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Cruise Miss

Bob Roles has this Pro Street Challenger roaring back from the past

Story and photos by Randy Bolig



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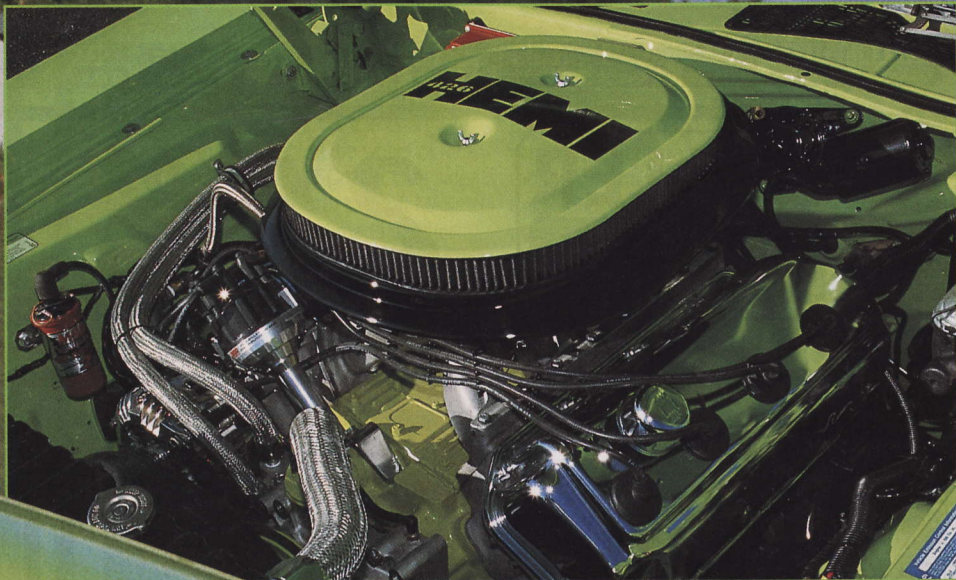
Most musclecars have an interesting heritage, but how many never hit the streets until 22 years after they've left the factory? Bob Roles of Montoursville, Pennsylvania, is the present owner of this modified '70 Challenger R/T, an E-Body that began life as a 383 four-speed. In 1970 this car left the assembly line and was purchased by noted speed emporium Barnett Performance of Atlanta soon afterward. The wedge engine and the transmission were immediately removed and

a fresh, blueprinted 426 Hemi was installed. The new car also received a full rollcage, a narrowed Dana 60 rear, and had the springs and inner fenders moved inboard to make room for bigger tires out back. Thanks to these modifications, the car was now a competitive, legal Hemi Super Stock car and was campaigned throughout NHRA Division 2 and IHRA events until 1981 by brothers Glenn, Wyman, and Frank Barnett.

The next owner was Bob Kaiser, who owned a small dealership in Muncy,

Pennsylvania. Bob bought it without the motor and the transmission, but had a spare elephant mill out of a Hemi 'Cuda he'd previously raced. However, once the Dodge was done, Bob never had a chance to race it. An acquaintance, Rick Emerick, who purchased the Hemi 'Cuda body from Bob, wanted the original motor; so he bought the car for the motor. Once that transaction was completed, Bob

File



removed the motor from the 'Cuda and placed a 440 between the fenderwells of the Challenger.

In 1982 Tom Gordon purchased the Challenger from Rick and returned it to the dragstrip, racing it in bracket competition with the 440 until 1992. At that point, Tom decided it was time for the Dodge to meet the street, so it was converted into a cruise machine, complete with a fresh, orange paint job; the hot 440; and all the Super Stock tricks intact. For the next eight years,

the "wolf in R/T clothing" made regular appearances at the local cruise spots and car shows in central Pennsylvania plus the occasional pass down the quarter in the low-12-second zone until new owner Bob Roles entered the picture.

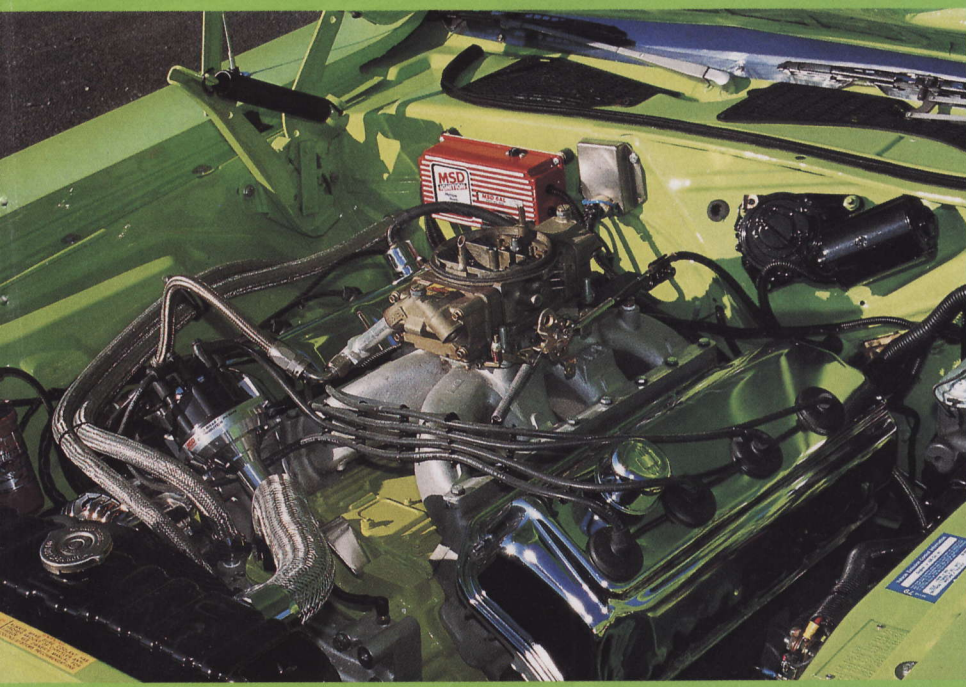
As it turns out, Roles, Tom Gordon, Rick Emerick, and Bob Kaiser are all buddies who lived just a few miles apart from each other; they constantly hung out together and knew the car quite well. So when Roles purchased it, he drove it for a few months until he

finally decided it was time to make the Dodge his own automotive statement and not just "Tom's old car."

Since the Pro Street/Super Stock heritage was solid and a stock restoration wasn't what he was looking for, the first thing Roles and his crew did was completely disassemble the car so he could assess what type of work it needed. With the body completely stripped, they planned to give it an original high-impact paint color, FJ5 Sublime Green. After a T/A-style fiberglass



Cruise Missile



hood was installed, Valley Body Shop got the nod to cover the prepped panels with fresh paint.

Meanwhile, as the body was being painted, Roles made plans to return a Hemi to the engine bay. He contacted engine builder John Arruzza in Trinity, North Carolina, for the motor, settling on a fat, custom-built 512-inch Hemi. The 4.256-inch-bore block came from Mopar Performance, and Arruzza worked his horsepower magic using a Callies 4.5-inch forged crank that spins Eagle 7.100-inch H-beam rods topped with custom-cut Ross pistons. A Comp Cams street roller camshaft with moderate specs actuates Manley Severe Duty valves in the Stage V Engineering aluminum heads, and John kept the final compression ratio to a conservative 10.33:1 ratio. On top, an AED-prepped 850 Holley double-pumper feeds pump gas through the Indy intake, which is, in turn, fired by a Pro-Billet distributor and an MSD ignition outfit. Once the final assembly was completed, the wisdom of the choices was proved on the dyno to the tune of 813 hp. A worked 727 'Flite and the narrowed Dana resides behind this mill.

For the interior, Roles decided the factory accoutrements were fine; the factory Rallye dash remains and the seats are re-covered with factory vinyl. Despite the rear tubs, the car retains the back seat and the Cheetah SCS shifter even fits in the factory console. To finish off the package, Roles chose Weld Wheels shod with Mickey Thompson rubber: 15x3s in front and wide 15x15s out back.

Being in the amusement business, Roles does his best to make sure everybody else has a good time when he's working. However, once he's out in the Challenger, he doesn't need any additional stimulus; this cruise missile is the star of any automotive big top.

