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# GS X-TRA

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## Latest Multi-Disc T-R Vigilante Torque Converter

- Richard Lasseter

Years ago B&M brought out a centrifugal lock-up style converter for the TH350-400 transmission. Its purpose was to give good stall speed off the line and then centrifugally lock-up at higher engine speeds to minimize slippage thus provide good efficiency beyond half track and give you great trap speed mph. Apparently it didn't work because that converter became sales history years ago.

Scott Parat of Des Plaines, IL was one of the first individuals to realize that locking up your T-R's converter early in your quarter mile run would produce et gains of .1-.2 seconds and provide 1-3 mph trap speed gains on a typical high 11-low 12 sec. T-R. Back in late '88 and early '89 he even made the first little "black box" to lock up the converter with the push of a button when the trans. shifted into 2nd.

A call to Hydramatic Division about the long term effects of locking the converter at WOT brought gasps from an engineer we talked to along with a few expletives of just how crazy he thought the idea was. "It won't last 10 runs doing that. Why do you think the factory programming always unlocks the converter at WOT?!"

That was all back in early 1989 when horsepower levels of 99% of all T-R's were 350 HP max. That's when these T-R's were new and no-one was chopping them up to make race cars out of them. After all, most of the owners were still making monthly payments. I'll never forget how funny it looked to see the first GN's come to our Nationals on trailers with slicks. After all, they were "new" cars back then.

Anyway, it's amazing how long most of the stock T-R lock-up converters *did* last despite what the Hydramatic engineer claimed. The stock converter lasted quite well because unlike higher stall lock-up converters, the differential between stall speed RPM and lock-up RPM was less, so converter clutch slippage was less. And there's a square law in effect here: double the differential in stall speed from one converter to the next and clutch wear soars by *four times* as much. It's like dropping the clutch on a 4-speed car. It takes way more toll on the clutch lining at 4000 RPM as opposed to



doing the same at 2000 RPM. That is why a stock size higher stall lock-up must be engineered to be much stronger and contain more bullet proof parts than the stock converter. It has a much tougher job to do *and live!*

We've taken apart budget converters and seen what all they *didn't* have done inside. We feel that our Street Brawler Red and Orange stripe converters simply cannot be beat for the price. But there is a *design limit* within any stock type converter if you continue to lock it up time after time at WOT, particularly at very high horsepower levels.

To get serious about building a lock-up converter that will live under continuous lock-up at WOT on true 450 + HP T-R's, the stock configuration must be put out to pasture and something new developed. Enter Terry Hedrick of Precision Industries and their purple passion colored 9.5" Vigilante converter. Yes, it's the same converter we reported on back in our March/April '96 issue with one big exception. These converters are *now available* with an extensively beefed up multi-disc clutch lock-up package that has 64.5 square inches of clutch surface area compared to 28 square inches for the stocker. The turbine/impeller/stator assemblies are the same as last year's Vigilante and offer their characteristic high torque multiplication.

For guys wanting higher stall speeds, more instant spool-up with big turbos and full lock-up under lighter cruising loads but *not full lock-up under wide open throttle*, then the single disc Vigilante will do the job nicely. Such a full custom converter with billet back

half does not come cheaply. The multi-disc Vigilante sells racer net direct from Precision Industries at \$1030 and the single disc unit for \$795. These converters are made to order for the serious racer and street/strip warrior so you need to contact Precision Industries (Terry, Larry or Jack) to discuss your basic needs and stall speed requirements.

As this issue goes to press, we have tried the just released multi-disc Vigilante in two 11-second T-R's over a period of nearly a month. All we can say for now is that the unit has been working perfectly. Clutch lock-up is somewhat attention-getting for normal driving, but for anyone with a serious enough T-R to purchase a Vigilante, I'm sure that they won't mind.

This converter is the ultimate lock-up and Precision Industries has re-engineered the entire concept of getting a true, full power 1 to 1 lock-up that will give you your best trap speed possible with a heavy duty launch for those great 60-foot times.



**No other converter looks, acts or lasts like it! Bolt it in, strap yourself in and hang on.**

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