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# Mopar

MOPAR COLLECTOR'S GUIDE

CLARIFYING THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE RTS & THE SONIC CUSTOM 'CUDAS

'71 TOP BANANA 440+6 GTX

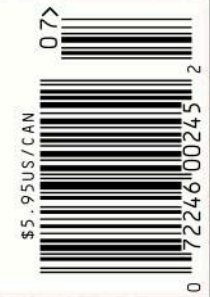
1969 WHITE 340 'CUDA SURVIVOR

1970 SUBLIME CHARGER R/T

2014 CHRYSLERS @ CARLISLE PREVIEW MOPOWERED TOUR INFO

1969 BLACK HEMI ROAD RUNNER

DISPLAY UNTIL 7-1-14 Printed in the U.S.A.



JULY 2014

CORONET ♦ BELVEDERE ♦ SUPER BEE ♦ DART ♦ DUSTER ♦ FURY ♦ IMPERIAL

BARRACUDA ♦ DEMON ♦ NEW YORKER ♦ 300 ♦ ASPEN

**T**im Wellborn, over in Alabama, is certainly no stranger to the pages of Mopar Collector's Guide, and unless you're brand-new to the hobby, he's probably no stranger to you either. Having assembled one of the largest collections of old Mopars and muscle cars through the years, Tim finally bought an old dealership in Alexander City, Alabama and opened the Wellborn Muscle Car Museum, which easily should be given the title of "The National Muscle Car Museum" — because we don't know of any other facility that houses a better assembly of factory hot rods, or does a better job of displaying them in a wide variety of creative and innovative fashion. All that being said, if you recall anything about Tim's background or how his incredible collection began, you'll remember that everything started with him having a 1971 Charger back when he was in high school. That first car set Tim on a path that would shape the rest of his life, and the rest of the hobby. Once he

began accumulating cars, more than thirty years ago, Wellborn concentrated on finding nice 1971 Charger R/T's, as those were the cars he was most drawn to. That soon expanded into 1971 Charger Super Bees, then 1971 Road Runners, then everything started getting out-of-control and the boy just started buying everything he could afford that struck his fancy, whether it was a Boss 429 Mustang or a Hemicuda. Through all the decades of collecting, however, the 1971 B-bodies have continued to hold an almost hypnotic place in Wellborn's psyche. He has more '71's than anyone we can think of, and his quest for unusual examples and survivor cars, we're assured every time we talk with him, will be an unending quest throughout his life.

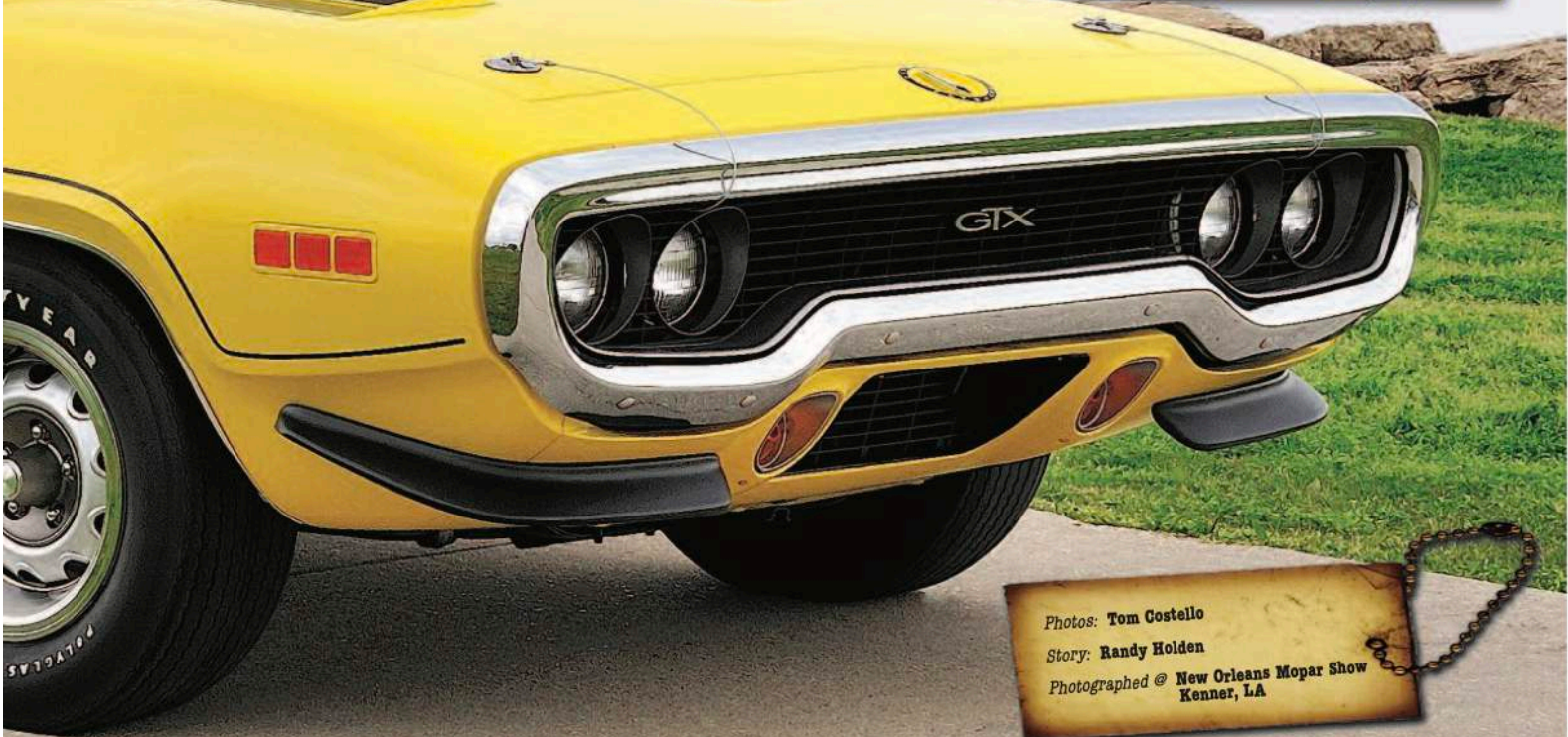
Obviously, when you're wheeling and dealing to build a mega-collection of vintage Mopars, and especially when you zero-in on one particular year car, you end up knowing just about everybody in the hobby. That was the

case with Tim and a fellow in Ohio named John Hadjis. John was also a serious devotee of 1971 B-bodies, and had spent most of his life gathering cars and a huge cache of NOS parts for '71 Chargers and Plymouths. He and Tim had swapped parts back-and-forth for years for various restoration projects, but back around 2005, John decided it was time to clean house and liquidate his entire collection. This was big news for Tim, because he knew the caliber of parts and cars John had, so after several weeks of negotiations, Tim bought the whole works; which amounted to several truckloads of clean used parts and NOS parts, and no-less than six complete cars. And among the cars Tim picked up that day was a yellow 1971 440+6 GTX. Having seen the car before, Tim knew it was an unusual machine and definitely out-of-the-ordinary, but at that particular moment, there was a lot going on planning for the museum, shifting his collection around, and he was rather busy man-



# NOT SO MELLO YELLOW

## TIM WELLBORN'S LATEST HOT HUE '71 B-BODY



Photos: Tom Costello  
Story: Randy Holden  
Photographed @ New Orleans Mopar Show  
Kenner, LA

aging his company, so the GTX traveled south to Alabama with its stable mates without a whole lot of fanfare or major attention just at that moment.

When it arrived at Tim's garage, the GTX was largely as Tim remembered it and expected it to be; a largely original car with probably 80%

impression of how this one looked eight years ago. What Tim didn't initially know was that every previous owner had kept some pretty meticulous records on this machine, and its lineage was known all the way back to day one. It's almost like this one came with a portfolio from Ancestry.com telling Tim

for the job, then contacted his friend and Mopar resto wizard Andrew White at Apex Restorations to have him put the GTX in line for the full ground-up resto treatment. By 2011, things had cleared up enough for both Tim and Andrew to finally get started with the GTX, and it was moved over to Apex to begin life anew.

Leaving you at that point for a moment, let's roll back through the paperwork and the history on the big yellow machine, which finally led to that rebirthing process. You'd never know it by looking at this thing, but it was ordered new by a guy named Frank Coffee at Gardner Motors, way up in Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada! Located in the wilds of Alberta, a bit



of its original paint still intact. All of the original body panels looked to be in unusually good condition, the original engine, transmission, and even the original carbs were still in place, but, it was obvious the car had been sitting for a very long time and it was just plain tired and needed a complete restoration to bring it back to life. Just picture a typical dusty "barn find" car in your head and you'll have a pretty good

everything it had ever done and everybody with whom it had ever crossed paths! Looking over the GTX's unique combo of options, its clean body and drive train, and the spotless history on the car, it didn't take long for Tim to realize this really comfy driver needed to be in line for a full rotisserie restoration. He rummaged through the piles of parts he'd gotten from John and grabbed all the NOS parts he could find

east of Calgary, this rugged and downright frigid part of Western Canada was never what anybody could call a hotbed of activity for muscle cars. Due to the horrific winters, the mountains, the glaciers, and everything else, 4x4's and more practical means of transportation are the general rule around there and something like a 440+6 GTX certainly had to be a surprising order to the sales manager at the dealership. Apparently, it was a bigger surprise than anyone at the dealership would've cared for. For reasons unknown, Mr. Coffee (no pun intended) never took ownership of the car he'd custom ordered. Perhaps he couldn't get his money together, perhaps other circumstances arose while the Plymouth was being built, who knows? Whatever the reason, the high-dollar GTX landed at Gardner Motors in Medicine Hat with nobody sitting there waiting to buy it. That being

the case, the expensive GTX was initially shoved off to a low-level Chrysler exec who worked at Chrysler's Western Canada parts depot in Red Deer, Alberta in mid-1971. This unnamed exec looks to have used the yellow Plymouth as his daily driver for the remainder of that summer and, according to the paperwork, apparently put 6,000 miles on the odometer before turning it back in to a dealership.

This led to the GTX being fluffed and buffed for sale as a used car in late 1971. That's when William and Marie Williams, in the little town of Drumheller, Alberta, several hours North of Red Deer, entered the picture. The young married couple went to have a look at the Plymouth and it seems Marie fell in love with the car. They drove it home to Drumheller, and for the next decade, Marie Williams, in the middle-of-nowhere Drumheller, Alberta, used this monster 440+6 muscle car as her sunny weather and summer daily driver. As with most Canadians in a harsh climate, it appears the Williams family had beaten "winter cars," in addition to the better vehicles they drove in the summer. Every winter, the GTX would be tucked away in the garage, and even in the summer months, when it wasn't on the road, this one slept inside – perpetually kept away from ice, snow, rain, and everything else that typically dissolves a car sold new in Alberta. The GTX was never modified, it was never hot rodded, it never had mag wheels or headers slapped on it, and as far as we know, Marie used this one just like it was any "normal" luxury cruiser; but we're quite certain she must've enjoyed the Plymouth's ability to handle the up-and-down roads and highways of that region with ease. By the early 1980's, the Plymouth was showing its age, gas prices had gone up, collectors were just starting to look at muscle cars like this with interest, and with just over 70,000 miles on the clock, the 440 was tired. So, William and Marie parked the GTX in their garage, apparently with an eye toward keeping their trusty yellow Plymouth and maybe enjoying it once again eventually as something of a collector's item, after it had served them so many years as a reliable family car.

Winters passed and the GTX continued to sit idle, and by the early 1990's, word had begun to spread among the growing Mopar community in the Northwest about this long-dormant

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Cross-section

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440+6 car tucked away in a garage. Mopar fanatic Terry Antonsko was the man who finally located the hiding Plymouth and managed to convince the Williams family it was time to part with their beloved GTX. Terry bought the car in the early nineties and moved it to

his house in Alberta, planning to revive it and hit the show circuit out West. While intentions were good, that plan never came to fruition, and Terry ended up selling the car to well-known collector Marvin Baerg in 1999. Baerg also intended to restore the interesting GTX,

but with the muscle car feeding frenzy that was going on at that time, his collection was in a near-constant state of flux. That's when John Hadsis in Ohio found out about the car, struck a deal with Marvin, and so it came to be that the Canadian Plymouth finally moved to the "Deep South" of Ohio (relatively speaking). Which brings us up to where we left off a little bit earlier.

With the GTX and mounds of parts in-hand at his shop, Andrew White set about doing what he does best – taking old cars and making them better than they were when new. In just over a year, the work of performing a ground-up resto was completed and the GTX rumbled home to Tim's garage, roaring and rolling under its own power for the first time since the early eighties. Tim, being a true car guy, likes to drive his cars as much as he likes to let others enjoy seeing them, and the appeal of this unusually-colored Plymouth soon hit home – this one is a serious pleasure to drive. With the 390 horse 440 up front, there's plenty of power, and the TorqueFlite and 3.55 Sure Grip rear combine to provide spirited performance without having to worry about stirring a shifter. There's power disc brakes and power steering to make time behind the wheel even easier, and this one came with a factory AM/FM stereo and the scarce cassette tape deck/recorder mounted on the console, so you can even enjoy a pretty good variety of tunes in this one. Oddly enough, one of the things Tim likes best about the GTX is the light package, which placed turn signal indicators on the hood, almost directly in



front of the driver. Quoting Tim, "I don't know why, but it's just neat to be cruising along at night, hit the blinkers, and there's this little orange light out in the middle of the hood flashing back at you – it's just cool!" And, this option probably also explains why the car doesn't have the Air Grabber hood you might expect with a 440+6 car. The front and rear spoilers are factory on this one, as are the dual mirrors, the 15" Rallyes, and the unusual color combo of being yellow with a black half canopy roof with a white interior. We have no idea what Frank Coffee was thinking when he opted for making a tri-color car, but we're certainly glad he chose to go down that path; even if he didn't ever actually take possession of the car when it was new.

Tim's GTX made its big time debut at the 2013 MCACN show in Chicago, where it met with rave reviews, then it was off to the Big Easy Mopar Club's show in New Orleans for some cruising around Lake Ponchartrain, before heading back home to its new place of honor in Tim's museum. This one will likely make a few more major events during the next several show seasons, but when it's not out on tour, you can check it out at the museum in Alexander City, Alabama. Don't get perturbed if it's not on display when you happen to visit, however, there are still plenty of extraordinary cars there for you to see; if it's not in the museum, that just means it's likely sitting in the parking lot outside Tim's office, as this one's turned into one of his favorite drivers. And when you have as many options to choose from as Tim Wellborn does, that says an awful lot about how much fun this particular car is to drive! ✖



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