Trimming the timing on a running V12.

Ok, your engine runs, but sounds/drives as if the timing is not spot on. Also it may run hotter than desired under load.

To time these engines by “drive timing” is simple and works well.

Some basics first:

1) The distributor rotates counter clockwise, so when the body of the distributor is moved counter clockwise that is retarding the timing, and clockwise is advancing the timing.
2) The fuel for these is the highest that is available in your market. Our case is 98PULP.
3) The engine should be at operating temp.

Look down the front face of the distributor and you will see a slotted end of the adjusting bolt staring back at you. It will have a locknut on it. This is a 13mm spanner size. Access is near impossible with the cruise control bellows in place, and not much better without it if the original a/c compressor is still fitted.

My suggestion is to note the orientation of the slot, and use a socket to loosen that locknut. The adjuster will not move in MOST cases, so the timing is as it was.

With the engine running, use a long blade screwdriver and rotate that adjuster SLOWLY so that the distributor moves in a clockwise direction.

The engine will change note and possibly “sweeten up” somewhat.

Now drive it. Accelerate HARD, and listen CAREFULLY for any pinging. If pinging is heard, stop, and rotate that adjustor so the distributor moves SLIGHTLY in a counter clockwise direction, thus retarding it slightly. Drive it again, and keep doing this until you can take off from a standing start HARD, and there is no pinging.

It does take some practice doing this, but it is simple and effective.

Once done, use that socket again and tighten that locknut.