

AMX PROTOTYPES



TRIUMPH GLORIA



HEMMINGS

CLASSIC CAR

AMERICA'S DEFINITIVE COLLECTOR-CAR MAGAZINE

JULY 2019 #178



FORD RANCHERO
THE COMPACT PICKUP



COACHBUILT ALFA
1900C SS BY GHIA-AIGLE

PONTIAC CHIEFTAIN

FORGOTTEN MODEL OF DISTINCTION



HOW A
SEAGRAVE
FIRE TRUCK
WAS REBORN



PLUS
1947 DODGE
FORD ANGLIA
MOPAR ENGINES



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THE HAARTZ
CORPORATION



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NEXT MONTH'S
SPECIAL SECTION:

CHEVROLET
VS.
FORD

The Chrysler Corporation cultivated a legion of devotees via dynamic designs and engineering

BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO • PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD LENTINELLO

When competing against General Motors and Ford, offering styling and engineering that entices buyers is imperative. A high-compression straight-six engine and four-wheel hydraulic brakes aided the sales of Walter P. Chrysler's namesake 1924 car that was developed while he headed the Maxwell Motor Company. In 1925, he founded the Chrysler Corporation, which took over Maxwell. Success followed but Chrysler wasn't infallible. The revolutionary Airflows of the mid-1930s were shunned by a public unwilling to embrace their radical styling.

With Plymouth, Dodge, De Soto, Chrysler, and Imperial catering to markets in ascending order of price and equipment from pennywise to prestigious for a good portion of the 20th century, the Corporation offered vehicles for every budget.

When rival automakers built their OHV V-8s with easy-to-package-and-produce wedge chamber

heads, Chrysler, De Soto, and Dodge each engineered an OHV V-8 for 1951 with hemispherical combustion chambers and more power. Soon after, unique Polysphere head engines were developed to provide lower-cost alternative V-8 choices.

B- and RB-series wedge engines arrived in the late 1950s delivering reliable day-to-day service, while also offering high performance versions at a lower-than-a-hemi cost due to the less complex design. They also served as corporate engines, shared among the divisions, which further simplified manufacturing and reduced the amount of required replacement parts and inventory. A compact LA-series wedge-head small-block arrived for 1964.

The 413 and 426 Max Wedges and the 426 Hemi became legends in motorsports. The 426 Street Hemi, the 340, and the high-powered versions of the 440 and 383 established the performance legacies of Dodge and Plymouth through the muscle car era.



Chrysler Corporation set itself apart again in 1957 with the introduction of its "Torsion Aire" (torsion bar) front suspension, while Ford and GM stuck with coil springs in front.

Unitized construction promised a more rigid overall body structure. Though already used by a few automakers, for 1960, Chrysler committed to it across its divisions. (Imperial, however, remained on a separate frame through 1966.)

On the styling front, the "Forward Look" of 1955-'61 was so influential in its first few years that it prompted General Motors to redesign its already scheduled 1959 models. The Chrysler 300-letter cars of the 1950s and 1960s were standouts of style, power, and status. Awe-inspiring describes the 1968-'70 Charger, and the form-married-to-function 1969 Daytona and 1970 Superbirds pushed the racer-for-the-street design envelope to the limit.

"Fuselage" fullsize C-bodies of 1969-'73, the redesigned 1971-'74 midsize B-bodies, and the 1970-'74 E-bodies stood well apart from competing GM and Ford models.

Vintage Mopars of nearly all types are still coveted by voraciously faithful followers of the Pentastar, many of whom don't discriminate based on displacement or door count. Sure, the Hemi cars, 440s, and the like draw top collector dollars, yet ample respect is still paid to the less powerful V-8s and those equipped with the ubiquitous "Leaning Tower of Power" Slant Six, or even the antique L-head straight six. To foster that kind of loyalty, the Chrysler Corporation must have done quite a few things right. 🐎



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