



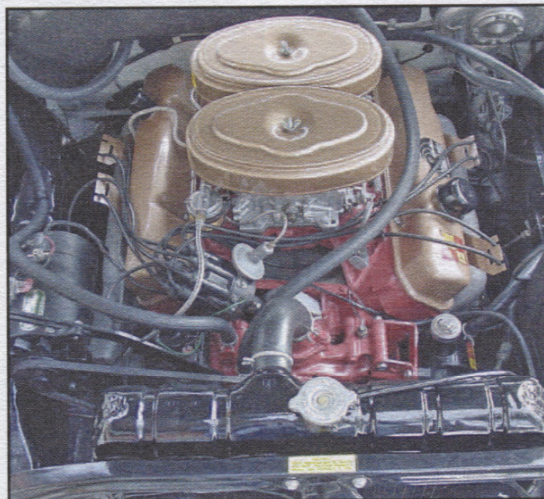
The Great Dual Quad Debate

“With a booming post-war economy fueling it, automotive performance and competition grew by leaps and bounds during the mid-1950s,” writes Geoff Stunkard in the Fall 2000 edition of *Forward* magazine, “...stock-bodied competition was a developing factor nationwide, especially in the southern states where Bill France was promoting his NASCAR events... The advent of high-revving, overhead-valve power plants like the Chrysler Hemi and the Oldsmobile Rocket, and the small-block Chevrolet that debuted in 1955, were producing a new segment of the buying public wanting performance above other new-car features.”

As cubic displacement continued to grow, so did the thirst for fuel—and Chrysler took note. For Plymouth in 1957, the top-of-the-line Fury came standard with dual-quad carburetors on the 318 A-block, dubbed the Fury V-800. For 1958, this offering was repeated as the Dual Fury V-800, joined by the new optional B-block, the Golden Commando 350, with dual-quads as part of the package. But then, starting in 1959, only a single-quad carburetor was available from the factory on the Golden Commando engine, sporting, for the first time, 361 cubic inches.

So, what accounted for the rollback to a single-quad? And... was a single-quad, indeed, the only available option? This has been a topic for much discussion at <59plymouth.net> as “The Great Dual Quad Debate.”

An early edition of the Mopar parts manual for 1959 (dated, September 1958) contains this curious entry [RIGHT] for carburetors (*the page is compressed here for brevity*).



Tom Gerrard's 1959 361 Golden Commando

The high performance dual-quads listed are the same as on the 1958 Golden Commando! On a separate page, dual air cleaners are offered. And what to make of the new part numbers for “Fury” dual-quads?

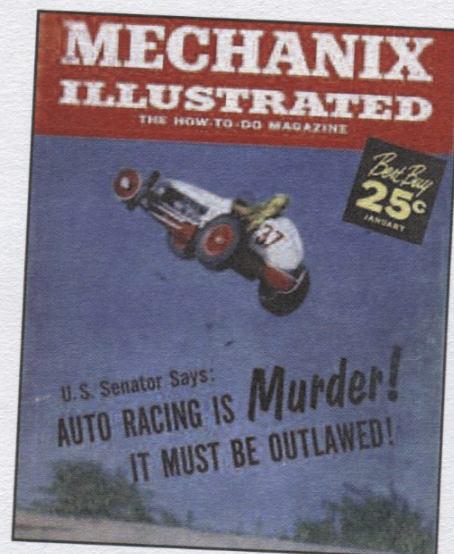
References to these front and rear carburetors disappear in a 1960 edition of the same parts manual (and, I’m told, from the March 1959 edition it supersedes, although a copy of that edition is unavailable at the time this column goes to print.)

What the heck was going on in the 1959 Plymouth model year? I turned to three ’59 Plymouth enthusiasts for counsel: “Forward Look” Frank Worsham,

Bernie Brouillet and Ed Eckerson. The consensus among the three: Dual-quad-equipped Plymouths never left the factory floor in the 1959 model year.

Frank has a plausible theory about the rollback to a single-quad. A spectacular racing accident in 1955 at Le Mans claimed the lives of at least 83 spectators and wounded over twice more than that number. A horrified nation was galvanized, demanding “something has to be done about the growing automotive threat on streets across America.” In 1957, NASCAR banned multiple carburetors, fuel injection and supercharging at their sanctioned races. The Automobile Manufacturers Association banned direct manufacturer support for auto racing altogether. Richard Neuberger, Senator from Oregon, went so far as to decry auto racing as murder. While the staid motoring public may have embraced this saber rattling, racing enthusiasts were looking for an escape clause.

In 1957, it was too late for Chrysler



1959 PASSENGER CAR PARTS LIST							FUEL
CODE	PART NAME AND DESCRIPTION	NO. OF CYL.	PLYMOUTH	DODGE	DESOTO	CHRYSLER AND IMPERIAL	PART NUMBER
14-30-0 CARBURETOR							
14-30-1 CARBURETOR ASSEMBLIES							
MODEL	USE WITH TRANSMISSION	CARBURETOR STAMPED	PART NUMBER				
MP2, w/Power Package	STANDARD OR OVERDRIVE	2812S	E1858 976				
MP2, w/Power Package	AUTOMATIC	2813S	E1858 975				
MP2, Fury, Front	ALL	2780S	E1858 463				
MP2, Fury, Rear	ALL	2781S	E1858 464				
MP2, High Performance, Front	AUTOMATIC	2652S	1826 081				
MP2, High Performance, Rear	AUTOMATIC	2653S	1826 082				
MD1	ALL	2410S	1675 971				

★ Indicates use as required. Numerals in parentheses () refer to notes. Printed in U.S.A.
 ☐ Indicates parts not listed in any previous parts book. Page 14-4 Prices and specifications subject to change without notice.
 September 15, 1958.



Tom Gerrard's 1959 Sport Fury

to put the brakes on production of Golden Commato put the brakes on production of Golden Commando dual-quad engines in the 1958 model year. But was Chrysler hedging bets by producing a stock Police Pursuit with a single-quad Golden Commando, a move that would have permitted it to keep the 350 in NASCAR racing? Frank has seen two such '58 Plymouths firsthand, and wonders.

A standard-issue 1959 Golden Commando 361 with a single-quad would have met NASCAR qualifications for racing. But for the twenty-something potential Plymouth purchaser who wanted to blow the doors off that Ford or Chevy in the next block...well, was there anything to be done? What if you could buy a dual-quad setup through the dealer, just like the ones they had in '58, and "roll your own?" Could this account for the availability of the parts in the catalog? Or, was Chrysler simply trying to reduce excess inventory of B-block dual-quad intake manifolds, originally intended as standard equipment for 361s, but whose need was eliminated by

a rollback to single-quads?

Or, was the document just not edited in time? The references were removed after the first edition. And there doesn't seem to be a *Plymouth Technical Procedure Bulletin* describing dealer installation of dual-quads for 1959, at least none that's been discovered to date.

Frank also speculates: Was the decision to roll back to a single-quad a marketing decision to keep the low-line Plymouth from upstaging the higher-scale Dodge? It wouldn't do, to have Plymouth outperform a D500, might have been the Dodge Division's thinking.

Bernie suggests other factors may have come into play. "I think the pitch for higher torque, quick response drivability and of course, cost, played a role in dropping the multiple carburetor setup from the 1959 Golden Commando 361. Still, I think the popularity of dual-quads back in the day would still find a couple hundred cars converted at the least, from coast to coast and across the world. Not all at once, not just new parts from the

dealers, (but) many with take-offs from other cars, either junkyards or 'Midnight Auto Supply'... But, they showed up."

And show up, they did. Tom Gerrard's 1959 Sport Fury (meticulously restored by Myles Walker) sports a pair of quads. Did they come as a dealer-installed option when this car was built, or did they "show up" sometime later?

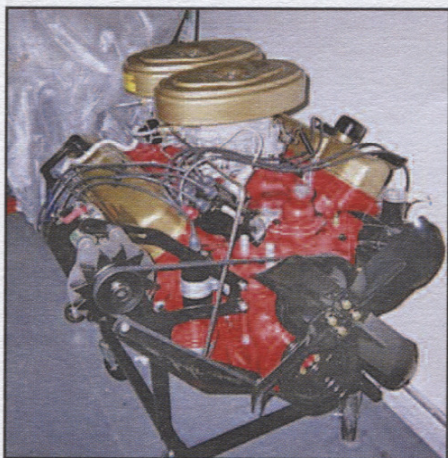
The dual-quads on Ed Eckerson's Golden Commando certainly showed up sometime later. So enamored was Ed of a dual-quad setup that he rebuilt a 361 engine with dual-quads, even before he found the Sport Fury to put it in—which he did!

¹For more on Ed Eckerson's extraordinary Golden Commando 361 rebuild and the Sport Fury now housing it, go to <<http://bit.ly/Eckerson59>>

² The inclusion of dual-quad components for Plymouth in the 1959 Mopar parts manual—at least the early edition—has sparked much debate and speculation as to how dual-quads have come to appear on '59 Plymouths. Many questions remain, and the answers may well be lost in antiquity. Who doesn't love a good mystery? Perhaps some clues are still lurking out there—even among the readers of this article. So, let's hear from you. Contribute to the great debate!

—Dan Morton
1959 Tech Advisor
<dan@59plymouth.net>

*"For '59... If It's New,
Plymouth's Got It!"*



Ed Eckerson's 1959 Sport Fury and 361 Golden Cammando engine