

## TOMATO ON FIRE



### FIREPIT

Clearly, Mark's take on the build was not predicated on the engine. What might have been humungous and belligerent is a powerful yet docile big-block. Based on a 454, it was punched 0.060 to create the time-honored 468ci. Aside from this, we know that Mark bought the bullet so he had no hand in building it. Details are therefore somewhat sketchy. Dart Pro 1 cylinder heads breathe bitchin' and help create a 11.5:1 compression ratio. In the belly of the big-block is a "very large solid roller cam," according to Mark. The rest

of the finery is clearly visible. A Moroso oil pan buttons up the bottom end, while cooling fluid is moved via a CSI electric pump, a CSR aluminum core, and dual electric fans. A Victor Jr. intake manifold holds court with a Demon 1000 (Billet Specialties air cleaner housing) and is supplied by a Barry Grant fuel pump sucking from a Rock Valley stainless tank. The instigator is an MSD ignition setup. On the back end of the chain, Hooker Super Comps stuff noxiousness into a 3-inch system "quieted" by a cross-pipe

and Flo-Pro mufflers. Regardless, the properly detailed engine in its sanitary surroundings is nothing if not compelling. That Turbo 350 his wife Jennifer surprised him with is equipped with a semiserious Hughes 3,800-stall speed converter and has been fitted with a manual-shift valve body. Twist twirls down a custom-made driveshaft to the Strange Engineering axle. Mark was taking no chances here; he took the S-60 Dana package fitted with 3.73s and beefy 35-spline shafts as well.

### WHEELS & BRAKES

It's difficult to beat a five-spoke wheel (or variation thereof) for the best in a simple yet powerful presentation. The ones on Mark's ride are Budnik Groove, 17x8 and 17x10, with spokes ample but not enough to obscure the 13-inch Baer brakes posted at each corner. Since maximum stick is the object, Mark chose DOT-approved P245/45ZR17 Nitto NT555 and P275/40ZR17 Nitto NT555R drag radials for the drive wheels.

### UNDERLYING WEB

Though the frame rails are stock, Mark welded up every seam to oppose lateral and torsional bending. Further, subframe connectors join either end of the Camaro and set the stage for a CalTracs traction system, complete with a 1-inch lowering Split-Mono leaf spring and Calvert's legendary adjustable bars. On the steering end, Mark adapted Speedtech tubular upper and lower control arms and works them with adjustable QA1 coilover shock absorbers, securing the desired stance and ride height. The Camaro points true with a Flaming River quick-ratio box on an adjustable steering column.



### BODY

Though we've outlined Mark's ministrations to the '71 SS Camaro's skin and aesthetics, he did all of the prep work himself, saving a pile of cash. He modified the original grille and reworked the lower valance to accept the first-gen Camaro running lights. To put a little more breathing room between the Demon and the underside of the hood, he adopted a modest cowl. His friend Mike Reed blew on the custom-mixed Orange Crush paint. **CHP**



### IN THE SEAT

Mark, despite the incendiary red device he's cloaked in, is thinking very serene thoughts. Where you might expect solid black, Mark preferred the soothing hues of charcoal and gray—all leather, of course, to coincide with his high-zoot audio system. 1 Stop Mobile Solutions in Richland, Texas, arranged and installed a comprehensive Alpine series, beginning with a CD head unit, two amplifiers that 1 Stop augmented with Diamond Audio 6 1/2-inch front speakers, 6x9s in the rear, and a brace of 10-inch subwoofers. While this benign cacophony vibrates his cochlea, he sees before him an array of neatly arranged and logically placed controls and visuals. With a digit or two firmly hooked on the Billet Specialties steering wheel, Mark has a clear view of the Covan's Classic Dash insert with Auto Meter gauges. The cockpit space is visually expanded by a custom billet stripe that comes off the audio nacelle and stretches nearly to the opposite door.