

COLLECTING TRENDS: HOT RODS, SHELBY MUSTANGS & NASCAR WINNERS

# The Robb Report COLLECTION™

Sports, Luxury and Classic Cars

October 2004



## Red-Blooded Rides

DRIVER'S NOTEBOOK: Novitec 360 Modena & Unique Performance Shelby GT350SR

COLLECTION CLASSICS: 70 Years of Unmistakable American Style

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# Red-Blooded Americana

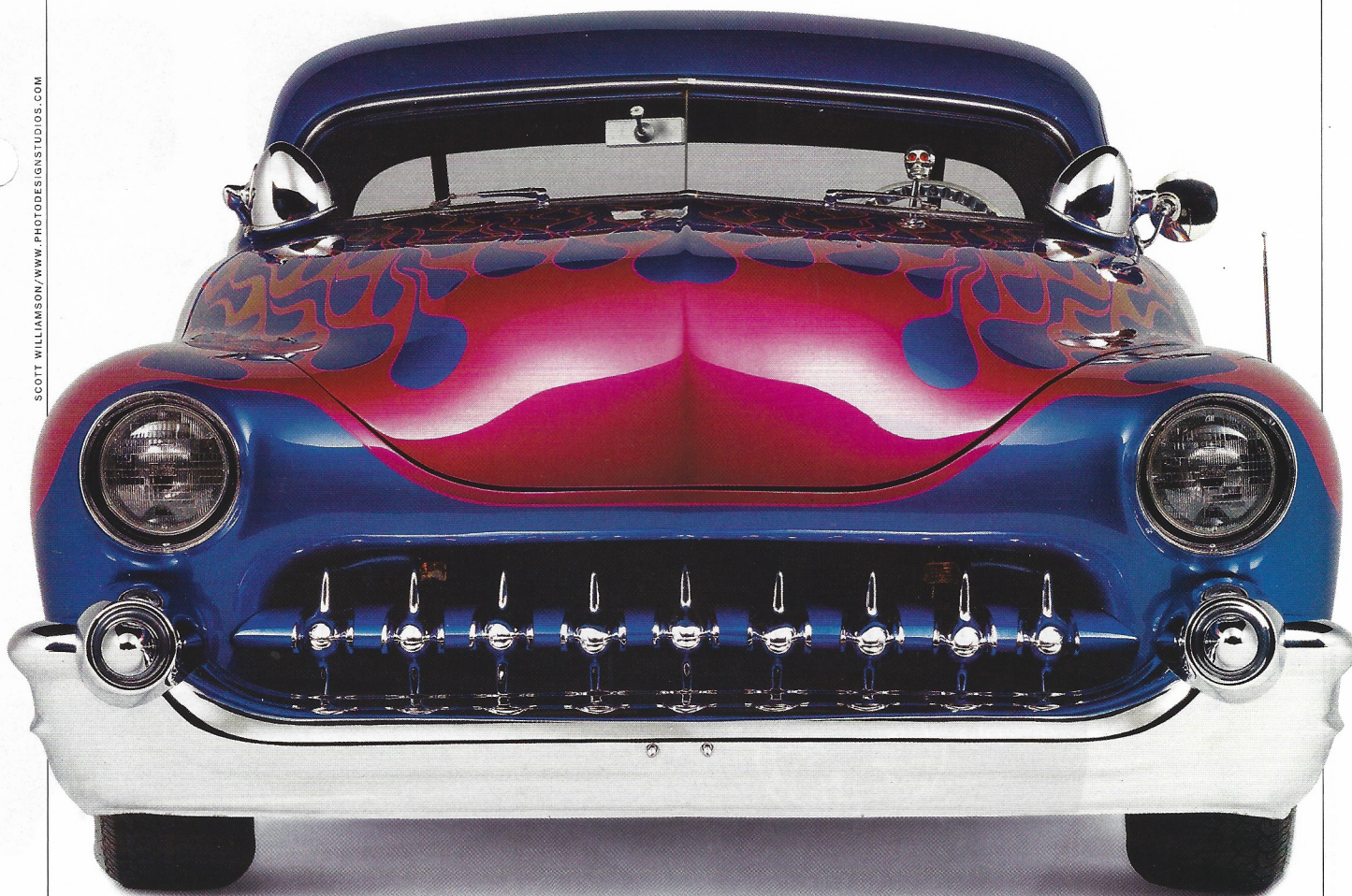
BY GARY WITZENBURG • AUTOMOBILES PHOTOGRAPHED BY SCOTT WILLIAMSON

ALTHOUGH NOT ONE of these ageless automotive icons is a priceless collectible, this potent six-pack embodies American fantasies of speed and power. All have in common prodigious Yankee muscle and bold visual flair, yet each is different from the others, representing what each owner wanted to preserve from that memorable pre-emissions, pre-economy, pre-bumper-law, pre-safety-reg, pre-insurance-paranoia performance era.

Half of these cars were originally built in the '30s and '40s, but all in current form represent '60s and '70s-era



interpretations of automotive excitement. The '32 Ford is the quintessential '60s hot rod, and it played that role in the movies. The '40 Willys is a purpose-built '60s-era dragster, while the '49 Mercury is the ultimate late '50s, early '60s custom. The '62 Chevy Impala is a '70s "low rider" replete with hydraulic suspension. The '64 GTO, the original factory muscle car, set off a decade of intense performance competition, while the '70 Dodge Challenger T/A brought road race-style performance to the street.



*There is no brand loyalty when building a lead sled; most of the non-stock elements in this 1949 Mercury come from General Motors.*

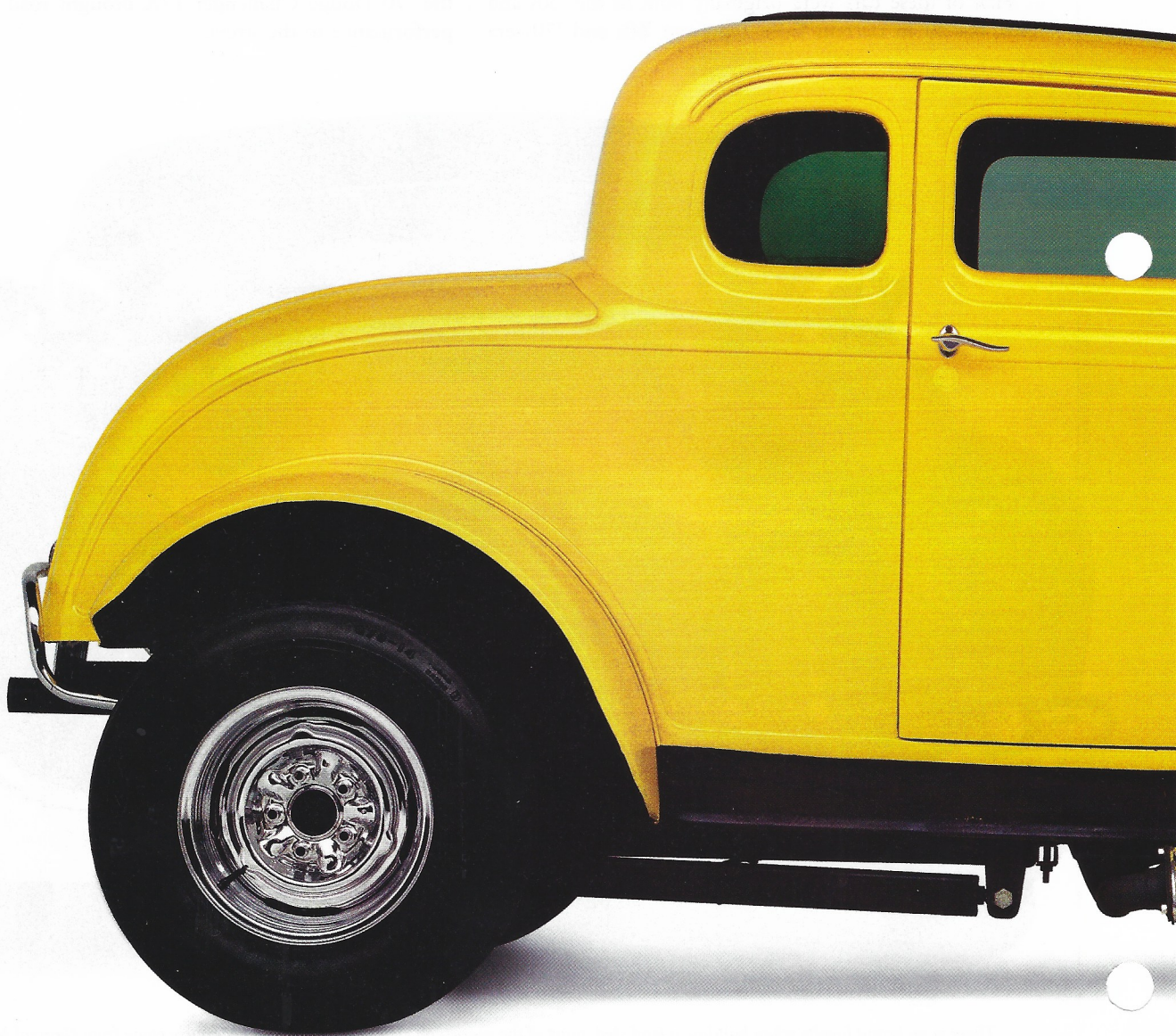


COLLECTION  
CLASSICS

# 1932



## *Ford Model 18 Coupe*

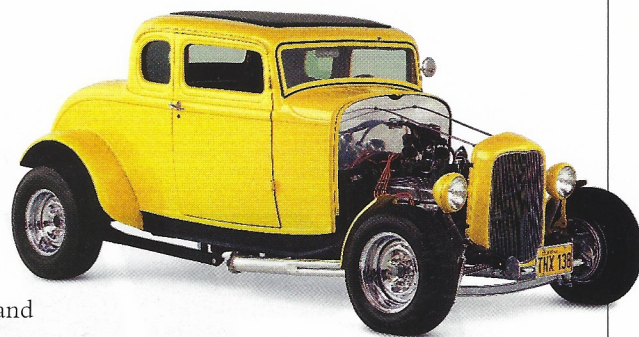


SCOTT WILLIAMSON/WWW.PHOTODESIGNSTUDIOS.COM; AUTOMOBILE COURTESY RICK FIGARL

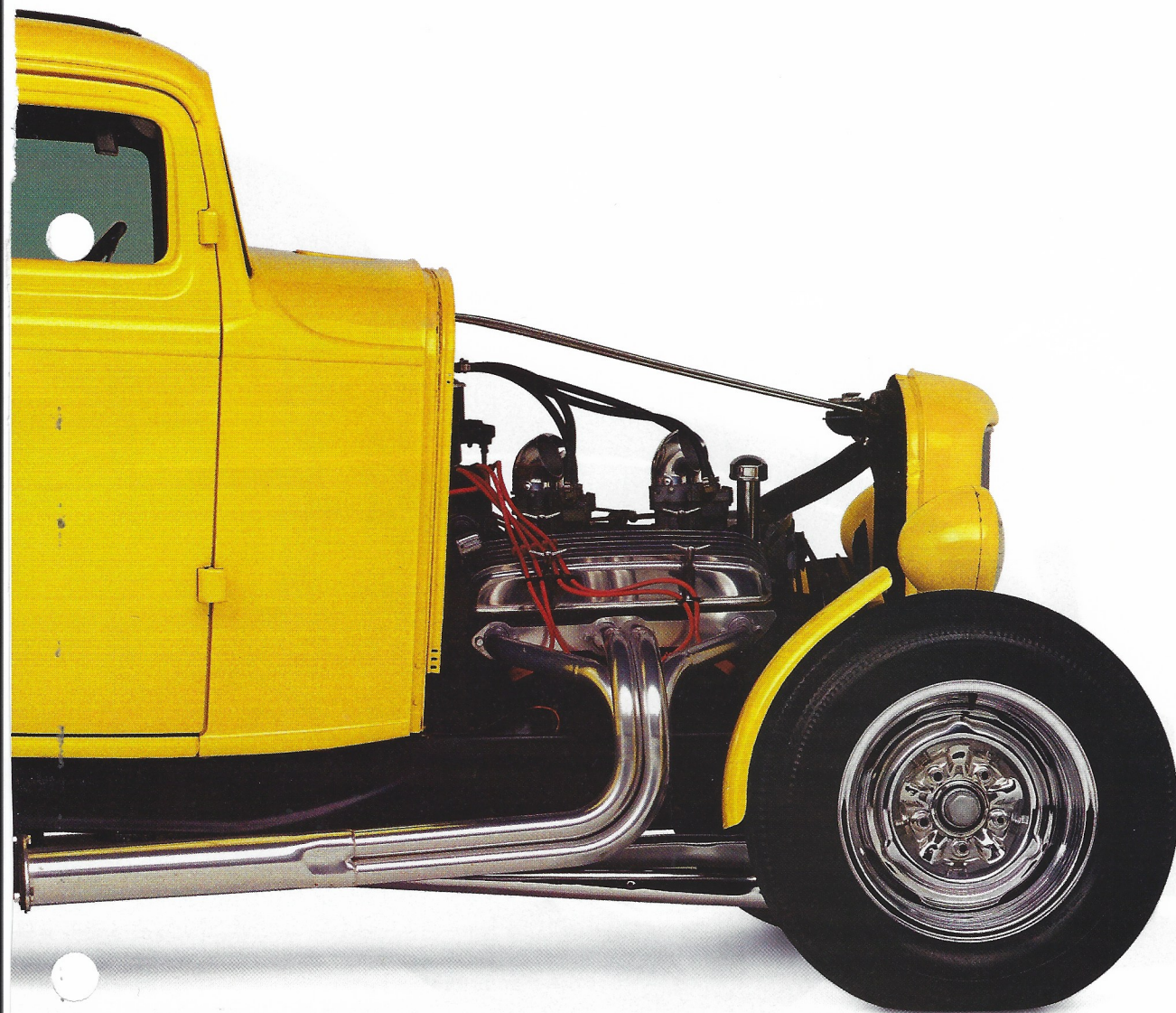




ACTOR PAUL LE MAT played cool-guy John Milner in the 1973 movie *American Graffiti* and again in *More American Graffiti*, and



this lil' deuce coupe played his too-cool car. Like most rockin' rods of the time, its top is chopped, its fenders are bobbed, and its 14-inch tires roll on chrome reversed rims. The chromed Chevy 327 small-block V-8 exposed to the elements between the rod's radiator and cockpit breathes through a matched set of "fuelie" heads and stovepipe-size chrome headers, and its quad Rochester carbs sit on a state-of-the-'60s-art Man-A-Fre manifold. Perched on a three-across bench covered with black, rolled-and-pleated Naugahyde, the driver monitors a set of vintage Stewart Warner gauges and stirs four forward gears through a long piston-handled shifter.



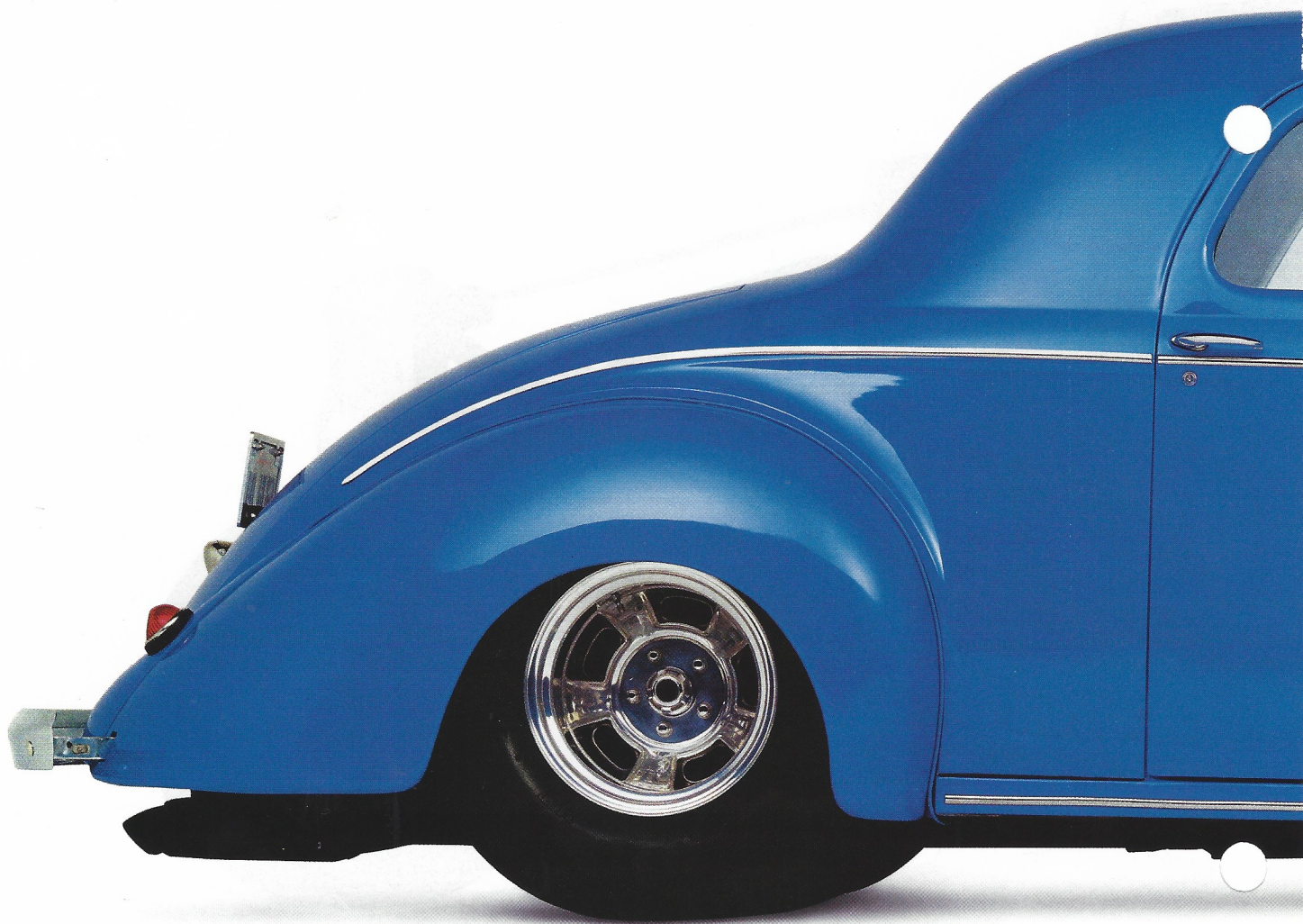


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# 1940

WILLYS

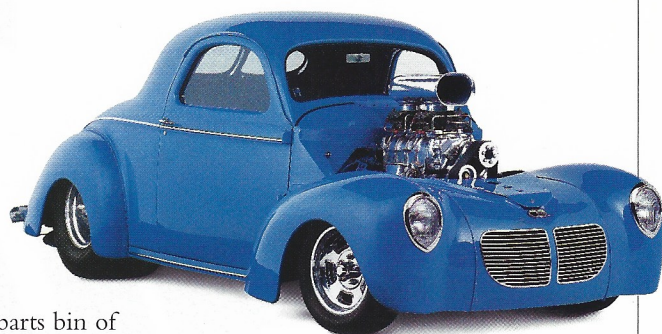
## Willys Coupe







THIS '60s-ERA blown Hemi-powered Willys "Gasser" Super Stock drag car was restored in the early '90s. It is a veritable parts bin of modern and vintage components: Its fabricated steel tubing chassis is suspended by Carrera coil-overs at all four corners; the tilt steering column comes from a '67 Chevy Chevelle; a Lincoln Mark VII donated its rear axle; its automatic transmission is 1969 Dodge; and its front spindles, brakes, and both anti-sway bars are '70s Mustang II. The Willys' narrow 5.5-by-15-inch front wheels sport BFG Defender tires, while its 14-by-15-inch rear rims wear fat Mickey Thompson Sportsman Pro "wrinkle wall" slicks. The 1957-vintage twin-carb Chrysler Hemi V-8, bored and stroked to 392 cu in, is boosted to 700 hp by a giant GMC supercharger. A rich two-tone gray tweed-and-leather upholstery adorns the interior, highlighted by Cerullo bucket seats, a Le Carra steering wheel, VDO Cockpit Series aircraft-style gauges and switches, and a killer Blaupunkt sound system.





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**1949**



***Mercury Lead Sled***



SCOTT WILLIAMSON/WWW.PHOTODESIGNSSTUDIOS.COM; AUTOMOBILE COURTESY SAM SCHOENBERG



THERE WERE FEW COOLER RIDES in the '60s than a customized '49 Merc, and this lustily flamed and striped

example takes custom car art about as far as most would want to go. The '68 Chevy

Impala top is chopped and the body channeled 6 inches over a '71 Pontiac frame. The 380 hp chromed, radically cammed '68 Pontiac V-8 is stroked to 350 cu in and fed by a 650 cfm "double-pump" carburetor on an Edelbrock aluminum intake manifold. The "lead sled" label says the nose is "nosed," the deck "decked" and



the sides "shaved," meaning all the trim and door handles are removed and the holes smoothly filled as if they were never there.

The front bumper is '57 Chevy, the grille '54 Chevy with '53 teeth, the rear bumpers are four '55 Pontiac units, and the tail lamps are

'71 Cadillac Eldorado. The interior boasts custom upholstery in white, blue, and fuchsia, high-tech liquid crystal gauges, a six-speaker Infinity sound system, and a tunnel-mounted 13-inch TV with VCR.





**1962** 

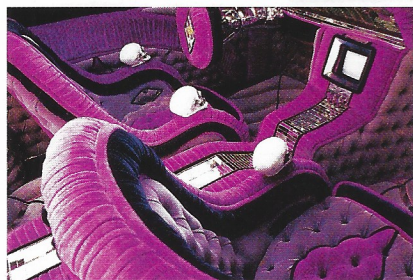
***Chevrolet Impala SS***





THIS '62 IMPALA LOW RIDER retains its original styling under lavish purple, blue, and magenta candy and pearl lacquer paint. The original, albeit heavily chromed, 170 hp

283 V-8 is mated to a 2-speed Powerglide automatic transmission. Beneath its skin, "Twilight Zone's" most fascinating feature is a hydraulic ram suspension, powered by trunk-mounted pumps and controlled by switches on the dash, which can make it tilt to one side, squat on its haunches, or bounce up and down like an enormous, overly excited dog. Low riders typically roll on undersize



wheels, and this one rides skinny 7-by-13-inch, 100-spoke chrome rims. The roofline sports a convertible-top shape, everything under the body is brightly chromed; painted murals decorate the front fenderwells, and the undersides of the hood and rear deck are upholstered in velvet to match the plush, tricolor interior, which is handcrafted from three types of velour with ample mirror work and special effects.





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# 1964



## *Pontiac GTO*



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“GTO” once stood for *Gran Turismo Omologato*, Italian for an international racing class for “homologated”

(approved) “Grand Touring” cars. Ferrari once dominated GTO

competition and hung that label on one especially fast and beautiful series in the early '60s.

Then Pontiac wedged a 348 hp race-derived tri-power V-8 into a midsize '64 Tempest and had the gall to call it “GTO.” *Car and Driver* magazine matched this upstart Pontiac against a Ferrari GTO... and the Pontiac

won! Eurocar purists howled, but the Pontiac prevailed, and an

American legend was born. This pristine example stickered at

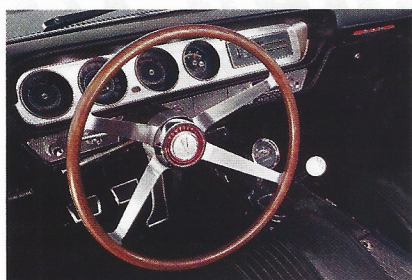
\$3,392.38 when new with a long list of options, including the

\$295.90 Gran Turismo Omologato package, which added the three

2 bbl 389 engine with heavy-duty fan, dual exhausts, 4-speed

manual trans, sport suspension, redline (or whitewall) tires, chrome

engine trim, and GTO emblems.

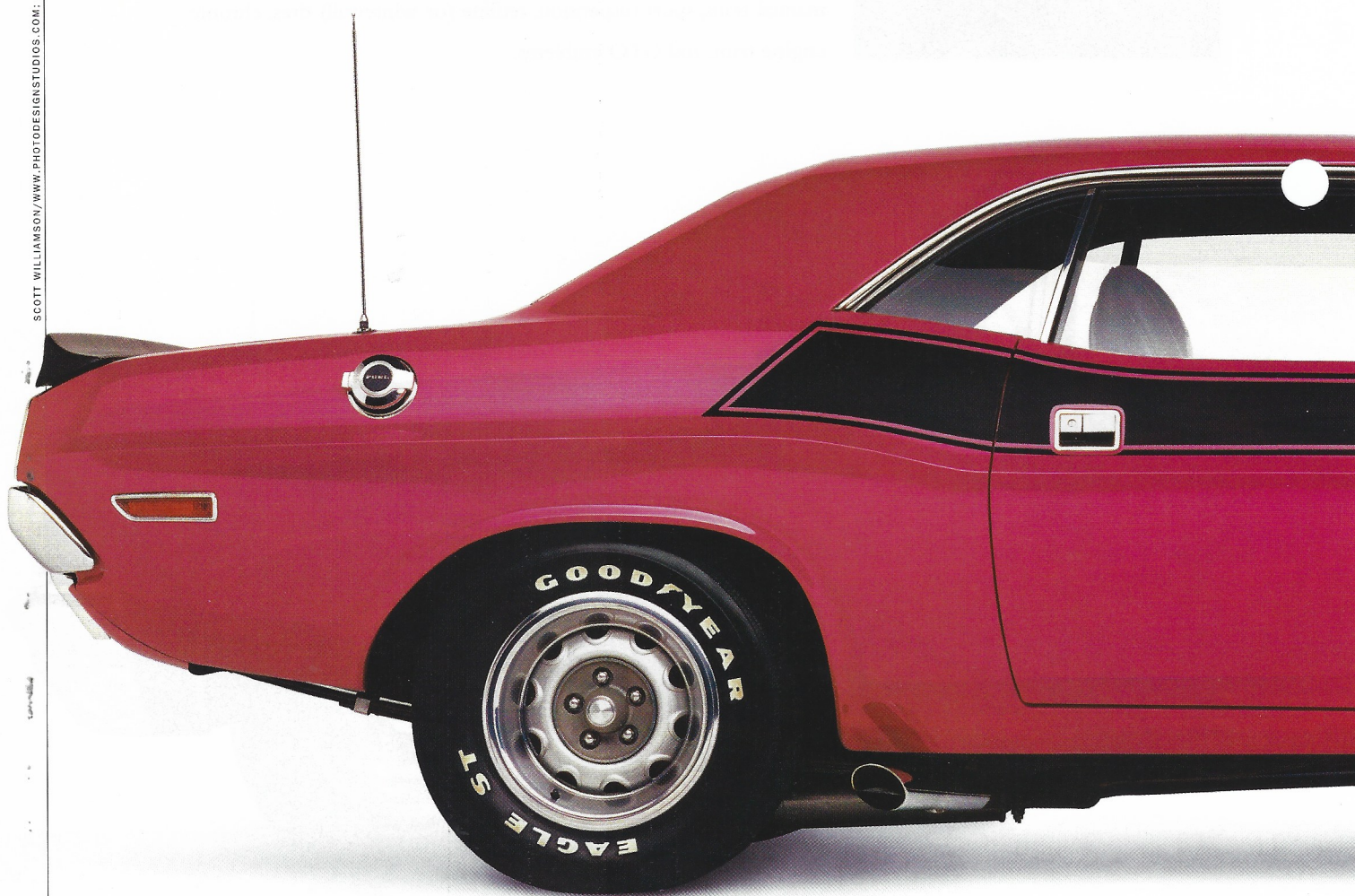




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# **1970** *Challenger T/A*

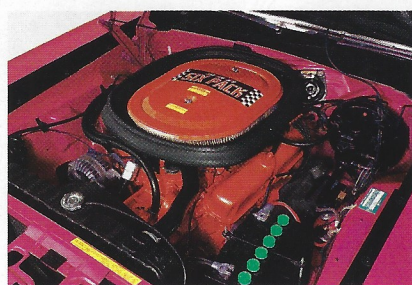
## ***Dodge Challenger T/A***



SCOTT WILLIAMSON/WWW.PHOTODESIGNSTUDIOS.COM; AUTOMOBILE COURTESY MIKE HATCH



THE SPORTS CAR CLUB OF AMERICA's Trans-Am racing series, conceived to pit factory "pony cars" door-to-door on the nation's road racing tracks following the '64 Mustang's introduction, was mostly Ford (Mustang) vs. Chevy (Camaro), with some Pontiac (Firebird Trans Am) participation—until the 1970 season, when Plymouth, Dodge, and American Motors briefly joined the fray. This Challenger T/A (for Trans Am) was the street version of Dodge's purpose-built racer, complete with (underrated, for insurance



reasons) 290 hp tri-carb 340 cu in V-8, 4-speed Hurst-linkage manual (or optional Torqueflite automatic) transmission, Posi-Traction limited-slip differential, and a handling-tuned torsion-bar front, leaf-spring rear suspension. One of the first production cars with different-size tires front to rear, it wore E60-by-15 Goodyear Eagle STs in front and larger G60-by-15s in back to better manage the 340 V-8's ample off-the-line torque. ☐

