

## FireStorm Plasmaglow Tailgate

By Scott Campbell

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When I got the car from my mom after my dad passed away, he had attached 2 red 6" and 2 yellow 8" trailer after market LED lights to the top of the rear window, connecting them to the turn signals and brake lights. In my total revamp of the exterior of the car I know I needed to upgrade this feature to match the style of the car. While at a car show I saw a truck with tail gate lights, and when in reverse the bar also had white lights. This is where the idea for using a truck tailgate bar for this upgrade came from.

After some hunting around on Google searching "Tailgate Light Bar" I found a FireStorm Tailgate Bar made by PlasmaGlow. The bar has scanning turn signals, reverse, brake, parking lights, controlled by a micro processor They specialize in LED aftermarket lights for cars, boats, trucks, motorcycles, trailers, etc. They sell a 36" bar used for small (S10 / Ranger) step side trucks and I know from earlier measuring it would fit the back window of a GT.

Video 1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlBSNtoRiOg>

Video 2: <http://www.plasmaglow.com/firestorm-led-tailgate-bar/>

Pricing for the Fire Strom can very depending on where you get it from. I just Googled under shopping "36 FireStorm PlasmaGlow" and went to the cheapest best reviewed site that sold it. I honesty don't remember which company it was. I bought it for about \$175.00 including shipping (straight through PlasmaGlow it is \$250.00 before shipping).

Before buying it I contacted PlasmaGlow by asking if they could show me a picture of what it looked like out of the box so I could see if it could be attached somehow. (**see image 1**) After seeing the pictures I realized there was probably a way to make it work. The item came via Postal Service in a poster tube, with a smaller poster tube inside which was the actual packaging from PlasmaGlow. When I opened it I found the instructions for the wire hook ups and adhesive tape on the bar to. I found the bar to be very ridged and there were 2 stickers on it that said "**DO NOT BEND**" and was hoping that the curve of the roof would not be an issue since I couldn't bend the bar. (of course it was)

When I started to figure out the installation I noticed that the lights would ride right underneath the lip above the back windshield, however part of the "L" shape of it was hang down below the lights and could be seen. I could have simply attached the bar with adhesives to the back window, and called it quits. However I did not like the look of the plastic hanging down below the lights. In addition in the middle of the window it would have blocked some of the third brake light (illegal in some states). This is because the bar was straight and to see the very outside lights of the lip the middle had to be further down than the sides. Again I contacted PlasmaGlow and wanted to know if the part without the lights could ground off.

You could see a small seam in the plastic. (**see image 2**) I was told that the version I had could be grounded, but their newer versions could not because there was circuit board in the way.

I took my Drimmel and ground all the whole extra part of "L" till it became and "I" being careful not to slip and cut into the part behind the lights or the light itself. I just used a sanding drum on the Drimmel and took off about 1/16 -1/8 of an inch a pass (VERY DUSTY!!! MASK AND EYE WEAR SUGGESTED!) After that removing that the bar had a little bit of flex / spring, allowing it to bend about 1/2 - 1 inch curve from the side to the middle.

I now had to attach the light to the lip above the window instead of the window itself. When I held the lights up to the lip the edges (left and right) of the light bar disappeared behind the lip, the middle part hung below. I found 12 small hard oval plastic pieces in my garage (don't know from what probably packaging off something) that were about 1/4 inch thick and the same diameter as the bar. Attaching one to 4 different spots on the bar using double sided tape (LocTite brand). Then held it up under the lip and it didn't help. I then doubled up on the plastic pieces using more double sided tape between them. Holding the bar up to the lip the left and right lights were now showing, however the middle lights were floating further down and those spacers weren't touching. I thought about adding more spacers to the middle, but it just did not look right with the light going straight across with a curve roof line. In the end I went for it and used that curve / spring I gained earlier (remember earlier it said DO NOT BEND;), not adding more spacers but just attached the doubled up ones to the underside of the lip to match the roof line. I attached it to the underside of the lip in those 4 locations with some more double sided tape, and the tension on the lights from the bend have not pulled it off yet.

The wiring was basic just like installing a trailer harness on any car with the exception it wanted a Constant 12V power source. All the wires came out the end of the the unit and I placed that end on the side with the battery to help with the 12v power source. I routed the wires behind the inner sale body panel on a GT down to the tail light area. There spliced into my turn, brake, reverse, and parking light wires with the colors as stated in the directions. The only trick was that the right and the left turn signal colors had to be flipped because on the truck beds the light bar is mounted the other way with the wires coming out the drivers side of the unit. You can also chose not to hook up the parking light wire. Don't expect the 4 way flashers to flash both turn signals outward, they just flash the brake lights. I have had no other problems with any lights on the car with tapping this system into them.



Image 1



Image 2

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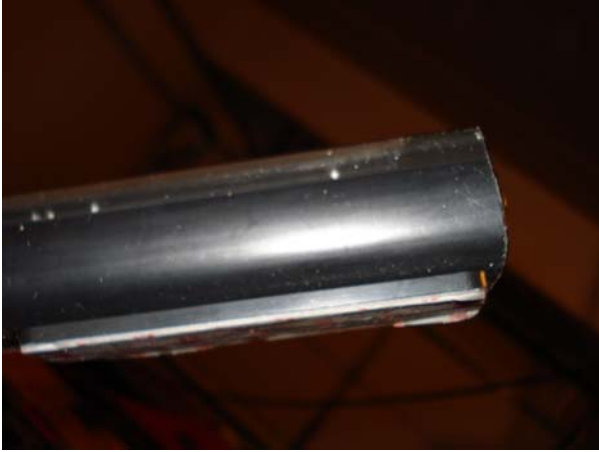


Image3



### **Hot Rod Power Tour 2011: June 2-9**

Many of you may read "Hot Rod Magazine", and probably have heard of the "Hot Rod Power Tour", or even considered attending it. I have been a "Long Hauler" on the Power Tour the past two years with my dad in his 1970 Cutlass convertible and will once again be doing the whole tour this year. The Power Tour consists of seven different cruise nights in seven different cities, starting on Saturday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012, in Detroit, MI. You then leave the following morning for the next location where you will have a cruise night between noon and 7:00pm, and then repeat. You can stay as long as you like at the cruise nights and get there whenever you want. There are daily sponsor giveaways and games played at the main stage throughout the day, and

sometimes special events are planned (open drags, hot laps around racetracks, autocross, etc.). The driving route that Hot Rod plans takes you through many small towns and on two lane-paved roads. It is a sight that you won't forget going through small towns with hot rods as far as the eye can see in front of you and behind you. Throughout the whole tour you can join in at anytime and leave at anytime, or you can do the whole thing and be a part of the "Long Haul Gang." Registration fees vary depending on how much of the tour you do. As an insider tip: if you plan on attending more than a couple of days, it will be cheaper to pay the Long Haul registration fee, and get the free "Long Hauler" vendor giveaways too.

It is hard to describe spending a week with thousands of other people that have common objectives; to have fun, meet great people, and see thousands of awesome cars. The Power Tour is considered to be the largest automotive tour in the world. The Power Tour is not just about the seven days of car shows throughout the country; it is about the drive, the love of cars, the people you meet, and just having an old fashion good time. It is also not for only 1960's and 1970's muscle cars and street rods. There are many new, exotic, and daily driven cars that are part of the event also. Many participants respect the Fiero and believe it to be an icon of "Pontiac Excitement" and an important part of automobile history. There have been many Fieros on tour in the past. People attend from all over the country and world. You will see their rides and talk about life and cars. Everyone is there to help everyone else and have a good time. You always hear stories about some random person helping out when there is a breakdown or something goes wrong. When you are done with the Power Tour you will have 1,500 or more new friends that you will want to see annually on the tour, and memories you won't forget!

The route this year is as follows:

- Saturday June 2, Detroit, MI - GM Proving Grounds, Milford

- Sunday June 3, Muskegon, MI -  
Downtown Muskegon
- Monday June 4, Champaign, IL  
- Assembly Hall, University of  
Illinois
- Tuesday June 5, Madison, IL -  
Gateway Motorsports Park
- Wednesday June 6, Miami, OK -  
Buffalo Run Casino
- Thursday June 7, Stillwater, OK  
- Kicker Corporate Complex
- Friday June 8, Arlington, TX -  
Quicktrip Park
- Saturday June 9, Arlington, TX  
Long Haulers Ceremony  
(Location TBD)

If you would like more information  
please contact me at  
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740-3901. Or visit [www.hotrod.com](http://www.hotrod.com) under  
the events page or  
[www.familyevents.com/event/170](http://www.familyevents.com/event/170).