

CHALLENGER CHARGER ROAD RUNNER SATELLITE GTX CUDA

CORONET BELVEDERE SUPER BEE DART MUSTANG FURY IMPERIAL

THE #1 SOURCE GUIDE FOR EVERYTHING MOPAR!

MOPARCOLLECTORSGUIDE.COM

Mopar

MOPAR COLLECTOR'S GUIDE

GET **WILD** ON WOODWARD!

RECORD SETTING DAYTONA RETURNS TO THE SALT FLATS

FOUND! SHAKER HOOD BUBBLE PROTOTYPE

2,000 HP DUAL TURBO STREET RACE CHARGER

ULTRA-RARE 1970 FACTORY GBBL FURY


DISPLAY UNTIL 1-1-17 Printed in the U.S.A.



JANUARY 2017

BARRACUDA DEMON NEW YORKER 300 ASPEN





Photos by: Rob Wolf
Story by: Randy Holden
Photographed @ MATS

YELLOW SHOW STOPPER

If you've been around this hobby for at least the last half dozen years, more than likely, the brilliant yellow Charger on these pages will look reasonably familiar. It first appeared in the pages of Mopar Collector's Guide just a few short years ago, back in our July, 2013 issue, when it was owned by collectors Tim and Pam Wellborn. One of the more serious pieces in their collection and at the Wellborn Muscucar Museum at that time, the yellow Charger came to the forefront of attention thanks to claims of another white '71 Charger R/T being broadcast all over the internet that it was the last Hemi car Dodge ever produced. Tim,

knowing a thing or two about long-nosed Chargers had previously had this yellow R/T investigated with detective-like scrutiny and there are some in the old car hobby who believe this car is the last Hemi Dodge ever built, but, all of that was chronicled in our 2013 article. In 2015, Tim and Pam Wellborn agreed to run the Charger through Dana Mecum's Florida auction along with others, and that's when it caught the eye of Texas collector Darryl Wischnewsky. Darryl threw the deep ball and ended up with the brilliant Hemi R/T, adding it to his ever-growing fleet of exotic Hemi cars and things with multiple carburetors, and he came

home with a Hemi Road Runner in tow as well. Perhaps more importantly, that was his first meeting with Andrew White from Apex Autosports up in Wisconsin. Having known Tim forever and having restored some of the cars going across the block, Andrew wanted to be there to hang out with his friends and see how well his work was holding up and how well it would be received by the bidding public. If you recall that record-setting auction, pretty much everybody left happy, and handing his business card to this guy from just outside Houston didn't seem like a big deal at that moment, but it happened to be a major turning point for both men.

ULTRA RARE FACTORY 1971 HEMI FOUR SPEED CHARGER R/T



After the auction, Darryl called Andrew and they began talking about doing a ground-up restoration on the well-known yellow Charger R/T. Initially intrigued, Andrew wasn't quite sure what to make of things, because he'd just seen the car and while it was hardly a perfect OEM restoration, the car didn't really look that bad – why do a ground-up restoration on something that most people would consider to be a really nice car to begin with? And here is where we run into another cliché that happens to also be quite true, "Those who settle for anything less than perfection, will never achieve it." Meticulous about the cars in his col-





lection, Darryl knew right away that the Charger wasn't living up to its potential; yes, it looked good, but he knew it could look infinitely better. Having seen the work turned out by Apex and Andrew, they came to terms rather quickly, and in short order, the Hemi Charger arrived at Apex Autosports in February, 2015, where Andrew did a whole lot of studying on the machine before he laid a hand on it. Quite a bit has been written about the possible "last Hemi R/T" aspect of this Charger before, but darn little has been written about the car itself, which is a shame, because it's an important car regardless of its serial number.

This one was delivered new to Made-Cartwright Motors in Welch,

West Virginia, presumably in early August, 1971. An ordered car, the first owner's name is listed as K.R. Whitenack, and reportedly, it's thought he owned the car up to somewhere around 1976. The ins-and-outs of the Hemi R/T's history before it became a sought-after muscle car collector's item are a bit fuzzy, but one thing is immediately apparent – this thing was never abused and it was always in the hands of people who appreciated it. In fact, the car was wearing one repaint with the paint applied around the original black stripes, most of the interior remained original, and with just over 40,000 miles on the clock, the Charger hadn't been driven a whole lot. Of course, the main reason for that more

than likely simply lies in the fact that it's a four-speed, 4.10 Dana 60 car, and with the sky rocketing gas prices in the seventies, perhaps it was too expensive to keep feeding this thing? Whatever the reason, it's obvious the Charger spent the majority of its life in a garage, away from rain and snow, and it's still wearing all the original sheet metal it was born with. But, let's go back to the car itself, and that fateful day in June, 1971, when Mr. Whitenack stepped into the dealership and decided he couldn't live without a Hemi R/T Charger.

The option list for Charger R/Ts in 1971 was as big as muscle car option lists ever got. The same is true on the Plymouth side, where the most expensive Mopar muscle car ever built (a '71 Hemi sunroof GTX) was produced late that year (and interestingly, also resides in Tim Wellborn's collection now). The sky was the limit, if you could afford it, Dodge would pile it on, but this FY1 Top Banana Yellow R/T was built with an eye toward the more traditional elements one would expect to find on a Hemi R/T. The high impact paint, as always, was a personal choice for the buyer, which largely seemed to indicate they had no regard for keeping a low profile. The drive train is what added the serious money to the window sticker, but it also ended up making the car important in the decades which followed; being a 426 Hemi car with a console mounted Pistol Grip four-speed

APEX autosports
BUILDING MUSCLE THE RIGHT WAY

WORLD'S ULTIMATE
...
MOPAR 2016

THE LAST HEMI

GRAFTON, WI :: 262.375.2402 :: WWW.APEXAUTOSPORTS.COM

mated to a 4.10 Super Trak Pack Dana 60. Obviously, the guy wanted a car that could move. He also wanted it to stop, getting power disc brakes up front. Cosmetically, the Charger is pretty straightforward, it has the 15" Rallyes, a Rallye instrument cluster, dual chrome mirrors, the pedal dress up package, hood pins, and the aforementioned console to house the Hurst Pistol Grip. Mr. Whitenack apparently wanted a car that looked good but was meant for business, as he didn't load it down with all those little options that clutter up a fender tag; there's no bumper guards, no spoilers, no rear window louvers, no vinyl roof, no hide-a-way headlights, none of that, just a whole lot of yellow paint and a whole lot of Hemi to go with it. The motivation for

ordering the car to begin with will likely remain unknown forever, as you'd expect anyone ordering a four-speed Hemi car with a Dana would've been ordering it so he could beat the tar out of it (heck, we would have). Instead, for whatever reason, it appears the Charger was used sparingly and never modified in any way. From all appearances, top-and-bottom, the R/T looks like it was babied from the day it was delivered new – hardly typical for a Hemi car. Whatever the reasons behind the fantastic treatment, those decades of care provided Andrew and his crew at Apex a remarkably clean slate to start with, and a car that they could easily study and learn every little build technique that had been done to this one. Completing that, by the end of

February, the R/T was lying in pieces scattered all over his shop.

Talking with Andrew about the Charger, and knowing how many incredible restorations he's done through the years, the high praise he heaped on this one's condition, inside-and-out, was certainly worthy of note. He also noted, amusingly, that as the weeks went by and he and Darryl got to know each other better, he realized Darryl was one of those guys who wanted everything done beyond OEM standards – it's an important Hemi Charger, and Darryl wanted it to be the best restored '71 Hemi Charger existent. No pressure there, eh? But, that's the kind of talk Andrew thrives on, which is why he's spent years developing no less than five different paint mixes that mimic different types of bare metal! And that's just scratching the surface of his talent. We've known Andrew since his days at Aloha Automotive (some of you who've been around will remember that shop well), and calling Andrew a perfectionist is an understatement. As he said, "I'm not the fastest restoration shop in the business, but I'd rather take the time and get things right than have to come back and redo it later." Having a collector in



Darryl, who wanted nothing short of perfection, and a guy in Wisconsin who fully understood that level of dedication, was a match made in Mopar heaven.

The Charger's body was media blasted since there wasn't much evidence of rust or corrosion, and sure enough, there wasn't. A few small dings here and there were smoothed at Apex, but the naked steel revealed no surprises. The interior had a number of its original components, but wanting the car to be completely flawless, an all-new interior was installed, with Legendary using the Charger's original cardboard and metal door panel cores to put the brand-new upholstery on – that way the original Chrysler codes and date stampings on the back side were retained. Being a Mopar purist, Andrew boxed up the original interior and kept it with the Charger. Doing almost all of his work in-house, Andrew went through the Hemi himself, sending it out to be machined .030 over, but otherwise rebuilding it to stock 1971 specs and detailing it to the nines. Jamie Passon rebuilt the original 833 four-speed, installing new bearings and forks, and Andrew detailed it to look just as it would have when it arrived at the assembly plant. The same was done

with the Dana rear axle, and slight tell-tale rust on the ring gear provided the clue that the Charger had spent a good deal of time sitting idle somewhere along its life. If you pull the rear axle apart today, however, you're not going to find any sign of that miniscule rust pitting, as even something as minor as that was a detail Andrew wasn't prepared to overlook! Honestly, the boy doesn't overlook anything. On the front suspension components alone, you'll find five different custom-mixed paints and finishes that Apex has perfected to perpetually give the Charger the impression that it just rolled off the assembly line ten minutes ago. Wanting above-and-beyond an OEM restoration, admittedly, the Charger has been restored to a far higher standard than that to which it was built; the paint is staggeringly flawless, there's not a spec to be found in any chrome or stainless, and we assure you, the drive-shaft in this thing is probably cleaner than anything at your dentist's office. With the last bolt driven into place, the R/T made its reborn debut at the 2015 MCACN show in Chicago, where it won gold first time out. Since then, Darryl and Andrew have shown the car at the 2016 MATS event in Las Vegas, where

it got the coveted "World's Ultimate Mopar" award, and "best of show" then it was off to the 2016 Mopar Nationals where it won first in class and received "The Award of Excellence." After which, the big yellow car was shipped down to Darryl Wischnewsky's place outside of Houston, where he and his wife, Linda, have had a blast, adding the piece of history to their collection.

Occupying a place of pride among some notable other Hemi cars, Six Packs, and even some Boss 429 Mustangs and COPO Camaros, the big Charger R/T demands attention and certainly gets it. With something this yellow, it's darned hard to ignore! And, the R/T cemented a great relationship between Darryl Wischnewsky and Andrew up at Apex. As this is being written, Andrew and his crew are restoring Darryl's Hemi Road Runner that he also picked up at the same Mecum sale, and there are plans to keep a steady stream of cars heading his way. As Darryl told us, "I love these cars and I want them to look and run as good as they possibly can. I know there are shops a whole lot closer to Texas than having to go all the way to Wisconsin, but I don't know of anybody that's doing work any better than Andrew.." Having known this particular Charger for half a dozen years, and now seeing it in its current form, we're certainly not going to disagree with him on that one. If any '71 Hemi Charger had ever made it to the end of the assembly line looking this good, we're quite certain the quality assurance guy who had to sign off on it would've fainted. ✖

