

North Of The Border Hemi Cars In Canada

The Canadian Scene Eh? by Lee Ellison

With the unusually high amount of people who know very little about Canadian Mopars...

1968 Charger R/T {22 units}

XS29J8B157732	Drummondville	QUE
XS29J8B157734	FL. McMurray	ALTA
XS29J8B182279		
XS29J8B182314	Valcourt	B.C.
XS29J8B182355	Victoria	
XS29J8B184153	Agincourt	ONT
XS29J8B199059	New Uskeard	
XS29J8B199100		
XS29J8B215799	Vancouver	B.C.
XS29J8B215802	Stayner	ONT
XS29J8B215806		
XS29J8B227174	Co Labelle	QUE
XS29J8B233583		ONT
XS29J8B255503	Toronto	ALTA
XS29J8B275737	Hinton	ONT
XS29J8B341119		
XS29J8B342326	Thorold	ONT
XS29J8B350871		
XS29J8B351578	Toronto	
XS29J8B361177		
XS29J8B361178		
XS29J8B370026		

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At left, in the early '90s Mopar Collector's Guide wrote a story about Canadian Hemi cars and mentioned, by VIN anyways, this '68 Hemi Charger RT...sold new in Hinton, AB. Above, the R/T Charger was an aggressive car so no surprise the advertising matched its nature.

RAMROD

DODGE CHARGER R/T

There you were with your plug wrench chomped in a set of body battered knuckles, when this black mare of a girl attached to a wiggles March 2nd throbs too. "Ha...you idiot...!" He has to beat it with a whip to even get it out of the garage. With a snick that can only mean close coupled four speed and a hot that says 440 cubes

of mean, it disappears. Charger R/T just arrived. End of the road for the do it yourself Mr. Charlie.

STANDARD R/T EQUIPMENT

- 440 CID, 375 HP (4-bar) V8
- 110 Suspension Package
- 170 x 14 Wide Treads
- Dual Exhausts
- 110 Brakes

OPTIONAL

- The Hemi-425 HP

DRIVE SAFELY. IT'S CONTAGIOUS.

Dodge

CHRYSLER

Dodge Sport Packs... the cars with the Bumblebee stripes



The Charger the day it was unloaded and bottom left, Lorne Panchyshyn with his new toy. Bottom right, an example of a '68 Charger with the 331 Bright Red paint.

the small, west-central lumber town of Hinton, AB. With the Hemi and all those options, it is pretty much guaranteed to have been special ordered and by someone who had a few bucks to spare.

We don't know much about the car's early years, but we know, thanks to a friend at registries, that it eventually made its way out to the Maritimes. In the early '90s, it dropped down to Georgia, where it was until 2002-3. At that time, the Charger's owner was NFL defensive end John Thierry. It was at the end of his professional career — he retired from the Atlanta Falcons after the 2002 season — that he bought this Hemi Charger, adding to a collection that already had a few over-the-top muscle machines. We don't know what condition Thierry bought it in but we do know that he's the one who 'hot-rodged' it, as the Hemi was built stout along with suspension and brake updates, including a new K-Member, all to accompany the stouter Hemi. It doesn't look like any body or interior mods were done. Panchyshyn thinks there might have been a few body patches when Thierry painted it black, but with just 82,000 original miles on the odometer thinks the interior is all original.

Unfortunately Thierry passed away in 2017 at 46 years of age and the Charger went to his wife. In 2018 it was

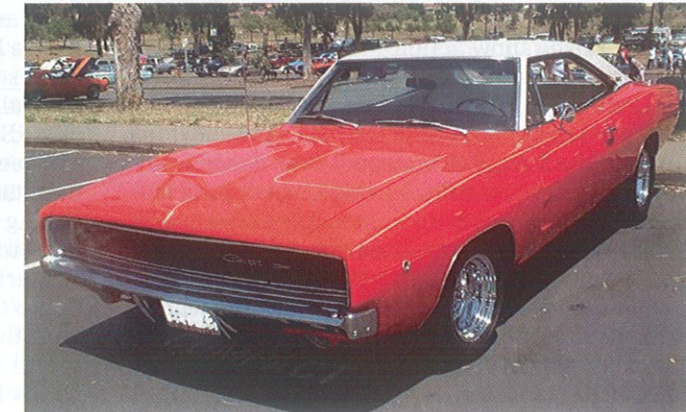
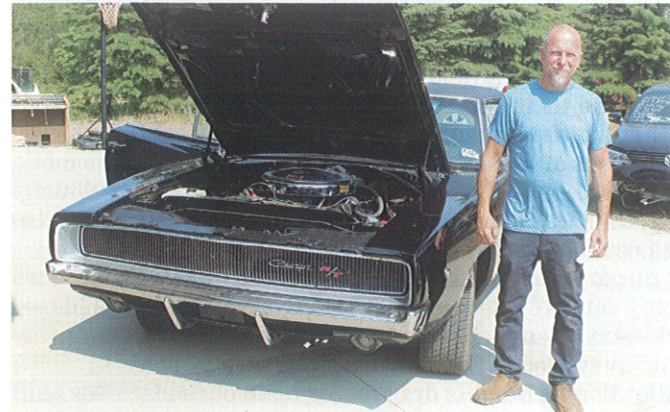
sold to a Kevin Dooley out of Vienna, VA. Dooley apparently had a lot of fun with it for a couple years before deciding to sell it.

In Panchyshyn he, eventually, found an eager buyer. Though initially unsure of making such an investment, Panchyshyn decided the car had too many pluses to ignore.

"It was a red '68 Charger R/T, something like my old high school ride and.....it had a Hemi and it was Canadian, maybe I should take the plunge — that would be one awesome machine," says Panchyshyn. "And it would be great to bring it back into Canada." Well, after a little back-and-forth on the website the Hemi Charger made its way back home.

Panchyshyn isn't sure how much work the Charger will need to bring it back to totally original but he does know he's starting with the original engine and 727 auto transmission and that's a very nice start to any muscle car restoration.

Before the restoration Panchyshyn says he wants to have a little fun with the Hemi R/T and we can't blame him. We don't know when the restoration will begin or be finished but when it is, look to read about it in *Muscle Cars: Bone Stock & Modified*.



After high school Panchyshyn worked in the family business but the restoration of muscle cars was a big side operation. It's not surprising that he has a collection of amazing muscle, which are either restored or in the process of being restored or refurbished. While he now owns this killer '68 Hemi Charger, he isn't overly brand loyal as a concours restored, cross ram'd '69 Z/28 is currently the centerpiece of his collection. He also has a bevy of Oldsmobiles, including the only known 1968 Ramrod 350 Cutlass S convertible which was sold new out of Winipeg, MB. The car is considered somewhat of a unicorn and Panchyshyn says its pedigree is somewhat contentious in the Oldsmobile world because it isn't supposed to exist. It may be one of maybe two built or one of one.

(Editor's note: We will be featuring this car in an upcoming issue of this magazine with documentation and verifications, so subscribe and make sure you don't miss that issue.)

To keep that unicorn company, he also has a '69 W-31 and '70 W-31, both 4-speed cars. On the other side of the paddock are a couple Mopars to keep this latest edition company — a '69.5 A12 Road Runner and a wicked '32.5 Plymouth Coupe with a blown 392 Hemi. He's also got a number of project cars, along with all the neat old iron in the auto salvage yard, so, he's got all angles covered when it comes to cars.

In 2021 Panchyshyn was searching for a red '68 Charger just like the one he had back in high school when he found this '68 Hemi Charger R/T on the Eric's Muscle

Cars website. Because of the Hemi the asking price gave him pause, but as he started decoding the fender tag he noticed the 331 red paint code and knew how rare a colour it was. Turns out only around 400 or so of the 96,100 '68 Chargers produced were painted in the "spring" coded colour. Then he saw it was a W6 Canadian spec car. He became pretty interested and after a bit more detective work he came across a Lee Ellison "Hemi Cars in Canada" feature in an early '90s *Mopar Collector's Guide*.

In the article it's stated that only 22 Hemi Charger R/Ts made their way to the Great White North. Yep, this car...with its XS29J8B digits...was listed. We couldn't find any info refuting that number so for now that's what we'll go with.

The Charger sold new to a Dan Pankiewich out of Valley Chrysler in Hinton, AB and the broadcast sheet breakdown reveals a pretty impressive options list. Take a deep breath...along with the aforementioned Hemi and the 331 bright red paint, it was ordered with a white vinyl top — we've found info that says up to 75% of 1968 Chargers were ordered with vinyl tops — 15" F-70 Red Streak Goodyear Speedway tires on Magnum 500 wheels, power disc brakes, drip rail, body belt and wheel lip mouldings, fender signal lamps, passenger side mirror and stripe delete. It was ordered with black bucket seats and console, power windows, AM 8-Track radio, tachometer, tinted windows and rear window defogger the better to see behind you during cold Canadian winters.

It was built on April 5, 1968 at the Hamtramck, MI plant to the W-6 code Canada built spec. It was then shipped to