



FLAT OUT

A Barry's Speed Shop Online Publication.

Magazine

10 TIPS TO BUILDING A SUPER MUSCLE CAR

- 1. The first step to building a Super Muscle car is to have a reputable automotive designer create a rendering of your car to your specifications so you have a rough idea of what the finished product will be. Remember: none of these ideas such as paint scheme, wheels, tires, interior, and color are set in stone, and you can change them as you go along.**
2. It's a good idea once you have hard copy of your rendering to figure out how much you are willing to spend on your muscle car. Research companies parts prices that you are most interested in and do a rough estimate on all of them together so you have a vague idea of what you are going to spend during your build. If you choose to have a professional shop do the building for you, make sure you get an estimate from them including their hourly rate and parts. Remember to set your personal budget a little higher than what your rough estimate totals to compensate for either shipping of your parts or for your professional builders hourly rate. Remember to add these into your estimate as well:
 - a. Paint and Body
 - b. Media, Soda Blasting
 - c. Professional shop help (hourly rate)
- 3. Once you have your estimate, your next step is to find a good-bodied car to begin your project with. The less rust, bondo, holes, warps, and filler you have to begin with, the more your pocket book will thank you later. It's also important to research the vehicle you are looking to purchase, there might be a reason it's a "steal". Make sure the VIN is an actual car. You can also learn the correct make, model and year, as well as where car was made and what color and engine it had in it originally by checking the VIN. You should also make sure the frame is straight, as well as the body, and find out if there were ever any replacement parts such as fenders and quarter panels put on the car.**
4. When you find that "rust free" car, it's important that when you are tearing it apart that you bag and catalog all your parts. It's easier to find them when you know where they are later, this is especially important if you are doing a complete restoration. It's also a good idea to catalog your new parts as they arrive also, so you don't end up purchasing two of everything.
- 5. After your cars tear down, you might want to consider having it stripped. There are several methods of going about this and they vary in price according to the company performing the task.**
 - a. The most common method is Media blasting, where particles of walnuts and plastic are used. This method leaves you with the rough "grey primer" look.**
 - b. We have also tried Soda blasting, which uses baking soda at high pressure and leaves you with a clean, shiny, "fresh from the factory" look. We personally recommend this method to our customers.**
 - c. There is also a method called Acid dipping, where the car is lowered into a pool of liquid acid to remove paint and bondo. This method isn't highly recommended due to the acid getting into small cracks and causing problems later when you decide to paint.**

6. Since your car is now in a “vulnerable” state, it’s smart to either have it premiered, or keep in indoors to prevent rusting. At this point you might want to begin the search for a reputable painter in your area. Contact professional shops and inquire on whom they use, or if they provide this service in house. It’s smart to get several estimates from several different paint and body shops, and remember it’s not always great to go with the “cheapest deal”. It may result in an unsatisfactory paint job. It’s good to go with a painter who readily provides you with examples of his work, or customers who have used him. This is the painter who will be a little more expensive but well worth it in the long run.
7. **Since your car is off being painted, and to keep you from twiddling your thumbs, it’s that time. Time to take the biggest chunk out of your wallet, the purchase of your engine. When choosing an engine, you need to decide what type of power plant you would like, then call around to research that has the best deal on your motor. We use Jon Barrett Engines for all of our new and rebuilding needs.**
8. You should also consider ordering your suspension and brakes at this point so you can have everything ready to go when your car comes back from paint. Call competitors and see who has the most product for the best price. Always remember that it’s better to spend a little bit more money on your brakes and suspension now, instead of later if a component should break. We used mainly Global West, Bear Brakes and QA1 shocks for our Ford and Chevy rebuilding needs, you can call any of these companies and ask for their specs for your car. Remember your wheel and tire choice when ordering your brakes, and keep in mind your rotor size in comparison to the size of your wheels.
9. **Wheels and tires are the meat between you and the asphalt, so it’s natural to want to choose the right ones for the use of your car. Super Muscle Cars are made with the driver in mind, so remember this when choosing a tire. There are so many combinations of sizes for your wheels to get many different looks, keep in mind how you want your car to sit. Super Muscle Cars have a “rake” to them, meaning the front of the car is usually lower than the back. Be careful when doing this though, if the car is too high in the back you end up with a “stink bug” effect. A typical wheel sizing combination we use for a Super Muscle Car is 17” in the front and 18” in the back. Any bigger and you begin to see the “bling” of the wheels more than the fierce beauty of the car itself.**
10. Once your car is back from paint, and all the parts are ready and waiting to be bolted on, it’s very motivating. You’re almost to the finish line, but you need to remember that it’s detail that catches the public’s eye. Take the time to hide air conditioning hoses and miscellaneous wiring whenever possible. This creates a clean environment to showcase your new engine and headers. Pick a theme and stick with it, too much chrome and it’s hard to look at, but the right amount of brushed, chromed, and painted parts has the “wow” factor you’re after in creating a Super Muscle Car. Your interior should also be installed at this point, and we always recommend a stock interior in black, it’s a fail safe color. However, if you want to stretch the boundaries of SMC styling you might want to try a stock tan or saddle color interior. Most Chevy and Ford reproduction parts companies also offer interior kits, or you can take your car to a custom upholstery shop. Detail is VERY important in putting your car back together. Remember all those parts you cataloged earlier? Now you can break open the bags as you go and polish, paint, and clean them for re-installation.

Have fun putting your Super Muscle Car together and Good luck to you!

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