

HIGH PERFORMANCE INVESTMENTS

SUPER COLLECTABLE MOPARS FOR SALE

THE RELENTLESS PURSUIT – A ‘BIRD OF PERFECTION

by Patrick Krook

What drives any person to stop at nothing to achieve the highest result possible? Without hesitation, regardless of obstacles or hardships, to achieve what others deem “impossible” - not just once? But,

to repeat the result over and over again, never satisfied, never letting up? What is the relentless pursuit of perfection? Tim Grover, personal trainer to athletic phenoms like Michael Jordan, Dwayne Wade, and Kobe Bryant, calls the person with singular focus on a par-

ticular result a “Cleaner.” Richard Petty, the first driver to earn over \$1 million in career earnings, is a “Cleaner.” Chrysler in the 1960s, with their conquest to dominate every form of racing and their relentless pursuit of the perfect car to win in NASCAR, was a



“Cleaner.” The Hemi Superbird was a game changer. Petty is called “The King” for good reason. The legacy of total domination looms large today, even fifty years after the fact. Two million posts on Instagram are tagged with #Hemi. #ZL1 has only a fraction of that. #Boss429, 18,500 posts, and #Cobra Jet could only muster 668.

It seems only fitting to pursue the perfect restoration with a remarkably well-preserved example, still in the hands of the original family until recently, and parked since 1977. In fact, we covered this car as it was beginning restoration in our Under Construction feature. According to the family, this Hemi Superbird was driven daily throughout the early seventies, when its owner wasn’t busy racing sprint cars. Showing 69,000 miles, the car still retains its original numbers matching engine, transmission, rear-end, and sheet metal. Instead of being restored “over-the-top” like so many others, this one has pushed OE restoration to its limit.

The objective was clear, and difficult – restore the car so accurately that it looks just as it would have when it was delivered from Chrysler in 1970. Just like Jordan, spending hours of practice on the court after the rest of the team went home, it takes ten times the work and attention to detail to return a car to “as-built” condition. It involves replicating assembly line techniques and finding original assembly line or NOS parts. There’s not a single reproduction part on this car! That’s not as easy as it sounds. Normal wear items installed on the assembly line, commonly discarded at the first maintenance interval, are not the same as Mopar service replacement parts. So, not all NOS is created equal. Mopar Hall of Fame collector, Steven Juliano, referred to these rare items as “lunch pail parts” because they didn’t have any natural distribution path outside the factory. This one, and a few other OE-quality restorations, benefited from Steven’s acumen for identifying, locating, and acquiring these assembly line

original parts.

It doesn’t stop there. Dedication yourself to a no-compromises OEM specification restoration demands that you preserve and recondition as much as you possibly can. The carpets, for instance, are the originals. They were removed, cleaned, redyed, and reinstalled. The seat upholstery couldn’t be saved, so they went to the extraordinary length of locating original new old stock material spools and having new seat covers sewn from factory patterns. The attention to detail carried into the fit and finish of the paint and body, started with duplicating Chrysler’s seven-step primer process. The body is painted with acrylic enamel, the nose cone and wing are finished in lacquer. The car was not buffed, taking care to preserve the “factory” orange peel in the paint. The undercarriage was treated to the same rigorous attention to the order of operations between primer, paint, sub-assembly installation, undercoat, and

ALL FACTORS CONSIDERED, THIS ONE IS ESTIMATED TO BE VALUED SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 750,000 TO ONE MILLION DOLLARS.



inspection marks. NOS parts were used where it would've been more convenient to use repros, but they weren't in pursuit of convenience, they were in the pursuit of perfection.

When you're setting a new benchmark, documenting the process is paramount. Head judge of the ICCA and noted Mopar inspector, Dave Wise, closely followed the restoration of this Superbird from initial tear down to final assembly, taking thousands of photos in the process. When it was complete, Mr. Wise also performed an independent inspection, rating it a 1.1, where 1.0 is the highest! In his report he states; "I had the privilege to inspect this vehicle in its unrestored state and in its current restored state. I watched this car being transformed from a very good original survivor to an exceptional example of closest to factory original with improvements in quality over the factory.

"This may be the best restored Superbird in the world at this time. As a matter of fact, this may be the best Mopar restored to date! The attention

to detail is second-to-none in my opinion... I have had the pleasure to witness this award-winning Superbird in its original condition, before the restoration, and follow it through its restoration process. There are thousands of man hours and countless NOS parts that went into the restoration of this car."

Often pursued and rarely achieved, perfection is an elusive standard to reach. By all accounts, this 1970 Plymouth Superbird Hemi, four-speed, has accomplished that feat. Every concours awarding event equipped to judge this specimen concurs; this Superbird is the finest restored example known. Muscle Car and Corvette Nationals judged it Concours Gold in 2014, and awarded it the prestigious Platinum Pick Judge's Choice, and Best Plymouth Stock. Carlisle Chrysler Nationals awarded it OE Gold in 2015, which is the most rigorous judging system offered for Mopar vehicles.

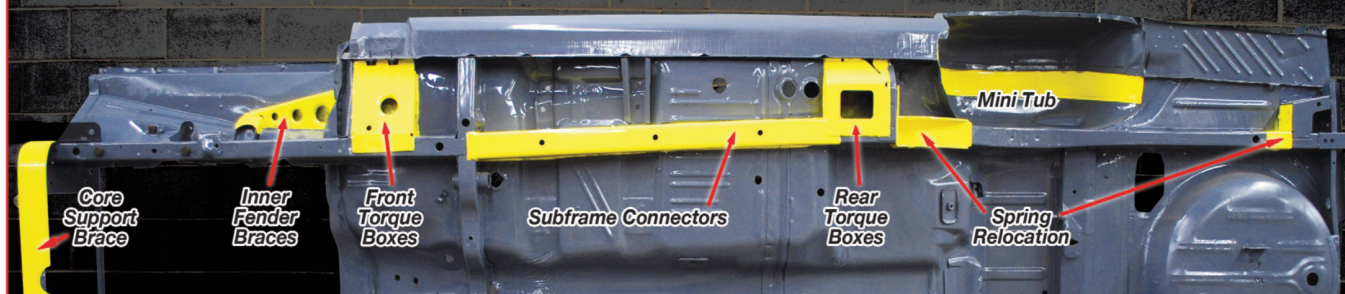
This Hemi Superbird is the very best that has ever been. It does

something that no unrestored car has done, and no other restored car has ever done - shown people what perfection and originality looked like in 1970. It is the Michael Jordan of Mopar restorations. And yes, it is "the King" - an absolute "Cleaner," setting a new benchmark for authentic, original restorations. From here on out, concours restorations will improve as restorers strive to emulate this example. Given the dwindling supply of assembly line original and NOS parts specific to the Superbird, it is not a feat likely to be repeated. All factors considered, we set the value range from \$750,000 to one million.

With the 50th anniversary of the wing car this year, the 50th anniversary of Talladega, and the Aero Warrior Reunion planned at the Wellborn Muscledar Museum this coming October, now would be an excellent time to add the ultimate Superbird to your collection. It is available now, for a limited time, on ShowYourAuto.com. ✖

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