

# How to paint the grill black for an SS car

It is widely believed that the pattern for the Black “SS” grill differed slightly depending on the final assembly plant.

NOS grills came with just the top painted black. Here is a NOS grill still in the box:



## **OPEN DISCUSSION: Black on top or not? THIS is the question! Is the very top of the grill (where the rivets are) painted black?**

(notes based on facebook discussion

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/65chevelle/permalink/1720529708383783>)

### **Discussion Points**

- @Chris Daniels posted original Z16 engine compartment, grill is clearly not painted on top.
- Other plants incl Kansas and Atlanta it appears that they are not painted on top.
- JR presented Baltimore grill painted on top.

At this point I suspect, but see the FB discussion!: The grills were painted a little differently depending on the assembly plant and when the car was assembled. As we've seen in other areas, Baltimore cars seem to differ. I'm guessing here based on talk with some old timers (I'm from Baltimore), but the Bmore plant, opened in 1935, was one of GM's oldest plants and did a lot of processes manually. I think this might explain why cars made in Baltimore during the 60's seem to differ from other plants and even from each other.

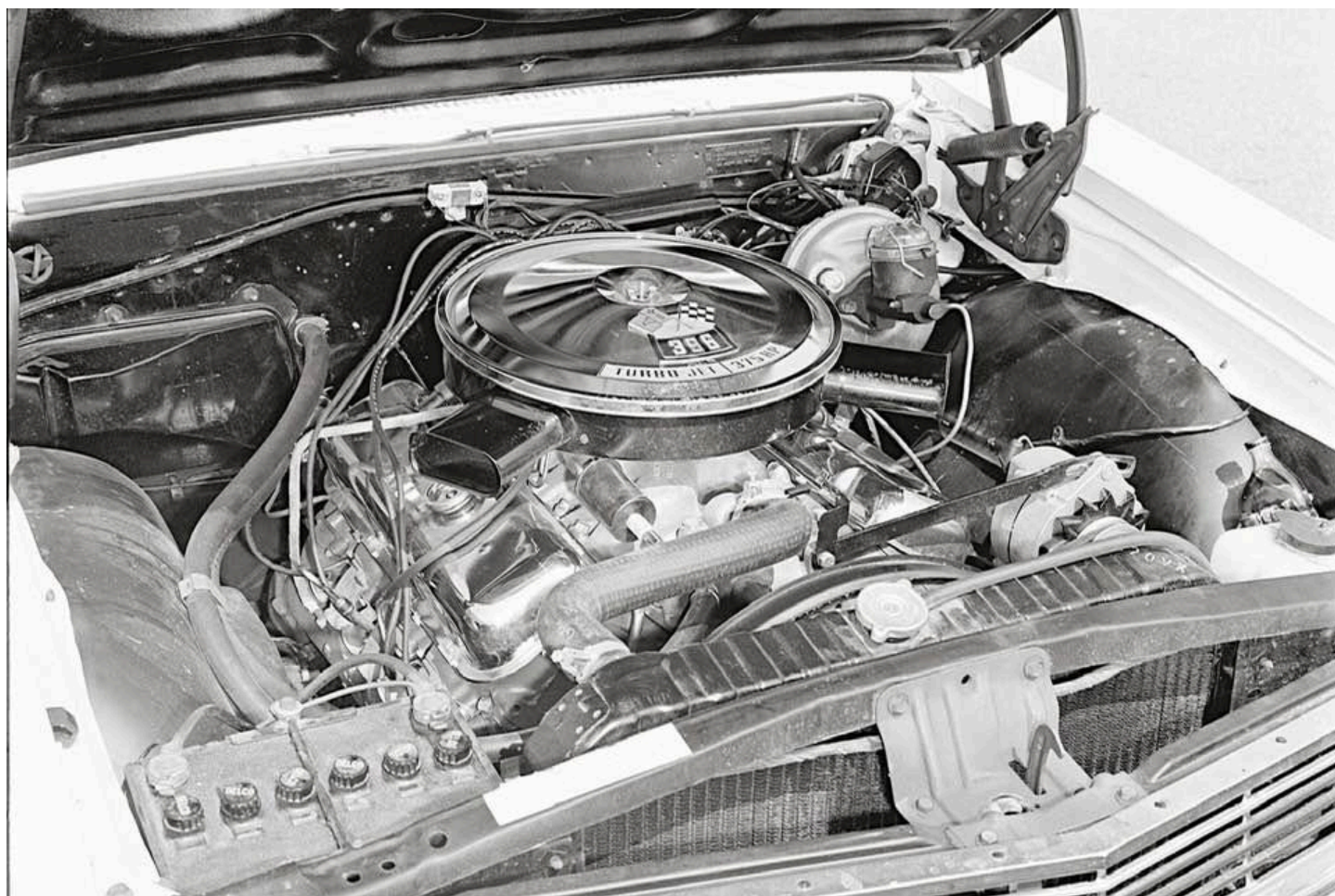
I've also learned that these were painted after being assembled to the front fender tie bar so they must of used tape to mask off the grill when they painted it for SS cars. If that's the case, they could have easily masked off the top of the grill or just masked the tie bar.

Here is an original grill from the Baltimore plant (early model year). Notice the top and bottom fin are not painted.



Same grill showing top was painted.

**Original 1965 road test picture shows grill top is unpainted with black rivets. This is a Kansas City car.**



Here are some very common patterns and considered correct. Note leaving the top and bottom fins unpainted gives the appearance of a chrome border surrounding the black.







For the headlight bezels, there are two main patterns, solid black and striped black. Here are the striped black bezels:



What color black paint to use? The original color black was satin black. Some popular products:, (this blog post has no financial relationships with any products mentioned).I used the Eastwood Satin Rat Rod Black and I'm very pleased with it.

 <p>A black spray can with a black cap. The label features the SEM logo and the text '39143 THE INDUSTRY STANDARD TRIM BLACK'. Below this, it says 'OEM matched coating for refinishing automotive trim components' and includes a Spanish translation. At the bottom, there is a 'DANGER' warning and the net weight '15 oz. / 426 g'.</p>	 <p>A white spray can with a clear cap. The label features the Eastwood logo and the text '2K AEROSPRAY RAT ROD BLACK SATIN FINISH'. It includes a list of features: '2-Component Nano-Ceramic Technology', 'Most Durable Aerosol Paint Available', and 'Sprays Like a Paint Gun'. There is also a 'DANGER' warning and the net weight '12.2 oz. / 345 grams'.</p>

Here's my process:

1. If your grill is not brand new, polish it (not too much, these are anodized aluminum, you don't want to remove the anodized layer).
2. Tape off areas that won't get paint.
3. Just before you paint, wipe down with rubbing alcohol, I prefer 91%
4. Spray with etching primer.
5. Spray with Eastwood Rat Rod Satin Black.

Have your own favorite? Please let us know! [Contact Us](#)