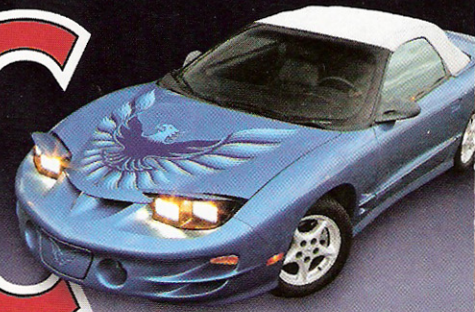


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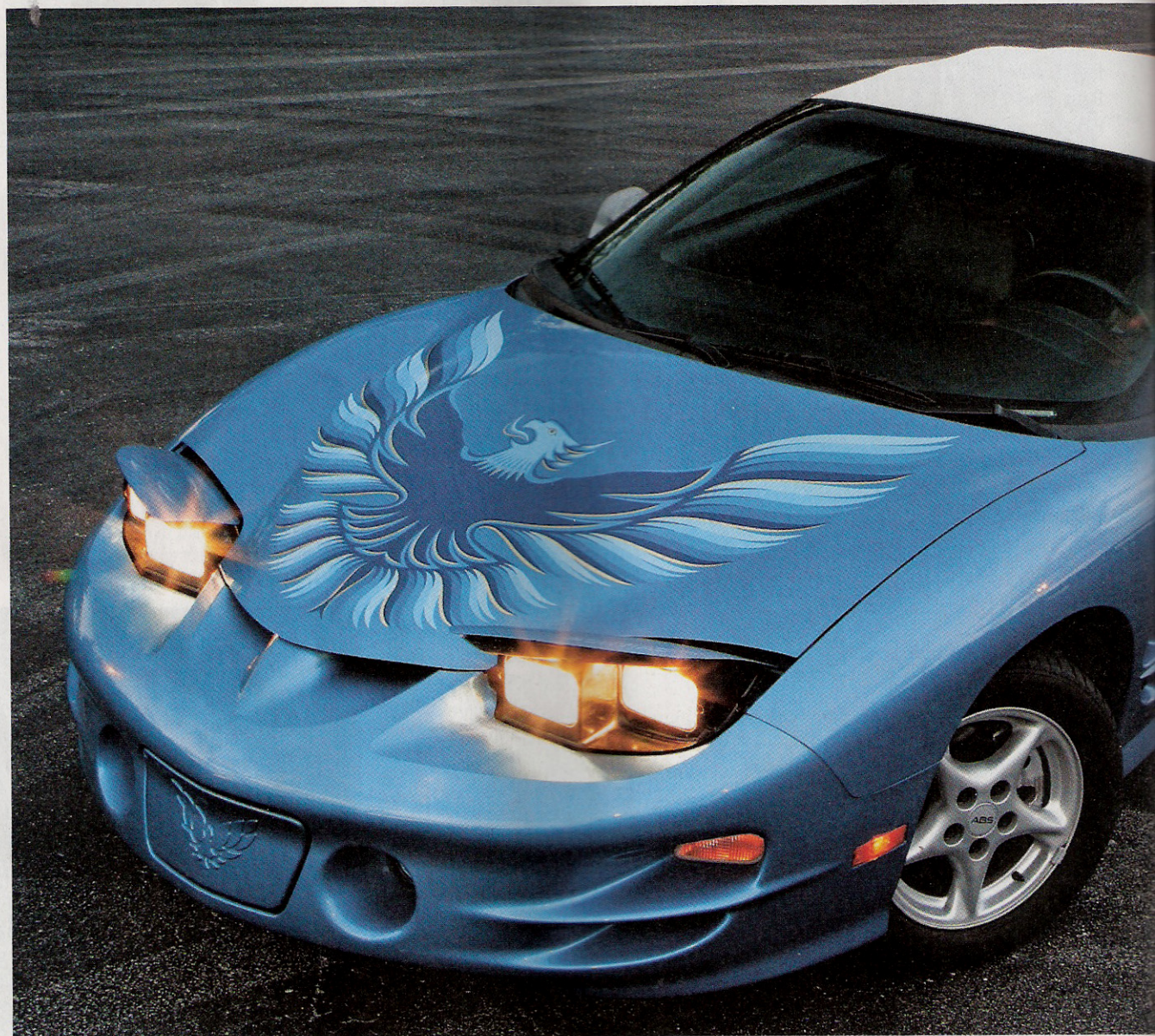
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STROKER SHOOTOUT! 12-SEC '63 GP • 10-SEC '65 GTO • 9-SEC '67 BIRD • 8-SEC '92 BIRD

RETURN OF THE SCREAMING CHICKEN

***Installing A Second-Gen Hood Decal On
Your Fourth-Gen Trans Am Is Easier Than
You Think, And The Results Are Spectacular***



BY CHRISTOPHER R. PHILLIP

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR
ADDITIONAL PRODUCT PHOTOGRAPHY
BY PATRICK HILL

The Fourth Generation Trans Am is a menacing-looking musclecar, but you'd have to stretch your imagination to see the similarities between it and the famous Bandit-era Second Generation Trans Ams of '77-'81. Whoever you ask what they remember about the T/A, the first words out of their mouths will most likely be "the Screaming Chicken." More than 35 years after its 1973 introduction, the Bird hood decal still defines the Trans Am, both for Pontiac hobbyists and the general public.

One question we hear from *HPP* readers is, "Why doesn't somebody create a GM-quality

hood bird for the Fourth-Gen Trans Am?" After much thought, we came to the conclusion that we didn't have to reinvent the Bird to reunite the Fourth-Gen Trans Am with its fine-feathered friend. Instead, we just had to figure out how to modify the Second-Gen hood decal so it would correctly fit on a newer Trans Am, and look like a factory option that left St. Therese on T/As produced in the '98-'02 era.

The project was easier than we thought and

will work on any non-Ram Air '98-'02 Fourth-Gen. (It may or may not work on a Ram Air T/A, or the earlier '93-'97 Firebird-T/A hood.)

Follow along as we modify and apply a Second-Gen hood decal onto a Fourth-Gen Trans Am at Dick Norris Buick-Pontiac-GMC in Palm Harbor, Florida. Body Shop Manager Robert Bomson enlisted the talents of Kevin Fawcett, decal specialist, to handle our install. Let's see how it turned out.



This '99 Trans Am convertible is painted Medium Blue Metallic (code 20), a beautiful one-year-only color. Doesn't it look like there's something missing on the hood? We think so... it needs a Screaming Chicken.



◀ *Phoenix Graphix (www.phoenixgraphix.com) provided its GM-licensed Trans Am hood decal for a '79 in blue (PN 7981TA-BLUE) for \$269. This bird is a one-piece design identical to the original supplied by GM, and is vastly superior to the unlicensed reproductions on the market. It measures 47 inches wide by 55 inches long, while the '99 T/A's hood is 61 inches wide by 44 inches long. The width of our decal is a perfect fit, but is 11 inches too long.*

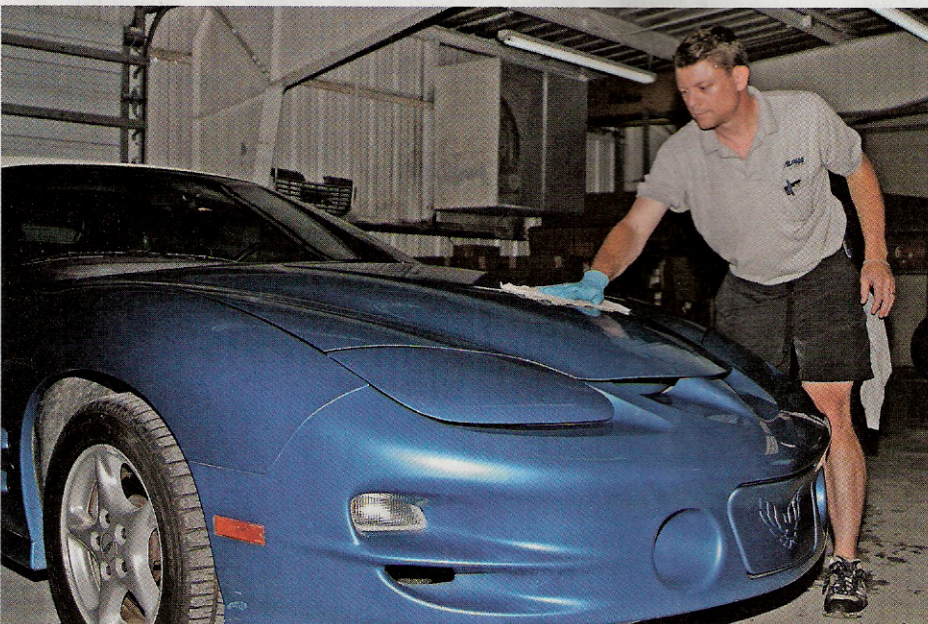


▲ Here's our decal after being trimmed. It now measures 40 inches tall by 47 inches wide.

◀ For the decal to install perfectly onto our Fourth-Gen Trans Am, we have to remove the top set of feathers. Using brown packing paper, we carefully cut a mask around the top set of feathers on the decal and follow the masking line up to the base of the bird's back neck. We repeat the process on the face side of the Screaming Chicken. With a utility blade, we carefully cut out the top set of feathers on each side of the decal. Remember, this voids the warranty of the decal we ordered, so be careful to cut slowly and not make a mistake.



▲ We place the decal (with its backing still attached) on the hood of the Trans Am and test it for position. For us, the most pleasing location is 2 inches from the bottom lip of the hood and 2 inches from the top.



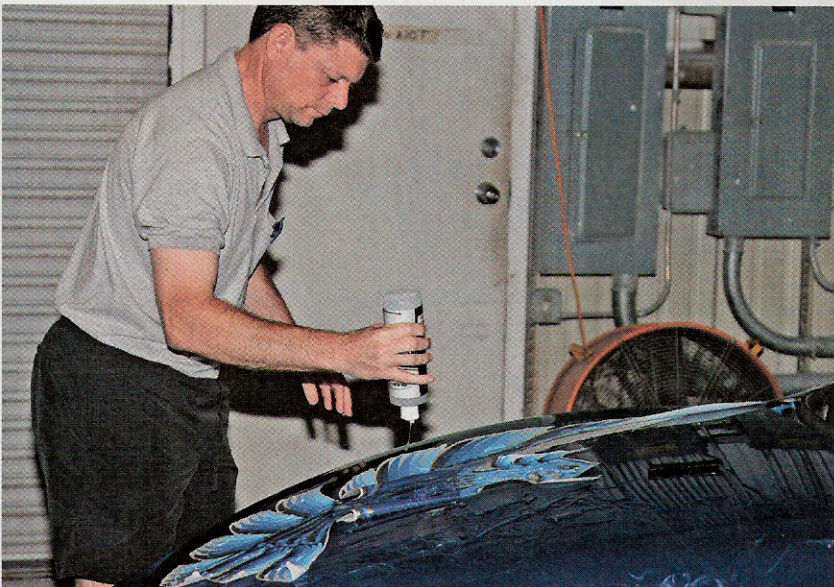
◀ Phoenix Graphix suggested that we move the Trans Am indoors to an area free of dust and with the temperature between 70 and 90 degrees. Once inside, we prep the hood area with a small amount of isopropyl alcohol applied to a damp, lint-free cloth.



Having laid the decal in the desired location, we use masking tape to mark the intended placement.



We remove the paper liner, exposing the adhesive side of the decal.



Then we liberally apply Slide-On Application Gel to the adhesive and the hood underneath where the decal will go.



HIGH-TECH INSTALLATION AIDS

Slide-On Application Gel and Slide-Over UV Protectant & Conditioner are two new products available in the '08 Phoenix Graphix catalog to make your decals install perfectly and remain great-looking.

According to Phoenix Graphix, "Slide-On is the best insurance against having to purchase another decal because of an application mistake. In addition to allowing graphics to hydroplane above the surface until squeegeed, Slide-On creates a vacuum beneath the graphic whereby air is not allowed back under it, thus preventing bubbles and air pockets, making it far superior to simply using old-fashioned soap and water. Slide-On is exceptionally well received by customers and our feedback has been all praise." Slide-On Application Gel, PN SOAG, \$19. (Includes application squeegee and instructions.)

"Our second new product is called Slide-Over. Long ago, Phoenix Graphix recognized the value and importance of maintaining vinyl stripes and graphic decals. Although our products are of the highest quality, Slide-Over will protect your vinyl from nature's elements and the aging that go with them. It restores lost color and luster; repels dust, dirt, oils, tree sap, smudges and stains. Treated vinyl stays cleaner and cleans up easier and protects your decal from ultraviolet rays. Slide-Over is not oily or greasy, it does not attract dust, and, most importantly, unlike petroleum distillates, it does not suck the moisture from your vinyl, rubber, fiberglass, plastic, leather, or tires. It is an excellent low-cost investment to extend the life of your decals." Slide-Over UV Protectant & Conditioner (PN SOPC) costs \$19 and is available from Phoenix Graphix.



We lay the decal adhesive-side down and slide it into the desired location. Slide-On temporarily inhibits the tacking of the decal adhesive, allowing us ample time to position it.



After waiting three hours to allow the decal to dry, we start at a pointed edge and peel back the pre-mask paper liner at a 180-degree angle.



Any edges that didn't lie perfectly we carefully peel back using an X-Acto knife, and relay.



Next we take a Phoenix Graphix squeegee and, starting in the middle of the decal using small overlapping strokes, work the Slide-On out toward the edge of the decal.



We spray the entire decal and hood area liberally with soapy water to loosen the pre-mask paper liner, then wipe the solution off. (This step is optional.)



We use a soft, clean towel to clear the hood surface of any remaining gel.



We spray the entire decal and hood area liberally with soapy water to loosen the pre-mask paper liner, then wipe the solution off. (This step is optional.)



Robert Bomson, Dick Norris Buick-Pontiac-GMC body shop manager (left), and Kevin Fawcett take a look at the final results. "I started working at a Pontiac dealership in 1976," Robert says. "The Screaming Chicken made the Trans Am what it is. It's great to see it back." 🗡️

SOURCE

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