

# 356 Ignition Tune Ups - Tips, Parts, Problems and Availabilities

by Steve Douglas

Lately several postings in various publications have highlighted issues with ignition parts for our original cast iron distributors, aka 018 and 022, such as parts no longer available, or if available only from "other brands", and of inferior quality. Here are some spring tune-up tips.

## Condensers

In case of a condenser failure, beware that many parts suppliers offer unmarked Chinese knock-offs, with a green insulated wire, that are often trouble. Original condensers, from Bosch last for a long time and don't need to be discarded. The originals were marked with Bosch 1.237.330.067 and most often had yellow insulation on the wire, while some were black. Bosch 616.602.907.02 replacements are available from Stoddard @\$9.52, or you can try the various unmarked Chinese ones at about \$7.00. The brackets do not come with the new ones so must be purchased #616.602.215.02 @\$14.75 from Sierra Madre or @\$19.50 from Stoddard. **Note:** VW Condensers may have a different mounting bracket, but will work.

## Points

Use the original Bosch 2-piece points #616.602.226.01, or for 36HP VW #111.998053. Some of the new Bosch sets have a reddish-brown rubbing block which seems to wear quickly, closing the points within a few hundred miles. The originals had a dark brown/black phenolic block. In the past, there were ones with white nylon rubbing blocks but they swelled with heat thus opening the points while running. Breimi is supplying many of the current sets, and the quality seems to be good. Prices for replacements vary widely for Breimi from Pelican Parts @\$6.75 to Bosch from Stoddard @\$10.00. As a reliable alternative, try Napa Echlin #ECH CS321 @\$12.69, and they have a small hole for venting/cooling.

## Cam Lube

When installing new points, don't forget to lube the distributor cam, and the new rubbing block. The small capsule of grease, originally supplied with each set of new points, is not any more so you will need a tube of Distributor Cam Grease which will last a life time, but is hard to find. Napa ML-1 may still be in your local store, and Mallory Point Lube can be found at some "speed shops", but Bosch / Delco / GM and Ford alternatives are no longer available. Recently Standard Motor Products SL-2 Lubri-cam @\$12.40 has been available from Amazon, or you can use white Lubri-Plate #630-A grease or #311-002-007WB also available on-line.

## Caps

The original dark brown Bosch Distributor Caps 616.602.215.00 are no longer available. But Breimi makes a dark brown cap that ranges from \$14.50 - \$25.13 available from many suppliers, and Beru offers a reddish brown one @\$11.00. Make sure the inserts are brass or copper not aluminum as found in many of the black caps.

## Rotors

Bosch Rotors 616.602.221.00 are about \$21.00, while cheaper VW ones for \$7.00 have aluminum contacts. (Better VW rotors: #111905225C.

## Insulation Kits

The cast iron distributor uses an electrically isolated screw to hold the points, to attach the wire to the condenser, and to secure the wire to the coil. The full Insulation Kit involves several parts, available from Stoddard #NLA-602-936-00. The original kit was #61660293600.

## Spark Plugs

Bosch, Porsche Classic, and NGK all offer Spark Plugs, with varying part numbers depending upon the heat range. Bosch WR6BC is the old standby @\$2.75-3.50, but Bosch also offers their Platinum WR7BP @ \$7.00-9.00. Recently Porsche Classic has offered #14-5AU, or 999.170.023.90 @\$7.00, while a very versatile plug is the NGK B5HS, (4210) @ \$3.25-\$5.00.

For general alternatives, you might visit an old time full service VW shop as some of the older 36hp VW parts may be superior to what is out there now.