



HEMI ROAD RUNNER: 0-105 IN 13.5 SECS.! ONE OF THE REASONS MOTOR TREND NAMED IT...

CAR OF THE YEAR



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Look what Plymouth's up to now.

Well, there we were, all set to announce the results of our latest Road Runner acceleration tests, and—Zap!—*Motor Trend* up and names it Car of the Year. Needless to say, we were extremely pleased at the news. Not surprised particularly, but pleased. For some time now we've asserted that we, Plymouth, build the best high-performance cars in the industry. The Car of the Year award confirms the fact.

If anything, though, the *Motor Trend* award advances an even broader theory than our own—that, for the price, Road Runner is the most outstanding car in the industry, *period*. In that case, *Motor Trend* appears to be recommending it to vast legions of the Establishment—doctors, lawyers, bankers, Sunday school teachers, undertakers, librarians, bird watchers, dowager aunts. (Ah, we can just see good old Aunt Mildred now, suddenly the scourge of the sit-and-knit set, making the scene around town and putting it on all the young cats.) It staggers the imagination.

But then, why not? With the 383 engine and automatic, Road Runner's about as easy to drive as a golf cart. And what with the car's big 11" heavy-duty brakes, unpretentious exterior, tight construction and inherent good handling—well, maybe it is the right car for just about everyone. Maybe flabby cars went out with bolo ties and long hemlines. Maybe it's Aunt Mildred's cup of tea after all.

But enough about everybody's car. Above all, Road Runner is a car for purists. And our subject this month deals with the purest Road Runner of all—the *Hemi Road Runner*.

Hemi. No mistaking what that means: 426 cubic inches; two four-barrels; enormous black-crackle rocker covers; cavernous ports; tulip valves; wild cam; solid lifters; nitride-hardened crankshaft; horsepower: 425 @ 5,000 rpm; torque: 490 lbs-ft. @ 4,000 rpm.

Hemi Test Car

Aside from the Hemi, however, our test car was notable for still another reason. It was a complete "sleeper." No racing stripes, no chrome to speak of, no mags—just a business coupe with little "taxi" hubcaps and bench seats. In fact, the only options on the whole car were the radio, heater and the Super Performance Axle Package, which is mandatory with the Hemi and includes such necessities as a 4.10:1 Dana Sure-Grip rear axle, a 26"-wide radiator and power disc brakes. Oh, and the tires were F-70 x 15" "Polyglas." The transmission was automatic—a high-upshift TorqueFlite with a high-stall-speed converter. It's a no-cost option with the Hemi.

And so, with a scant 322 miles on the odometer, we were off to nearby Irwindale Raceway. The plan, as before, was to run the car *pure stock*, with street tires, mufflers, suspension—stock *everything*. Ronnie Sox would make a series of runs first, then the amateurs would take over. NHRA would man the clocks and certify the results.

Pure Stock Times

This is what happened:

Driver: Ronnie Sox	Run #	ET/secs	Trap speed/mph
	1.	13.44	106.25
	2.	13.53	105.38
	3.	13.69	104.28
	4.	13.43	105.88
	5.	13.50	105.50
	6.	13.56	105.14
	7.	13.35	107.39
Average:		13.50/105.68	



Drivers: Dick Maxwell*, Jerry Gross*	Run #	ET/secs	Trap speed/mph
	1.	13.55	105.75
	2.	13.53	105.88
	3.	13.57	105.14
	4.	13.63	105.88
	5.	13.63	105.75
	6.	13.68	105.38
Average:		13.59/105.63	
*denotes amateur			

The figures were almost too good to believe; but there they were. Not bad for a "business coupe."

That night, the Road Runner received the usual "Nationals"-type teardown under the watchful eye of NHRA Technical Director "Farmer" Dismuke, just to make sure it was completely stock. It was. As a matter of fact, the weigh-in showed the car to be more than 200 pounds overweight.

Modified Hemi

Inspection completed, we decided to modify the Hemi a bit. Not that much that can be done to improve the Hemi, but a few well-chosen bolt-ons *do* help. The first step was the installation of a set of Hooker under-the-car headers; next came a Racer Brown SSH-25 hydraulic cam and lifter set and, finally, a set of Iskenderian outer valve springs. But otherwise, nothing else was changed. The next day, we drove our "package stock" back to Irwindale. There, the headers were uncorked, and with Ronnie shifting the TorqueFlite at 6,000 rpm, the following runs were recorded:

Run #	ET/secs	Trap speed/mph
1.	12.85	110.97
2.	12.98	110.70
3.	12.88	110.83
4.	12.93	110.02
5.	12.93	110.15
6.	12.83	110.50
7.	12.83	110.35
8.	12.79	110.52
Average:		12.87/110.50

Wild, huh? But then again, the 383 Road Runner is no slouch either. In an earlier test, it averaged 14.01/101.26, pure stock and 13.64/105.32, modified stock. (See Hot Rod, Dec. '68.)

Well, which Bird'll it be—383 or Hemi? The decision is up to you. But in either case, you'll be glad to know that complete tuning information on both engines is available free of charge from Chrysler. The same goes for price info' on many of the bolt-ons we've mentioned in our ads. Write Performance Parts Service, Chrysler Corp., P.O. Box 1919, Detroit, Michigan 48231.

Performance Catalogs

In addition, there's a brand-new "Motion by Plymouth" high-performance car catalog available—24 pages of facts, figures and illustrations on Road Runner, GTX and 'Cuda. It's *must* reading. Just send 50¢ to Supercars, P.O. Box 7749, Dept. A, Detroit, Michigan 48207. We'll throw in a copy of our Road Runner "Goodies" catalog at no extra cost.

Above all, remember that the only way to measure a car's acceleration is at a sanctioned dragstrip. We hope we've demonstrated that with our manner of testing. It's the only accurate way, the only safe way.

See you at the strip.

