



CARS ROAD TEST

We've been having a love affair with Dodge's compact since 1963 and the beat goes on

THE DEMON MADE ME DO IT!

BY THE CARS STAFF



It's Thunder Road all the way, baby, when you put your foot into the water pump. It's truly a dual-purpose machine for the family man.

IF YOU were shopping for a compact car and you visited Chrysler-Plymouth and Dodge dealers you would have at least six *theoretically* different cars to choose from. The Chrysler-Plymouth guy would offer you a Valiant, a Scamp or a Duster. Then down the road a piece, the Dodge Boys would try to turn you on to either a Dart, a Swinger or a Demon. Lots to choose from, right? No way, baby. They're all the same. Only the names (and trim) have been changed to confuse the buyer and

protect the profit. Actually, the Duster and Demon are somewhat different than their poorer relatives. But down deep, only the assembly line boys know one from the other.

Every Product Planning group in Motown has its Marketing/Merchandising genius whose job is to confuse the buyer. In the case of the small Mopar, he has succeeded. We get at least two or three calls per week from potential buyers who have been unable to decipher the mystery

surrounding these machines. When it came time to test one, we chose a Demon since it was the latest and most dressed of all the models. It's the Duster's twin and has become another bread and butter car for the Dodge Boys. Over the years we've come to love the Dart/Valiant line because of its straight forward design and excellent combination of no-nonsense practicality and performance. It makes it in all categories, including trade-in value.

The new Demon, like its brothers,

can be had in economical Six, consumerish Eight or in High Performance Eight trim. Ours was, of course, fitted with the top line 340 engine, one of the most respected in the Dodge lineup. It's their answer to Chevrolet and Ford small-block engines and, for the most part, it's super competitive. Conservatively rated at 275 hp, it's right in the ball park with Chevrolet's 327/350 and Ford's 302/351 engines. Hot parts are available from the factory and speed shops and it does respond exceptionally well to tuning and popular mini mods. Rated at 5000 rpm, the screamer actually has a top rev limit up around the 6000 rpm marker, even though the cam used is a hydraulic model. The 340 hp cam is a 268/276 degree duration compromise stick which is tame enough for daily traffic driving, lumpy enough to whet the appetite of an enthusiast and strong enough to get the job done. It is still currently available with the good old 10.5-to-1 compression which can't last forever. Tying everything together is the latest model Carter quad—the one with all the plastic parts—known as the Thermo-Quad. It's not a Holley by any stretch of the imagination, but it is a helluva lot better than the old AVS model and it helps the engine pass emission tests, too. Just for

the record, it's a lot smoother than the old AVS and transition from low to mid-range is greatly improved. Throttle feel is better than ever.

The Demon is not the kind of machine you can write volumes about after a road test. Dodge hasn't really changed the Dart that much over the years and the latest version is nothing more or less than a Duster. It's built on the standby 108-inch chassis and is actually 3 inches shorter than the common garden variety Dart. There are torsion bars up front and leafs in the rear. Not the ideal combination for boulevard ride, but Chrysler doesn't go for boulevard ride and handling. The torsion bar ride is firmer and more positive than coil spring setups and, in our opinion, more desirable. The suspension has been around for a while and we can't see any reason why Chrysler should change it. The car does understeer to some degree but this is to be expected. The power steering, while it is notoriously light, is a welcomed addition. Anyone who's thinking of buying a similar package without power steering must try the manual before signing on the dotted line. It's heavy, clumsy and 100 percent undesirable.

Our test car was fitted with TorqueFlite which we find much easier to live with than the four-speed. The

four-speed bolted up to the 340 mill is the easiest to shift, but we still prefer the dial-a-win setup. With 3.55 gears and the torque multiplication factors dialed into the automatic, it's a real holed-out machine. There's a neat new part-throttle kickdown on all the auto trans models this year which enables the driver to gain extra passing power at low speeds. It automatically shifts the TorqueFlite into Second when the pedal is tapped for more passing power in the 10 to 40 mph range. It does away with the usual full-throttle kickdown, thus saving mucho wear and tear on all components.

In out-of-the-box shape, the Demon proved to be a real performer, shutting down quite a few machines with 75 to 100 more cubes. Quarter-mile times ranged from 15.1/92 mph to 14.8/94 mph. Torque loading to 2500 rpm seemed to get the job done. We tried some Neutral starts but they just aggravated the rear suspension. We were constantly on the verge of wheel hop and probably would have run into a severe case had the Demon been fitted with four-speed and drag gears. With automatic the suspension worked out just right. Four-series gears are the only way to go on the quarter since this mill will run around the 6000 rpm mark.



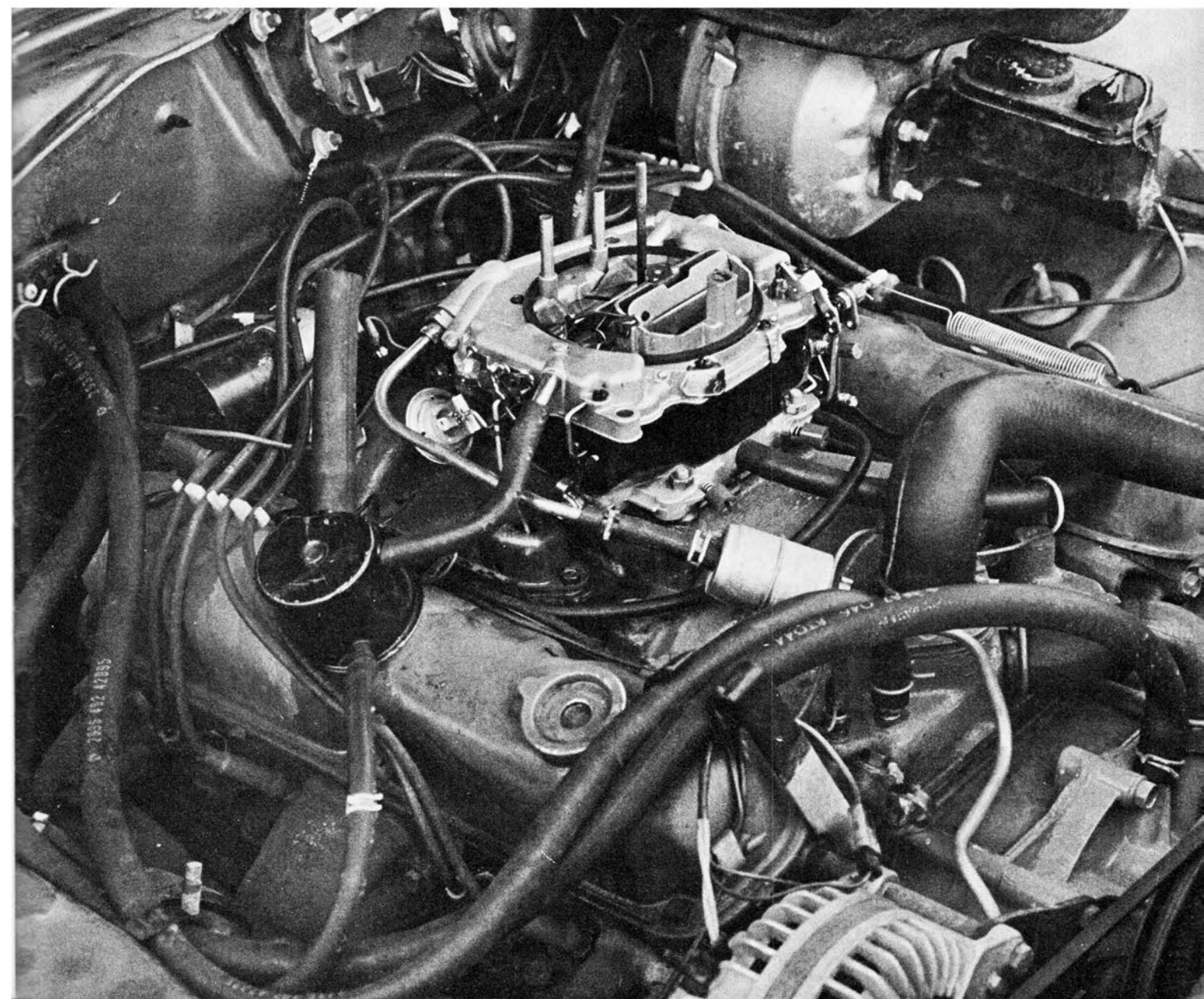
Tall contoured buckets boast built-in headrests. They're much more sane than bolt-on 'rests. Sixty series Goodyears dig in when the going gets rough. Bite is good.



Well-padded race-type wheel is easy to handle and looks good. Dash layout is simple and effective. Flat black paint treatment sets off rear of new Demon.



Heavy-duty suspension, good brakes and fat tires pay off when you put a car through its paces on the dirt. Power steering is super light. Manual steering is out to lunch. Also on facing page is the HP mill with its new Thermo Quad Carter intake. New carb makes it.





Twin scoop hood has air intake holes, but they don't mate to the carb and air cleaner.

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The use of Duster body panels transforms the squared off Dart into a much more pleasing design. It's sportier without detracting from the very functional styling. You can still put people in the rear seat and the trunk is still gigantic by sporty model standards. You can easily stuff the trunk with enough luggage for four adults to make a cross country trip. Like the Duster, the rear windows pivot instead of rolling down. Some people find this annoying. We didn't. Our test car was finished off in lime green with flat black trim, a color combo that was a bit off the deep end for us. A simple effective ram air hood scoop would be one of the things we would change if we owned one. The dual jobs just don't carry it off that well. Also, the devilish Demon decal should be deleted from all 340 models. It doesn't belong on a *real* performance car. We loved the Dart in '63 and we still love it for 1971 thrashing!



Trunk is huge and can handle all the needs of a family. It's also great for slicks!

DODGE 340 DEMON SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE

Type	OHV V-8
Displacement	340 cubic inches
Compression Ratio	10.50-to-1
Carburetion	Carter Thermo Quad
Camshaft	268/276 Hydraulic
Horsepower	275 hp 5000 rpm
Torque	340 foot/pounds @ 3200
Exhaust	Headers, dual pipes
Ignition	Dual Point

TRANSMISSION

Make	TorqueFlite
Control	Console

REAR END

Type	Sure-grip
Ratio	3.55-to-1

BRAKES

Front	10.7-inch power assisted discs
Rear	10-inch power assisted drums

SUSPENSION

Front	Independent, HD torsion bars, HD shocks, sway bar
Rear	HD Multi-leaf springs, shocks
Steering	Power-assisted
Overall Ratio	Variable

GENERAL*

List Price	\$2700
Price As Tested	\$3500
Weight	3520 pounds
Wheelbase	108 inches
Overall Length	188.4 inches
Tire Size	E-60x15 GT

PERFORMANCES

0 to 30 mph	N/A
0 to 60 mph	7.6 seconds
Standing ¼ mile	92-95
Elapsed Time	14.80
Top Speed	110 (EST)
Fuel Consumption	12-16 mpg