

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

Third Gen Camaro 1982 1992 Z28 Iroc Z

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RESTORATION ESSENTIALS

Third-Gen Camaro

1982–1992

Z28 & IROC-Z

Z28 and IROC-Z — Tuned Port performance, decoded

Platform guide · Model years 1982–1992

KEY FACTS AT A GLANCE

- The third-generation Camaro ran 1982–1992, with about 1.53 million Camaros built — the Z28 and IROC-Z are the performance trims that matter.
- The IROC-Z (RPO B2L) ran 1985–1990, named for the International Race of Champions series.
- Engines: carbureted 305s (LG4, L69 HO) gave way to Tuned Port Injection (LB9 305, L98 350) — 215 hp in 1985, up to 245 hp by 1990–92.
- The 8th VIN digit is the engine: F = 305 TPI, 8 = 350 TPI, H = carbureted 305. Check it — TPI badges are cheap.
- RPO 1LE (1988–1992) is the factory racer: no A/C, big brakes, aluminum driveshaft, oil cooler. RPO B2L is the IROC-Z itself.
- The Borg-Warner 9-bolt rear (G92/L98 cars) is identified by its 9-bolt cover with a rubber drain plug — not the usual 10-bolt.
- TPI used mass-airflow metering 1985–89 and speed-density (MAP) in 1990. The computers and wiring differ.
- This guide speaks two languages, labeled throughout: STOCK-CORRECT (how Chevrolet built it) and PERFORMANCE-SMART (what the aftermarket learned).

SAMPLE EXCERPT — full guide available at the link on the cover sheet

Why the third-gen Z28 matters

The third-generation F-body was GM's clean-sheet answer to the 1980s: lighter, lower, more aerodynamic, and — after a carbureted stumble — genuinely quick. The Z28 carried the performance banner from day one in 1982, and the IROC-Z, introduced for 1985, became the defining street car of the late 1980s: 16-inch wheels, Tuned Port Injection, DeCarbon gas shocks, quicker steering, and an attitude the Mustang couldn't match on looks alone.

About 1.53 million third-gen Camaros were built, and the owner community is deep and active — thirdgen.org's tech and build forums show fresh activity, and aftermarket support has grown steadily over the last decade. Be honest about this crowd: they restomod as much as they restore. This guide serves both. **STOCK-CORRECT** sections cover VIN and RPO decoding, casting numbers, original finishes, and year-to-year changes. **PERFORMANCE-SMART** sections cover the TPI bolt-on path and the judgment calls. The two are never blurred — when a modification costs originality, this guide says so.

Year by year: what changed, 1982–1992 — STOCK-CORRECT

1982 — The all-new third generation. The Z28 is the top performance trim from launch. Engines: LG4 305 4-barrel (145 hp) and the LU5 305 Cross-Fire Injection (165 hp). The Berlinetta covers the luxury end. Everything is new — new platform, new styling, new expectations.

1983 — The L69 305 HO arrives mid-year at 190 hp with a 4-barrel — the first genuinely quick third-gen. The Borg-Warner T-5 5-speed manual becomes available. LG4 rated 150 hp.

1984 — Carryover powertrains (LG4 155 hp, L69 190 hp). Refinement year; Berlinetta continues.

1985 — The IROC-Z debuts (RPO B2L): LB9 305 Tuned Port Injection at 215 hp, 16-inch wheels, revised suspension with DeCarbon gas-pressurized dampers, quicker steering, and larger anti-roll bars. Also offered: LG4 155 hp and the L69 HO 190 hp (manual only). The TPI cars are the ones to have — the long-runner intake transformed the 305's character.

1986 — Federally mandated center high-mount stop lamp (third brake light). The LB9 drops to 190 hp in IROC-Z tune; the L69 HO's final year (190 hp). Last year for the Berlinetta.

1987 — The big year. The L98 350 TPI arrives at 225 hp and 330 lb-ft — IROC-Z only, automatic only. The LB9 305 TPI splits by transmission: 190 hp with the automatic, 215 hp with the 5-speed. All V8s get hydraulic roller lifters, new center-bolt valve covers, and revised heads with a raised sealing lip. VIN check: 8th digit F = 305 TPI, 8 = 350 TPI. The 350 cars are visually identifiable by the "5.7L" added to the bumper-cover "Tuned Port Injection" decal. Every 1987 L98 IROC-Z was required to carry 3.27 gears (G92), J65 rear disc brakes, G80 limited-slip, and the KC4 engine oil cooler. G92/L98 cars got the Borg-Warner HD 7.75-inch 9-bolt rear axle.

1988 — RPO 1LE debuts: the factory-built racer for SCCA and the Player's Challenge series. L98 rated 230 hp / 330 lb-ft. IROC-Z continues.

1989 — The RS (Rally Sport) trim replaces the base Sport Coupe. IROC-Z continues with a full engine ladder: LO3 305 TBI at 170 hp (base), LB9 305 TPI at 195 hp (auto) or 220 hp (manual; 230 hp with G92), and L98 350 TPI at 230 hp (standard 2.77 axle) or 240 hp (G92 3.27 Borg-Warner axle). 1LE continues.

1990 — The last IROC-Z — the IROC series contract ended (the Dodge Daytona carried the series name in 1990). TPI switches from mass-airflow to speed-density (MAP) metering. Published ratings: LB9 210 hp, L98 245 hp / 345 lb-ft. 1LE continues.

1991 — Facelift: new ground effects, high-rise rear spoiler, revised front end. The Z28 returns as the top performance model with the IROC name retired. B4C police package debuts (Z28-based Special Service). Published ratings carry over: LB9 205 hp, L98 245 hp.

1992 — Final year. The 25th Anniversary Heritage package adds the stripe treatment. L98 245 hp / LB9 205 hp (published). End of the third generation.

Engines: the 305 and 350 ladder — STOCK-CORRECT

Years	RPO	Engine	Induction	Rating (hp / tq)
1982	LG4	305 (5.0L)	4-bbl	145 hp
1982–83	LU5	305 (5.0L)	Cross-Fire Injection	165 hp
1983	LG4	305	4-bbl	150 hp
1983–86	L69	305 HO	4-bbl	190 hp
1984–86	LG4	305	4-bbl	155 hp
1985	LB9	305	TPI	215 hp
1986–87	LB9	305	TPI	190 hp
1987	LB9	305	TPI	190 hp auto / 215 hp manual
1987	L98	350 (5.7L)	TPI	225 hp / 330 lb-ft
1988	L98	350	TPI	230 hp / 330 lb-ft
1989	LO3	305	TBI	170 hp / 255 lb-ft
1989	LB9	305	TPI	195 hp auto / 220 hp manual (230 hp w/ G92)
1989	L98	350	TPI	230 hp (240 hp w/ G92) / 330–345 lb-ft
1990–92	LB9	305	TPI	205–210 hp (published)
1990–92	L98	350	TPI	245 hp / 345 lb-ft (published)

All figures are factory ratings; 1990–92 figures are published ratings that varied slightly by source. All use the small-block Chevrolet bore/stroke families: 305 = 3.736 × 3.48 in, 350 = 4.000 × 3.48 in. Compression ran roughly 9.3–9.5:1 on TPI engines.

TPI: what it is and why metering matters

Tuned Port Injection's long-runner intake manifold was tuned for low-to-midrange torque — exactly what a heavy street car wants. It made the 305 feel far stronger than its horsepower number, and it's the visual signature of the era: the ribbed plenum and long runners under the hood.

Metering changed in 1990: 1985–89 TPI cars used a mass-airflow (MAF) sensor; 1990 cars switched to speed-density (MAP). The computers, wiring harnesses, and sensors differ — you cannot mix-and-match MAF and MAP components and expect the car to run. When buying parts or a parts car, match the metering system to the year.

1987-up engine details: hydraulic roller lifters on all V8s, center-bolt valve covers with new sealing, heads with a raised lip for improved gasket sealing, and the two center intake-manifold bolts changed from 90-degree to 72-degree orientation. These details matter when ordering gaskets and intakes — 1987-up top-end parts don't all interchange with