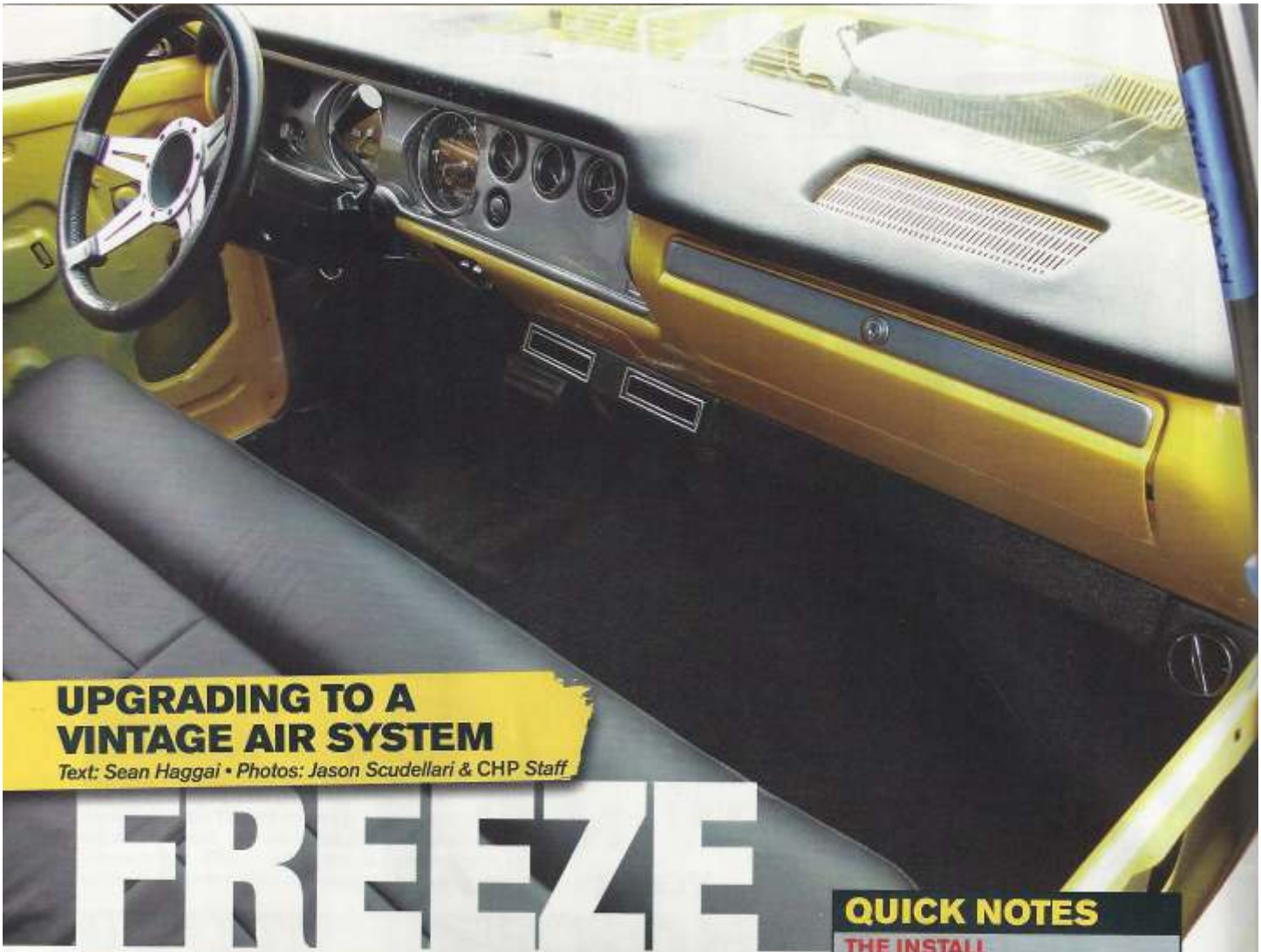


UPGRADING TO A VINTAGE AIR SYSTEM

Text: Sean Haggai • Photos: Jason Scudellari & CHP Staff

FREEZE LOCKER

QUICK NOTES

THE INSTALL
Vintage Air system into a '64 Chevelle

BOTTOM LINE
Tolerate any trip with the comfort of a modern car

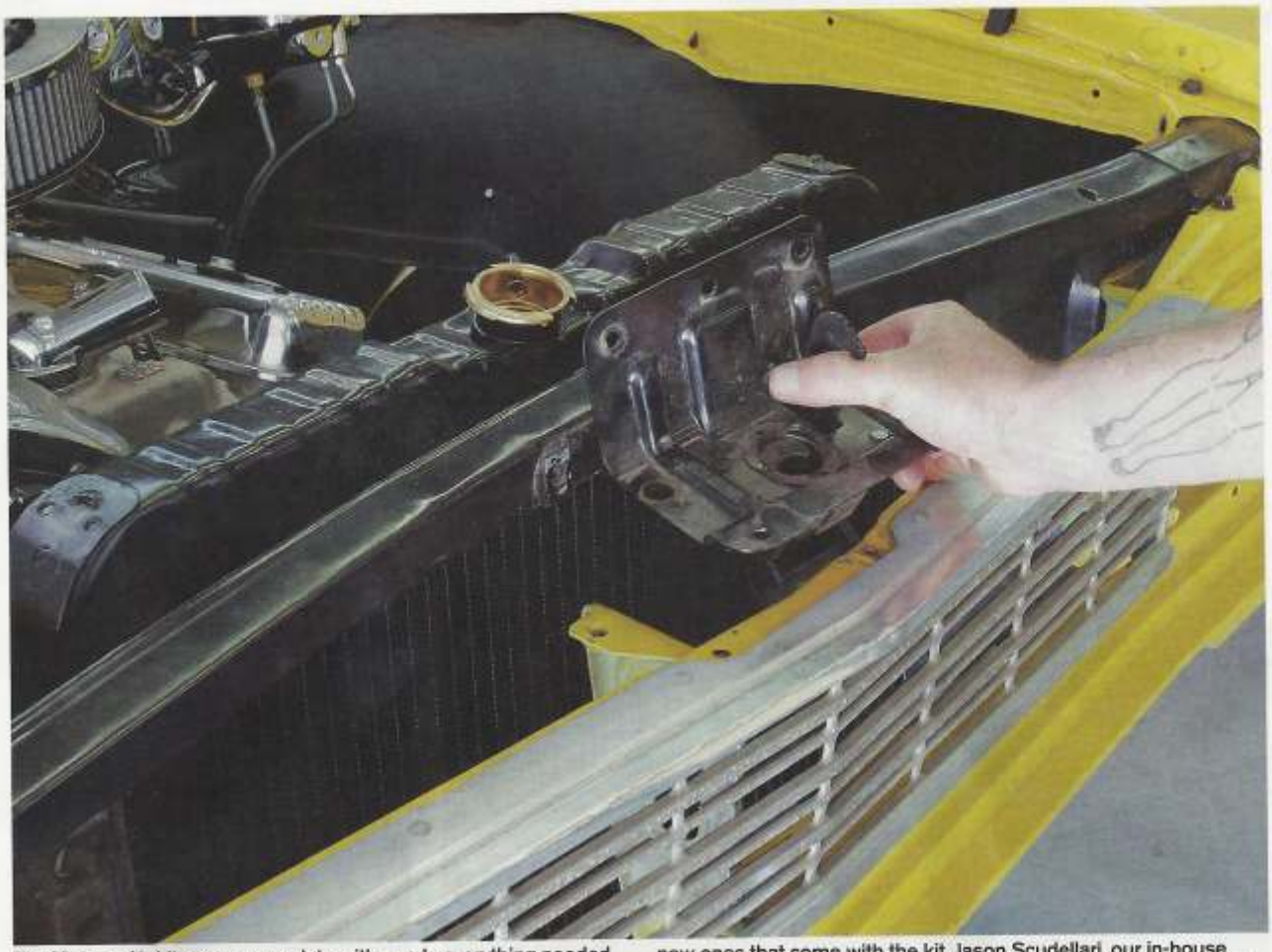
COST
$1,300

No one likes an uncomfortable ride, whether it's the car's suspension, seats, or even the fit and finish. What beats them all, though, is a blisteringly hot interior. Sure, roll down the windows at freeway speeds and attempt that conversation. Anything from a quick run to the local market

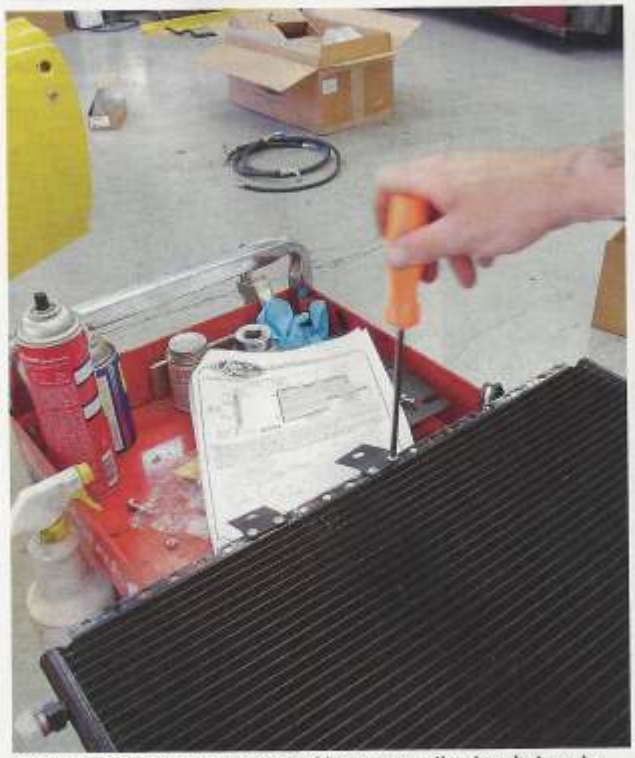
to a leisurely road trip, a boiling interior can make any driver frustrated, turning a fun cruise into a grueling experience. But when we get the tickle to drive, that's what we're going to do—no matter what the elements may dictate. So what better way to fight the heat than with some temperature control?

There's something to be said for those creature comforts we normally associate with home living or even the up-to-date functions of more modern cars; things like air conditioning. Luckily, technology has caught up to the hobby—nay, lifestyle—and our beloved muscle cars. Vintage Air Systems has the know-how and has designed air-conditioning systems for nearly all classic, American-made vehicles. These all-inclusive kits are ready to go and only take a weekend to install. To illustrate the benefits of the Vintage kit, we got a hold of a beautiful '64 Chevelle sporting a potent small-block for power, a perfect candidate to show you what goes into installing the Sure Fit system from Vintage Air. This system for Chevelles and Novas features A/C vents that exit through the dash, dehumidified defrost, and a smooth firewall. Plus, it all mounts completely under the dash for a clean look.

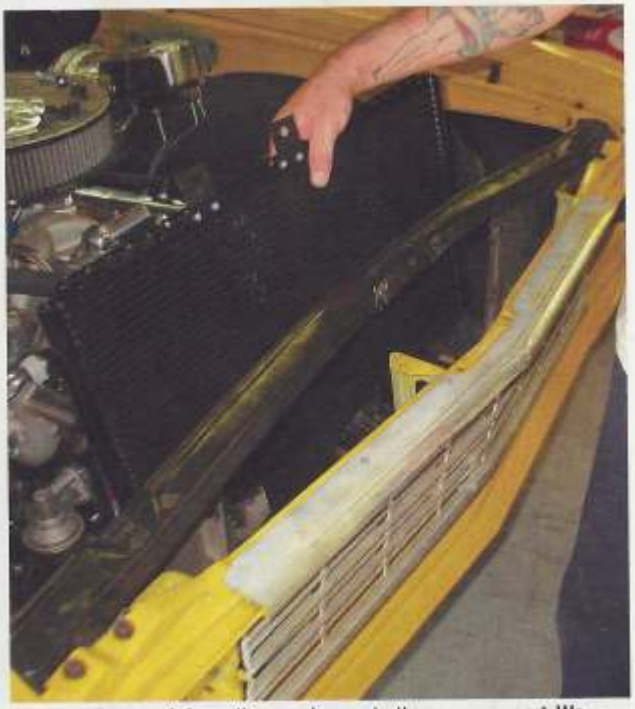
Before we began any major work, though, most of the interior dash was removed, along with a majority of the front grille and bumper. Once the unit was installed we were left to locate our own belts and get the A/C system charged. We touched upon the key points, making it easy to follow along. No longer will the scorching heat of summer prevent you from enjoying your ride. You'll be freezing in no time.



The Vintage Air kit comes complete with nearly everything needed to cool your ride. The first order of business for installation, however, is to remove some factory components to make way for new ones that come with the kit. Jason Scudellari, our in-house tech guru, made way to disassemble the front of the Chevelle. This included the hood latch, the grille, the headlights, and the radiator.

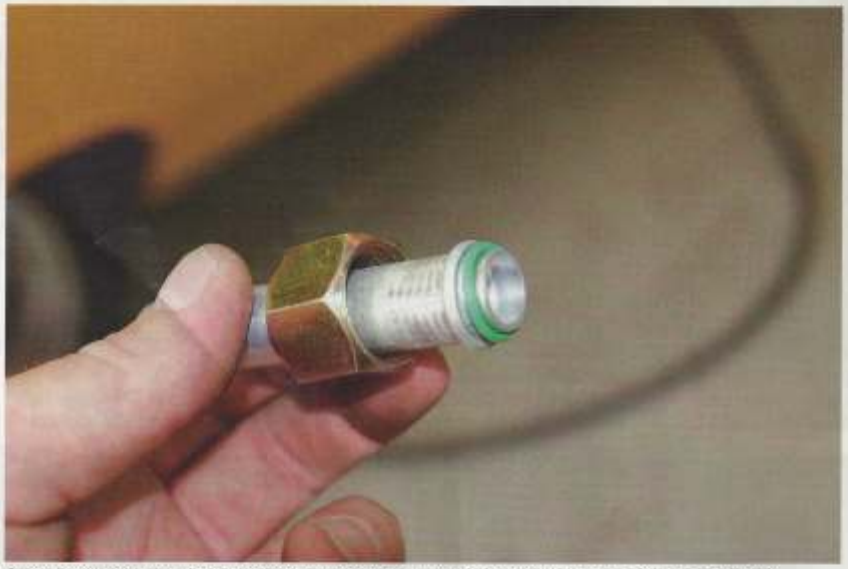


Scudellari installed the upper and lower mounting brackets onto the condenser using the supplied hardware.

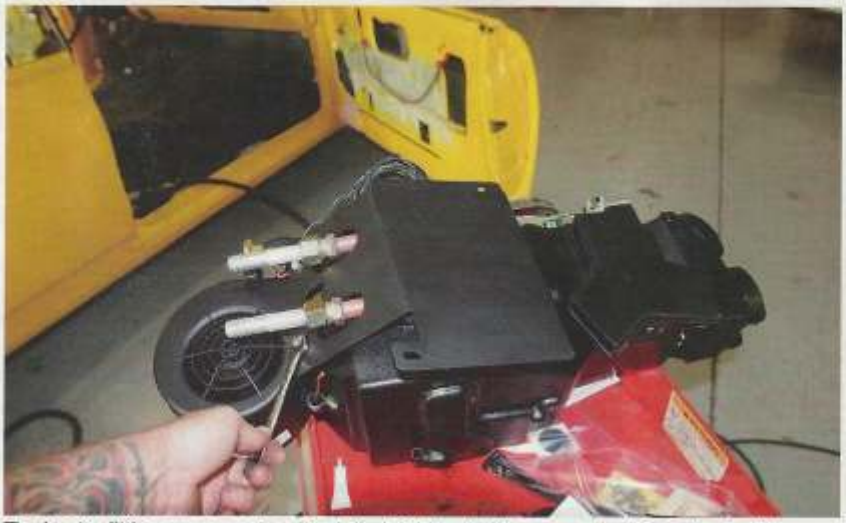


Next, we fastened down the condenser to the core support. We began to reassemble the hood latch assembly with all of the factory hardware, although an additional 3/16-inch hole was drilled into the core support to secure the condenser.

Following the detailed instruction booklet from Vintage Air, our next step involved installing the drier and safety switch. We went ahead and mounted our drier on the passenger-side fenderwell using the supplied clamp and hardware.

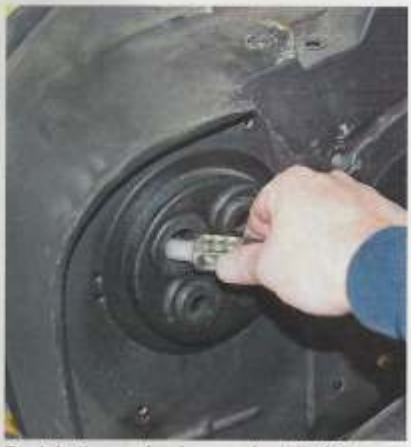


After first lubricating the ends of our hard lines to accept the O-rings (oil is supplied), we installed the #6 hard line from the drier to the lower fitting of the condenser. Then we followed the same method for installing the #8 hard line to the upper fitting of the condenser, which will eventually lead to the compressor.



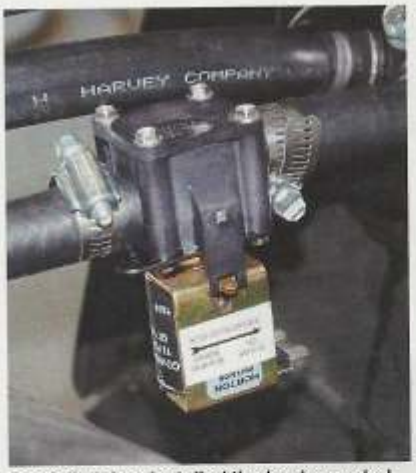
The heater fittings were next and installed right on to the evaporator. We bolted on the rear evaporator bracket using the supplied bolts.

Removal of the glovebox door, glovebox, OEM heater assembly, and defrost ducts, and disconnection of all wires and cables from the control panel must be done before the new evaporator can be installed. Scudellari drilled out the last remaining spot welds on the defrost ducting then drilled two pilot holes to accept the sheetmetal screws that hold the defrost duct in place.



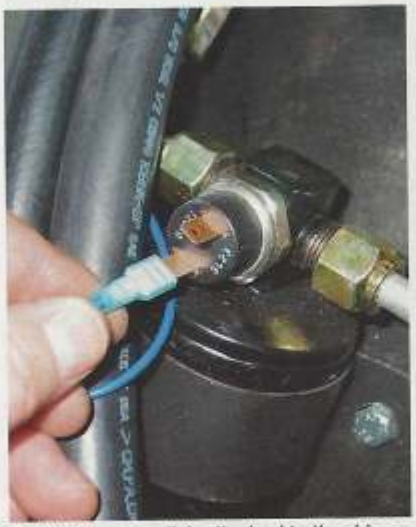
Back in the engine bay, we installed the fresh-air cap, which holds the two heater hoses along with a #10 and #6 A/C hose. First we applied a 1/4-inch bead of silicone around the backside of the fresh-air cap, then locked it down against the firewall with the supplied washer and bolt.

Once the hoses were routed through the firewall and down through the kick panel, Scudellari attached them to the evaporator. Then he gently lifted the evaporator unit up under the dashboard and loosely secured it to the firewall from the engine compartment side using the supplied hardware.

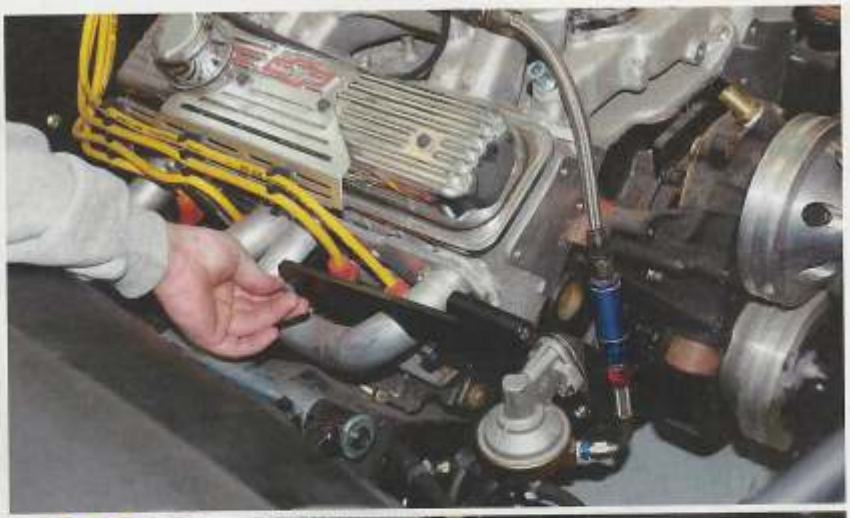


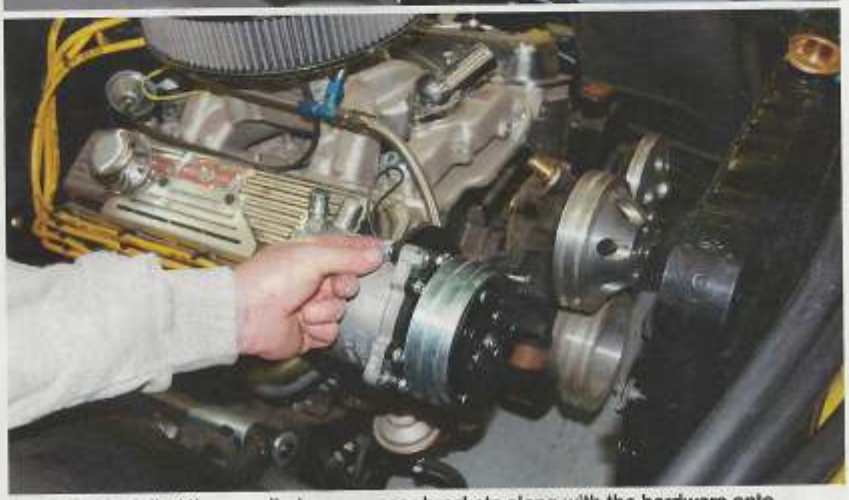
Scudellari then installed the heater control valve by splicing it inline between the heater hose and intake manifold hose (pressure side) and secured it down with hose clamps. Note: Check for proper flow direction.

This portion of the install includes the major wiring for the Vintage Air unit. It's important to follow along with the detailed instruction booklet. A complete wiring diagram is included there. Here, we connected the heater control valve to its relay and installed the relay to the firewall.

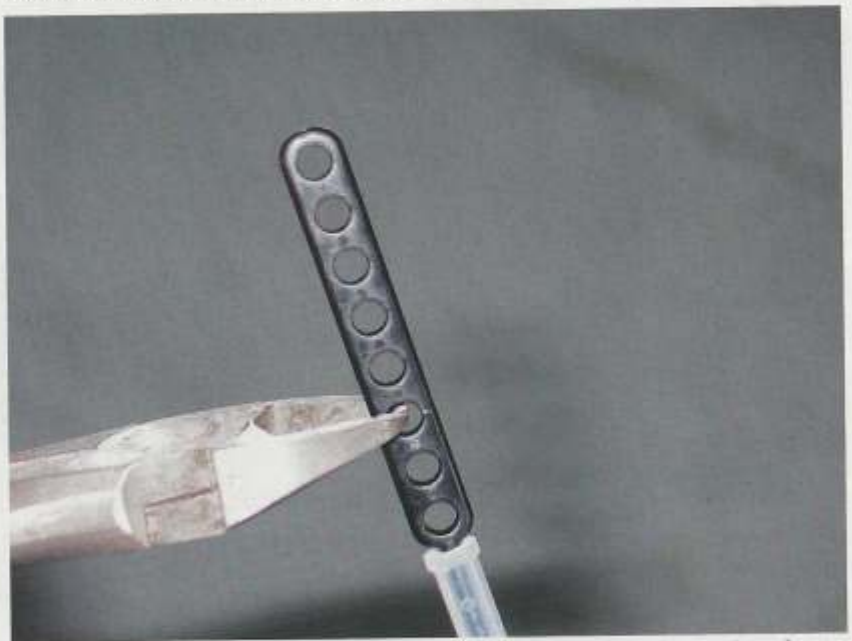


For the binary switch attached to the drier, we connected the black wire from the compressor to the blue wire on the switch then connected the other terminal to the A/C compressor relay (also installed on the firewall).





Scudellari installed the supplied compressor brackets along with the hardware onto the engine, then the compressor onto the brackets. The #8 discharge hose from the compressor will route to the #8 condenser hard line from the top of the condenser. The #10 suction hose will route back into the firewall and route to the evaporator.

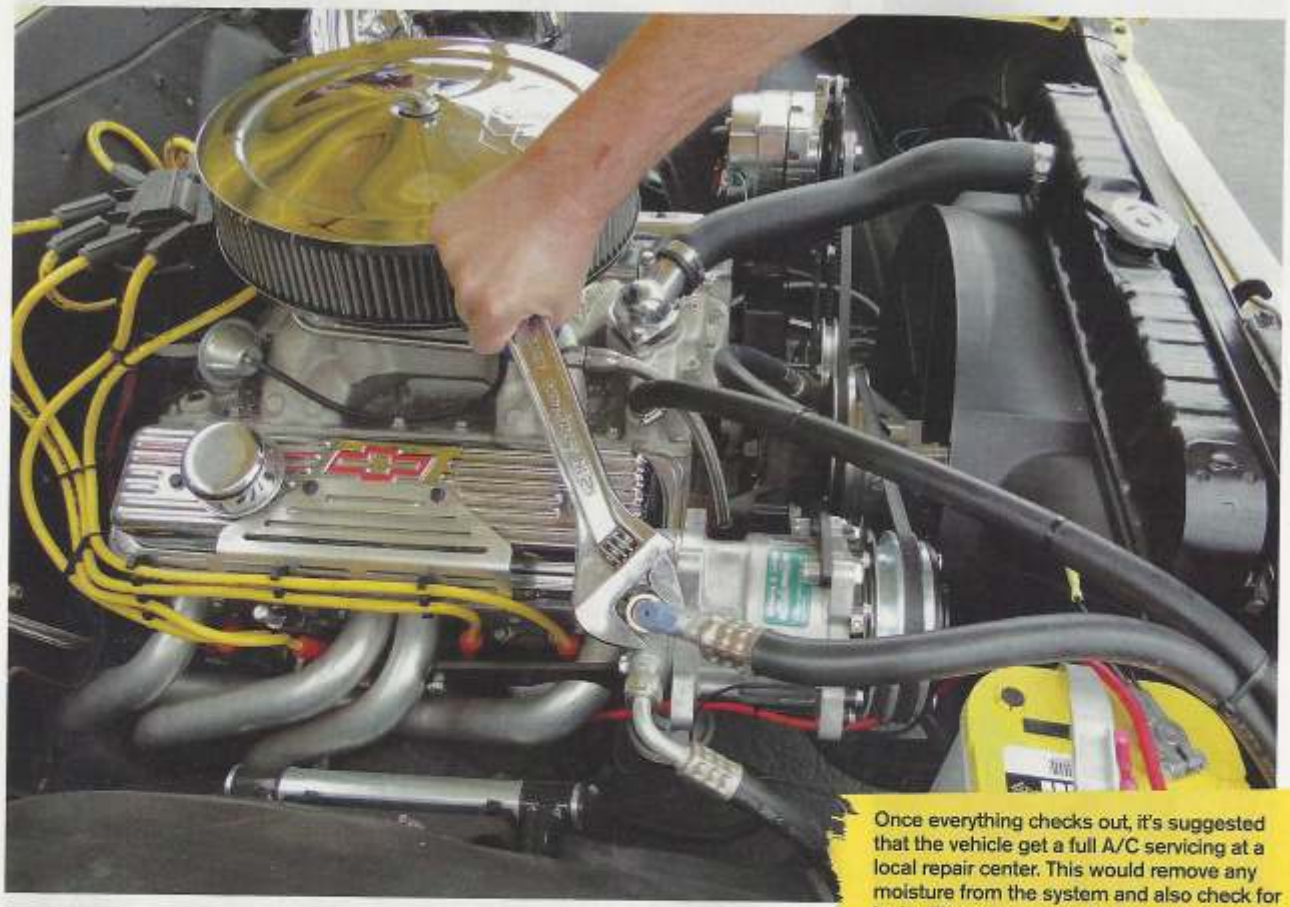


Some of the last steps include installing the cable conversion assembly kit. It allows for the operation of the temperature or defrost functions of the unit while still using the factory controls. Following the instructions, we used a pair of wire cutters to cut the actuator rod at the third hole.

FREEZE LOCKER

Scudellari installed the mounting clamps and then placed each slide pot onto the factory controls for the air. This is done twice more, once for the defroster and again for the heater control. To secure the rods, a 3/16-inch push-on ring is used to keep the rod on the pin. We then reinstalled the control panel into the dash.

Next, Scudellari routed the tubing which would deliver temperature-controlled air through the cabin. He attached each tube to the vents for the defroster and to the passenger- and driver-side underdash bezel and louvers.



Once everything checks out, it's suggested that the vehicle get a full A/C servicing at a local repair center. This would remove any moisture from the system and also check for leaks. Then you can cruise home in your new, air-conditioned cabin. ***CHP***

THE SHOPPING CART

PN	DESCRIPTION	COST
961065	'64-65 evaporator, compressor, compressor bracket, hoses, condenser, drier, safety switch, and hard lines	$1,300
	TOTAL	$1,300

GET THE HOOKUP

VINTAGE AIR, INC
800.862.6658 • vintageair.com