HIGH PERFORMANCE INVESTMENTS

PATRICK KROCK

The "BIG IRON ONE"

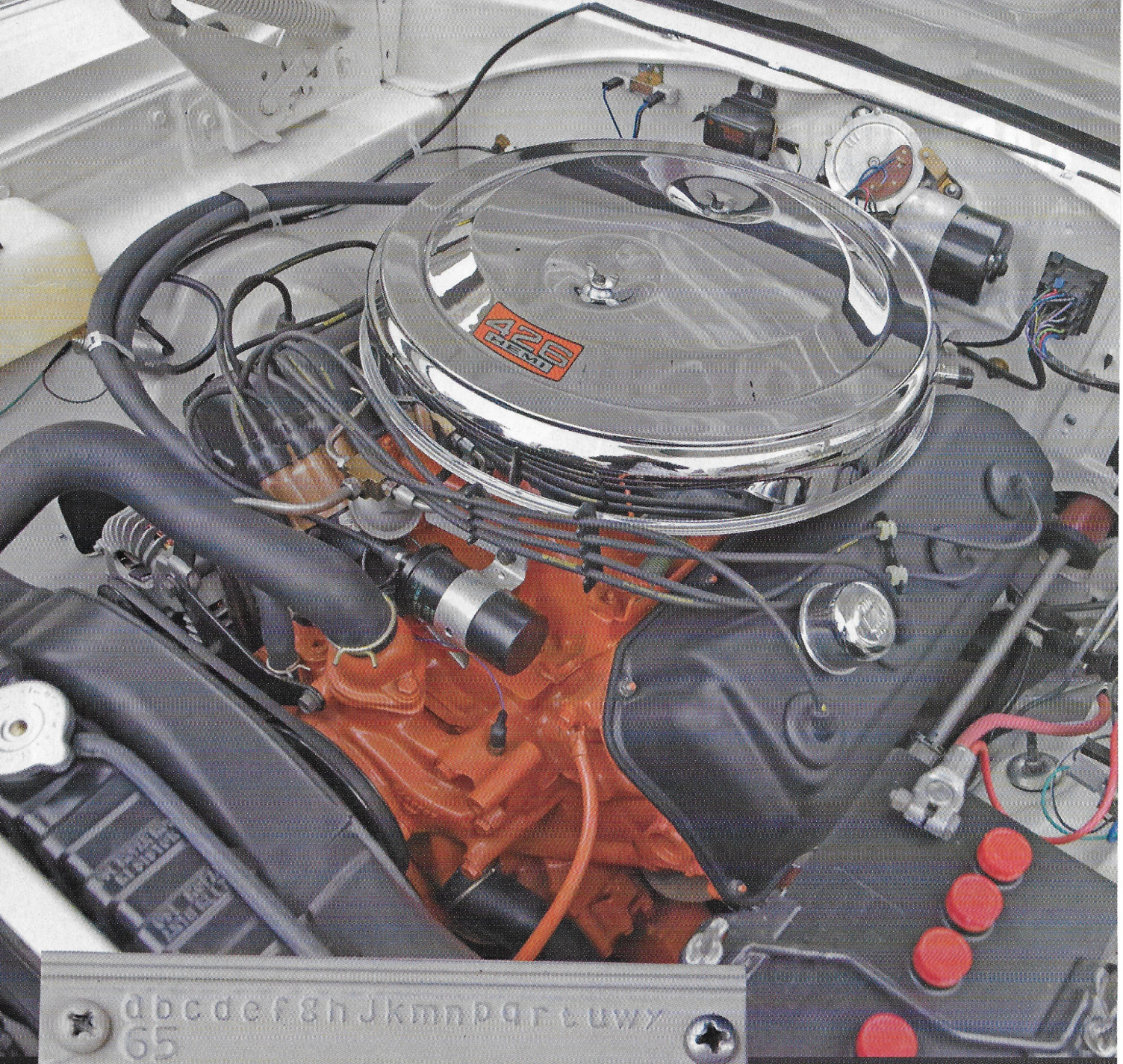
This whole thing started with Richard Petty dominating NASCAR in 1964 with his bright blue Plymouth and a brand-new motor, the 426 Hemi. It caught Ford and Chevy off guard to the point of protest. "Big Bill" France, the owner of NASCAR, responded by banning the motor, citing the fact that Chrysler didn't offer the motor in any of their regular production models available for sale to the public. Chrysler boycotted the 1965 race season in protest and hatched a plan; Ford can't stand competing with the Hemi on the racetrack, so we'll make them compete with it on the showroom floor!

In 1966, the slightly detuned, solid-lifter 426 Street Hemi was offered by Plymouth, in their completely redesigned new Belvederes and Satellites,

RARE 1966 4-SPEED Satellite

which were significantly bigger and more angular than their 1962-1965 offerings. The earlier production 1966 Hemi Plymouths were badged with an unassuming "HP2" moniker on each front fender, which has been a source of controversy within the Mopar hobby for ages. Some say HP2 stood for "Hemi Powered Plymouth". Others state that Tom Hoover, the father of the second generation Hemi, meant it to designate the Hemi heads and the two dual-quad carburetors, "HP-Squared," because, at that time, every high-performance car on the market that was a major player had a multiple carb setup. The truth of the matter was finally cleared up by legendary Chrysler engineer Willem Weertman, many years ago, when he went on record as stating the badge was meant to indicate "Hemi-Powered Squared," which made sense to the engineers and the design team, but the execs and the general public didn't understand, so on January 1, 1966, the Plymouths began wearing the same 426 Hemi emblems as their Dodge counterparts. No matter the case, this HP2 solved a very pressing problem for its first owner, Ray "Big Iron" Scoggins.

"Big Iron" Scoggins was an



over-the-road truck driver during the week, and a race car driver on weekends. Ray even held an AHRA world record in his class for seventeen years! In January 1966, we went hunting for a new A990 Hemi four-speed car and attempted to order one from Hervey Motors in his hometown of Corsicana, Texas, who was apparently unaware that the factory had ceased production of the A990 Super Stock cars. When the bad news came, Hervey told him the factory placed a hold on his order and they'd have to find something else. Disappointed, Ray and the guys at the dealership began looking for the next best thing, and Hervey Motors went to work finding a suitable replacement car.

They found one of the new Street Hemi four-speed hardtops in the form of this 1966 Plymouth Satellite HP2; one of the first examples built and shipped to Texas. An HP2 Hemi four-speed hardtop seemed to fit the bill for Mr. Scoggins, but there was only one catch; it was in Lubbock, Texas, 389 miles away! Hervey Motors offered to send a driver down to get the car, but

Ray wouldn't have it, stating, "No one but me is going to drive my car." So, he and his bother-in-law drove a truck and trailer six hours, in the snow, to pick the car up! The original title reflects an original purchase date of February 25, 1966.

Ray went right to work prepping the car for his favorite Super Stock class, which, thankfully, did not require, or allow, modifying the rear wheel tubs. The original motor was immediately set aside, as was the rear seat, carpeting, and console. Since Ray was great friends with Dick Landy, he installed a Landy-built Hemi in the Plymouth to replace the original motor. They used a huge wooden crate to ship the engines and parts back and forth between Scoggins and Landy, featured a top

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that had Ray's address on one side, and Dick Landy's address on the other. When they shipped engines and parts back and forth, they simply flipped the lid and sent the goods in the opposite direction! Once fully prepped, this '66 HP2 became "Big Iron One" and hit the tracks, until a rule change forced it out. The Plymouth dominated the AHRA Super Stock class around Ray's area, but after only a year and a half, the car was simply parked.

In 1993, "Big Iron One," along with another car and a king-sized cache of vintage Mopar racing parts, passed to the second caretaker. Almost everything that came off the car when it was new to prep it for racing was still around, thankfully. The backseat, the carpets, the console, even the original air cleaner with the original air filter, was still sitting in the shop rafters! Most fortunate of all, the original Hemi was still sitting on an engine stand.

Showing less than 5,000 miles on the odometer, it didn't take long for the new owner to realize how remarkably intact and original this HP2 Hemi Plymouth was. So, he spent the next twenty-five-years methodically sourcing NOS and original parts that were still missing, but doing much of the work himself, the forward progress moved rather slowly. Fast forwarding to 2018, the car changed hands again as a restoration was still in progress. Legendary restorer and early B-Body expert, Jim Drain, was tapped to complete the project. Jim Drain, if you aren't already aware, is the foremost expert when it comes to first generation, "Shoe Box," B-body Hemi cars. If you've ever restored one, you've probably bought parts from Jim!

Jim took special care in restoring this one, breaking out some of the NOS goodies that he's held back for decades for a special case. This car was that case; his last and ultimate restoration. Why? Well, because this is one of only five four-speed HP2 Hemi hardtops still known to exist, for starters. All the original documentation is there going back to the original title and dealership paperwork, she's all matching numbers and, as of this writing, there's just over 4,800-original miles on the odometer! We were fortunate enough to catch this one for the

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first time during its major debut, fully restored and road ready for the first time in over fifty years at the 2019 Muscle Car and Corvette Nationals in Chicago. The square white Plymouth was OEM judged and scored 989 out of 1000 points; which is plenty good enough to win Concours Gold. That is one heck of a legacy to leave — for Jim Drain, for "Big Iron" Scoggins, and for Plymouth's early days of producing the Hemi for the masses. ✠

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