

440 DART: A SUPER DODGE



**Charlie Allen evaluates the factory's
latest strength – "It Melted the Tires!"**

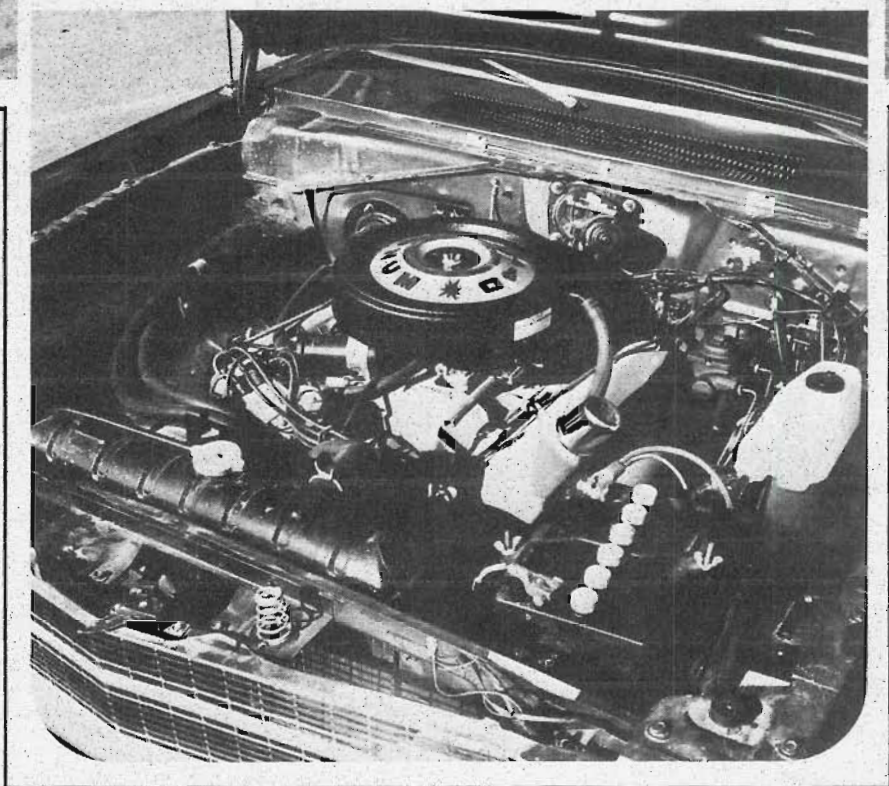


Chrysler Corporation has no self-imposed restriction on the horsepower to weight ratio of its product such as General Motors, and they have released some brutes the likes of the hemi Charger and Road Runner. Yet neither Plymouth nor Dodge was taking full advantage of even the equipment they had on the shelf. (A) The big engines were available only in relatively heavy bodies; (B) The hemi, which it took at a street weight of 3900 pounds to outperform Ram-Air GTOs, 427 Vettes and light CJ Mustangs, cost far too much for most enthusiasts, and is not ideally suited to street operation. Now, in one full swoop, Chrysler has achieved a measure of economical performance that will put away anything you'll meet and provide the reliability of a truck.

The 440 cubic inch engine, with 375 underrated horsepower and 480 foot pounds of torque, shoehorned into the lightweight Dart with factory "K" frame relocation, enables the best of both worlds. As race-ready light as 3300 pounds, this package yields a power/weight ratio of 8.88 to 1 and more sheer exhilaration than any other car dollar for dollar.

The 440 is a torque engine, not a high-winding horsepower engine, and as such boots any car it is in to equal 0-60 times with the costly street hemi, and gives up little from that point on until absolute top speed is measured. It has been very successful in such sheet metal as the Charger and R/T, and is even more so with five or six hundred less pounds on its back.

Saddleback Dodge in Santa Ana, California wrestled the very first production 440 Dart from Detroit as part of their enthusiastic order for twenty, and Drag Racing engaged Dodge veteran



Standard Dart E70 x 14 wide ovals are likely to last only half an hour on 440 version. Charlie Allen billowed both in test workouts (top) with only 3.55 gears, recommends instant replacement to G70 or larger on delivery. Factory 440 Magnum installation by "K" frame movement causes no underhood problems, but Allen found the gas line location near a head resulted in hot weather vapor lock. A simple redirection should correct.

Charlie Allen to evaluate and test it first thing. He was hot off of a big HRM Championship Funny Car win in 7.59-194.38, so the prospect of working with a 12-second stocker was not expected to gain much enthusiasm, but Charlie has a modified '440 Dart that he put together in '68 and knew how much fun it could be.

The factory delivered a GTS two-door hardtop with only the 440 numerals on hood bulges to give away its capability. This is a sleeper for sure. No special

styling, no code name like Z-28 or Talladega—it's truly an acceleration fan's delight, not much for the type who would buy a rally-striped Camaro for threatening looks with a mild 350-inch grocery store mill.

Three-speed TorqueFlite, 3.55 Sure-Grip rear end, heavy duty rear springs, torsion bars, shocks, and brakes were expected parts of the package, but the supply room either had an overabundance of E70 x 14 tires or the engineers made a typographical error in specifica-

tion, because this smallest of all the wide ovals is in the wrong league. In fact, the first report Charlie had after wheeling the Dart around awhile was, "It melts the tires!"

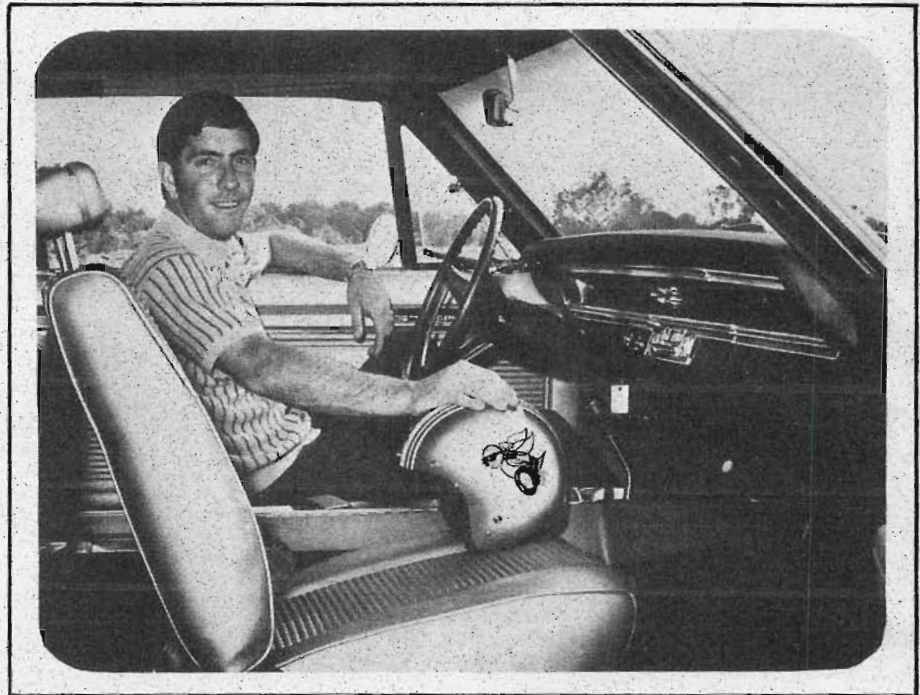
Needless to say, when (and if) 3.90 or 4.11 gears are installed for serious action, no less than wide M/T or Inglewood rear rubber is mandatory. The 3.55 ratio is a perfect compromise for the torquing 440, but even for street use G70's or the equivalent are a must. Tack \$50 on the price of the car for after purchase upgrading of rear tires.

When Charlie took the car out the temperature was in the high 80's and the car began heating up after an hour of high speed handling tests. Some vapor-locking or fuel percolation occurred which restricted the car's performance on the big end. After cooling it down for about 30 minutes the temperature came back to normal and he was able to continue with time runs, but in order to prevent the overheating he recommends you re-route the fuel line completely away from the cylinder head. You could even install a Cool-Can.

A wolf in sheep's clothing, Dodge's 440 Dart uncorks mid-twelve-second elapsed times and 111 mph off the showroom after a tire change. This is not astounding in this age of supercars, but the wedge-head 440 improves more with breathing modifications than most engines, and headers alone will chop off another two tenths. Charlie's personal Dart, blueprinted, with Super Stock specs, puts out 450 hp, and with 4.56 gears clocks 11.98 on 6000 rpm shifts.

There will probably not be any handling awards to the 440 Dart, for with 100 extra pounds on the front axle, the same wheels as intended for the 340 engine, and immeasurably greater power on tap, you're just not able to go deep

into corners. "It's bag is stompability," Charlie figures, with the bonus of trouble-free everyday operation, a combination that can only be wholly successful with cubic inches and light total weight. *(continued to page 67)*



Allen, fresh from a 7.59-second win in his Dodge funny car, also has a 440 Dart from pre-production days, so was not surprised by potent GTS. Low twelve second e.t.'s with full upholstery and equipment. Posed in three-quarter view (below) the sleeper looks for all the world like clean economy car with sport stripe. Only 440 numerals on hood styling bulge tips off competition.





There's not much front end lift under acceleration with extra 100 pounds of big incher (above), though passing gear downshift from 30 mph on feels like it picks up wheels. Cornering exercises were for the record only, for despite heavy-duty suspension and brakes, the narrow wheels/tires et al would keep 440 out of Grand Prix. Satisfactory for street and road, best suited to sheer motion.



ENGINE

Type	OHV V-8
Displacement	440 cubic inches
Comp. Ratio	10.0 to 1
Carburetion	One Carter AVS 4-bbl (580 cfm)
Camshaft	Hydraulic
Horsepower	375 @ 4600
Torque	480 @ 3200
Exhaust	Cast iron manifold, dual pipes
Ignition	Single point, 5° initial advance

TRANSMISSION

Type	Three-speed Torque-Flite automatic
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REAR END

Type	Sure-Grip limited slip
Ratio	3.55 to 1

BRAKES

Front	Both heavy duty police option drum brakes
Rear	

SUSPENSION

Heavy-duty torsion bar and leaf spring, with H.D. shocks

Steering	Power
Tires	E-70 x 14 polyglas belted
Wheels	Stock steel, 5½ rim

PERFORMANCE

0 to 30 mph	3.2 seconds
0 to 60	5.9 seconds
Standing start quarter-mile	12.70 seconds
Fuel Consumption	112 mph
	10 to 16 mpg

GENERAL

List Price (Delivered in Calif.)	\$3941.00
Weight	3350 lbs.
Wheelbase	111 inches