
Subject: Cool Stuff in the Summer of 2020

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Tue, 14 Jul 2020 16:59:11 GMT

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What projects do you have going on this summer? Or maybe any fun mini-getaway plans?

I've been pretty busy working on computer stuff and on my loudspeaker kits. People got really interested in building kits over the last few months, so that has been keeping me busy. And I'm also restoring a 1968 Chevy Impala. So I'm staying really busy these days.

How 'bout you?

Subject: Re: Cool Stuff in the Summer of 2020

Posted by [gofar99](#) on Thu, 16 Jul 2020 02:50:59 GMT

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Hi Wayne, Sounds like fun. I remember the 68. One of the better years IMO. Actually though I liked the 60 Impala convertibles and 64 2 door models better. What motor does the 68 have. They came with everything from a 6 to the 409 (maybe the 427 but I am not sure) as I recall. The two door was the best looking. A 409-427 wagon might be a real sleeper and a lot of fun to bugger other folks in a speed run.

Right now I'm working on a stereo power amp. I have had lots of requests for such and decided the time was right. It uses push-pull KT120s at a very modest power level of 62 ma at 450V (per tube). I have found this to be a sweet spot. The sound is amazing. Class A operation U/L into 8K load. I converted all my main amps to this setting (I bi amp my system). Output is right at 20 watts per channel. Quite sufficient for most speakers (for anyone who doesn't know loudness is not a linear function of power and to get twice the loudness you need 10 times the power). The phono preamps I have been working on (prototypes exist) are undergoing a second version as the original ones were too noisy for my ears. With the fixes the S/N is now at -80dbv. Our beta tester says it is stunning for sound quality and super quiet. A \$12K preamp he has been using is left in the dust. Now if we could get our suppliers up to speed life would be good.

Subject: Re: Cool Stuff in the Summer of 2020

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 16 Jul 2020 14:32:45 GMT

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Super cool on that KT120 amp. I'd love to see and hear that one. I tend to tell folks buying my speakers that 10 watts is plenty, even for home theater. So 20 watts is perfect, because it gives a little extra headroom for transients.

I got an email yesterday from a guy that is planning to use an entry-level Bottlehead amplifier. I

have a lot of customers with this kind of amp: 2A3 single-ended. Bottleheads use parafeed circuits too. That gives 'em about 100dB/M with my speakers.

Which brings me to my question: Do you have an entry-level kit? Inexpensive cabinet, simple circuit, low-power output? I've seen a handful of amps in the < \$1K range, some SET and some UL. They make great "gateway drugs" for more powerful higher-quality tube amps.

On the Impala: Mine is a four door with a 327. The guy I bought it from had a two-door and a four-door, and for what this car is going to be for me, I wanted the four-door model. I already have a two-door Cutlass with a big block, aluminum heads and roller lifters. Nine Inch Ford in the back makes it look like it has big balls. But for this car, I wanted an antique "family car" with some Americana muscle car roots. It won't be the fastest car, it'll be a cruiser.

The four-door version of the 68 Impala looks very much like the two-door model to my eyes. The difference is the B-Pillars. Everybody says they like the looks of a car without pillars - and some people will notice right away - but most people really don't. And to me, the way the windows track is soooo much better. Everybody I know that has a car without B-Pillars has a window sealing problem. You gotta have new rubber and adjust the window angle in the door and still, they just don't seal like windows in tracks.

So I decided this car would be the four-door model. I think it looks awesome. I'm having it painted blue, and stitching in a diamond tuck blue velour interior. Dash and carpets are black. It has a Powerglide and a 3:08 rear-end gear, so the stock 327 has very little push. But I have a small block Chevy at the machine shop right now. I'll build it mild, but with roller cam and aluminum heads so I can get a little more out of it. Not intending it to need RPM to get into the power band though, so it'll have a low-duration cam. Might still swap out the rear-end gear for a 3:23 ratio, we'll see.

Subject: Re: Cool Stuff in the Summer of 2020
Posted by [johnnycamp5](#) on Thu, 16 Jul 2020 22:13:18 GMT
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Awesome projects!

Both interest me as I'm both a car guy and a tube guy LOL....9" rears and KT120"s = 8) 8)
As a summer project Ive started floor to ceiling (corner) line arrays using little 2.5" peerless drivers full range. Ive long been curious as to how they sound.
Just another set of speakers to add to my collection lol.

Each tiny driver is only 85db sensitive alone, but combined in the vertical array they are supposed to equal around 94db sensitivity. I'm using 30 per side.

Subject: Re: Cool Stuff in the Summer of 2020
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Fri, 17 Jul 2020 02:27:10 GMT
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Dude, that's awesome! Gotta post pics as your project progresses.

Subject: Re: Cool Stuff in the Summer of 2020
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Fri, 17 Jul 2020 02:58:21 GMT
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I figure since I asked you for pics, I probably should post some of my own. Pics or it didn't happen!

First, my Cutlass. I've had it since 1993. It was stock when I got it, just a good get-around car. Typical 80s American car - Gutless, a faint whisper of better days gone by. Now days, American cars have made a big comeback, but when I built this car in the late 1990s, our cars still sucked. So the mods to that Cutlass made it a tribute to the rumble of yesteryear's muscle cars.

1983 Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme

I shoehorned an Olds 455 into the '83 Cutlass. I had to cut into the heater box, and then fabricate a plate that recessed to allow room for the passenger side valve covers. And even though MSD was commonplace by the time I built the Cutlass, I wanted to keep it old school, so it has a dual-point distributor. But you might notice a transistor in a box mounted on the firewall in the photo. That's what drives the spark coil. The points never pit or wear out, because they're just driving the base, so current through them is small. Never a need for a dwell adjustment, like was needed in the old points days. The failure mode is the spring wears out, and it doesn't happen until around 100K miles. Who would have ever thought that would be the failure mode of a set of points?

Oldsmobile 455 w/ aluminum heads and roller cam/lifters

Now a little bit about the Impala. Not much to look at when I bought it. I didn't care if it ran well, and really expected it to just be a rolling chassis. My plans were to go through pretty much everything, so the most important thing for me was that it not have rust. But to my surprise, the little 327 actually runs pretty good. It looks nasty under the hood though. Not a problem 'cause I'm building an engine for it now, and I'll detail the engine compartment when it's out. So for now, the 327 just makes it convenient for moving it around while the body work is being done.

1968 Chevy Impala running roller

1968 Chevy Impala work in progress

File Attachments

- 1) [Cutlass.jpg](#), downloaded 415 times
 - 2) [Olds455.jpg](#), downloaded 404 times
 - 3) [20190607_113023.jpg](#), downloaded 430 times
 - 4) [20191118_172912.jpg](#), downloaded 301 times
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Subject: Re: Cool Stuff in the Summer of 2020
Posted by [johnnycamp5](#) on Sat, 18 Jul 2020 20:12:12 GMT
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I love those cars!

Your progress on the impala looks impressive. Is that your workshop/building?
looks like a great, spacious shop.

I also had a points and condenser distributor on an old 69 Bronco....
which also had the venerable 9" rear....but only a Dana 30 front end. I believe in 73/74 Ford
switched to the Dana 44 front which was more stout.

It also had the old vacuum powered windshield wipers lol.

With oversize tires, those old Broncos with the short wheelbase (90") didn't really roll down the
road as much as they "bounced" down them....

Subject: Re: Cool Stuff in the Summer of 2020
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Sat, 18 Jul 2020 20:27:50 GMT
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That's not my shop, no. That's the paint shop. I'm building the motor on an engine stand in my
garage.

I'm getting to the point where I don't like dropping the engine with a cherry picker with the car just

on stands. Might save for a lift before I do the engine swap.

Subject: Re: Cool Stuff in the Summer of 2020
Posted by [gofar99](#) on Mon, 20 Jul 2020 02:12:55 GMT
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Hi, I never got around to answering an earlier question. For high sensitivity speakersyes The Poddwatt DMB (dual mono block) or the Mini Blocks (just like 1/2 of the DMB each) are perfect. 5 watts class A ultra linear push-pull. Super clean sound typically under 0.5% THD+H&N, response from 10HZ to 35K +0/-0.25 db at 1 watt. They work fine with speakers over 92db/w in many situations. I can use them with my Martin Logan ESLs (92dbw) and have a nice listening level. Not suitable for loud stuff in my room (12X10X17 feet).

File Attachments

1) [EL84 amp.jpg](#), downloaded 371 times

Subject: Re: Cool Stuff in the Summer of 2020
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Mon, 20 Jul 2020 13:56:39 GMT
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Oh, yes, very cool. Seems like a lot of guys start with an amp like that and trade-up after a few years to a more powerful tube amp. It's a great way to start.

Subject: Re: Cool Stuff in the Summer of 2020
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Sat, 15 Aug 2020 20:06:57 GMT
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Last weekend, I cleaned the old carpet and pad out of the interior. Seats are already at the upholstery shop. Ran the stereo wires from the dash back to the trunk, putting them in the factory conduit which runs under the carpet. You can see it here running along the floorboard; It's the black ribbon looking thing on the driver's side floor:

1968 Impala carpet-less interior

Yesterday, I picked up the block from the machine shop. I had already chased all the bolt holes with a tap, cleaning them out. And I had radiused the oil passages and rounded sharp edges on

the block to prevent cracks. I took the block for cylinder honing and crank align honing. I already had the crank ground 0.010" under on the main and rod journals. Now it's time to balance the crank with the pistons, rods, bearings and rings.

Nice fresh small-block Chevy block

File Attachments

- 1) [20200808_154124.jpg](#), downloaded 202 times
 - 2) [20200814_170116.jpg](#), downloaded 241 times
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Subject: Re: Cool Stuff in the Summer of 2020
Posted by [johnnycamp5](#) on Sat, 15 Aug 2020 21:21:48 GMT
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Looking good!

Sheet metal looks good... back here in the NE it would look much more like Swiss cheese or an old shipwreck.

Is that really the stock wire chase? On my phone It looks more like a bicycle inner tube.

The block looks great in the pics...Looking at the bearing caps, is that why they call them "4 bolt mains"??

Subject: Re: Cool Stuff in the Summer of 2020
Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Sun, 16 Aug 2020 17:06:34 GMT
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Yep, those are 4-bolt main caps.

Here's a close-up of that conduit for the wires running from the dash to the trunk. That's the original part. I didn't know I'd find one there, and was planning to run my wires through some kind of protective cover. But I found this already there, so I ran my wires through it. This photo shows the section around the middle of the conduit, right under the front seat:

File Attachments

- 1) [20200816_141958.jpg](#), downloaded 213 times
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