was much easier to line everything up on the bench like this.



15.



20 – With the caps out of the tray, it was positioned in the trunk and mounted for good. At that point the caps were dropped back into place and their brackets lined up with the holes that had just been drilled.



16 – This screen-door tool makes tucking carpet into the tight corners of the capacitor tray a simple task.



21 & 22 – More of that 8-gauge cable was then run to the capacitor tray and the appropriate ends crimped on so that they could be wired to the caps.



17 – Once the carpet had been laid into the tray and smoothed up onto the walls, a sharp razor knife makes easy work of trimming the excess material.



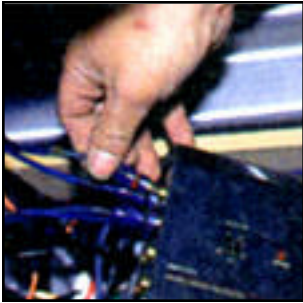
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23 – A PPI 2-way electronic crossover was next on the bill. It was stashed just to the side of the amp rack so that it could be easily accessed for system tuning.



28 – A Pioneer CD changer was linked to the overhead console-mounted Pioneer source unit and stashed in the trunk opposite the Lightning Audio batteries.



24 – Of course, Lightning Audio RCA cables were used to link all of the 12-volt products.



25 – A pair of Lightning Cells were also installed in the trunk. This endeavor started with a basic MDF box.



29 – At this point, everything was installed and the only thing left to do was fabricate and upholster various trim panels like this one that filled in the passenger's side of the trunk and framed the changer.



26 – Next, the box was covered with a layer of tweed and the batteries were wired with no less than Lightning Audio's finest 4-gauge and accessories.



30 – To match the battery and CD changer with their tweed trim, a Masonite panel was used to frame the amps and the capacitors. These panels were, of course, covered in the same tweed.



27 – A trim panel, covered in more of that black carpet, finishes off the batteries.



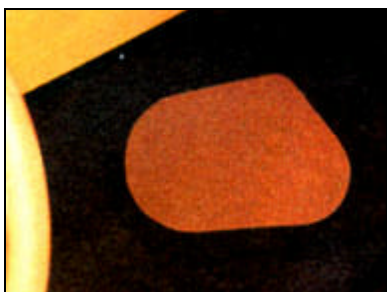
31 – The final panel to be installed was a black carpet piece that tied the whole trunk together. All of the trunk trim panels were so ingeniously designed by the crew at Xtreme that they required no fasteners for mounting – they are held in strictly by friction!



32,33,34,35 – It was long haul, but thanks to some Xtremely high quality gear and thanks to Mike Chang and his crew at Xtreme Audio we were able to show our classic Chevelle some Xtreme Measures! You can see how good it looks – if you could only hear how good it sounds!



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SOURCES

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