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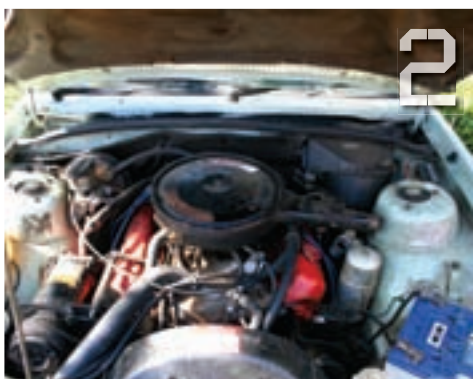
TO THE FLOOR

WE CONVERT A TWO-BARREL 253 WITH A MANIFOLD AND QUADRAJET FROM A 308

STORY BY LIAM QUIRK PICS BY CHRIS SORGSEPP



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1. Like all our DIYs, start by removing the negative battery terminal whenever you work on your car.

2. This is the bay as it stood with two barrels of restrictive goodness. Sure, it's filthy but the dirt will make the later photos look even better. Remove the air filter assembly to expose the puny carby.

3. Tremble in the presence of this, the major restriction to the 4.2L. Disconnect the throttle cable and remove the lower radiator hose to drain the system of some coolant. You'll be removing the hoses around the thermostat housing soon, so you won't want coolant around an open engine.

4. With the hoses out of your road, you can make a start on the manifold bolts. It became apparent that ours hadn't been undone for quite some time, which necessitated a larger ratchet for more leverage. We ended up using a 0.5in drive wrench with a 14mm socket for the bolts, which cracked them no worries. The manifold should be looking like this – no bolts, no hoses and nothing holding it down.

5. You will need a flat-blade screwdriver to crack the old gasket, which will allow the manifold to come away easily. Keep at it, the gasket will give before the manifold will. With the gasket cracked and the manifold free, lift it away.

Buying the VB made me swallow a lot of words I'd uttered in the past. The car was too good to pass up having logbooked low kays, being completely stock and living its whole life inland away from corrosive salt spray. Under the bonnet of this stock '70s SL/E was an engine that I'd put a lot of dirt on in the past, but one that often goes overlooked – the humble 253ci Holden V8.

These engines are not the most potent bit of gear, thanks largely to the world's most chronically undersized carby. Removing the air filter assembly from the two-barrel reveals a carby not much bigger than a Coke can, and its job is to provide air to 4.2L of V8 muscle?

By all accounts, the four-barrel would make a world of difference, so one Sunday afternoon we ripped off the two-by and replaced it with a muscular four-by. It must be noted that this four-barrel came

off a later-model 253, so it was a straight bolt-on proposition. If you can, use a four-barrel off a blue 253. Speaking to Tom from Tom's Automotive Services, we discovered that the changes needed to fit the 308 quaddy on a 253 were minimal, but the work was best left to someone who knew what they were doing.

So, what's needed to get it on there and have that 253 pumping? Obviously, a four-barrel with matching manifold as well as manifold gaskets and a carby-to-

manifold gasket for good measure. The throttle cable is too long, so you'll need to replace it with a shorter one, get the current one customised or customise the current bracket.

A lot of the lines (fuel, vacuum, etc) will all need replacing, be it due to differing lengths or the fact that, like ours, they were corroded beyond functionality. Bring a little common sense, some basic mechanical know-how, a random nuts and bolts tin, and you're on your way.

6. It could have looked a lot worse than this that's for sure. The oil didn't look crook, the cam appeared to be healthy, and there was no coolant mixing with the oil. Everything looked good and, most importantly, it seemed to be consistent with the 'it was recently rebuilt' story we were fed.

7. We didn't waste any time. Clean the faces on both the engine and the manifold side and place the new gaskets down. We sprayed ours with Hylomar compound, which aids adhesion and helped the swap go smoothly. We reused the manifold bolts to make sure it all went together right the first time.

8. Bolt the lot down. If the bay is starting to look like this, then you're doing well.

9. Place the carby gasket atop the manifold and drop the new four-barrel carby in place. You should be looking at a much tougher engine by now. You can almost feel the extra power.

10. Our new manifold didn't have a thermostat housing, so we swapped the one over from the old manifold. Replace the gasket and bolt the new one down. Connect up the hoses. Also MIA was the coolant temp sensor, which was a simple swap.

11. We repositioned the coil to the other side of the motor close to the fire-wall. This tidied the bay up a touch, but was also a more practical position for it. Continue reconnecting the lines (you may need a diagram for that or a mate who knows what they're doing).

12. Reconnect the throttle cable. You will need either a different bracket or a different cable as the 253 one is too long to use. We used the 253 cable with the 253 bracket, but modified it to remove the inch or so of slack that we had. Overlook for a moment that none of the pollution gear is hooked up. That's the way the manifold came, and we're in the process now of finding where the lines go and how they all hook up.

13. We jumped on our internet forum to check a few things. A quick search showed up plenty of threads where people had done the conversion before and some very handy diagrams explaining lines, modifications needed to get it to work and other handy info.

If any hoses have perished, it's a good idea to change them now before they completely corrode leaving you stranded miles from nowhere. Before undertaking this, know that you will need a new line between the fuel regulator and the fuel feed, as the 253 one is around 6cm too short.

Don't forget to hook up the pollution gear and check that all hoses are connected and tight. Refill the coolant system and replace the air filter with a 308 item and you should have a potent little 253 on your hands. We'll look into more mods for the 4.2L down the track. *SC*

