

# FEATURES TO THE MAX



## THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY IN PERFORMANCE INSTRUMENTS

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So much of what we do to our street machines involves increasing the performance or improving the appearance. We do this so the car or truck we're working on better meets the goals and expectations we've set out to achieve. Everything from building powerful engines to spraying custom paint schemes...it's all done in the name of customization. It's for this reason that when we were introduced to Auto Meter's latest line of high performance gauges, known as the Elite Series, we immediately wanted to learn more.

Outside of varying faces and shapes, it's easy to think a gauge is a gauge. However, while that may have been true at some point years ago, it couldn't be

further from the truth today. Auto Meter has long been known for their highly accurate gauges, which are used in everything from professional racing to the show car circuit. While some might rest on their laurels, Auto Meter continues to push the envelope in search of better performing instruments. Their Elite Series gauges are proof of that.

The Elite Series gauges have a clean and simple design that would be at home in a variety of street machines, and offer about as much customization as you'll find anywhere. The most obvious and probably most appealing customizable feature is the ability to change the color of the vibrant, always-on through-the-dial LED lighting of each gauge. The Elite Series gauges offer seven user selectable col-

ors, which allow users to customize their color schemes to match the rest of their interior lighting or to maximize gauge visibility. The seven available colors, which are programmed using a combination of the two buttons on the front of each gauge, are white (default), red, blue, yellow, green, pink (or light purple), and teal. If one so desired, they could easily program each gauge to be a different color in a matter of seconds, without the use of an external module or remote.

While having the option of choosing the color of your gauges is intriguing on its own, the ability to change colors plays another role that's equally as cool and arguably more important. The Elite Series gauges allow users to set custom high and low alert points, which when reached will provide a full dial warning notification. The warning points activate a user-

defined change of color, which indicates a need for driver attention. Similarly, should the needle continue to rise beyond or fall below the set alert points by a user-defined amount, the gauge will begin to flash, signaling an over warn condition. These useful features not only help ensure the driver is made aware of issues as soon as they arise, but it also eliminates the need for warning lights that accompany traditional stock instruments or

Series gauges feature solid state, data acquisition grade sending units and peak recall functionality. The high quality sending units allow users to output sensor signals to an external data logger system or aftermarket stand alone fuel management system. This feature eliminates the need to install two sensors to measure the same function for logging purposes, which has previously been the standard. While this function is most commonly used by racers, the use of data acquisition systems has become more wide spread, especially among late-model fuel injection enthusiasts due to the benefits it offers during the tuning process.

that are necessary when using less advanced aftermarket gauges.

In that same vein, Auto Meter's Pro Control system, which is the technology behind the high and low warning features, is capable of triggering external devices like relays, fans, pumps, or audible alarms based on instrument readings. For example, a water temperature gauge can be programmed to activate a cooling fan as soon as the gauge reaches a given temperature and will deactivate it when the gauge drops below the set temperature. Similarly, if an oil pressure gauge indicates an oil pressure reading below a programmed limit, it could potentially trigger an ignition kill switch to help prevent catastrophic engine failure due to a loss of oil pressure. This ability alone is worth the gauge's weight in gold.

Taking a feature from Auto Meter's Competition Series instruments, the Elite

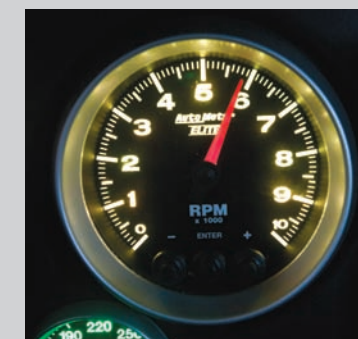
Considering the age, noticeable inaccuracy, and laziness of the stock gauges in our project '85 Camaro, we've wanted to upgrade the original equipment to a set of aftermarket instruments for quite some time. Our introduction to Auto Meter's Elite Series gauges left us impressed by the incredible amount of technology and cutting-edge features they offer. Armed with knowledge of the product line, we decided to incorporate the slick gauges into our similarly technology-packed project Camaro.

Before we could begin the installation, we needed to locate a mounting solution since the stock dashboard clearly wasn't going to work. We contacted the folks at Classic Dash to inquire about their dash panels designed for use with Auto Meter gauges. Classic Dash offers dash panels for a variety of street machines ranging from the '60s to the '90s, including a panel for our '85 Camaro.

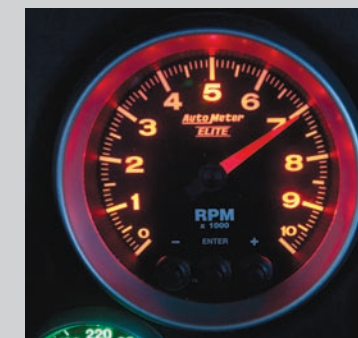
## PROGRESSIVE SHIFT TECHNOLOGY



Auto Meter's Elite Series tachometer features Progressive Shift Technology, which eliminates the need for a conventional shift light. The above photo shows a tach with the default white LED backlighting.



To help warn drivers of an impending user-programmed shift point, the gauge backlighting changes to a user-selected color. In our case, we selected a yellow pre-shift warning at 5,800 rpm.



When the tach needle reaches the preset shift point, the gauge backlighting changes color again to signal that it's time to shift. We set our shift point at 7,000 rpm with a red warning color. If the rpm climbs beyond the shift point a user-defined amount, the backlighting begins to flash, signaling an over-rev situation.



## CLASSIC DASH GAUGE PANEL

Classic Dash, which was formed in 2002, is the leader in replacement ABS composite dash panels for a wide range of street machines. To best match the interior of our project Camaro, we selected Classic Dash's black gauge panel, which features six pre-cut holes for use with Auto Meter 3 3/8-inch and 2 1/16-inch gauges. Other available finishes include simulated carbon fiber and brushed aluminum.

Classic Dash offers gauge panels for the following vehicles: '67-'92 Camaro, '64-'72 Chevelle, '64-'72 and '78-'87 El Camino, '64-'72 and '78-'83 Malibu, '70-'72 and '78-'87 Monte Carlo, '62-'75 and '77-'79 Nova/Chevy II, '60-'87 Chevrolet Truck, '82-'86 S10, and '67-'68 and '70-'81 Pontiac Firebird.

The stock dash panel houses five gauges, but thanks to Auto Meter's 3 3/8-inch speedometer and tachometer options, Classic Dash designed their panel to house six gauges total (two 3 3/8-inch and four 2 1/16-inch gauges). Teamed with Auto Meter's '82-'92 Camaro A-pillar triple gauge pod, we were able to squeeze nine instruments from the Elite Series into the cockpit of our Camaro.



With the gauge panel and gauges installed in our project Camaro, we programmed each gauge to display a different color. Visible are six of the seven available colors (teal is not shown).

The nine gauges we selected are speedometer, tachometer, water temperature, oil pressure, oil temperature, voltmeter, fuel level, boost/vacuum, and wideband air/fuel ratio. All of the instruments (except the digital wideband air/fuel ratio gauge) are full-sweep electric gauges offering 270 degrees of readability.

After learning more about the technology and features Auto Meter has packed into their latest gauges and experiencing all that they're capable of, we can say with confidence that they've se-

The additional room provided by Auto Meter's '82-'92 Camaro A-pillar triple gauge pod allowed us to install a total of nine gauges.

cured their place at the top of the high performance instrument leaderboard. Be sure to check out the accompanying sidebars to learn more about Auto Meter's Elite Series instruments and Classic Dash's extensive line of aftermarket dash panels.



## SOURCES

**AUTO METER**  
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