

In preparing a 1960 Corvette for the Iowa regional judging, I have been studying prior NCRS judging sheets, using them as a punch list of items to correct. One of the things that was mentioned over and over was:

CHASSIS: Section 31, Chassis & Rear Axle: Rear Suspension, all components_____

The line is filled in: **Shocks MADE IN MEXICO.** 2 Originality and 1 Condition point deductions.

(One judge even made a cute little sombrero cartoon picture. Hahaha, you are hilarious.... Don't quit your day job Mr. Johnny Carson)

I have been in contact with the only guy that makes correct shocks for a 1960 Corvette, and he said that he has a 1 year waiting list for them and the list is full for last year and this year. Only having 9 months to get ready for the regional, I decided to do what I could with the existing AC Delco shocks on the car. Now, I know that it will probably not receive any less deduction, as I have no way to stamp Pliacel and a date code into the top of the shocks. BUT, using this procedure, I no longer have to suffer the scorn and ridicule of having MADE IN MEXICO in big red letters written on the score sheets when they come back from Iowa. Here is the procedure I used to remove the "MADE IN MEXICO" stamping from the AC Delco shocks on the car.

Step one: Remove the shocks and sand down the factory black paint from the AC Delco shocks. I ended up taping over the upper shock cover as well as the lower mounting ring and rubber bushing.

Step two: Apply a thin coating of Bondo® Glazing & Spot Putty. Now, you can laugh all you want, and insert your clever "Bondo" jokes here. But this stuff works, sticks to metal like crazy, fills in the lettering cleanly, and is easily sandable to a smooth finish. I did several thin coats, sanding it down each time with 120 grit and then 240 grit to get a nice feather into the lettering so that they were completely filled in. I was careful to not fill in the rough "seam" at the bottom of the shocks

Step three: Grey sandable primer. For this small job, I just use a spray can, giving several liberal coats, building it up so that is now ready for wet sanding with 200 grit paper. I did several prime, dry, wetsand, reprime coats until I have a perfectly smooth finish that blends in with the existing paint surface. When done, the black paint will show all the imperfections, so although this is not a hood panel that will be seen easily, I want to prepare these to be unnoticeable even by the most discerning C1 Chassis judge.

Step four: Gloss black paint. I like to shoot the first layer almost as a tack coat, covering but not going for that wet look yet. Let it sit and flash off after 3-5 minutes and then come back with the second coat that is heavier and "wetter" to get better coverage and will lay down nice and glossy. I let them air dry adding a blow dryer to help speed up the process, so I was not waiting a day until the paint was hard. Inspect and check for any runs or thin coverage. YES, I know these are shocks, and they were painted horribly from the factory, probably had all kinds of drips, dirt and bugs in the paint. The bottom of this 1960 has been restored so nicely, I couldn't have the shocks looking as bad as they were when new, so I painted them nicely. I dare any chassis judge to take a point for "finish" because these shocks don't have dirt in the paint!

Step five: Reinstall and move on to my next item on the punchlist.

Step six: Go to the Iowa Regional next week and score a 97+ on the way to a Duntov Award at the NCRS National Convention in Palm Springs.

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