

DODGE



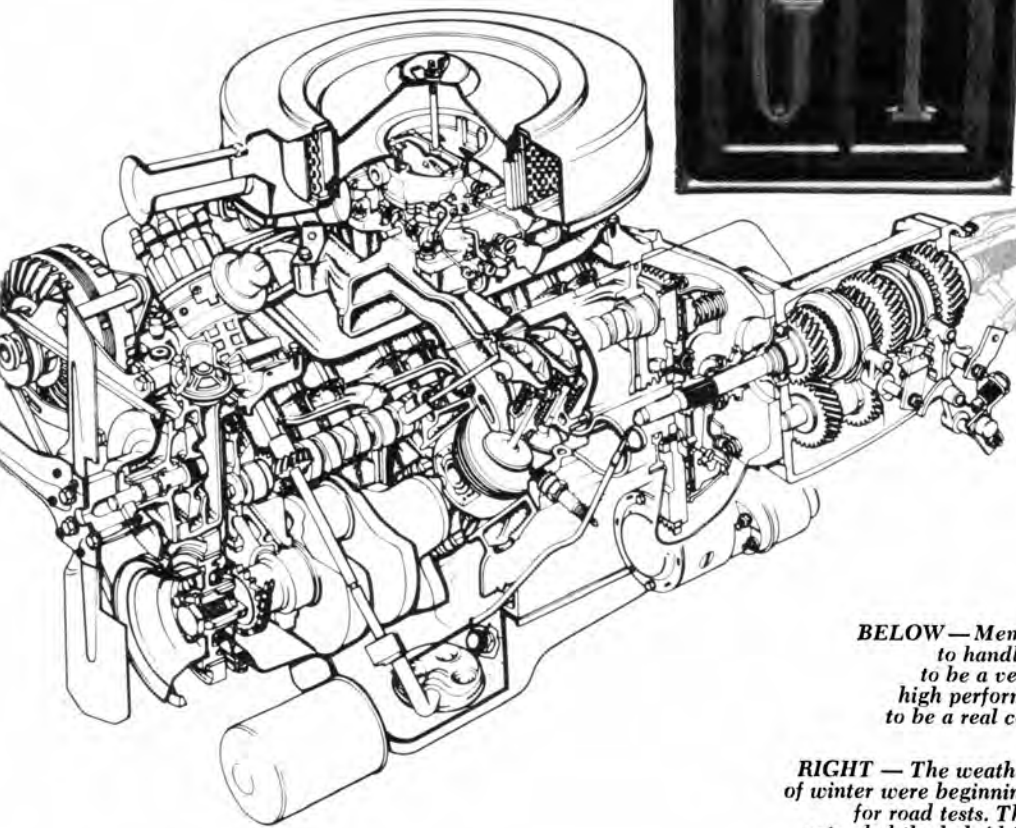
GETS

CHICAGO'S MR. NORM DOESN'T BELIEVE IN BEING NUMBER TWO, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO SELLING HIGH PERFORMANCE CARS. WHEN CHRYSLER GAVE THE "383" ENGINE TO PLYMOUTH FOR THE BARRACUDA, GRAND-SPAULDING BUILT ITS OWN SPECIAL DART.

BELOW—Members of Mr. Norm's Sports Club were tapped to handle the road test for the 383 Dart. They proved to be a very qualified group, since each of them owns a high performance Dodge. To the man, they found the car to be a real contender in the performance-oriented market.

RIGHT—The weather wasn't a bit cooperative as the first touches of winter were beginning to hit Chicago when the 383 Dart went out for road tests. These conditions only added to the total testing extended the hybrid from Grand-Spauldning. Rain stayed strictly on the outside, another plus factor for the car from the testing crew.

383 TREATMENT



Test Team / Mr. Norm's Sports Club



BY DICK SCRITCHFIELD ■ The Dodge Rebellion isn't entirely limited to the factory this year. An enterprising young performance minded dealer by the name of Norman Kraus (better known in the Chicago area and drag racing world as Mr. Norm) the hard charger behind the Harvey Kraus Grand Spaulding Dodge agency, did some rebelling of his own. □ Pretty sharp on what the young guys want in the way of a top performing automobile, Mr. Norm has been talking long and hard with the powers at Dodge to install their big V8's, 383, 440, and 426 hemi in the small cars of their compact and sports-personal line. The factory's approach of a big engine in a heavy sedan was not the way to please the customer who was interested in a car that could double at the drags, to Mr. Norm's way of thinking. The outlay for a Hemi-Charger was just a bit steep for the average young working man. □ While the powers at Dodge were sympathetic with Mr. Norm's views, they were governed by Chrysler Corporation regarding just how far they could go with their engine-body combinations. They had the right size car in the Dart. It was a young people's car. Distinctive, large enough for six passengers, yet compact, even if it was the largest of the fun cars with its 111-inch wheelbase. □ The year 1966 came and went with the best offer from Dodge coming under the heading of "D/Dart." It was a good young person's car, but still not a top runner like Mr. Norm envisioned. The 273 cubic inches just couldn't perform like the big engines. With the '67 model year Dodge, and Norm in particular, had high hopes of getting a 383 Dart. On announcement day, however, they

found Dodge had been by-passed in favor of the Barracuda, which Chrysler Corporation felt would compete more strongly against the Mustang. □ Never one to give up easily, Mr. Norm immediately started sizing up the '67 Dart. Here was a totally new car in the Dodge line. It retained the Dart nameplate but from there on the Dart had been completely restyled, inside and out. With its crisp new appearance, the Dart still looks more like a "junior car" than an undersized compact, even though it lost an inch in length and width. The wheelbase, however, remains the same long 111-inches of the '66 but the front track moved two inches further apart. Weight, always a major factor in drag racing, remained near the 3000-pound mark. □ The more Norm looked at the new Dart's engine compartment, the more he became convinced that the 383 cubic inch, 325-horsepower Coronet engine would fit. This is the wedge head "B" block engine that has been around since its introduction in 1958. Basically unchanged from '66 the 4.25 inch bore combines with a 3.38 inch stroke to produce 325 horses at 4800 rpm and 425 foot-pounds of torque at 2800 rpm. Compression stands at 10-1. A Carter AFB with 1.44-inch primaries and 1.56-inch secondaries are used on the single quad cast iron manifold. The camshaft remains unchanged for '67, providing a lift of .425 on intake and .437 for exhaust. Valve timing finds the valves opening at 16 degrees BTC and closing at 60 degrees ABC to provide a 256 degree duration. The exhaust opens at 64 degrees BBC and closes at 16 degrees ATC for a 260 duration. Valve overlap measures 32 degrees. □ It was now that Mr. Norm's

rebellion got under way full bore. Norm took a top of the line Dart GT, which was equipped with a six-cylinder and automatic transmission, and put the shop's racing specialist, Frank Oglesby, to work in making the swap. While the factory was getting ready, Norm built his own prototype and demonstrated what could be done with a 383 powered Dart. □ Oglesby, working at night and in his spare time, got busy pulling the six-cylinder engine, transmission and rearend to see how the "good stuff" would fit. The 383 Torqueflite combination was obviously the way to go, while in the rearend department a Coronet unit was chosen for its added strength and durability. If the 383 would fit, then the 440 would fit. Man, what a potential! No "panel beating" was needed in the engine compartment, but the closeness caused Rich Ignoffo, of Iggy's Muffler, to do a bit of head scratching in order to weave the tuned headers past the steering and suspension components. Had the car been equipped with power steering, they never would have made it. □ A spare four inches between the rear of the engine and the firewall was discovered by Oglesby, so naturally, he did what any smart hot rodder would do, moved the engine back. Fortunately, the stock rear engine mount was useable by merely boxing in the center to allow the rubber mount to align with the transmission. Not so with the shift linkage, which had to be completely revamped, but Oglesby did a terrific job, even to the kick-down switch operation. Although the track of the Coronet rearend is three inches wider than the 55.6-inch tread of the Dart, it fits inside

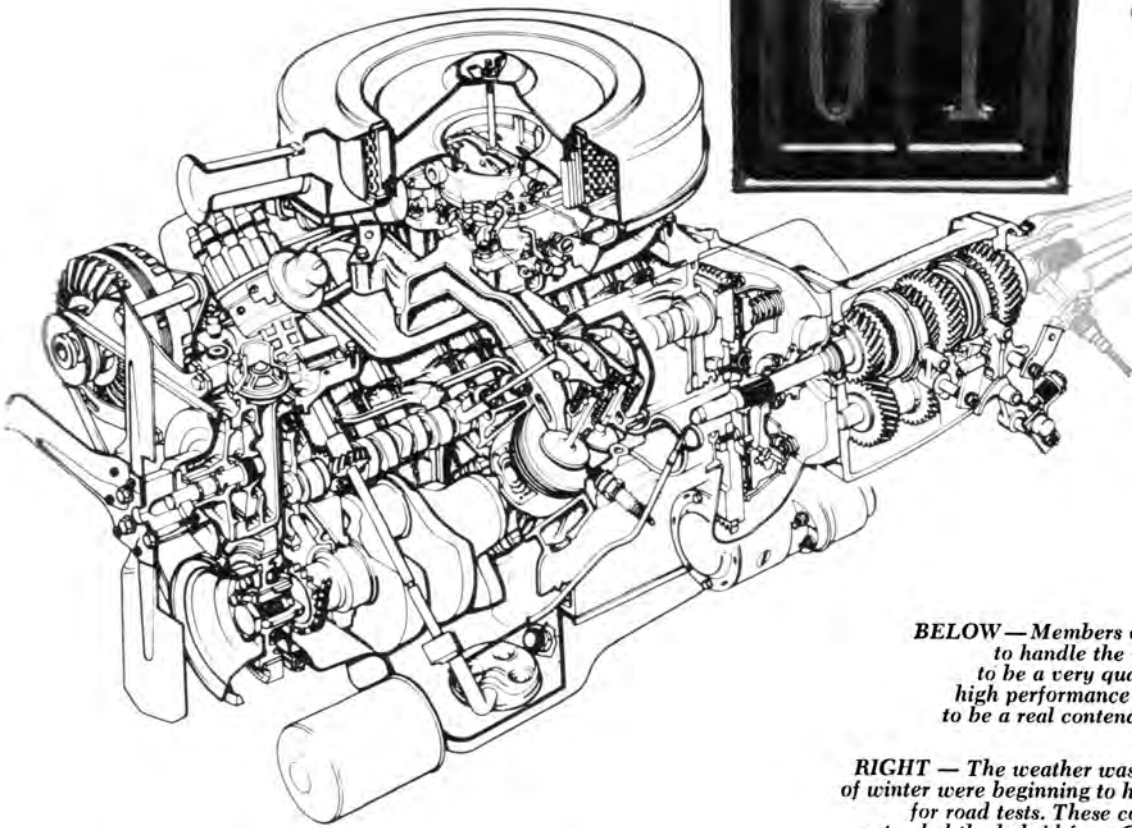
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DODGE DART

the wheel wells without problems, even when larger 7.75 x 14 tires were added. Even slicks should be no problem. □ The rear axle housing is held in place with stock Dart semi-elliptic springs, so the only change Oglesby made to the standard suspension, either front or rear, was the addition of a pinion snubber. On hard acceleration this prevents axle wind-up which can quickly destroy drive shaft universal joints. □ Upon completion of Mr. Norm's prototype, we felt that this would be just the car to include in our Car Club Road Test series. So, it was off to Chicago to give the 383 GT Dart a run in its own backyard and see if it really would make a good all-around street and drag machine. To assist us, we rounded up three guys who were well acquainted with Dodge products. Being members of "Mr. Norm's Sports Club" they all owned a high performance Dodge product. The Sports Club is comprised of some 1500 members who qualified for membership by purchasing a new or used high performance Dodge. Periodic meetings are held to keep the guys informed as to the latest developments in performance equipment, and tuning information. You can usually find quite a few of the members in Oglesby's dyno room on Saturday, preparing for Sunday's drags. □ Being Dodge owners, we were sure we would get an excellent evaluation from this group as they would be anxious to compare the 383 Dart GT to their own equipment. □ One of the problems in doing a road test is the weather. Usually, there is not too much difficulty in Southern California, but you're not always that lucky in other regions, as most of you probably know. On the day before our test was scheduled, the weather was beautiful, at least for Chicago in the winter. The sky was grey but the temperature pushed to almost 70 degrees. We had it made for the test, at least we thought so. The next morning opened with rain coming down by the buckets full. It looked like this wouldn't be the day for any drag tests, that's for sure, so we figured we would just give it a good run covering city streets, as well as the highway, without any clocked drag strip runs. □ A skeptical bunch of guys took off that day wondering just how the normally six-cylinder powered car would handle with a big 383 wedge under the hood. Bill Roman was anxious to get a chance behind the wheel as he wanted to see how it compared against his street/drag '66 Coronet equipped with a "383" and four speed. **"The car really performs, even on wet pavement. I thought it might be difficult to control wheel spin**



when starting but the transmission-engine combination makes it move quickly and smoothly away from signals without any difficulty. On the highway there is little or no tendency for the rear-end to get squirrely, which surprised me since small cars are often hard to keep on the road. The Dart gave no problem. The larger 7.75 x 14 tires help

the handling immensely. For the way this car is set up, it is good, but with other options, a bigger gear, etc. it could really turn on. It would give my Coronet a lot of trouble!"

□ The factory 2.94:1 rear axle ratio had been replaced with 4.11's, which Norm considered a good combination street gear. On the highway it was a little noisy, but not obnoxious, and probably not even noticeable with the windows rolled down. □ With the rain continuing, we drove out to the country to see just how dry the Dart would remain. On the inside, that is. There's probably nothing as irritating as spending several thousand dollars on a new car only to find in the first rain that there's a big leak right down on your gas pedal foot.

□ Test team member, Bill Piner, Jr., owns a 426 Charger which he uses as a rally car, competing against all types of sports cars. Everyone had told him, "You can't rally a big American sedan," so Piner set out to show them. Many a sports car buff has had his eyes opened when the big American fastback came into the winner's circle. **"The Dart could**

make a great rally car with its good handling and excellent visibility. The concave rear window allows an excellent view



out the back without the reflections and distortion usually found in rear windows. I'm amazed at the room in the rear seat, both for your legs and your head. At 6'2" there's nowhere near enough room in my Charger, but there is a good four inch clearance above my head in the back seat of the Dart. The GT is a good

looking car inside and out, and the bucket seats are a big improvement over last year's model. These are much wider and more comfortable by far, than the '66's. Another thing I like is the turn signal lights mounted on the front fenders, making them easily noticeable by the driver. There shouldn't be any excuse for anyone leaving them on now. They can also be hooked up to show on the dash by an enterprising hot rodder. Usually all you have to do is install bulbs." □ As you can see, the Dart GT made a real impression on Piner. Like he said, the seats are a big improvement over last year's. The Dart GT shows more pure luxury and comfort than anything else in its class. Bucket seats are standard on the hardtop, but optional on the convertible. Interiors are all vinyl with the door handles matching the seatbelt buckles. If you want more "posh," then add the floor mounted console and tachometer or a simulated wood



Temperature, fuel, and alternator gauges are used but loss of oil pressure is indicated by light. All are very well located.

RIGHT — Bill Piner, at 6'2", was surprised to find more head room in the rear seat of the Dart GT than in his big Dodge Charger.



grain steering wheel. □ The dash has a clean functional look and sits under a heavily padded shelf. Temperature, fuel and alternator gauges are used, but loss of oil pressure is indicated by a light. Unlike most of the '67 cars, the Dart's flasher switch is mounted on the dash rather than on the right side of the steering column. Instruments are well located in front of the driver in a rectangular shaped cluster. □ One of the test team got so enthused about Dodge, he had to go to work for them. Al Smith is seen pretty often around Norm's, in fact he's the man in charge of the Sports Club. Al is pretty happy with the Dart, especially the 383 GT. "I like the size of the Dart. Surprising enough, it's almost an inch shorter and narrower than the '66 but it still gives you the feeling of roominess on the inside. There's still plenty of room to move around. The 383 Dart GT is an exciting combination. I wouldn't have believed the GT could have handled the 383 engine, but it acts like it was made for it. Often when you do things like this, handling problems arise, but I feel it handles better than the six-cylinder cars. I was glad to see that only 55% of the weight is on the front wheels. This ratio remained the same as with the six-cylinder. With the car weighing 3220 pounds tires can help compensate for the difference."



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Leo Mattei and Oglesby check out the horsepower on Mr. Norm's chassis dynamometer. Read 390 compared to street hemi's 340.



Closeness of the inner panels made use of stock exhaust manifold impossible without major cutting. Headers were answer.



Iggy's custom headers had a tight fit weaving around steering and torsion bars. Shouldn't be a problem with factory casting.



Largest of the fun cars, the Dart GT has a crisp new appearance which is augmented by the addition of the 383 cubic inch engine. The six cylinder powered car is turned into a rebellion leader with the 383.

LEFT — A new look is achieved in rear windows with the Dart's concave styling. The window appealed to the test crew who reported the view was excellent with no distortion. "GT" features overlay on deck lid.



Frank Oglesby, who performed major portion of swap, prepares to remove jack from transmission after making crossmember modifications. RIGHT — Adding a new boxed section to center of cross-member, Oglesby found transmission would align perfectly with stock rubber pad.



Extension was given pinion snubber in order to reach floor bracing. On acceleration car lifts eliminating axle wrap up.

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DODGE DART ROAD TEST

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□ As with other '67 cars, the Dart is equipped with a new energy absorbing steering column designed to "telescope" at a controlled rate under head-on collision conditions. Instead of being driven rearward toward the driver on impact, it collapses. Should the driver be thrown into the wheel, the column telescopes even further to reduce the force of in-car "second collisions." A two circuit hydraulic stopping system, four-way emergency flashers, and stronger door latches are all part of the new standard safety package. Front wheel disc brakes are available when 14-inch wheels are used. □ If it's towing a dragster trailer that you need your Dart for, Dodge has a special trailer-towing package. It consists of a heavy duty turn signal flasher and stop light switch, large capacity radiator, seven blade fan, fan shroud, radiator air seals and heavy duty rally suspension, which includes a sway bar and 3.23 axle ratio. □ What about the future? Where's the Dart going? If Mr. Norm has his way, "We'll be able to offer a Dart with a 383 or 440 cubic inch engine at the customer's request without involving a big cost and give them exactly what they want. The 440 wedge engine is a good, solid, powerful engine and with the lightness of the car, makes it just that much stronger.



The fellas on the strip are demanding the lightest type cars with big engines but not the maximum in a radical engine which consumes a lot of money adjusting valves and carburetion. In my opinion, if you want to sell volume, you have to build for the guy who drives on the street, not the half dozen guys who race on the track. The 426 in a heavy car is definitely not the answer. We figure the 383, properly set up, should pull the Dart into the low 12's, it's an excellent engine and has a lot of potential." □ The 383 Dart was a blast to drive and the power was definitely there. The only tuning that the engine received was a carburetor jet, plug change and distributor adjustment. Stock carb jets were enlarged .010-inch and A-42 Autolite plugs were installed. Oglesby feels that the A-42's are the only plugs that will really make the 383 perform. An altered advance curve was given the single point distributor, which started at 1500 rpm and ran to 34 degrees maximum. Oglesby seem able to back up his ideas. On Mr. Norm's chassis dynamometer the horsepower gauge read 390 at the rear wheels. As a comparison, the stock street hemi will show 330 to 340 horsepower turning 3500 rpm. Not bad for a 383 wedge!