

An afternoon's anchorage upgrade transforms the Camaro's stopping ability.

Words & photography: Elizabeth de Latour



1999 Chevrolet Camaro Z28

After a good few months of inactivity while I was waiting for stuff, it finally feels like progress on the Camaro is beginning to gather pace and things are starting to happen. A number of boxes of suspension components have taken up residence in my house, there's a 3.73:1 rear end gear set sitting in the kitchen and I have just finished installing a full complement of upgraded speakers, but this month it's all about brakes. You may recall, because I mentioned it at least once, that they were well past their sell-by date, with both pads and discs seriously worn and binding calipers to top it all off. Not a good combination whichever way you look at it. New discs and pads all-round were desperately needed and so I turned to EBC, who know a thing or two about brakes and also happen to offer a number of uprated disc and pads options for the Camaro, because why stay stock when something needs replacing?

For the discs, I chose the company's GD Sport Rotors, which are vented and feature both grooves and dimples on the surface to aid with dissipating the

gases that build up between pad and disc during braking. An added bonus is the swanky black GEOMET coating they come with, designed for long-lasting corrosion resistance. When it came to pads I wanted something that was suited to everyday driving,

suited to a large, powerful car like the Camaro and wouldn't struggle when I decided to up the pace and have a bit of fun. Having perused the EBC range, the obvious choice was the company's Yellowstuff pads, which ticked all the boxes for me.



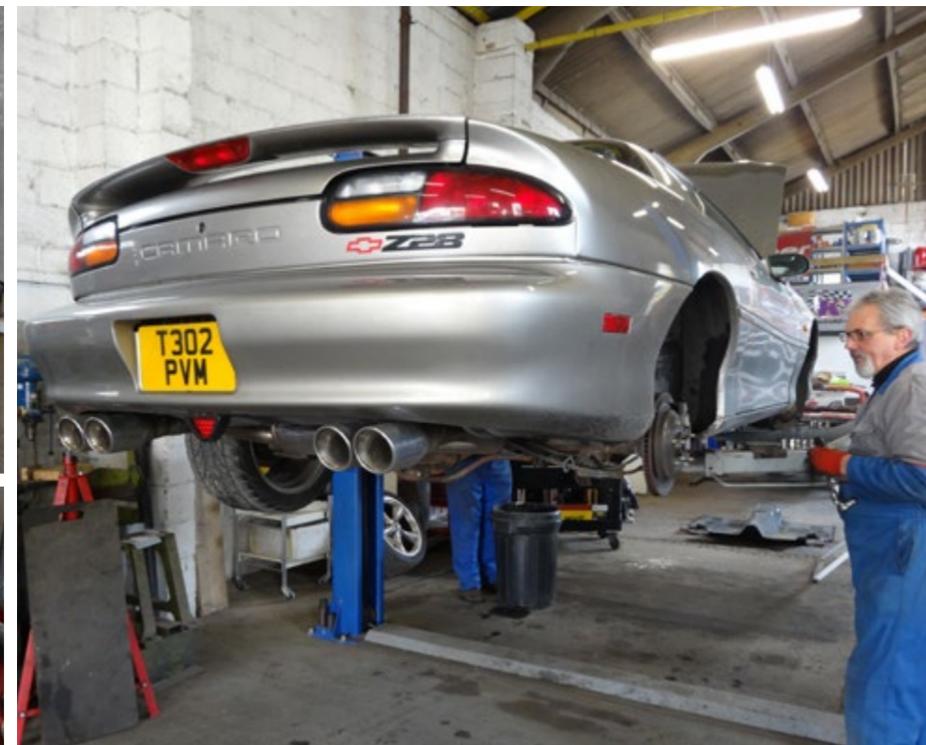
The pads have been designed with more spirited driving in mind, recommended as they are for fast street, track day and drift use, but don't let the latter two applications put you off the idea of using these on a daily as EBC has designed them to perform exceptionally well in all situations. First of all, the Yellowstuff pad compound has high friction from cold, meaning you don't need to worry about warming them up before they start to perform, and are ECE Brake safety tested, which means they have to work perfectly from cold and perform at least as well as stock pads in this respect. Get them hot, however, and they really come into their own and they have been designed for zero brake fade, even after repeated heavy braking. For longevity of components, the Yellowstuff pads have been designed with minimal disc damage characteristics and feature a red Brake-In surface coating, for instant safe braking right after install. As you can see, all boxes ticked, and then some.

I booked in with Mike and Kevin at Redline American Muscle and as the guys reckoned it wouldn't take too long to fit the new discs and pads I stuck around to watch them work. Someone had really got their money's worth from the old brakes as there really wasn't much meat left on the pads and the discs were looking very worn and extremely rusty; really not what you want. Mike noticed that on at least one of the calipers one of the rubber O-rings that sits around the pistons was damaged and likely contributing to the binding; taking the calipers apart and rebuilding them would be an option, but Mike suggested that, by the time this had been done, it would have been cheaper to just buy some refurbished calipers, which would save a lot of time, hassle and money. I'm planning on adding some braided hoses to my set-up at a later date, and in order to fit those I will definitely need new calipers as the bleed nipples on a couple of the current ones have

been damaged and attempting to change hoses would be very difficult as a result.

When it came to installation I was very impressed to see Mike and Kevin giving the caliper slider pins a thorough clean prior to greasing them up and refitting them, and equally impressed with how easily everything came together with absolutely zero drama, everything fitting perfectly first time. As the discs aren't handed, in that the cooling vanes aren't angled in a particular direction which would dictate they be fitted on a specific side of the car, Kevin and I discussed which way round would be best to fit them. I come from the school of thought that feels discs should be mounted with any curved holes/grooves/dimples angled towards the rear of the car, so that as the disc spins any gases that might build up on its surfaces are flung outward, plus they look nicer when installed like that and Kevin agreed so that was that.

All that was left was to put →



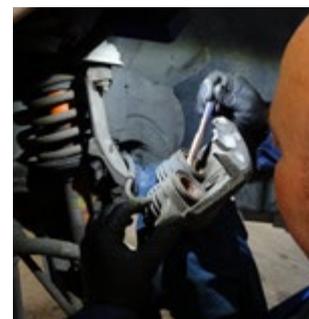
everything back together before Kevin took the Camaro out to make sure everything was working as it should; Mike had earlier commented that part of the reason the calipers had been binding might have been due to the fact that pads were very tight up against the discs, so I was hopeful that the fresh discs and pads might help on this front, and when Kevin rolled back in he said that everything felt good, which was definitely a reassuring sign. With that, I paid the guys and then headed out to try the brakes for myself.

It took all of a few hundred yards for me to realise that EBC really weren't lying when they said that the Brake-In coating means you get safe braking right after fitting, as from the very first application of the brakes, the pedal felt better than it ever had done and the Camaro stopped like it really wanted to rather than it feeling like a battle of wills between car and driver as it had done previously. As the Camaro doesn't get driven much, it will take me a little while before I can run the brakes through EBC's suggested bedding-in procedure; the company recommends gentle braking for the first 100 miles, with harder braking allowed in the next 100 and then you can carry out the bedding-in procedure, consisting of a series of heavy braking from 60-10mph. I know some people might say there's no need for this and you can just use the brakes normally, but I went by the book when it came to bedding-in the big-brake kit I have on my BMW 5-Series and it certainly did no harm, so I'm happy to do the same with the EBCs once I've covered enough miles. EBC actually says that it can take up to 1,500 miles before the pads are at their best, which makes me think a road trip is called for...

But even now I'm extremely

impressed with how the brakes are performing. With nice weather over a weekend recently, I decided to take the Camaro out for my first-ever T-topless drive. Having been used to the awful brakes for so long I'd forgotten about the EBCs and was genuinely surprised when I went to slow the car, not just at how quickly the car started slowing down but at how good the pedal felt. Good pedal feel is actually another Yellowtuff attribute that EBC lists, which is down to the pad's medium hardness material, and I can absolutely confirm that is the case.

What's most impressive is that the new discs and pads haven't just transformed the braking performance, they've transformed the whole driving experience. Before, I was experiencing some nasty vibration above 50mph as a result of the binding calipers, but now it's completely gone and the car just feels so much nicer to drive, so it looks like the calipers are holding up OK for now. After taking it out for a spin I checked the wheels and while the fronts were a little warm when I got home, when my neighbour pulled up in his BMW and had gone inside his house, I copped a feel of his front wheels and they were also a little bit warm so that's clearly nothing to worry about. And yes, I do realise how weird that sounds, reading it back to myself... Considering how impressed I am with the brakes at this point and that EBC says they get even better after being fully bedded-in and with a good few miles on them, I can't even imagine how good they're going to be feeling then. Just in case it wasn't completely clear, I'm absolutely over the moon with my EBC discs and pads and would recommend them in a heartbeat for anyone looking to give their Yank a bit more stop to match its go. **ACM**



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