



THE LITTLE 'CUDA

From a rare original, to an unbeatable racer on the track and street, to drag seminar circuit tourer, to exotic showpiece, this '69 'Cuda has done it all.

By Bill Woods and John Arruzza

Photos by TheBruntBros

One of the more amazing Mopars around, is this '69 440 'Cuda notchback, one-of-16 built, and one-of-4 believed to currently exist. This Plymouth originally was ordered for Bryce Ader, of A&W Radiator Repair, in Lexington, NC, by M&L Motor Co. in Lexington. Bryce wanted the car for drag racing, and as soon as the 'Cuda came in, it was sent to the Sox & Martin race shop for some performance upgrades.

S&M had an engine already built and waiting for the car to arrive. It was a 513-inch stroker wedge cheater motor assembled by Jake King. The 'Cuda was trimmed out for racing with fenderwell headers, super stock springs, a 4.89 Sure-Grip rear, a cool can, and a racing torque converter. S&M reworked the auto trans, removed the front swaybar, slapped on drag slicks, and dialed the car in. The 'Cuda was killer, running consistently in the 9s and 10s. Jackie Kerley, M&L's 24-year-old mechanic at the time, was crew chief for the 'Cuda during the 1969-'70 season. He said that the car, racing primarily in SS/FA and match competition, never lost one round all season except for red light runs. Cheating paid off. The 'Cuda ran with M&L Motors sponsorship, and was maintained by Kerley on their nickel.

In the summer of 1970, Bryce traded the 'Cuda to Sox & Martin for Billy "The Kid" Stepp's acid-dipped '68 Super Stock Hemi 4-speed Barracuda. Bryce had a very rough time with



THAT COULD



Original vintage stickers remain in excellent shape.



Original 8500-mile 'Cuda was never cut, tubbed or caged, though it did run with a rollbar. The 'Cuda was never apart, but required bodywork to fix a quarter panel ding caused by a kid riding his bike into the car as it sat in Tom Hoover's driveway. The 'Cuda does sport a fresh paint job.

THE LITTLE 'CUDA THAT COULD



While the fastback 'Cuda was more popular, the coupe, which weighed 100 lbs. less than the fastback, was the way to go for racing. This car came originally equipped with vinyl buckets, A13 'Cuda Special 440, A57 'Cuda 383 Group, console, D34 TorqueFlite, D56 axle ratio, Sure-Grip, E86 440 engine, tinted glass, stripe delete and E70x14 Red Streak tires.



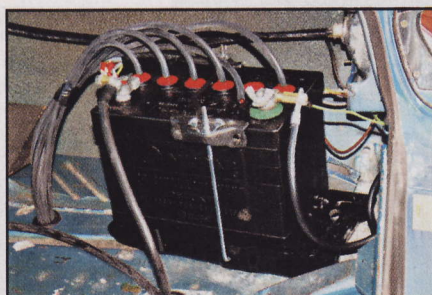
With the exception of new carpets, interior is original. The shifter is the second that Hoover installed. He made the first one himself, but it looked too crude.

that car and could win no races with that 4-speed. Besides, the car was worn out after two full seasons of racing (acid-dipped cars don't hold up well). The 'Cuda changed hands once again, when Sox & Martin sold it to the notorious New York street racers, the Smallwood Brothers. These guys matched-raced the car and dominated the midnight madness on the Clearview Expressway and Connecting Highway with it, until they could no longer get a run for cash or titles. So, in the summer of '71, they traded the 'Cuda back to Sox & Martin for the team's original '70 Pro Stock 4-speed HemiCuda. But the Smallwoods (or anybody else, for that matter) couldn't handle a 4-speed like Sox, and their winning streak came to an end.

In 1972, S&M sold the car once again—this time to Tom Hoover. The 'Cuda

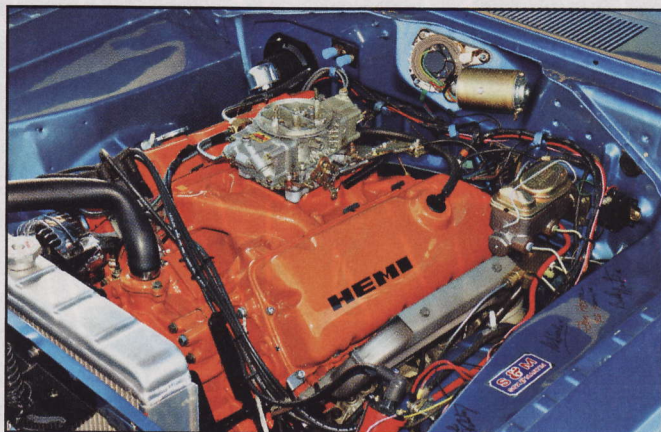
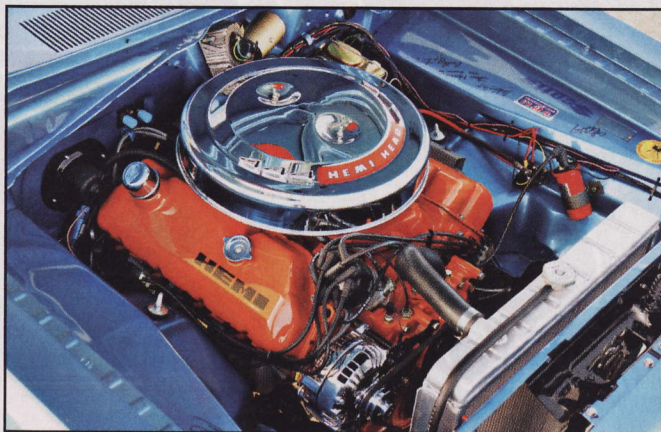


Undercarriage shows Arruzza-installed 8-quart Moroso chrome oil pan. Note exhaust cutouts. Driveshaft is the original, and the rear is the 4.89 Sure-Grip that was installed by Sox & Martin in '69.



Super Stock setup has the trunk-mounted battery.

would begin a new career as the Mopar Performance drag race seminar car and street machine. The stroker motor came out, replaced by a tricked-out smallblock. Hoover added a Road Runner horn, flames and a fiberglass lift-off hood. He honcho'd the car from 1972 to 1978 at Chrysler-sponsored seminars, to show Mo'fans how to build and race a W-2 smallblock A-body at reasonable



The 481-inch Ball-Stud Hemi built by John Arruzza sits on a pair of original A-body 440 engine brackets and insulators. The original numbers-matching 440 that was pulled by S&M, was found by Arruzza and is now displayed at shows with the car.



Tom Hoover with his "Mover," complete with flames and fiberglass hood.



The bumpers have been rechromed, but all the other trim is original.

cost, using Mopar parts, and win. The 'Cuda became known as "Hoover's Mover." It's the same car Hoover used to demonstrate how to build a stock 340-piston 360 motor in Hot Rod.

Tom kept the car for 32 years. Then, in August 2004, he sold it to John Arruzza. He, in turn, sold the 'Cuda to its current owner, Carl "Skip" Sable. Thanks to John, the 'Cuda now serves as a showcase for the probably one and only surviving example of the A279 Ball-Stud Hemi engine (see story on p. 40). ★

■ QUICKEST AND FASTEST MOPARS ■

JUNE 2007

MOPAR ACTION

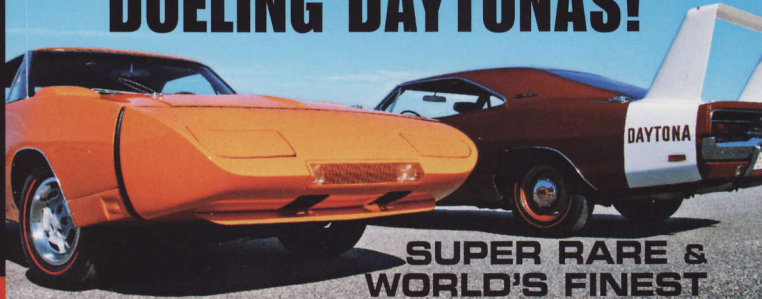
MOPAR ACTION™

www.moparaction.com

UNBEATABLE CHEATER 'CUDA



DUELING DAYTONAS!



SUPER RARE &
WORLD'S FINEST

TRICK 1970 6.1L HEMI SUPERBEE
CHRYSLER'S 444-INCH MYSTERY HEMI
OUTRAGEOUS '07 FACTORY IR PICKUP

TECH

INDY STROKER
6.1L HEMI
BUILDUP

KEISLER ELECTRONIC
OD AUTO
Install & Road Test

PROJECT 360
SMPI SAVOY
HITS THE STRIP

\$4.95

\$5.95 Can

0 6 >



Printed in U.S.A.