



Shelby Life Article

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INSTALLING AEROCATCH 21st CENTURY HOOD LATCHES

By Barry Levey

The automotive hobby is a wonderful exercise in freedom. So many choices to make: stock or modified?, leading edge or traditional?, do-it-yourself or do-it-for-me? No choice is wrong, it's all about individual freedom of expression.

As for me, I'm a hot rodder. Pretty much EVERYTHING I own is modified in one fashion or another so the choices I make with my Mustang tend to be along the line of modification rather than restoration. In addition, I steal shamelessly from those ideas that seem to work. I've stolen ideas from Shelby, Remington, Travers and Coons, and the world of tuner cars. So it should come as no surprise when I chose some leading edge, tuner based, hood latches for my 66 Mustang.

The Aerocatch Company in England makes an aerodynamic, positive latching, and locking hood latch set for race cars, tuners, and idea thieves like me. After my biggest modification (an engine too tall to fit under the hood) required a hood scoop, I was worried about keeping the hood latched at high speed and because I drive my car in events that sometimes require overnight parking at hotel/motel, I liked the idea of a locking mechanism to help keep the honest folks honest.

Here's a quick tutorial in how I installed the Aerocatch latches.

- 1) Study and thought: I wanted to use a solid mounting unit for the latch posts. Looking at the engine compartment structure, the core support was a logical and strong choice. Looking at the reinforcements on the underside of the hood, I chose a post mounting point that was aesthetically pleasing from a spacing perspective that also minimized the amount of underhood bracing that needed to be modified.
- 2) Study and thought II: While looking at the underhood bracing, I realized that mounting the latch mechanisms back to front would further minimize the amount of structural cutting that was required. I also thought the latches looked better mounted "backwards",
- 3) Study and thought III: measure multiple times and cut very carefully. We're talking some pretty big cuts here!

Once I thought things through carefully, measured repeatedly, and said a prayer to the modification gods, I drilled a pilot hole in each side of the core support and enlarged them to fit the latch posts.



After the latch posts were positioned, I put a small dab of white grease on the center top of the post and gently brought the hood down to make contact with top of the latch posts. Did I say gently make contact? Yeah, gently!



The resulting white spot is the center point for mounting the latches on the hood. Drill a small pilot hole from the underside of the hood as the guide point for all future hood cutting.

INSTALLING AEROCATCH 21st CENTURY HOOD LATCHES *(Continued)*



Remove the latch posts for now so you can close your hood and liberally apply a surface of masking tape all around the pilot holes. This tape will allow you to use a good marking pen to trace the mounting templates AND protect your hood's finish from marks from the jig saw or cut-off wheel (I used both). Also, use paper under the hood to catch shavings etc. and keep them out your engine compartment.



When you're done, you'll have some pretty scary holes in your hood.



Use the templates provided in the Aerocatch kit to lay out the position of you latches. Again, look at it from many angles and measure carefully. You want them to fit the latch post position perfectly, look good, and fit neatly. In this instance, two out of three is bad – you want to bat a 1,000.



But, once the latches are installed and the posts replace and adjusted for height, you'll have some pretty cool looking, aerodynamic, locking hood latches for peace of mind and dash of panache.





Shelby American Automobile Club—Motor City Region

Dedicated the preservation, care, history and **ENJOYMENT** of the automobiles manufactured by Shelby American and Ford Motor Company, as well as **ALL Ford Powered Vehicles**, while promoting safe and enjoyable open track events

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2016 Calendar of Events

Date

October

2 SAAC-MCR Harvest Happening Open Track, Waterford Hills Road Race Course, Clarkston, MI