



Torqueback

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE CHRYSLER CAR CLUB OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA



The Slant Six



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CHRYSLER CAR CLUB OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC

Torqueback

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G'day. Welcome to the "Slant Sixes" issue of the 'new' **Torqueback**. I should probably stop saying the 'new' Torqueback by the way – as this is now our thirtieth issue (*wow!*) since I took over the reigns from **Damian Tripodi** (although he did it for a hundred years before me). So if anything it's getting 'old' – and following the **AGM** recently I'm going around with it again. So I hope you're enjoying what I've been doing with the magazine. I know I do. Thanks for your continuing support and faith in me.

OK, so a few issues back we spotlighted the Hemi. This time, we look at probably the other most famous of all Mopar engines, the mighty Slant Six.

There have been lots of different Hemis – about twenty seven types over three generations, but there was really only one generation of the indomitable Slant-6, in four types. Mopar certainly got it right straight up with this unique motor.

The 225 Slant Six is especially synonymous with early Australian Chryslers – and many of us who own an ape up to the veegee would know all about those. I'm not professing to know a whole lot about them, but I have learnt a helluva lot putting this issue together!

The Slant-6 is legendary for it's indestructability, and remains a gutsy powerplant today with a veritable cult-following. While yes it might be somewhat of a dated engine architecture, you can still bolt on a supercharger, nitrous or turbo. How many 'vintage' motors can take that?

Sure is something to celebrate from the past – and definitely continue to enjoy today. We'll also cover the Flathead and Poly motors in later issues. All makes for a good comparison to that Hemi, hey? Man, I love the history of auto technology!

But what about the future?

Well, here are some things (both disturbing and/or comforting – depending on your point of view) 'they' are saying about the future, to ponder...

Whoever "they" are...

Did you realise **Uber** is just a software tool, an app on your mobile phone? They don't own any cars, yet they are now the biggest taxi company in the world.

And they are predicting that in 2018 the first self-driving cars will appear for the public. And then around 2020, the entire auto industry will start to be disrupted. They're guessing people won't want or need to own a car anymore.

You'll call a car with your phone, it will show up at your location and drive you to your destination. You won't need to park it, you'll only pay for the driven distance and can do other things while driving – so commuting will become easy and we'll make more use of that time doing it. Our kids will probably never get a driver's licence and may never own a car. This will change cities, because we'll need 90-95% less cars. Parking spaces will be transformed into parks.

They reckon 1.2 million people die each year in car accidents worldwide. We now have one accident every 100,000km but with autonomous driving that will drop to one accident in 10 million k's. That will save a million lives each year.

We've already started to see car companies struggle – and most will probably go bankrupt. Traditional car companies try the evolutionary approach to just build a better car, while tech companies (such as **Tesla**, **Apple**, **Google**) will do the revolutionary approach and basically build a computer on wheels. Indeed, many engineers from **Mercedes**, **Volkswagen** and **Audi** are reportedly completely terrified of Tesla.

They think insurance companies will also find massive trouble because without accidents, insurance will become a hundred times cheaper. Their car insurance business models will disappear.

Real estate will change too. Because if you can work while you commute, people will move further away to live in a more beautiful neighborhood.



It's thought electric cars will become mainstream about 2020. Cities will be less noisy because all new cars will run on electricity. Electricity will become incredibly cheap and clean: solar production has been on an exponential curve for thirty years and you can even now see it's burgeoning impact.

Last year, more solar energy was installed worldwide than fossil. Energy companies are desperately trying to limit access to the grid to prevent competition from home solar installations, but that can't last. Technology will soon take care of that strategy. They reckon it's inevitable that green renewable energy will replace fossil fuels – and hence, combustion engines.

So 'they' are saying...

But what about us? What does all this mean for us – and our cars? For car clubs?

I dunno.

But it's a very good question.

Well, we better enjoy our Slant Sixes, or our Hemis, or whatever we drive – while we still can, hey.

A new world is coming, folks. Brace yourself.

Cheers,
Dave H





I'm well and truly over this cold weather.

Bring back summer – and those long, warm, cruise-worthy nights. I shouldn't complain, but. I did get to spend 12 balmy days in Bali at the start of July. Our first visit. And what an eclectic, amazing place it is. The cars and bikes are just insane – cutting in and out, roads barely wide enough for one car let alone two going each way, ignoring road rules (not even sure they have any!) all while miraculously not running into each other.

All that chaos and not a raised finger or expletive to be heard. The Bali people are all so chilled! Within a day of landing back in good ole Radelaipe, it's road rage central – why? We have

so much room, double and triple lane roads yet we have no patience with each other and seem to want to own every inch of our ample road system for ourselves. We could do with a little Balinese patience, I reckon.

Interestingly I saw very few classic cars. A couple of **Toyota Corollas** of '70s vintage and a '56 **Chevy** was about the extent of it.

Quite different to SA, where we can now expect to see an even greater number of classic vehicles on our roads now that the new rules for *Historic Registration* have come into effect. We're seeing lots more members join up, which is bound to translate into more demand for club registration. As a result, at the **AGM**, **Stuart** has brought on a few more helpers to become Authorised Officers to spread the load.

Speaking of the AGM, congratulations and welcome to **Andrew Ingleton** who was elected Vice President. Andrew is a relative newcomer to the **CCCSA** and has some great ideas on how the club can be improved and grow.

Many thanks to outgoing VP **Hugh Mortimer** for his contribution to the committee over the past seven years. Particular thanks to Hugh for the organisation of the **Membership Day** at Tonsley at the end of June. That was a very successful and relaxing day.

Tonsley was a great venue for Membership Day with everyone kept dry under cover of the old Main Assembly Building (MAB) roof.

And yes, the **Adelaide Chrysler Festival** sub-committee is now evaluating it as a potential venue for **All Chrysler Day**. The logistics and organisation required will be considerable though, so we have to be careful in balancing the emotive aspect of returning our cars to the place they were built, with the effort required to relocate the show there from Urrbrae.

Watch this space.

On the subject of relocation, it's interesting to see that the car park at our old digs at Port Road has been gobbled up as part of the **Torrens to Torrens** roadworks. It certainly validates the decision to go to **West Adelaide**, where we also have much more room to accommodate the throngs of new members. Good to see lots of people coming and sharing dinner before the meetings.

The Committee plan to look at a few more improvements to the club in the coming year. Updating our Constitution, online membership applications, reviewing our processes and giving members more bang for their buck.

In the meantime, keep it Mopar!
– Iain



Rodding up a Magna wagon you gasp?
Sarah Michell makes no apology. The fire paint, laced roof and whitewalled moons are her twist on an otherwise mundane car. It's her statement – and her partner **Andy Miller**'s sense of humour. But some people just don't get it.



Hi everyone.

Well, here we are again; smack bang in the middle of winter (At time of writing). True, there have been some half pleasant days but for the most part it's been rain rain and more rain, flooding, the mandatory trees toppling over, burst water mains and so on. Makes me not want to bring the *VIP* out in the weather. Actually, for those who think I get anal about getting her dirty, that's partly true but my main reason is that, much as I love driving her; on wet roads she takes on the attributes of an amateur ice skater and I'm not a fan of aquaplaning. Anyway, it gives me a chance to make some upgrades and cosmetic surgery, especially since the regulations concerning the criteria for historic vehicles has been relaxed somewhat. Now, maybe I can fit that CD player I've had for so long and wasn't allowed before.

Speaking about historic requirements; time I gave an update at the various former Chrysler sites around town. First, the **Keswick** signage. That one's easy as nothing's happening at all. I've been advised to wait until the site's sold, then approach the new owners with a request for a sympathetic demolition so the wording doesn't get destroyed. The **National Motor Museum** did say once that the sheets could be stored at Birdwood until a permanent display can be mounted on display; possibly back at the redeveloped Keswick site. I hope their offer's still valid.

Regarding the **Lonsdale** signage; I set up a petition on **Change.org** to be presented to the appropriate officers at the **City of Onkaparinga** with a request that it gets left alone. I spoke to one such officer

who gasped: "*Signage? Impossible! It will peel away! It can't be saved!*"...yada yada yada! I had to point out that said signage is still going strong after sixty plus years. Anyway, we can only hope.

Then there's the **Tonsley Precinct**. A lot has already happened with more planned for the near future. Those who came to the **Historic Inspection and Membership Renewal Day** would have seen for themselves the development that's an ongoing project for **Renewal SA**. Actually to digress for a moment – in my unbiased opinion, I thought the day went far better than expected. There was a stack of positive feedback which gave me a warm, fuzzy glow as I did put in a lot of effort to make the event happen and faced considerable negativity in the process. Funnily enough, a few people still feel this way which is a mystery as we are all **Chrysler** people and the Tonsley Precinct is the spiritual home of Chrysler Australia. Still, it was a great day and augers well for future events. And it's all free too, we don't pay a cent.

As **Cosi** would say; "*That's a bargain!*"

Anyway, enough digression. And back to the Tonsley Precinct historic development. I did write in previous **Sales Pitches** (Is there a plural for Sales Pitch?) about a proposed memorial garden and timeline wall, the garden to feature historic plaques currently in storage and to be mounted on permanent display around the grounds. The wall itself will be Coresteel, built along the western boundary, approximately 200 metres long by 4 metres high with laser cut images of locally manufactured and/or assembled Chryslers. I believe the panels are



already completed and construction is about to commence with an expected finish in October. I think we as a club will be invited to participate in an official opening but we'll wait and see.

So there we are.

Much happening and many people to thank for their efforts; from both our club and the **Chrysler Restorers**. A big thanks goes to Renewal SA's marketing department for their cooperation – and who are happy for us to host more events in this venue that's truly unique among car shows.

Hell, that's up there with a **Showdown Grand Final**.

That's truly unique too.

Happy Moparing

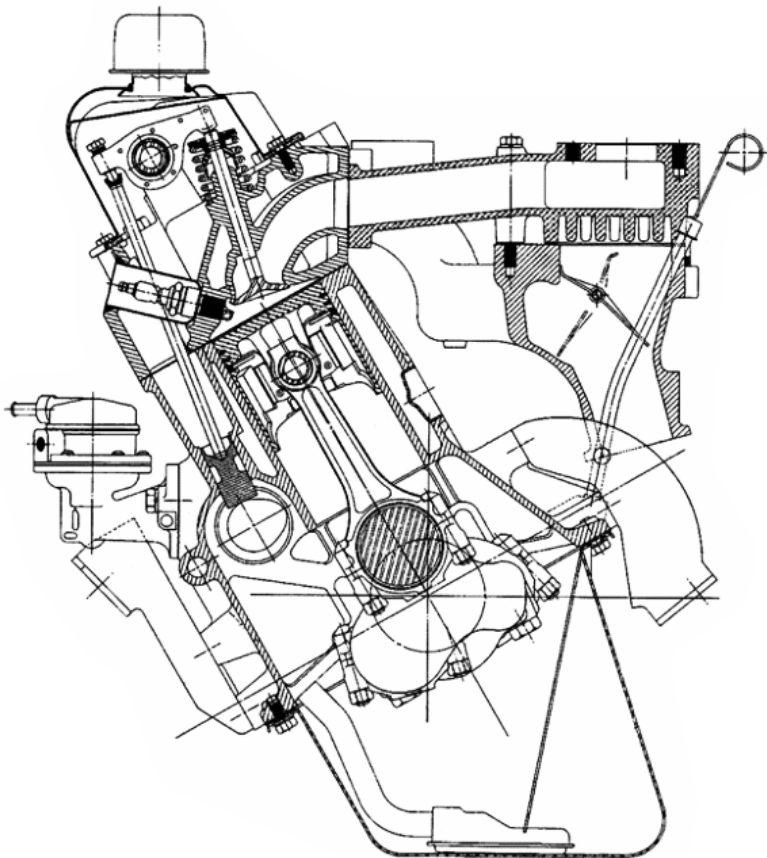
– **Hugh**



Actress **Amber Heard** at a promo for the fantasy action film **Drive Angry** (also starring **Nicholas Cage**) back in 2011. After making this movie, the former **Mrs Depp** fell in love with muscle cars – and now drives her own '69 **Dodge Charger** today!

THE G ENGINE

The Slant Six is a Chrysler motor also known as the G-engine. Introduced in 1959, it was an inline-6 internal combustion piston engine with the cylinder bank inclined at a 30-degree angle from vertical. Although an American motor originally synonymous with the Plymouth Valiant, the Slant-6 soon became very popular in Australia during the sixties, as it was the first (and at the time the most state-of-the-art) powerplant offered in Australia's new indigenous Valiant based on the yanks' Plymouth. Although it evolved into the staple six cylinder engine, by 1970 it would eventually be replaced by our very own native Hemi 215, 245 and 265.



The **Chrysler** Slant-6 engine had a characteristic 30° inclination of cylinder block which gave it a lower height. This enabled vehicle stylists to lower bonnet lines, and also made room for the water pump to be mounted with a lateral offset, significantly shortening the engine's overall length. The slanted cylinder block also provided space in the vehicle's engine bay for intake and exhaust manifolds with runners of longer and more nearly equal length compared to the rake- or log-style manifolds typical of other inline engines. The Slant-6 manifold configuration gave relatively even distribution of fuel mixture to all cylinders, and presented less flow restriction. This, in turn, provided for relatively good airflow through the engine despite the intake and exhaust ports being on the same side of the head rather than in a crossflow arrangement.

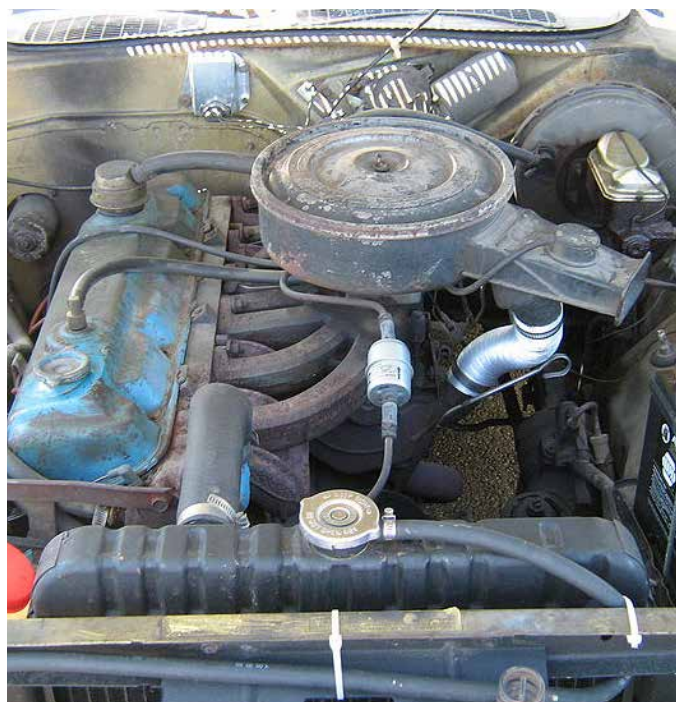
It was first introduced in two piston displacement sizes in 1960. The 170-cubic-inch (2.8-litre) "LG" (Low-G, referring to the relatively short engine block casting and crankshaft stroke) in the **Plymouth Valiant**, and the 225-cubic-inch (3.7-litre) "RG" (Raised-G, referring to the relatively tall engine block casting and crankshaft stroke) in the bigger Plymouth and **Dodge Dart** models. In 1960, the engine was called the "30-D Economy Six" engine by Plymouth marketers, referring to the 30° cylinder block angle.

The G-engine was offered in various configurations in the North American market until 1983 in cars, 1987 in trucks, and 1991 for marine, agricultural, and industrial use. Replacement engines were built in Mexico through to 2000. Although Poly and Flathead motors had been down under in Chryslers for a long, long time, the G-engine was the first motor ever bundled for assembly here in Oz to go into a locally produced Valiant.

The G-engine gained a reputation for reliability and durability. The basic design is rigid and sturdy, in part because the engine was designed to be made of either iron or aluminum. An aluminum block was produced between 1961 and 1963, but most blocks were made of iron. The block is of a deep-skirt design, with the crankshaft axis well above the oil pan rails for structural rigidity. Although only four main bearings are used, they are of the same dimensions as those in the Second Generation (1964–1971) Hemi, and fewer mains results in a crankshaft better able to withstand the effects of torque. Efficient cooling and lubrication systems, a favorable ratio of connecting rod length to stroke, and a forged steel crankshaft all contributed to the engine's strength.

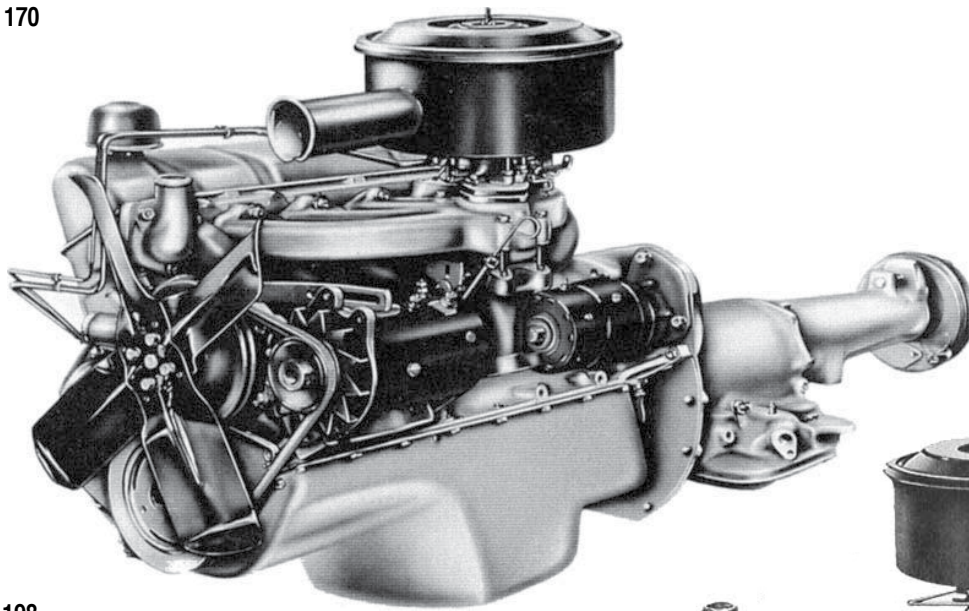
The G-engine gave better performance than its competitors at its 1960 introduction, and generally kept up throughout the decade, but after an early factory racing program was discontinued by 1962, the Slant-6 did not receive much performance development. Most Slant-6s were equipped with a single 1-barrel carburetor. By the early 1970s, primitive emission controls adversely affected driveability and power, though a version of the 2-barrel carburetor package was released for marine and export markets like us in 1967 under the "Super Six" name. Performance figures were only slightly higher, but driveability was substantially improved.

Other Chrysler motors were soon released with more advanced combustion chambers, electronic fuel injection, and other modern improvements, but the length of the Slant Six precluded its use in Chrysler's front-drive cars.



A Slant Six was a base offering in the 1970 **Dodge Challenger**

170



The 170 engine was offered in model years 1960 through 1969 in North America, and through 1971 for export markets.

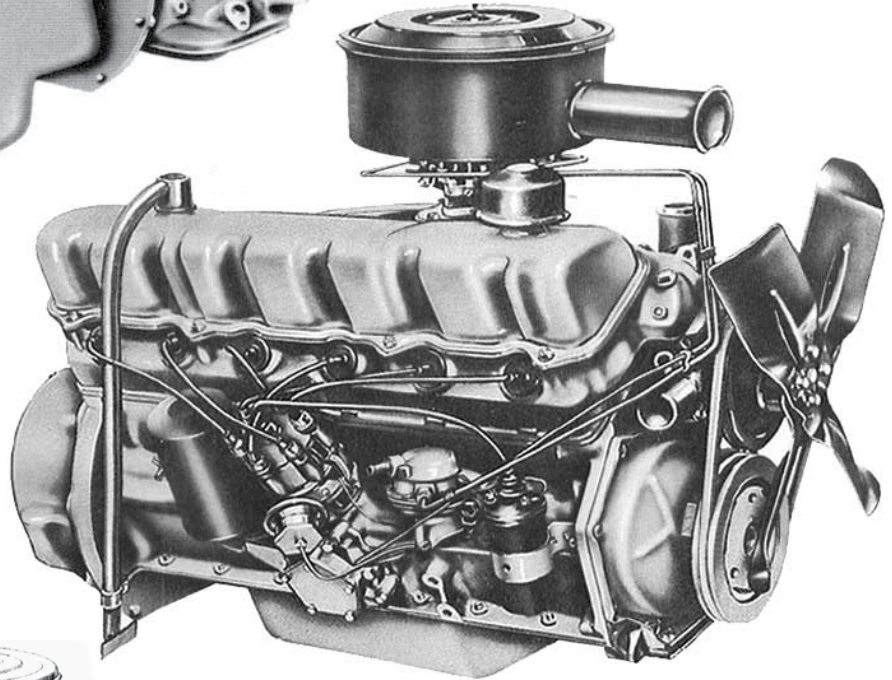
The first vehicle to offer the 170 slant-6 was the 1960 Valiant. The engine has a bore of 3.40 in (86.4 mm) and a stroke of 3.125 in (79.4 mm) for an actual displacement of 170.2 cu in (2.8 L). Connecting rod length is 5.669 in (144.0 mm). The "LG" low-deck block was unique to the 170 engine.

198

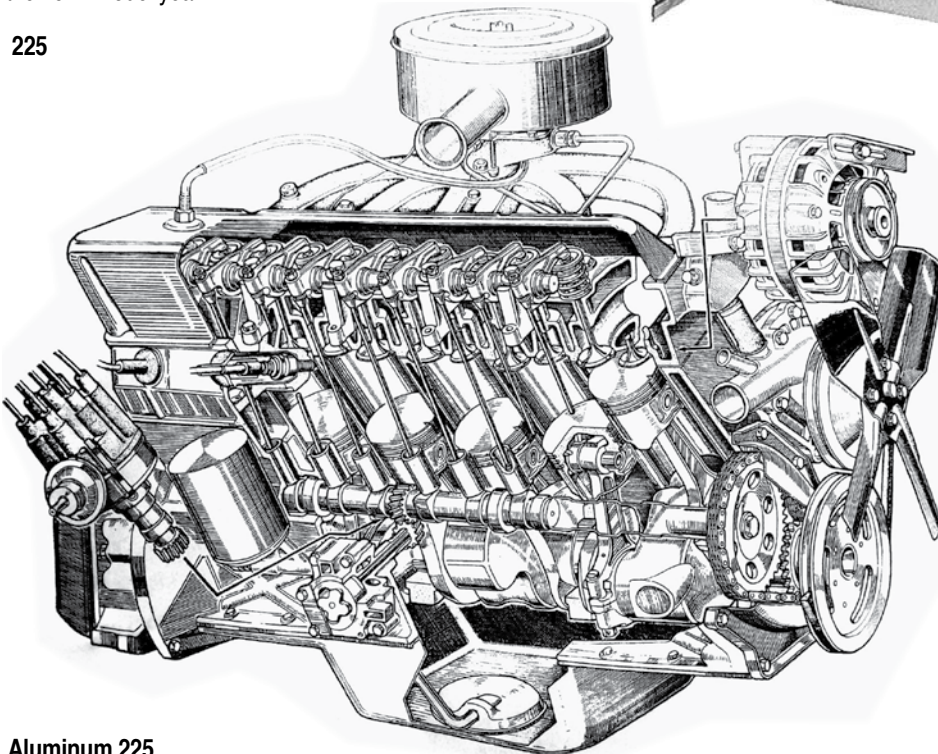
The 198 was introduced in the North American market for model year 1970 as a more powerful base-model engine than the previous 170 engine.

The increased displacement gave improved vehicle performance and lower manufacturing cost, for it was achieved with the tall RG block also used with the 225 engine by installing a crankshaft with 3.64 in (92.5 mm) stroke and connecting rods 7.006 in (178.0 mm) long, for an actual displacement of 198.3 cu in (3.2 L).

Manufacturing costs were reduced by eliminating using two different blocks for the two different available sizes of slant-6 engine. The 198 engine was available through the 1974 model year.



225



The 225 used the RG (tall) block with a 3.40 in (86.4 mm) bore, a 4.125 in (104.8 mm) stroke, and 6.699 in (170.2 mm) connecting rods, for an actual displacement of 224.7 cu in (3.7 L).

This undersquare geometry was a departure from the emerging trend towards oversquare engines. It provided strong low-rpm torque characteristics for automobiles and trucks, as well as other commercial and marine applications.

The 225 was originally designed and introduced in 1960 for use in full-size models, and it eventually became the best known of the Slant Six engines.

This would be the base six cylinder engine offered as a standard in our Valiant in Australia.

Aluminum 225

Between late model year 1961 and early model year 1963, approximately 52,000 die-cast aluminum RG blocks were produced and installed in passenger cars. These open-deck blocks used integrally cast high-nickel iron cylinder liners, and bolt-in iron upper and lower main bearing caps. Internal components (crank, rods, pistons, etc.) were the same as used in the iron engine, and an iron cylinder head was used with a special copper-asbestos gasket. The aluminum block weighs about 80 lb (36 kg) less than the iron RG block.

Although serviceable examples can still be found, the aluminum RG tended to undergo delamination between the iron cylinder liner and the surrounding aluminum. Severe corrosion within the block is also commonly found because of the general tendency in the 1960s and 1970s to fill cooling systems in summer with plain water without corrosion inhibitors. Moreover, the open-deck design and primitive head gasket technology are not sufficiently robust to withstand the increased seal demands of increased compression or forced induction.

HIGH-PERFORMANCE VARIANTS

Most G-engines were equipped with small-capacity carburetors (such as the Holley 1920) and exhaust systems adequate for standard passenger car usage at low altitudes, but which tended to hamper maximum available performance at high altitudes, in heavy or race-purpose vehicles and/or where quicker acceleration was desired. To meet the demand for improved responsiveness, modified engine configurations were made available in various markets over the years.



Hyper Pak

The Hyper Pak was a parts package made available from 1960 through 1962 at dealer parts counters. The parts were made available to comply with the regulations of sanctioning bodies for racing events in which Valiants had been entered by factory-backed teams. All parts used had to be “stock” parts, the definition of which meant that they were available through normal factory parts channels.

The Hyper Pak consisted of a very-long-ram intake manifold meant to accept a Carter AFB 4-barrel carburetor, the AFB carburetor itself and an appropriate air cleaner, dual (front-3 and rear-3) cast-iron exhaust headers, a large-diameter exhaust Y-pipe to connect to these dual cast-iron headers, a larger muffler, a 276°-duration camshaft with appropriate valve springs and pushrods, a heavier-duty clutch, a manual choke control, a starter motor modification template and, in the full-race version of the package, high-compression pistons designed to increase the engine’s compression ratio to 10.5 from the stock 8.5.

The Hyper Pak was recommended for installation only on vehicles equipped with manual transmissions, for the camshaft was of such characteristics that a high idle speed was required to prevent engine stall-out. The Hyper Pak was primarily intended for competition driving, its road manners involving rough idling and poor cold-engine driveability, a high power band and poor fuel economy. But, in competition events, it proved unbeatable.

Eight factory-backed **Plymouth Valiants** entered the 1960 **NASCAR** compact car race at **Daytona Beach**, and humbled the competition; the Valiants came in first through eighth. After a similar performance the following year, the race was dropped. A high-fidelity reproduction of the Hyper Pak intake manifold was created by noted Slant-6 builder **Doug Dutra** in the late 1990s; subsequently the tooling was sold to a marketer of performance equipment for inline six-cylinder engines.



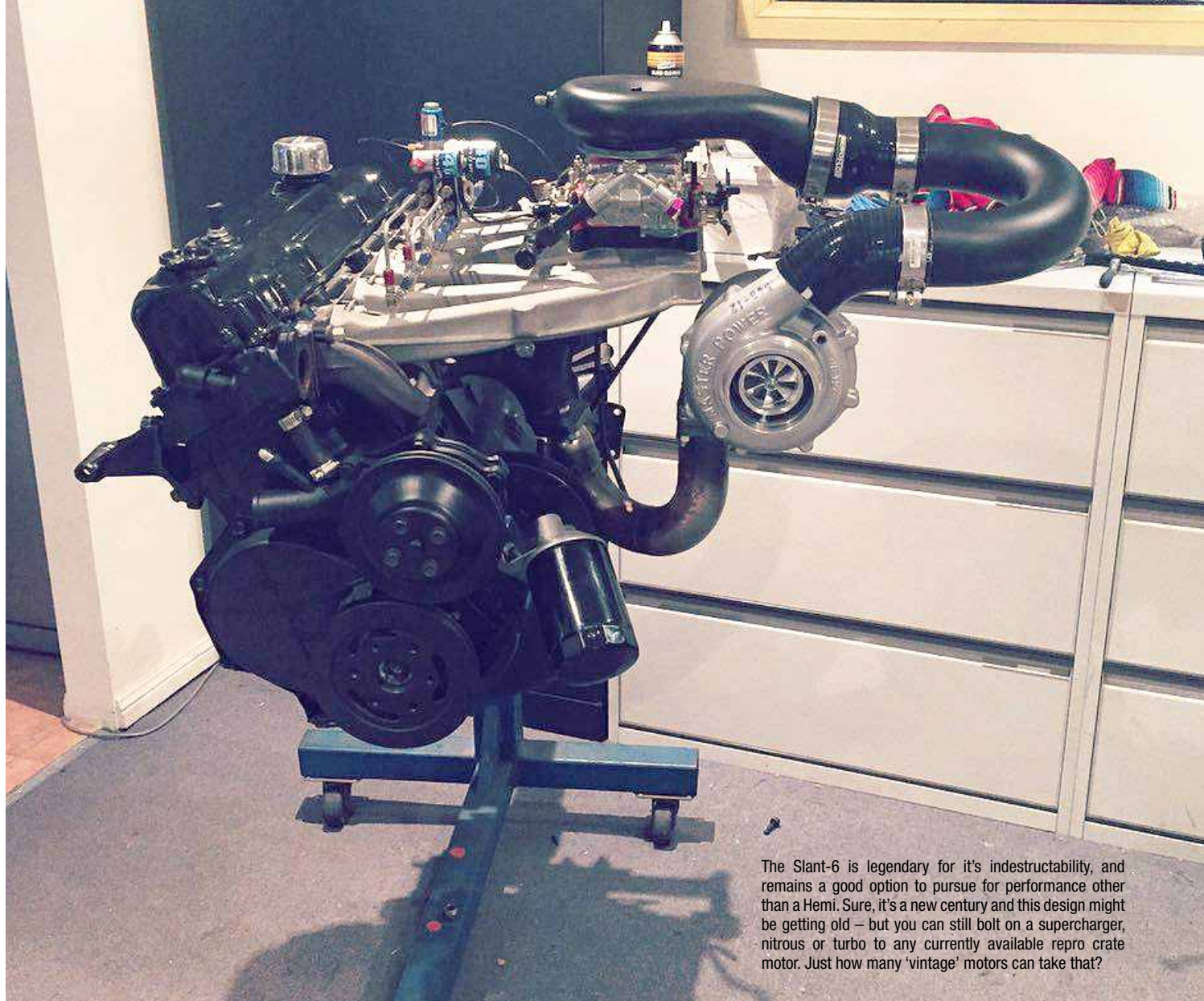
Multiple carburetors

For the 1965–1968 model years, **Chrysler Argentina** equipped their **Valiant GT** models with a system of dual 1-barrel Holley RX 7000 A carburetors and other engine specification changes. Claimed output was 180 bhp (130 kW), compared to the single-carburetor version of the engine producing 145 bhp (108 kW)

For the 1967 model year, a 2-barrel carburetor setup was released for export production. This configuration, similar to that found on marine G-engines beginning in 1965, consisted of an iron intake manifold with open-plenum 2-barrel carburetor mounting pad, a Carter BBD carburetor, and associated air cleaner, linkage and plumbing changes. Also installed on these export 2-barrel engines was a slightly hotter camshaft (244° duration rather than 240°), and a distributor with modified advance curves.

This engine, rated at 160 bhp (120 kW), was popular in Central and South America, South Africa, New Zealand and especially here in Australia.

Driveability characteristics were generally superior to those of the 1-barrel engine, but to avoid cutting into sales of the more expensive V8 engine, this 2-barrel setup was not offered in the North American market. Of particular note is the automatic choke design found in this export 2-barrel setup. Most **Chrysler** products used remote automatic chokes, with a bimetal coil spring mounted on the exhaust manifold, exposed to exhaust heat and operating a pushrod which rotated the choke lever on the carburetor. The export 2-barrel setup used an integral heat-tube style automatic choke: Air heated by the exhaust manifold was routed to a round bakelite housing on the carburetor air horn, which contained a bimetal spring acting directly on the choke lever.

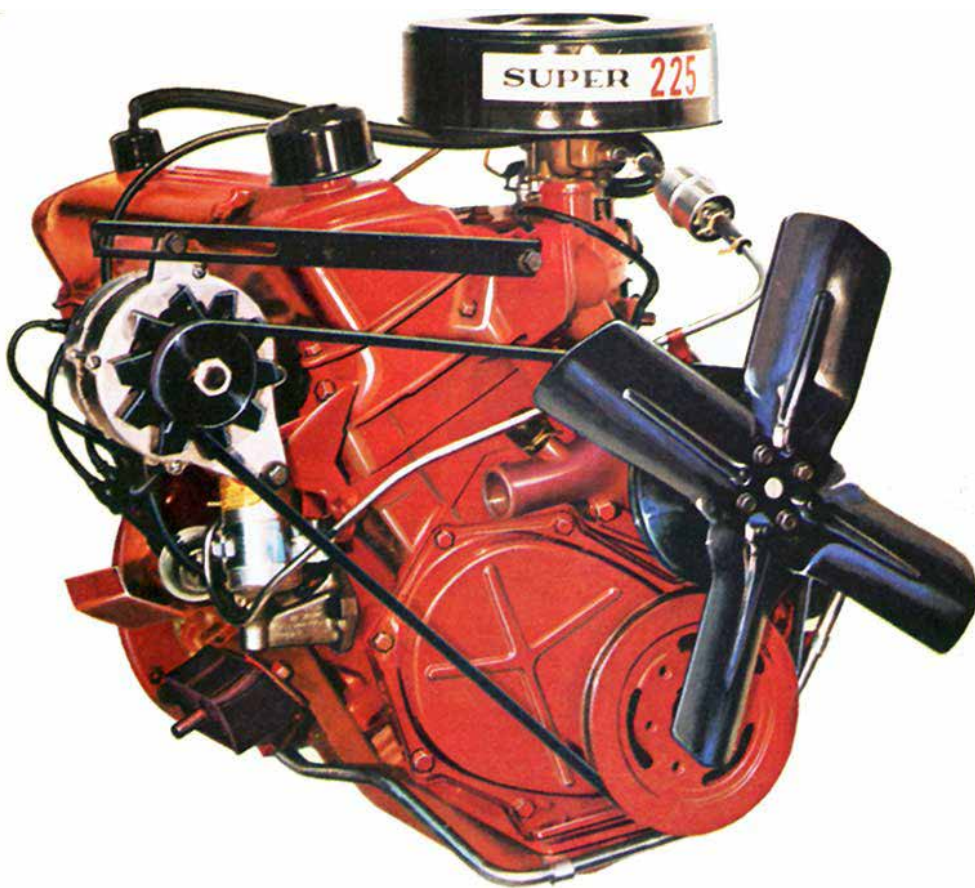


The Slant-6 is legendary for its indestructability, and remains a good option to pursue for performance other than a Hemi. Sure, it's a new century and this design might be getting old – but you can still bolt on a supercharger, nitrous or turbo to any currently available repro crate motor. Just how many 'vintage' motors can take that?

Super Six

By the mid-1970s in the North American market, emission control regulations were reducing engine performance at the same time as safety regulations were making cars heavier. An increase in performance was required for the G-engine, so a 2-barrel setup was released for the 1976 model year. This was not the same as the export 2-barrel package we got here; the intake manifold used a throttle-bored plenum rather than an open one, and had provisions for an EGR valve.

The carburetor, a Carter BBD similar but not identical to the one used on Chrysler's 318 V8 engine, used a standard Chrysler-style remote automatic choke. A 2 1/4-inch exhaust headpipe was also provided, as well as 2-barrel-specific advance curves in the ignition distributor. This package, called "Super Six" by the marketing division, brought rated horsepower from 100 to 110 hp (75 to 82 kW) and torque from 170 to 180 lb-ft (230 to 244 N·m), while improving throttle response and driveability while maintaining compliance with emission laws.



THE END OF THE SLANT SIX IN OZ

While options for a V8 grew with each new model as the demand grew, the 225 slant six remained as the staple six cylinder offering throughout the Valiant in Australia, from the first R and S series in 1962, through the AP5, AP6, VC and VE, to the VF in 1969.

In 1965, Aussie Valiant's speed advantage was evaporating, so the American 273 V8 was added to the AP6 *Regal*. It had a top speed of 107 mph, and a 17 second quarter mile time. Its performance dominated the market, even with the smooth, reliable three-speed TorqueFlite automatic. In addition, Chrysler brought out a two-barrel, 160 bhp "Super Six" as a \$60 option on all Valiants. They V8 later became an option (\$210, plus disc brakes) at all price levels. Prices now ran from \$2500 to \$3650.

The VC would follow, and in hindsight, we can now see how it would virtually be a blend of what had been before with what was coming, in both looks and motivation. The VC was part AP6 and part VE of the future. But the V8 was taking over regardless of the Val's shape.

In 1967, Chrysler had opened a new engine plant in Lonsdale, and hit third place in national sales with over 13% market share, similar to its position in the United States but with fewer carlines. An average of 95% of each car was locally produced, and the company was sending cars to South Africa and other countries, becoming the second largest vehicle exporter in the nation. The aussie Hemi Six was coming....

The Valiant VE appeared in 1967 and were sold through 1968, based on the new American 1967 A body (Plymouth Valiant midsections with Dodge Dart style front and its own tail). The cars had a uniquely Australian roofline; it was more squarish in shape than the past Valiants, and between the more conventional styling and two-inch longer wheelbase (to 108"), had greater interior space. Numerous mechanical

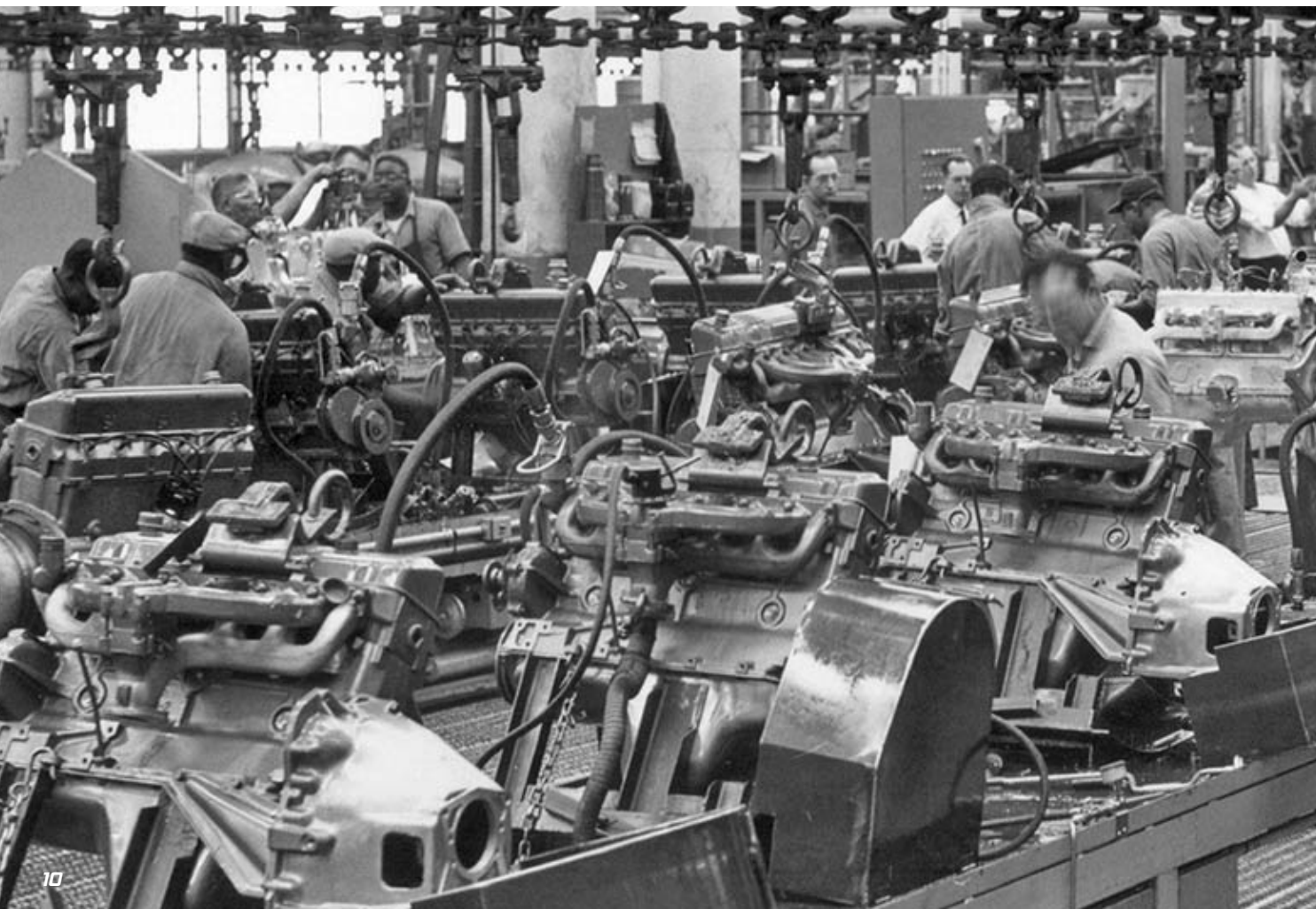
improvements were made, including dual-line brakes and standard seatbelts. The VE was a critical and sales success; it was given *Wheels' Car of the Year* award, and sold 68,688 units during its run.

The VF arrived in March 1969, continuing on with this shape, and with it came the first hardtop – plus even more sportier offerings such as the now legendary *Pacer*.

August 1970 saw the introduction of another facelifted version of the VE/ VF shape in the VG Valiant. The biggest announcement to come with the VG Valiant was of the all new Hemi-6 engine, replacing the Slant-6. The new engine was introduced as a 245 cu in (4.0 L) unit with quasi-hemispherical combustion chambers. The "Hemi" name was already legendary in America with Chrysler's use of the Hemi V8, hence Chrysler Australia's marketing leverage for its six cylinder offering. The 1-barrel version of the 245 produced 165 bhp (123 kW) and 235 lbf-ft (319 N·m).

Ironically, the last Slant Sixes to power an aussie Valiant body of any kind were actually made in Canada – and exported to South Africa to go in to panels shipped from Oz. This was the curious Valiant *Rebel* which finished its existence as the Chrysler 'L' manufactured by the **Sigma Motor Corporation** in Pretoria South Africa – between 1973 and 1978. (See **Pat McGrath's** car in *Torqueback* Issue 12 "All Chrysler Day 2012" and right overleaf).

But here at home they'd been all but consigned to history, especially as the V8 had begun to rule throughout the seventies.



SOMETHING YOU DON'T SEE EVERYDAY

At ACD 2012, club stalwart, sponsor and champion bloke Patrick McGrath revealed the latest (at the time) addition to his growing collection of Chrysler cars, a 1978 Chrysler 'L' manufactured by the Sigma Motor Corporation in Pretoria, South Africa. He'd discovered this unique and historically remarkable car purely by chance, which we actually featured in detail back in *Torqueback* issue 12.

At first glance, the car just looks like any other rusty garden-variety CL or CM, but on much closer inspection, you soon realise it's certainly not. While its panels may have been pressed here at Tonsley, much of the rest of the car – such as the unusual trim and detailing, is very exotic – not to mention the late generation Slant-6 made in Canada lurking under the bonnet.

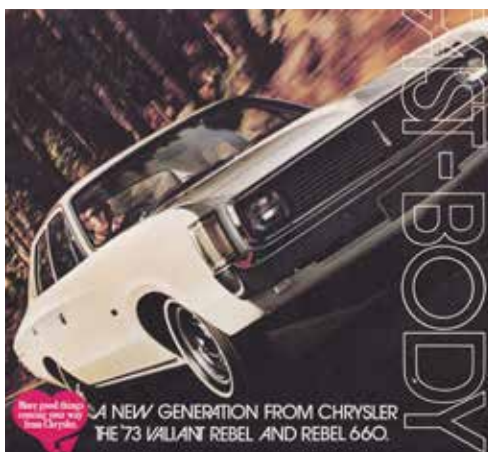
Pat says he may restore it one day, given the time and cash, as the driveline is in really good nick having only done less than 120,000 k's. So would repairing all that rust compromise its value? Probably not actually, given that any new bodywork would be from the original origins here in Adelaide anyway.

The body shell and panels were all supplied from CAL in C.K.D (complete knock down) kits to be integrated with a mixture of electrical and trim components to comply with local South African content production requirements.

Chrysler International in South Africa began assembling Australian VH Valiant body shape right hand drive vehicles in sedan, utility and station wagon forms – called the **Valiant Rebel** – from September 1972 to March 1978. When the newly formed **Sigma Motor** released the CL series it would be the last of the Valiants in South Africa, and only available as a Chrysler 'L' and 'SE' sedan. Priced at R10000 for the 'L' and R14000 for the 'SE', the AuD and Rand exchange rate at the time was close to one for one. For an extra R4000 the SE received electric windows, air conditioning, roof console, cassette player and the Australian SE grill, hubcaps and bonnet ornament.

The engine fitted is a 190hp Carter 4-barrel slant 6 engine with a 9:3:1 compression ratio, all the way from the canucks. Australia stopped using the slant six back in the VF series – except for a government order of VG Dodge utes – before replacing them all with the Hemi six.

In Africa, 320 SE and L's were sold in 1978, 348 in 1979 and 36 in 1980.



ON THE RACETRACK

Hyper-Pak 1960 Valiants starred at Daytona in the first broadcast of live auto racing in the world.

More than half a century has passed since that day, when Chrysler's Slant-6 briefly became the most-talked-about racing engine in America – and then the world. Yet folks at the recent Slant Six Gathering historic race meet near San Francisco late last year were still overheard reliving that domination by a fleet of factory race cars disguised as '60 Valiant sedans.

13 million-plus underpowered, overweight, 170-, 198-, and 225-cubic-inch Slant Sixes were made, last appearing in '87 Dodge trucks (although replacement engines were assembled in Mexico through 1990, and marine motors were still available in 1991).

Engineers cleverly tilted the cylinder block 30 degrees towards the passenger side to create an assembly both short and low enough to slide under the sloping bonnet of Chrysler's first Valiant (introduced as its own, stand-alone brand in late 1959; later absorbed into Plymouth's line when sister-ship Lancer appeared as Dodge's 1961 economy entry). *Again, in the US 'economy' or 'compact' means what we consider here a 'medium-size' car.* – Ed.

The holy grail of Slant Sixdom is the rare, die-cast-aluminum 225ci version, which Chrysler optimistically envisioned as the only A-body powerplant when Slant-6 development started in 1957. A dimensionally identical, all-iron block intended as short-term insurance while workers and consumers learned to live with aluminum instead, became standard equipment after machining, assembly, and corrosion issues ended the ambitious weight-saving program.

Approximately 50,000 units went into 1961 through to 1963 model passenger cars before the factory reluctantly pulled the plug on Detroit's pioneering aluminum block, which weighed about 80 pounds less than the iron copies that have dutifully served millions of grandmas and teenagers and Mopar enthusiasts for nearly six decades.

The annual *Slant Six Gathering* in northern California honours the memory of not only an engine, but also of a regional event that reportedly drew upwards of 200 vehicles before fading into history along with its host, the **Slant Six Club of America**. Nowadays it's more of a reunion of a handful of stubborn, former members on the last Sunday of each September in a parking lot – albeit without formalities such as membership dues, judging, and arguing about fees and results.



The only trophies are the rare replacement parts and aftermarket goodies that find new caretakers.

But even as recent as last year, about 30 Slant-6 equipped vehicles remained the undisputed stars at the latest reunion, though eight-cylinder A-bodies are now welcomed, and all newer Mopars are tolerated (but expected to park a respectable distance from the vintage inliners).

In January 1960, the largest audience yet to watch a motorsports event – approximately 35 percent of all American TV sets in use – were tuned to CBS for the first broadcast of live auto racing ever. The big draw and main event would be the *Daytona 500*. However, to familiarise crews with filming and announcing such fast-moving sports subjects, CBS first televised the last laps of a sports-car race and the complete 38 miles of a road race for imported

and new domestic compacts, the warmup act for **NASCAR's Grand National** headliners. Thus did more than 10 million people witness one of the most-lopsided contests in racing history.

A diverse, international field of 28 entries included five **Corvairs**, three **Falcons**, eight **Volvos**, and one-each **Studebaker**, **Rambler**, **Morris**, and even **Simca**, yet winner **Marvin Panch** and the next top six finishers all drove 170-cubic-inch Valiants.

A clean sweep extended to Panch's subsequent victory in a 50-mile qualifying race around the oval track (averaging 123.282 mph!); a two-lap "powder-puff derby" topped by **Barbara Bundy** (79.432); and top speed for all compacts on the flying-mile beach straightaway, also by Panch (117.187 average, both directions).

Not coincidentally, Chrysler had assigned the hot rodding to engineers from their factory **Ramchargers** drag racing team. Their visible modifications included cast-iron, split headers and a Carter AFB hung off the end of a two-foot-long intake manifold; prototype components within the pricey Hyper-Pak option subsequently offered by **Mopar** dealers for \$403.30.

Slant-Six Valiants dominated pre-Daytona 500 support racing in both 1960 and 1961 to such an extent that NASCAR killed the class. iron engines specifically for NASCAR's new series.

So the famous Slant Six Gathering in Frisco is still the next-best thing to time-traveling back to Daytona Beach for that winter of 1960.





Works driver **Graham Ryan** manhandling the VF *Pacer* 225 through Murray's Corner at **Mount Panorama** in 1969. This was the original slant six Pacer's first and only appearance at the *Hardie-Ferodo 500*, as the hotter and faster Hemi-powered VG model was waiting in the wings for 1970. Note how the passenger seat was fully reclined so that the large tombstone-style bucket seat would not obscure the drivers' vision through the kerb-side windows.

A few years later in Australia, the VF Valiant Pacer 225 would become the Sports Sedan to set Chrysler's pulse racing here...

"It would be fair to say that the VF Pacer was the first Valiant that opened Chrysler Australia's eyes to the benefits of being directly involved in motor sport," former competitions boss **John Ellis** told **Shannons Club**. *"It led to more investment and participation by the factory and ultimately the Hemi Pacer and R/T Charger programs."*

Not that the Pacer was the first Valiant seen on Australian race tracks. In the early to mid-1960s, drivers like **Ern Abbott**, **Clem Smith** and **Des Leonard** were tearing up the tracks in R Series Valiants which under the Appendix J touring car rules allowed modifications to their Slant Six engines to improve performance.

Those early cars performed extremely well against more powerful pace-setters like **Bob Jane's** 4.2 litre **Jaguar Mk II** and **Norm Beechey's** monstrous 409 cid **Chev Impala**. Even so there was no interest from **Chrysler Australia** in directly supporting these drivers, despite the enthusiastic army of supporters their cars attracted.

The R and S series Valiants also competed in the early years of the annual **Armstrong 500-mile** race for stock standard road cars at Phillip Island and Bathurst. Later models enjoyed Class D wins at the Mountain, including the AP5 in 1963 and the VC V8 model in 1966 which scored a resounding 1-2. Again, these excellent results were achieved by private or dealer-backed cars with no factory support.

Then in March 1969, Chrysler launched its new budget-priced VF Pacer, designed for young drivers (and those young-at-heart) who wanted a sporty but practical four door sedan that didn't cost the earth to own and insure.

It was powered by a unique high compression 175 bhp version of the corporation's venerable 3.7 litre (225 cid) slant six, which at the time was the most powerful six cylinder engine made in Australia. Its plentiful low-down torque and spirited acceleration produced sub 18-second standing quarters, although hindered on starts by the relatively tall 2.95:1 first cog in its three-speed gearbox.

With a manual floor shift, lowered suspension, front anti-sway bar, tachometer, special wheel covers, racing stripes, decals and a choice of bright colours, it was an excellent all-round performance package for the money.

Outwardly at least, the corporate mood towards motorsport had not changed when the Adelaide-based firm launched the *Pacer*. However, things had changed dramatically on the race track since the hot-rodded R series Valiants of the Appendix J era.

The *Bathurst 500* had enjoyed a rapid spike in public interest and by the late 1960s this annual event was proving influential in purchasing decisions made by new car buyers. A win, either outright or in one of the classes, was translating to increased showroom traffic after the race. Also alerting Chrysler to the possibilities in Series Production racing were pentastar loyalists like Melbourne Chrysler dealer **Jack Nougher** (aka "Eiffeltower") and his sales manager **David O'Keefe**.

They were punting on the VF Pacer on local circuits and although outgunned by the faster and more powerful **Falcon GTs** and **GTS Monaros** of the era, the Valiants were far from disgraced. Just seeing them competing against market rivals **Ford** and **Holden** on the track started to raise the pulse rate at Chrysler HQ.

Company boss **David Brown** could see the benefits of being directly involved, not only through increased showroom sales but also putting a spring in the step of every employee swept up in the team spirit that comes with such programs. He was also aware that there was considerable enthusiasm for motor sport throughout the company, particularly amongst young engineering staff.

Given the corporate change of mood, Chrysler's Sydney-based national service manager **Brian Butler** approached none other than **Leo Geoghegan** about becoming involved in the Pacer motor sport program.

Even though Butler was a good friend of the Geoghegan family, it took a fair degree of arm

twisting to get Leo to come aboard given that he was one of the country's finest racers and had more to lose than gain from driving an uncompetitive car.

Leo was also busy racing **Lotus** sports cars and open wheelers with great success, and selling road going versions of the famous British marque through a thriving dealership he ran with his younger brother **Ian** ("Pete"). As a result, Pete also dabbled in some early track testing of the Pacer, even though he was contracted to Ford and king of the Improved Production class in his V8 **Mustangs** at the time.

"My first encounter with a racing Valiant was at Oran Park in a VF Pacer," wrote Pete in his introduction to **Chrysler Valiant** by **Marque Publishing**. *"Brian Butler was responsible for putting the test session together and brought a couple of Chrysler people along to have a look at how the car went."*

"It was pretty good from the start but we carried out some extra work to improve the car. What we really needed was a four-speed gearbox, but Borg Warner didn't do one at the time. The regulations went on about Australian content so we couldn't import a suitable 'box."

"John Ellis was the chief engineer for the program and not only worked at making the Pacer better, but also at looking at the regulations to see how the car could be improved and still stay within the law."

Leo found the new Pacer ponderous; not surprising given that he usually raced some of the fastest and best handling competition cars in Australia. Even so, he agreed to be involved as the idea of getting in on the ground floor of a new factory-backed racing program was of great interest.

Improving the breed

Early race track development of the VF Pacer was carried out by Geoghegan and Adelaide-based **Ian Cook**, who not only raced open wheelers but also worked for Chrysler Australia as a test and development driver of considerable skill.



Leo Geoghegan's VF Pacer leading Fred Gibson's works XW Falcon GT-HO at Queensland's Surfers Paradise Raceway during the hotly contested *Tasman Touring Car Series* round held there early in 1970. This new format supported the annual *Tasman Series* for open wheelers, and produced some great racing.

Cook was involved in determining the VF Pacer's initial road-going specification, ensuring that engine and braking performance were properly matched and that ride heights, sway bars and shock absorbers produced the right balance of handling safety and performance.

When the decision was made to go racing, the company's testing schedule was expanded to ensure the Pacer could deal with the extremes of competition use.

An important initial test occurred in 1969 at Melbourne's **Sandown Park**. Despite some awful weather, two Pacers shared by Jack Nougher/David O'Keefe and Des West/Ted Brewster ran non-stop for 12 hours and broke numerous distance records. Unfortunately their achievements were not officially recognised by the **Confederation of Australian Motor Sport (CAMS)** on a technicality, but for Chrysler Australia it was a valuable test session.

Another non-stop 12 hour run was held at **Mallala Raceway** near Adelaide. This was a much tougher assignment than Sandown, as the South Australian track's tighter and more demanding layout was a brutal test of tyres, handling and braking.

The Pacer immediately showed a strong tendency to understeer, so they put more negative camber on the front wheels and dropped the front ride height to lower the centre of gravity. These changes, along with an increase in tyre pressures (45-50 psi) to reduce tyre wall distortion resulted in more front end grip and sharper steering response.

The Mallala test also produced fade in the shock absorbers due to overheating. To cure the problem, Chrysler engineers produced a heat-resistant nylon ring for the internal piston to stop oil leaking past the piston for better suspension control. This was a good example of racing improving the breed, because shocks fitted with the new nylon ring soon became standard fitment on all Chrysler production cars.

Another weakness emerged after about 10 hours, when a front wheel bearing failed. A replacement

was fitted to allow the car to reach the 12 hour target. Although it was the same bearing that had been fitted to all previous Valiants without a hint of trouble, engineers worked out that the load on the bearing had been up to ten times greater than normal road use.

This was due to the higher cornering speeds, heavier braking loads and increased grip levels of the latest high performance tyres. It was decided that a larger bearing would solve the problem, so a new factory specification was issued and the bigger front wheel bearings were then used on all Valiants. Another example of racing improving the breed.

Braking performance also came under scrutiny at Mallala. The optional 279mm solid front disc brakes provided good stopping power, but were prone to heat-related fade on the track. There was not a lot that could be done to improve their efficiency, apart from fitting harder pad materials.

The self-adjusting mechanisms on the rear drum brakes were also removed for racing, because the adjusters would 'chase' the drums outwards as they expanded due to extreme heat. This caused the brake shoes to run too close to the friction surface, causing even higher temperatures and rapid wear. The cars also raced without a power booster, to improve brake pedal feel.

It's interesting to note that at some stage during this process, the Geoghegans were involved in a ferociously fast 'what if?' project to see what was possible, according to Pete Geoghegan.

"I also test drove a Falcon GT-HO and it went hard, but the Valiant VF that we built up with a 360 cubic inch (V8) motor and imported four-speed gearbox went like hell. I'm sure it would have shaken the 'HO, but never saw the light of day (in terms of series production)."

Given that the 360 cid version of Chrysler's A series small block V8 didn't arrive until 1971, it's likely Pete was getting confused with the shorter stroke 340 cid version of that engine when recalling these events in 1996 – more than a quarter of a century later.

In any case, just the fact that such a prototype was built and tested (was he talking about the 'stubby' ute test mule or another top secret prototype?) gives an indication of how seriously Chrysler wanted to play with the big boys and were exploring all options.

Brian Butler, who knew the company's new Hemi six was due in 1970 but sworn to secrecy at the time, moved to sign up some other top driving talent with a view to Chrysler's increasing involvement in the sport.

These included the hard-charging **Graham Ryan**, the versatile genius of **Doug Chivas**, renowned Holden touring car star Des West and even Stormin' **Norm Beechey**, who showed his faith in the brand by adding a Chrysler dealership to his many business interests.

According to noted historian **Gavin Farmer**, Chrysler's track campaign was officially launched at **Catalina Park** on June 15, 1969 when Leo Geoghegan debuted the new VF Pacer. The car was not as well suited to the Katoomba circuit's notorious twists and turns as the swarm of menacing **Minis** he tried to swat out of the way.

Even so, Leo was having a real go until the heavily loaded right front wheel cracked, forcing him to pit for a wheel change. Interestingly, Geoghegan would suffer a similar failure at **Oran Park** in 1970 while leading the first race contested by the new VG Hemi Pacer.

"One of the most valuable lessons we learned from racing the Pacer was that a standard steel wheel designed for road use was no longer strong enough to cope with the cornering loads in racing, particularly with the extra grip being generated by the latest racing tyres," John Ellis told Shannons Club.

"It forced Chrysler to look for the best solution for the upcoming R/T Charger and that was to switch to a (single-cast) alloy wheel which was not only stronger but also much lighter with better brake cooling. We were running alloy wheels long before Ford and Holden were."



The VF Pacer entered by Melbourne Chrysler dealer Jack Eiffeltower (aka Nougher) and his sales manager David O'Keefe led home a Chrysler quinella in Class C at the 1969 **Datsun 3-Hour** race at Sandown Park. During the race, the tall passenger seat with its integral head rest was usually reclined down onto the back seat, to improve peripheral vision. Pacer drivers often did this.

1969 Sandown 250 and Bathurst 500: A toe in the water

Apart from the shock absorber and front wheel bearing failures, the VF Pacer had run reliably and trouble-free during its 12 hour tests which gave Brian Butler the confidence to back two of them in the Bathurst curtain raiser that covered a much shorter distance – the 1969 Datsun 3-Hour race.

The two Pacers, entered by **Eiffeltower Motors** at Dandenong, were shared by the proven combination of Jack Nougher/David O'Keefe in one car with new signing Des West joined by **Glyn Scott** in the other. These semi-works cars were backed by two dealer-entered VF Pacers for Bob Brown/Ted Brewster (**Max Manley Motors**) and Adelaide Chrysler stalwart Clem Smith (**Clem Smith Motors**).

The two Eiffeltower cars outclassed several S-type Mini Coopers and a lone XT Falcon V8 to finish first and second in Class C, a full

lap ahead of the third-placed Falcon. Although competitive in its price division, it's sobering to note that the VF Pacer finished six laps behind the works-entered Falcon GT-HO driven by **Allan Moffat/John French** to outright victory.

The second Eiffeltower VF Pacer shared by Des West and Glyn Scott finished runner-up in Class C at the 1969 Datsun 3-Hour at Sandown. West would star for Chrysler in the faster four-barrel VG Hemi Pacer he shared with **Peter Brown** at Bathurst in 1970, leading the race outright at one stage and winning Class D by a whopping six laps.

Surprisingly perhaps, the Sandown-winning Eiffeltower cars did not make an appearance at Bathurst three weeks later. Only one VF Pacer was on the grid for the 1969 race, shared by **Graham Ryan** and motoring journalist **Mike Kable**.

The huge 63-car field was broken up into five competing classes (A to E) based on retail prices. Class C (\$2251-\$3100) promised to be a real slug-fest between the VF Pacer and a fascinating mix of showroom rivals including the dominant S-type Mini Cooper, **Fiat 125**, **Ford Capri 1600 GT**, **Renault 16 TS** and the new rotary-powered **Mazda R100**. The Pacer faced a formidable challenge in trying to topple the mighty 1275cc Mini Cooper S, given the famous 'brick' had won Class C four years straight including its historic outright win in 1966.

With a 1340 kgs kerb mass, the Pacer was a much larger and heavier car by comparison, with an inferior power to weight ratio and handling and braking that could not match the go kart-like response of the sub-700 kgs Cooper S. The new Valiant was also an unknown quantity at Bathurst, with fuel consumption, tyre and brake wear yet to be determined over 500 miles (800 kms) of racing.

The Pacer's Bathurst debut showed promise when Graham Ryan qualified third fastest in Class C with a best time of 3 min 12.4 secs. That was only 0.4 sec slower than the second fastest Mini and within 1.5 seconds of the quickest Cooper S of **John Prisk/Alan Cameron** on pole position.

Unfortunately the Class C pole-sitter and about a quarter of the field became entangled in the infamous first lap pile-up triggered by Bill Brown rolling his Falcon GT-HO at Skyline. The multi-car crash claimed many mechanical victims, but somehow the Pacer managed to make it through the wreckage unscathed.

The Valiant sedan proved to be one of the top class contenders, leading at various stages throughout the race in a see-sawing battle with the fastest S-type Coopers and some very quick Fiat 125s. The big picture though was that the Pacer had a bigger appetite for tyres and front brake pads than its smaller foes and was losing too much time in the pits changing them.

Hard to believe two cars so different in size and mechanical design could be class competitors! Back in the golden days of *Series Production* racing, when cars were grouped according to their showroom prices, such contrasts were not unusual. Here **Leo Geoghegan** leads one of many **Mini Cooper S** entries, in the VF *Pacer* on debut at **Catalina Park** in mid-1969. From these humble beginnings, Geoghegan's role in the development of the VG *Hemi Pacer* and later *R/T Charger* would grow significantly. His younger brother **Ian** also drove the slant six Pacer on occasions.





The VF *Pacer*'s racing career was relatively brief, as the factory's competitive focus was on the Hemi-powered VG model due in 1970. Most VF Pacer racers were dealer-backed entries, like the cars entered by **Bob Brown** (above left) and Valiant stalwart **Clem Smith** at the 1969 *Datsun 3-Hour* at **Sandown Park**.

After an enthralling day-long battle which saw the top three cars finish on the same lap, the Class C victory went once again to a Cooper S with two Fiat 125s chasing the Mini home in second and third places. In fourth (18th outright) was the VF Pacer, one lap down but running strongly when it took the chequered flag.

The VF Pacer shared by Graham Ryan and Mike Kable takes the chequered flag to finish fourth in Class C at the 1969 *Hardie-Ferodo 500*. The sporty Chrysler sedan faced an uphill battle (literally) against smaller and more agile class competitors, like the dominant Mini Cooper S and Fiat 125.

The 1969 Bathurst race had given the Chrysler boys some valuable insights into the Pacer's performance at Mount Panorama. The lack of any major mechanical problems, particularly in chassis and suspension, would also have given them a confidence boost as the company's motor sport focus switched to the hotter 245 cid Hemi six-powered VG model due for release in April 1970.

VF Pacers continued to compete during the remainder of 1969 and into the early months of 1970, including rounds of the new Tasman Touring Car Series, before the new Hemi powered models became available.

These outings included the 1969 *Southern Cross Rally* with the versatile Doug Chivas completing the arduous event in a largely stock VF Pacer with minimal rally preparation.

With the release of the new VG range in April 1970, the VF Pacer's days as a track racer were at an end. However, in local motorsport history it was a pivotal car.

It not only sparked Chrysler's motor sport involvement but also served as an invaluable development mule for the VG Hemi Pacer and R/T Chargers that followed.

The VF Pacer's important legacy should never be forgotten.

– **Mark Oastler; Shannons Club**

SHARDS OF HISTORY

Recently the club had the opportunity to obtain some old marine signage relating to Brealey's Outboard Servicing.

A cottage was being renovated on the corner of Gunn Street and Victoria Road at Birkenhead. When the outer cladding was removed, it revealed some signage painted on the original wooden cladding which we believe to be circa 1960/70's.

Brealey's was a business dedicated to automotive and marine outboard motor repairs within the Port Adelaide precinct, as well as being a local petrol station. They were located at 53 Fletcher Road, Birkenhead SA. The site has now been demolished and has been sub-divided for residential housing.

Thanks to John Koznedev, this signage was saved from the demolition and donated to the SA Maritime Museum for preservation and use in their displays.



the leaning tower of power

SLANT SIX PERFORMANCE

ON THE DRAG STRIP

Although Chrysler made a lot of really good engines over the years, you'd be surprised to discover that there are actually two that come to mind as legendary in drag racing: the 426 Hemi of course, but also – the Slant Six. While the Hemi and its variations are the engines still to beat at drag races, the Slant Six is best known for its indestructibility – because of its ability to commonly run over a half a million miles without a rebuild.

Slants have a long history particularly in rail dragsters, pro-stockers and salt racing. Indeed, as with circuit racing, there are also still many nostalgic clubs and historic drag meetings in the States exclusively for Slant Six vehicles, while many performance engineshops dedicated to this 'little' motor are still around today – just like you'd find building Hemis...

For some who think that replacing the Slant Six engine with a V8 one of the best performance upgrades for an A-body, this is not true. In fact, the Slant Six is a performance engine with a proud racing heritage. The following is an excerpt from the Slant Six Racing Manual of the Direct Connection Engine Performance Book:

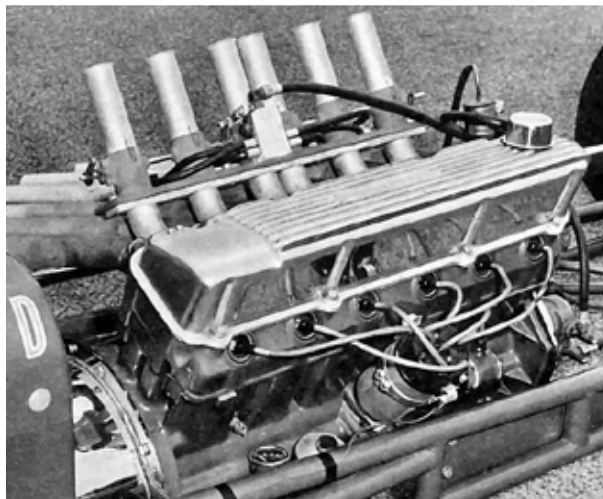
"The Slant Six engine was introduced in 1960 in two versions – 101 hp, 170 cu. in. and a 145 hp, 225 cu. in. From this modest beginning, the Slant Six built its reputation for performance and reliability. The 148 hp, 170 cu. in. Hyper-Pak introduced in the 1960 Valiant was the next step and the one that was to prove the new engine worthy of any performance challenge.

In 1960 with the introduction of the new compact cars by all the American automobile manufacturers, NASCAR sanctioned a special race exclusively for the little 6 cylinder powered compact cars. The race was held in Daytona and had seven Slant-Six Valiants entered. When the race ended, not only had all seven Hyper-Paks finished proving their reliability and durability, but they won the first seven places! This type of performance speaks for itself..."

Anthony Young wrote about that race in his book **Mighty Mopars 1960-1974**:

"When NASCAR decided to run a compact road race in conjunction with the 1960 Daytona 500," recalled Dick Maxwell, "all the factories got involved. We built a fleet of seven Hyper Pak Valiants with 148-hp 170 ci sixes having a single four-barrel with ram manifold. It was a Plymouth runaway. We finished first through seventh. Our cars were so fast, NASCAR never did that race again..."

While replacing the Slant Six with a 318 or 360 is fairly common, it is not cheap. There are several changes that must be made over and above the cost of the new engine, transmission, and possibly axle. With petrol prices the way they are today, a performance upgrade of the Slant Six can add significantly to its power while maintaining or enhancing its already excellent fuel efficiency. For those who like driving through twisty mountain roads, the Slant Six powered cars also handle better than V8s due to their superior weight distribution.



that way inclined

SLANT SIX TRANSPLANTS

SOME MINDBENDING CUSTOMS WITH A SLANT SIX

Nine of the weirdest cars powered by Chrysler's Slant Six.

The Chrysler 'slant six' is one of the most widely produced engines of all time: the "leaning tower of power" drove all sorts of Plymouths and Dodges from the '60s to the '90s. Here we've highlighted some of its weirder applications.



1964 Valano GT 225

The Valano GT was a one-off racecar built in the mid-'60s by **Chrysler Australia** engineers. It ran an un-slanted slant six with triple SU carbs and a **Jaguar** four-speed and turned out 13-second quarter-mile times. The design was swiped from the **Holden Chevy** six-powered **JWF Milano**—'Milano' plus 'Valiant' gives you 'Valano'!



BMW 325i E30/6

No, you're not misremembering, **BMW** never did offer a **Chrysler** Slant Six in its **3 Series**. This custom job is the work of **Team E30/6**, who built a number of 225s specifically for racing in the junker *LeMons series*.



1965 Dodge Deora show car

The A100-based *Ridler Award*-winning **Deora** by the legendary **Alexander Brothers** was moved along by a 170-cube Slant Six tucked underneath the tonneau cover. If you're curious, the **Chip Foose**-built **Deora II** is instead **Cadillac** V8-driven. (Boo!)



1960s Lotus-Valiant

The story goes that in the early '60s five **Chrysler** engineers in the UK. wanted to prove the mettle of their slant six's new HyperPak manifold, and so installed it in a **Lotus 11**, hooked up to a **Corvette** four-speed. The car was one of the first to use its engine as a stressed member of the frame, and managed somewhere north of 170 mph on the track.

1960 Plymouth XNR concept

When it sold for close to \$1 million in 2012, the **XNR** certainly became the most expensive Slant Six to cross the auction block, if not the weirdest. The **Corvette**-rivaling sports car was a concept designed by **Chrysler's Virgil Exner** and built in Italy by **Ghia**. Exner was hoped he could push it into production, but in the end Chrysler refused to move ahead with it.



1972 Tucker Sno-Cat

We've got to be honest: we don't know a whole lot about snowmobiles, so we couldn't tell you a **Sno-Cat** from a **Bombardier**. From our research, though, sounds like a whole lot of different engines have been installed in these mother-Tuckers, from **Chrysler V8s** to **VW air-cooled fours** to 225-cube Slant Sixes!



1963 Tex Smith-built XR-6

In '63 this T-bucket took home *America's Most Beautiful Roadster*, which must've made builder **Tex Smith** pretty proud. The '6' in the name stood for the Slant Six under the bonnet, of course. Smith, the man who coined the term "*Fad T*" unfortunately passed away in June 2015.



Jim Fisher-built Volkswagen hot rod

The Slant Six forum guys don't have a whole lot of info on this crazy-looking rod, but we can tell two things from looking at it: that's a **Volkswagen Beetle** body, and that's a slant six. There's apparently a **Ford** rear axle out back.



1972 Dodge Boulevard 3700 GT

Spain's **Pedro Serra** is the man you can thank for the **Dodge Boulevard**, a sports car built around **Dart** mechanicals. Serra took advantage of the knocked-down Darts Chrysler was exporting to the country via truck builder **Eduardo Barreiros** – and used their parts to build some 18 of the fiberglass cars.



full tilt boogie

THE 1960 PLYMOUTH XNR

FROM A DRAWING ON A SERVIETTE

In the late 1940s, Detroit's wild automotive fantasies reflected America's unbridled postwar exuberance. Inspired by jet aircraft and rockets, "dream cars" sprouted tailfins and wings. But Chrysler Corporation emphasised engineering prowess over styling. Practical, staid, and slow, its Plymouth division competed head-to-head with Ford and Chevrolet.

"Every goddamn farmer in America's heard of Plymouth binder twine," chairman **Walter P. Chrysler** reminded company president **K.T. Keller** when **Plymouth** was born. Conservative, corpulent, eminently sensible, 'Mister Keller' preferred tall, square-ish shapes. "We build cars to sit in, not to piss over," he lectured his designers. In marked contrast, **GM's** lavish traveling **Motorama** shows and futuristic concept cars teased a postwar buying public that was impatient for something more stylish.

When sales stalled, Keller realised Chrysler needed bold styling. Astutely, he hired a genius and gave him a relatively free hand. **Virgil Exner**, whose concept for the radical 1947 **Studebaker** edged out a proposal from his boss, the celebrated **Raymond Loewy**, was a visionary both in the designs he developed and the way he had concept cars built. Lacking **GM's** huge, well-financed studios, Exner commissioned Italy's **Carrozzeria Ghia** to fabricate sleek concept vehicles like the **Chrysler Falcon**, **DeSoto Adventurer**, and four **Dodge Firearrows**.

Features from Exner's stunning show cars morphed into Chrysler production cars. Plymouth's advertising crowed, "Suddenly, it's 1960!" With its dramatic fins and powerful **Fury** engine options, the ex-wallflower was primed to pass **Ford** and **Chevy**. Could the next step be a sports car? The answer wasn't long in coming. **Motor Trend's** May 1960 cover featured a radical red roadster with this dramatic headline: "150-mph Experimental Plymouth! Technical Analysis of Chrysler's Possible Answer to Corvette"

Why not? Ford's **Thunderbird** had evolved into a boulevard cruiser, but Chevrolet's **Corvette** had a growing following. Chrysler had no two-seaters in its dealer showrooms. Perhaps that was about to change? A sports roadster required a shorter chassis than a full-size car. The platform for the **Valiant** compact (American our for medium-sized) shared with the **Dodge Lancer**, was the obvious start. Its engine, a high-revving 170cid I-6, canted over at an extreme 30-degree angle could be tuned for more than 200 hp. It was perfect. The Slant Six...

Exner and his team devised the **XNR** (originally called **Asymmetrica** and later named for the design chief himself after Chrysler let **Ford Motor Company** have the **Falcon** name). It was built on a modified 106.5-inch **Valiant** chassis, with a dramatic, asymmetrical shape that polarised onlookers. The shock waves began with a large offset hood scoop that led to an extended blister fairing into the cowl and embraced a low, driver-side curved windscreen, then flowed smoothly into a single offset tailfin. On the passenger side, a small, folding, flat windshield was accented by a snug-fitting steel tonneau cover.

According to his son **Virgil Jr.**, the senior Exner was inspired at first by a 1930s-era **Studebaker** two-man **Indy** car he'd purchased when he worked in South Bend. "He wanted to do a modern version," Exner Jr. says.

Virgil Sr. also was inspired by then-contemporary **Indy** cars like the 'lay-down' **Watson Offy**. The **Valiant** Slant-6 was the perfect engine for that application. When we note the **XNR's** fin was reminiscent of the racing **Jaguars**, Exner Jr. replies that his father "...loved the **Jaguar D-Type**." Initial sketches were done in 1958-'59, after which a 3/8ths-scale clay model was approved by Chrysler management. A **Valiant** chassis was modified and the upper portion removed. It was then shipped overseas to Turin where **Carrozzeria Ghia's** craftsmen built an armature, then hand-formed the **XNR** body in steel, according to the Chrysler design drawings.

A bold extended nose led the way, framed with a thin chrome surround that outlined a grille composed of an oblong plate of solid aluminum with holes drilled for cooling, incorporating a set of then-popular quad headlights. In back, a vertical strip emerged from the tall dorsal fin and flowed under the lower deck, teeing into another thin blade, forming a bold cross that served as a bumper. The **XNR's** radical rear dramatically underscored its asymmetrical theme. An eight-page **Plymouth XNR** promotional brochure read: "Functional, beautiful, unprecedented: The entire design is concentrated around the driver." More eye candy included a slender reveal on each side, fronted by a small running light in an aircraft-inspired nacelle, to break up the car's rather boxy sail area. Below the curved outline of a side fin, later adapted for the production **Valiant's** rear quarters, was a fully radiused rear-wheel opening. A wide rocker strip broke up the **XNR's** slab sides. Fashionably thin whitewalls on 14-inch steel wheels were adorned with unique and very complex slotted hubcaps. External exhaust pipes ran on the left side only.

The low-slung roadster, just over 43 inches high, was 195.2 inches long and 71 inches wide. Exner believed its prominent fin, besides being a visual treat, positively affected high-speed stability. The designer wanted the **XNR** to be capable of exceeding 150 mph. That was not possible with a stock slant-six, although tests at Chrysler's high-speed proving ground in Chelsea, Michigan, resulted in a 146-mph clocking. A bolt-on high performance package, including a four-barrel carburetor, mounted on a ram-style intake manifold; a hotter camshaft; higher compression; and tuned exhausts, aided by a specially designed streamlined fiberglass nose cone designed by **Dick Burke**, eventually helped the **XNR** exceed a reported 152 mph. Exner, who earlier topped 143 mph testing his namesake roadster, was reportedly very pleased. So was Chrysler management.

A period newsreel, screened in movie theatres nationwide, shows the **XNR** roadster circling Chrysler's test track on a wintry day, as the announcer hints that the "idea car" might see production. The lone **XNR** was fully functional, with a black leather interior, twin bucket seats, deep door cavities (for better elbow room) with zipper pockets, and a stowage area for luggage. Its passenger seat was positioned 4 inches lower than the





was a padded headrest for the driver. Full instrumentation, located behind the steering wheel, race-car-style, included an 8000-rpm tachometer that incorporated a vacuum gauge. The lenses resembled camera lenses, and they were all different sizes. A floor-mounted shifter, in Motor Trend's words, "...completed the picture of a fast, functional, fun car."

News that the XNR could be marketed for under \$3000 must have tantalised enthusiasts. But it was not to be. Chrysler's business planners had ruled the XNR could be an attention-getting show car, but there wasn't sufficient volume for it to go into production. After that decision was made, Carrozzeria Ghia's **Luigi Segre** copied the basic design, and Ghia built a more practical version in 1961, with a full windshield and a fabric top. Called the *Asymmetrica*, it appeared at numerous European car shows, along with a steel hardtop sister model called the **St. Regis**. But Ghia failed to find a financial backer. It's believed as many as 25 examples were built, although some sources state there were just six, before the *Asymmetrica* idea was shelved.

The one and only prototype XNR began a strange odyssey. After the roadster made the rounds of the show-car circuit, it was sent back to Carrozzeria Ghia in Italy. Ghia sold it to a Swiss gentleman (identified in many sources as either a businessman or a butcher), who in turn sold it to **Mohammad Reza Pahlevi**, a noted car collector who just happened to be the **Shah of Iran**. Some time later, the XNR was again sold, this time to a Kuwaiti car dealer named **Anwar al Mulla**, and a photograph of the car with al Mulla appeared in a May 1969 *National Geographic* article on Kuwait. Changing hands again, the XNR made its way to Lebanon in the early 1970s, prior to the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1991), and became the property of a gentleman who hid the car in an underground garage. Enter **Karim Edde**, another resident and collector in Lebanon. In the 1980s, the enterprising Edde was paying Beirut teenagers to "go on their scooters and systematically search the underground garages in the upscale areas — I was looking for Ferraris. One day, they were all excited about a 'weird' car they'd found in a garage just 200 meters from my home. I recognized the XNR from a Swiss book I owned called 'Dream Cars,' and I immediately bought it. That was 23 years ago."

There was a bloody war in progress, but the resourceful Mr. Edde was undaunted. "I hid the XNR in an underground warehouse that seemed safe at the time, but when the conflict became more global, I had to move it to a different location. In fact, the last two years of the war were so bad, I had to move the car many times, to save it from destruction. We had no flatbed trucks, so we used big, long-arm tow trucks to lift the car and put it on a truck and move it around. It was a delicate operation, but we had no choice. When the war ended, the car was waiting patiently for me to find a restorer who could bring back its past glory."

Karim Edde spoke with many restorers through the years, but no one convinced him with his standards being very high. "Then in 2007, I met the staff from **RM Restoration** in Paris, found the enthusiasm I was seeking, visited their facilities in Canada, and was convinced they were the right ones for the job. I sent them the XNR in 2008, they started working on it in March 2009, and finished it in early March 2011, just in time for it to be displayed at the *Amelia Island Concours d'Elegance*."

Mario Van Raay, general manager of **RM Restorations**, says: "When we received the XNR at RM in 2008, it was greeted with a great deal of curiosity. After meeting with Karim, it became apparent that our greatest challenge would be the recreation of all the missing components, such as the instrument cluster, hubcaps, and many interior parts. Each hubcap

was composed of some 35 metal pieces. Small 'fins' lent the impression of finned brake drums, but that was not the case. We had to completely scratch-build those hubcaps.

"Because of the extensive information and many photos available, we could not take any liberties when remanufacturing all these components. They had to be exact. Surprisingly, the body shell itself was, for the most part, complete and in relatively good shape. However, since the car had an asymmetric design, it was a challenge to understand what Exner was trying to achieve."

Van Raay confirmed the XNR was built on a strengthened, but cut-down Valiant unibody platform. As the original Valiant wasn't a convertible, the rockers on the XNR were built up considerably for increased stiffness. A second firewall was constructed and located 2 feet rearward to accommodate the new cockpit and allow for a much longer bonnet. The spring locations were changed slightly (RM had an original Valiant chassis for comparison), and the engine was a 170cid slant-six, not the later 225cid version, which had a slightly taller block and would not fit under the XNR's bonnet.

The engine is one of 12 that were specially modified for **NASCAR** racing, where the Valiant proved a winner in the small-displacement class. Reportedly, as modified by Chrysler's engineering laboratory, the Slant-6 could be revved to 7500 rpm and was good for over 250 horsepower. "This car may have had an aluminum block when it was first built," Van Raay notes, "but the current block is cast iron." Van Raay and Edde credit Virgil Exner Jr., who graciously provided them his father's archive of the car. With Exner Jr.'s help, they were also able to locate three engineers who worked on the original Slant Six motor.

RM and Edde were delighted with the XNR's reception at *Pebble Beach* in August 2011, where **Kazunori Yamauchi** awarded the sleek speedster the coveted *Gran Turismo Trophy*. The XNR's shape will be digitized and integrated in Gran Turismo GT6. As well, the XNR was nominated for the International Historic Motoring Awards 2011 Restoration of the Year. I watched as the crowds parted and a very happy Edde drove over the ramp to receive his award. As the slant six's twin exhausts crackled, the XNR's sleek shape must have prompted some onlookers to wonder whether it was a contemporary concept car.

Looking back, Virgil Exner Sr. wanted to incorporate some of the XNR's styling cues in future Chryslers. His 1961 *FliteWing* showcar pointed the way, and a sketch in the June 1961 issue of *Motor Life* magazine depicts a limited-edition XNR-like sport model that was to have been equipped with a 230-hp, aluminum-block version of the larger 225cid Slant-6. But a major management shakeup precipitated Exner's departure from Chrysler in 1962 at age 53. Eased out, Exner founded his own design firm, where he developed modern versions of the **Mercer** (on a **Cobra** chassis), **Bugatti** (based on a **Type 101**), **Stutz**, and even **Duesenberg** for the specialty/luxury market. He died of heart failure in 1973 at just 64 years of age. Half a century on, Virgil Exner Sr. isn't generally recalled as popularly as GM's **Harley Earl** and his flamboyant protege, **Bill Mitchell**. But among aficionados, Exner and his futuristic creations will long be remembered.

As for Plymouth, you could say the brand never gave up its wish to compete with Chevrolet's Corvette. When Chrysler styling enjoyed a renaissance in the 1990s under **Tom Gale**, what is arguably the spiritual successor to the XNR bowed first as a show car, then as a limited production model. They called it the **Prowler**.

chrysler history tour

WITH THE NATIONAL MOTOR MUSEUM

PRESENTED BY GAVIN FARMER

Hello fellow Moparians! I recently had the chance to experience the National Motoring Museum's *Chrysler Heritage Tour*, which was held on the 21st of May this year. The tour was run by the ever-knowledgeable Gavin Farmer, former CAL employee and author of the books *Hey Charger* and *Great Ideas In Motion: A History of Chrysler in Australia 1946-1981*. We were also lucky enough to be joined by John Ellis, one of Chrysler's head engineers when they were at the peak of their racing development, and yes, the man that was lucky enough to take the VG Pacer to Italy for Weber tuning way back when.

Arriving at the **Torren's Parade Ground** a little before 9am, it was obvious there was more than one tour on, as there were quite a few **Holden** shirts in the crowd. We were quickly split into two opposing line-up's, paid our money and were loaded up onto our separate buses before tensions could escalate. The *Chrysler Tour* was loaded onto the nice new, clean, air-conditioned bus while the *Holden Tour* was loaded onto the bus which could only be described as 'dated', much like comparing an *EH* to an *AP5*...

Our first stop was just around the corner at Hindmarsh Square, where we begun to learn about **TJ Richards** and his family and how they went from blacksmiths, to coach builders, to auto body builders.

We then moved on down Torrens Road, to **Finsbury** – now known as Athol Park, where the Richards had purchased factories to build **Chrysler** and **Dodge** bodies as well as producing aircraft and munitions during World War Two.

We soon carried on our journey to the well-known **Keswick** site on Anzac Highway. This was built by TJ Richards to unify all operations and would become their headquarters, which would later be inherited by **Chrysler Australia**. This site was specifically selected as it backed right onto the railway line, which enabled anything produced to quickly and easily be shipped around the country.

While at Keswick we walked around the side of the building into Maple Street where we were able to gaze upon the fading "Chrysler" façade, where our guide from the **National Motor Museum** informed us they were going to attempt to save the sheets of iron and hopefully be put into the museum.

We jumped back on the bus for a quick trip around the corner to **Mile End**. Many club members will remember this site from the *2010 Megacruise*, when all of Scotland Road was transformed into a Mopar guard of honour as the sun set and the beautiful Mopar iron cruised up and down looking for somewhere to park. This site was the second part of TJ Richards expansion after moving to Keswick and was also conveniently located by the railway line.

After a quick lunch at **Café De Vili's** we headed on down to **Tonsley Park**. Entering through the rear, we walked through the empty lot as Gavin pointed out the engine machine shop, upholstery building and the chroming facilities. It was an eerie feeling being at an empty Tonsley Park, being told about its bustling hey-day producing the iconic cars by a pair of men who were there.

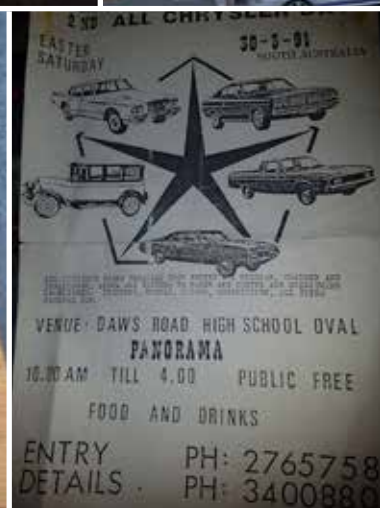
We moved on and wrapped up the day at the **Lonsdale** engine plant, where Gavin informed us it was built to help raise the local content and was meant to build engines for export. However this plan was scrapped and the plant was never utilised to its full potential, an unfortunate hint of the impending downfall of our marque.

Back aboard the bus we headed back to the parade grounds while Gavin and John recounted tales from years past, which alone was worth the cost of the tour. I implore anyone who considers going on the tour next time its run to do so – as although much of the information is available in the history issue of *Torqueback*, on the internet or in Gavin's book, I can honestly say nothing would compare to hearing the stories right from the people who were there.

Until next time, stay Mopar.

– Dylan Gibbens





TONSLEY HOTEL, FRIDAY MARCH 24



Left to right :

Chris Mather

(January 1967 – March 1972)

Engine Design & Development - Lonsdale & Detroit

- In **Mike Stacy**'s group, including dynamometer testing the Weber 6-pack D Engine
- Emissions Control technology and testing in USA
- Emissions Lab construction at Lonsdale

Bob Burke†

(January 1969 – July 1984)

Project Engineer, Lonsdale

- Local content of Hillman 1725cc 4 cyl engines, then local content on other engine electrics and internals - eg: 318 V8 parts

Manager Resident Engineering - Lonsdale

Manager Power Plant Engineering (Design & Development) - Lonsdale

Manager Chassis Design - Tonsley Park 1976

- Major projects were ELB with John Whelan
- CAL's version of Radial Tuned Suspension in 1979 referred to as "Chassis Upgrade"

Robin Schliebs

(January 1966 – May 1972)

Product Engineer (Vehicle Assembly) - Tonsley Park

Product Engineer (Engine Production) - Lonsdale

- Mechanical Design Engineer for Australian manufacture of the "R" Series (Slant 6) engine, and high performance engine fuel systems.

Bill Chinnick

(1969 – 1970s)

Vehicle Stylist / Designer - Tonsley Park & Detroit

- Shaped the **Charger** clay model and developed styling for the prototype, from design concepts from **Bob Hubbach (Chrysler Corp)**,
- Designed instrument clusters and many other items

John Ellis

(1968 – 1972)

Factory Race Team Manager - Tonsley Park & Europe

- VF Pacer, VG Pacer and VH Charger Race programs
Took 6-pak VG to Europe in 1970 to Weber factory, Bologna, Italy, via France & Switzerland, for fine-tuning development of the prototype 6-pack system. Resident for several weeks on-site with Weber engineers

Roger Carroll

(1970s)

Engine Development Engineer - Lonsdale

- Hemi-6, many tear-downs after dynamometer runs to identify durability issues
- Development of the mythical 4-cyl Hemi engine for the **Centura** and current custodian of the remaining engine

Ian Turich

(1971 – 1975)

Experimental & Resident Engineering - Finsbury

- Truck Design, Export Liaison

Test and Development Engineer - Lonsdale & Detroit

- Exhaust Emissions to ADR 27A
- In 1973, sent to Detroit with a Valiant Wagon 245 Auto for emissions testing, came across an unofficial 'skunk works' "Lean Burn" Program, convinced CAL to take this path to reduce tooling costs over EGR methods as used by **GM** and **Ford**

W.D.R. (Douglass) Potts

(March 1971 – mid 1970s)

Engine electrical and fuel systems - Lonsdale & Tonsley Park

- Email Carter RBS carbs hard-start / field issues etc.
- E38/E49 project
Wrote the introduction and tuning guide for the triple Weber E38 Workshop Manual, developed many of the fine-tuning systems including 6-pak vacuum gauges and balance adjusters, air horns etc.

And our Guest Speaker on the night...

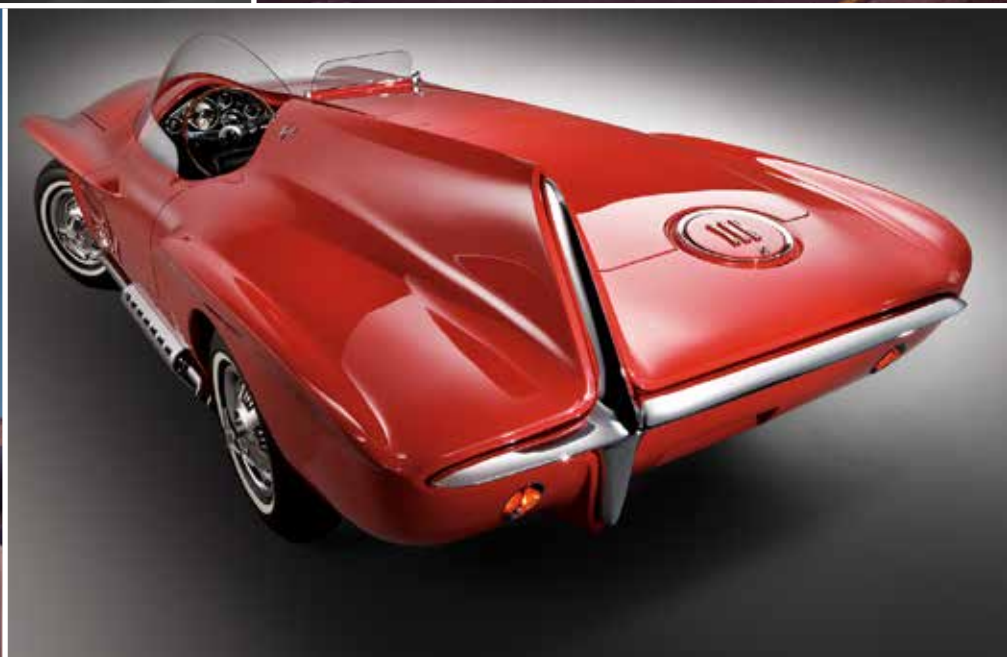
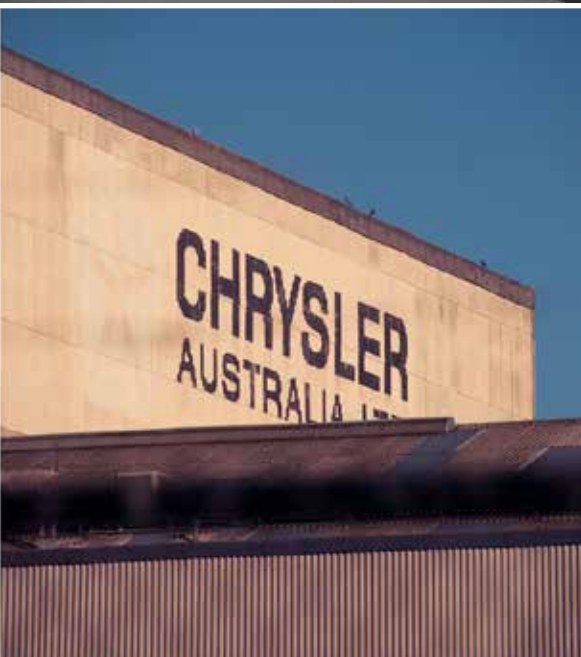
John Whelan

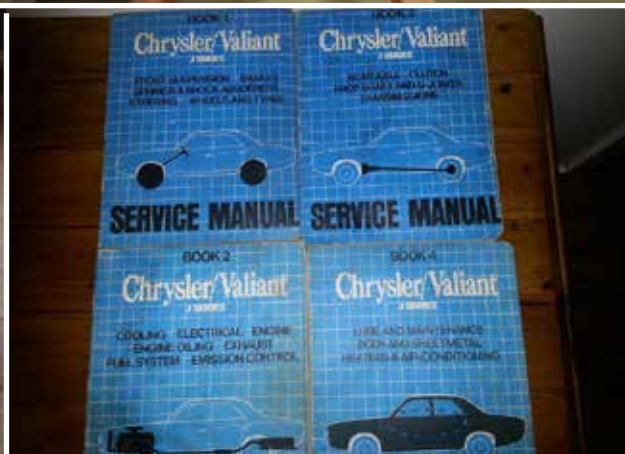
(October 1967 – December 1979)

Design Engineer - Tonsley Park, Detroit, Europe

- First project was for adapting Chrysler's US-designed integrated air-con to RHD bodies
- Developed heater systems, windscreen demisting, wipers, radios, electric windows, power steering, emissions, brought the then US skunkworks ELB system to production on the D-Engine with Bob Burke

SOME OF THE PEOPLE
BEHIND OUR CARS...





CLAIRE ROWLANDS

A family affair...

Hi, my name is **Claire Rowlands** (nee **Moffatt**) and I own my father's 1966 **Chrysler Valiant VC Regal**, RAW 088. My father owned the **Morphett Vale Shell Garage** from 1946 to 1969. In 1963 his health declined, and after he leased the garage, he began working 'part-time' – Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm for **Tillbrook Brake Lining Service**. In 1966 he sold his **Vanguard** to my sister, and bought this Valiant – with a custom white duco, black interior, 6 cylinder engine, factory-optional under car soundproofing and anti-rust treatment – as his retirement car.

The Valiant was originally sold to **W. Foster & Co.** P/L of Hindmarsh on the ninth of June 1966 with 20 miles on the odometer. I understand it was returned because the director it was purchased for found that the Valiant seats didn't suit his war injured back. Father purchased it in July 1966 (6 weeks old) with 1,003 miles on the odometer, after it had been returned to **Addison Motors**.

My son **Robert** and daughter **Fiona** were both brought home from hospital in the Valiant in 1966 and 1969 respectively.

In 1967, my parents went on holiday to Queensland and the radio was stolen. In 1969, they went to Western Australia and on reaching the Nullabor, the diff was out of oil and the bung missing. Father spent all morning looking through a paddock full of wrecks but alas couldn't find a suitable replacement. Being an industrious man, he got out his trusty penknife and whittled out a new bung from a broom handle. That bung was still in place 3,500 miles (5,632 kilometres) later and replaced back in Adelaide! The bung was lost when we sold the Prospect family home in 1998.

From 1924 onwards, Father and Mother, decided to forego trips to the pictures once a week and instead buy a gallon of petrol to go Sunday driving, first by motor bike, then later by car. I have numerous memories of lovely Sunday family drives with my husband **Jack** and the children.

In January 1970, father died at the age of 65, a mere 3 weeks after selling his garage and retiring. He always said "*If I slow down I will be in a pine box three weeks later*", and so it was. After he died, Mother and I were out in the Valiant once or twice a week. Fiona would always be with us on Sundays, forming some of her fondest memories of outings in "Nana's car". In 1972 the Valiant took Mother, Jack, the children and myself as far as Maryborough, Queensland when Jack took sick and in 10 days we were back in Prospect. My husband died in 1987.

In 1991 I needed a new car, so Mother sold the Valiant to me and it came to its new home in Klemzig. It had 52,820 miles on the odometer.



I still took Mother out in the Valiant but alas, she passed away in 2000, at the ripe old age of 95. In 2004 I was told to buy a modern car with rear seat belts, power steering, "real air-conditioning" and power brakes, because I now had a granddaughter. The Valiant had now done 136,000 miles. I bought a 1996 **Holden Acclaim** and joined the **Chrysler Club** in May 2004 for *Historic Registration*.

I don't drive it now because I think power steering has made me lazy and it is now securely housed at my son's place. Robert really looks after it, drives it when an extra car is needed and hopes to one day inherit it. Robert, Fiona and I have been in all *Bay to Birdwood* Classic Runs.

Maintenance

1971 30,391 miles, new muffler tail pipe

1991 Cobra car alarm fitted

2001 complete original engine overhaul

2005 first paint touch-up and polish

2012 rear shock absorbers replaced and alternator replaced

We love the car and think it still looks good in its original duco, upholstery and engine. The radio is one year younger. The odometer now reads 132,000 miles.

Thank you for asking me about my Valiant. It has been great for Robert, Fiona and I to reminisce about its prominent role in our lives and document its history.

I have really enjoyed the meetings and am grateful to have met the other attendees. In particular, I have made two very special friends, **Junette** and **Jeanette**.

– Claire Rowlands





Claire Rowlands











"A REAL PIECE OF HISTORY..."

In search of the great white whale... er, hippo. The mystery of the spear-gun turreted Chrysler by Chrysler hardtop from Mad Max 2 – probably the most famous hippo of all – continues to linger on today in 2017, almost thirty six years after the film!

Much of the principle shooting of **Mad Max 2** took place over twelve weeks in the winter of 1981 near Broken Hill, with many of the driving action sequences filmed at remote locations along the Barrier Highway to the South Australia border. For instance, the famous scene where the Pursuit Special rolls over and explodes was shot at Menindee Road on the Mundi Mundi Plains, just outside Broken Hill. Other scenes of the movie were shot at the Pinnacles, where the set of the gas mine compound was situated.

After production finished, reportedly most of the vehicles were stripped and scrapped, before being abandoned – and some buried – out in the desert at different places off the highway.

Rumours of the fate of the now-famous CxC have persisted over the decades since photos first surfaced of the wreck out on an emu farm near Broken Hill in 1999.

Then during the 2000s word had it that it was still out there. About that time other photos appeared showing the front windscreen, truck lights and doors going missing over the years – although otherwise the car generally looked much the same. Hence all the curiosity in it...

Apparently the owner of this isolated private property was always adamant that he didn't

want to sell the wreck, despite him never doing anything with it. The urban myth continues how eventually he started chasing away moviebuffs and car collectors alike with his shotgun.

These 'new' photos have recently appeared on the net – considered to be the most recent images by Facebookers (albeit purportedly taken around twenty years ago). Inciting the imagination of tin-hunters and stirring up much debate once again. Many folks hanging to know all the vital stats about this car.

The consensus of observers was that this CxC was an early build with a 265 Hemi, aircon and quarter windows – noting *"thumbwheel and factory air"* and *"see the Hemi's snout poking out of the extinguishers blast!"* From the bulkhead colour it was suggested that the car may have originally been Regency Blue, although to a few others it looked more like a deep maroon (maybe Deep Chartreuse) where the tail light cap was missing.

Mind you, the photos aren't perfectly clear and are therefore possibly quite misleading. Not the best place to judge the original colour, although later thinking concluded that the exterior colour was original.

"I can't see any evidence of overspray on the trims and its not exactly a careful respray."

While many hardtoppers would simply love to get ahold of that chrome trim, the priceless relic really should be saved and preserved in a collection somewhere. Indeed, it's amazing that it hasn't been placed under **Adrian's** care at the **Mad Max Museum** in Silverton.

Anyway, several Facebookers have since come forward and testify that the car is still – and has been – at the exact same location for over thirty five years. One bloke said he had *"no idea why anyone would think that all of a sudden it's gone."* And apparently it's a well known location, if you know where to look.

So now you can just walk up to it, huh?

Apparently, yes.

So someone get out to that emu farm and have a squiz at the plate. Or stick your head under the dash for the codes. And bring back paint scratchings for analysis! Save the hippo.

By the way, back in Issue 13 of **Torqueback**, **Movie Mopars: One**, I said the bonnet of this car had come from a **Cougar**, but I was mistaken. It was actually off a '66 **Pontiac** (which were assembled by **Holden** in Australia).

So for the record, I now stand corrected. D'oh!

– Dave H





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A HELLCAT-POWERED PICKUP?

In 2016, Jeep CEO Mike Manley confirmed the high-performance Trackhawk incarnation of the Grand Cherokee. Nobody actually really believed it though – until the factory-supercharged Jeep Grand Cherokee saloon debuted in April earlier this year at the New York Auto Show, when Dodge also unleashed the overly teased Challenger SRT Demon.

Now, as strange as it might sound, there is a buzz around the world about that FCA might be contemplating a **Grand Cherokee** pickup. And there's quite a few renders on the internet out there visualising a *Trackhawk* pickup truck, both in single and dual-cab forms. The bed wielder presented here is in four-door form, and check out a colour impression of a sportier single-cab on page 32.

Even if there never is a factory Hellcat powered **Jeep** like this, it still could be built without all that much effort, at least when compared to other concepts. We could certainly see an adventurous shop out there coming up with such a build, especially once the Trackhawk makes its debut as a mainstream offering.

In a bit of a far stretch, the image on page 32 makes us think of the Hellcat-hearted **Ram 1500** one-off. You know, the 707 hp monster built in Canada, which came to the world last summer (featured in our "Modern Mopars" issue). While the dual-cab below would make any tradie deliriously happy you'd reckon.

So? As for a Jeep pickup truck, it will probably only ever come out with a **Wrangler** badge. While the next generation of the Wrangler could debut later this year in the US, and a bed-wearing model should be introduced in mid-2018, we probably won't see it here. If we're lucky we'll get a **Ram**.

But, we can always dare to dream...



FOOTBALL PARK, WEST LAKES: SUNDAY JULY 2

The Street Machine Association of South Australia organised a high-profile thank you to Stephen Mulligan, the Minister of Transport, on Sunday 2nd July 2017 following the relaxing of laws surrounding historic registration. Over 1,000 cars attended the well organised display which took place on the lawns surrounding Football Park, West Lakes.

A group of 10 Chrysler car club members met at Seaton and travelled together to the event in convoy. A small CCCSA display was organised, handing out membership information. The change in the historic registration laws is expected to generate significant increase in membership for all car clubs. Whereas cars which had been modified from original were precluded from Historic Registration, now any street legal car over 30 years of age is eligible. Viva la revolucione!

Great news for anyone who could only justify registering their modified car for 3 months every year. Our special thanks and congratulations to SMASA president Glenn Stankevicius and their committee for enduring years of lobbying in leading the reforms campaign.

– Andrew I



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BACK TO TONSLEY, SUNDAY JULY 3

So there we were, the last Sunday in June when we traditionally hold our Historic Inspection and Membership Renewal Day. However; this one was different in many ways.

First of all, it was the last inspection day as we know it due to the relaxing of government requirements with conditional registration. Then there was the venue itself, the former **Chrysler Australia** factory; now the **Tonsley Precinct**. This has to be a first anywhere in the country; holding a car event where most of them were made or assembled.

The feedback I received was overwhelmingly positive – and why not?

Not only was the venue Chrysler's spiritual home, but everything was undercover which helped our inspectors no end as they didn't need to step outside to process cars. The setting itself was attractive with lots of available seating and well planned gardens throughout which made life comfortable for the attendees. We were gifted the use of a spacious vacant pod where our admin staff set themselves up and processed all the paperwork without having queues everywhere (or so I thought) and in air conditioned comfort.

As for those who came on the day; maybe it was my imagination but there seemed to be vehicles and members we don't usually see. So

many, actually. The overwhelming majority loved the venue and there were many who actually worked in the factory and took pride in showing where their various work stations were located.

Naturally, our volunteers deserve thanks for the effort they put in on the day. The admin team, headed up by **Stuart** with **Greg**, **Di** and **Karen**, along with our **Historic Inspectors** who ensured the wheels of bureaucracy turned smoothly. Also thanks go to the **Three Little Pods Cafe** for opening on the day. (Special mention goes to **Jim Bowles** who chatted them up in the first place). Further thanks should go to **Charles Lee** and **Chris Hastwell** who helped the smooth flow of vehicles in and out of the building. **Evan Lloyd** also wrangled **Channel 7** to do a human interest article for their Sunday News as well. Well done Evan; I hope you all saw it. And last but by no means least, **Di McAuley**, and **Bob McArthur** from **RenewalSA** who liaised with me to help make the event happen.

Best of all, the venue was free. You can't get any cheaper than that. All going well, we should be able to do this again.

– Hugh



NEIL FRANCIS



It was with great sadness that on behalf of the **CCCSA** I attended the funeral of **Neil Francis**, former *Head of Styling* at **CAL** and early **MMAL**, and a good mate from the **Sporting Car Club**, who succumbed to an aggressive leukaemia earlier this year.

Neil first joined Chrysler Australia in 1959 as a patternmaker and worked on styling for the **Charger** program. He eventually became Head of Styling there, before moving on to **Britax-Rainsfords** later in the 1980s, to become their *Head of Global Engineering*. Neil's genius in his field was certainly recognised internationally. After retirement, Neil immaculately restored a number of vehicles including a **Mercedes 230SL** and a 1914 **Napier**, winner of the 2010 **B2B Concourse**. Vale.

It was a very sad week that week. I expected to catch up with Bob Burke at Neil's funeral but surprisingly he wasn't there.

I then received an email that he had suffered a massive stroke on the weekend just prior to Neil's funeral, and was in hospital, unlikely to recover.

— Jason

BOB BURKE

Sadly, it was then confirmed that **Bob Burke**, former *Senior Engineer* for **Chrysler Australia** had (not long after) also passed away on the following Sunday night. While preparing for Neil's funeral, he had suffered a massive stroke a few days before and had fallen into a coma. Vale.

Bob was a senior engineer at Chrysler's engine plant at Lonsdale and actually supervised the assembly of the 340 V8 engines. Bob also developed the **ELB** computerised spark control system of the **Hemi Six** and V8 engines. He also built up a 340 four speed **Charger** for himself which is still in existence. Bob assisted **Gavin Farmer** and **Gary Bridger** with rewriting the the 340 V8 chapter in the **Hey Charger** and resolved a number of the outstanding anomalies in the story. He also wrote a timeline of events regarding the 340 which were reproduced on page 104 of the book, as well as the foreword with **Bob Hubbach**, the Charger's chief exterior stylist.

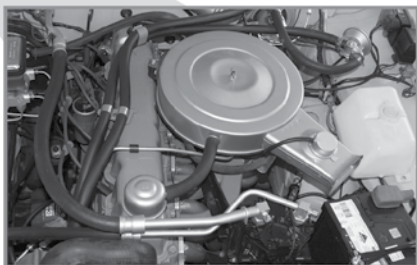
Just recently he provided some useful information for a VJ Charger **E49** story in **Australian Muscle Car** magazine. His sharp mind and clear memory of the Charger years will be sadly missed. Our best wishes and kindest regards to Bob's wife **Judy** and family.



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A PRETTY GOOD YARN...

This letter was written to the CCCSA by Wayne, a retired policeman who in the mid 1970s had a chance meeting with two interesting blokes from Adelaide on a fishing trip in Elliston, South Australia. Some folks you meet on holiday, hey? This is Wayne's story.

- Di

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have a bit of a strange ask.

On the 19.8.1977, I obtained a CL Valiant **Chrysler** sedan from **Blacker Motors** in Port Lincoln SA. The option codes: E33 - D20 - A41 - B15 - H31 - T15 - W36 - although they mean absolutely nothing to me. I have had Valiants since 1965 (AP5). I still have the above vehicle, it has done about 26,000 kms, and it is in good condition. I also have a 1979 CM sedan in the same condition, 60,000 kms. I am not a fanatic but just like Valiants.

Without getting into a boring story, just briefly in 1977 I spoke to two people in Elliston SA who were on a fishing trip. One an electrical engineer, the other a GP.

I had just bought a White Knight Charger two door coupe. I explained to the engineer that I was disappointed with what Chryslers had available at the time. He stated that his friend was in charge at Chryslers and he could get me what I wanted. Each option, A/C, etc., although power steering was an extra \$250. I stated how I wanted an orange colour with extra paint, a 265 (4.3L), a 4 speed floor-change, no console, plain dash, sport steering wheel and styled road wheels, no A/C or power steering.

Then, one Saturday in August 1977, I was just leaving Elliston to play footy at Minnipa, when the phone rang and this person said that "your car is ready". I made some vacant response. He explained that I had to go through a dealer, so I said Blacker Motors - but I was stunned. I had already just bought a new car. I did not know this person's name.

Geoff Blacker rang me and asked me how I got this car. Not wanting to get anyone in trouble I made some feeble response.

Anyway, the salesperson was a decent chap and gave me a good trade in for the **Charger**, and I had the car. The car cost \$7,400.

After all that, I am trying to find out if anyone from Chryslers who may know the story is still around. The Chrysler person's name may have been **Ian**. I may be 20-30 years too late. I thought someone from your club may know if any of the Chrysler personnel may still be around. I received a certificate with the car - I think saying only two were ever made like it. Needless to say the certificate was put away carefully (and never to be found again!).

It is a longwinded story, but at the time the car seemed too good to use so I bought another standard Valiant!

Any information would be appreciated.


Thank you,

Yours Sincerely

W.D. Baddams



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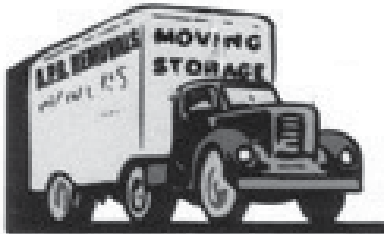
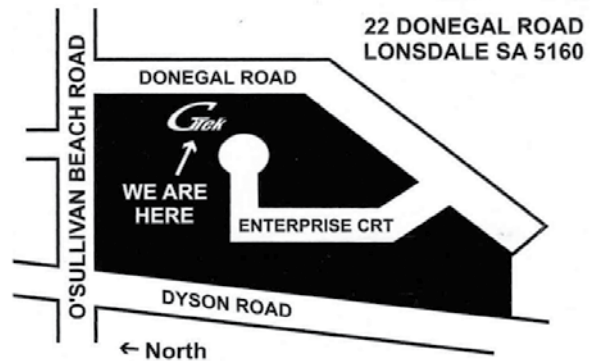
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It's a great weekend of Cornish Pasties, fairs, interesting things to see and of course, classic vehicles. The CCCSA had a good turn out with around 12 cars making the trip. Even **Frank Bergamin** made an appearance (and an impression!) with his blown **Charger**.

A group of us caught up for dinner at the **Weeroona Hotel** on the Saturday night, a great little country style pub with down to earth meals to boot.

Unfortunately, **Mr Plod** decided it was a good weekend to do some revenue raising from the tourists, so he set his traps at various locations around the region. Most of us avoided him, but he was a PEST to one of our members, who also backed into a post in his Charger!

– Iain





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SUNDAY MAY 7

A top day out to the Meadows Hotel for lunch, with some awesome cars and good company. Unfortunately we couldn't get all the cars at the front, but it was fantastic to see some new members and new faces. A great turn-out – well done guys and girls flying the Mopar flag!



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HISTORIC RACING MEET

MALLALA MOTORSPORT PARK, SUNDAY MAY 3





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We design and produce all our beers ourselves, with our own bare hands. Other brands claim to "hand crafted" but are mass produced, some pretend to be independent, but are owned by the multinationals, still others appear imported, but are contract brewed locally. Brewing real beer is good, honest, hard-work, and we don't pretend to be what we aren't. We're brewers, just brewers, not salesmen. We believe in truth in advertising, and a down-to-earth approach to marketing.

Our beers are naturally beautiful, not airbrushed into blemish-free shape. We work with the best resources nature can provide, supplied by the craftsmen who appreciate our philosophy of unadulterated freshness and sustainability. Our part is to carefully craft the beer, cajole it along its path from grain to glass, and present it at its finest to you.

Please continue this cycle with us in your enjoyment of these beers, being mindful of your environment and your neighbours. Put all your senses to work, into the pleasure of something good for you, good for us all. Above all, have fun drinking our beers, enjoy them in the company of good friends.

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ANGOVE FAMILY WINERY, APRIL 2

The McLaren Vale Vintage and Classic keeps getting bigger and better each year. The CCCSA was well represented again with a contingent of 15 cars from our club.

After marshalling at **Serafino** and enjoying a bacon and egg sanger for breakfast, the parade kicks off down the main street of McLaren Vale about 11am. The spectator numbers this year were huge, people standing five or six deep the entire length of the street, such a great sight to see so many people interested in our classic vehicles.

It doesn't take long to pass down the street then each club moves on to a different winery for the rest of the day. Our allocated venue this year was **Angoves**. For a change, lunch was well catered with hot pizza the go from the wood oven. Angoves even do a nice range of organic wines if you're ever down that way.

– Iain



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On our vineyards we grow grapes for flavour, not schedules and make wine for friends, not shareholders. Many scientists out there will be disappointed to learn that we trust in the wonderful perfection that nature offers and don't tamper with things that don't need fixing. After all humans have been making wine successfully for a really, really long time.

A natural approach to grape growing and wine making will produce charismatic wines that reflect the terroir and have distinct varietal characteristics. They may not be perfect, or taste the same from vintage to vintage, but every wine we produce will tell it's own unique story. We hope you enjoy drinking our wines as much as we have enjoyed making them for you.

– John and Sarae Adamopoulos



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Event	Date/Time	Location
SMASA Cruise	Saturday August 19, 7:30pm	Target, Fulham Gardens
The Get Down Show	Saturday August 19, 10am-4pm	1259 Main North Road, Para Hills West
CCCSA "Gawler/Barossa Mafia" Cruise and Lunch	Sunday August 27, 10:30am	Leave from Welland Plaza
CCCSA September 2017 Monthly Meeting <i>Monthly Meeting - come and join and chat to fellow Chrysler enthusiasts. Visitors welcome. Meetings are informal and friendly. Dinner available from 6pm prior to the meeting</i>	Tuesday September 5th, 7:30pm	West Adelaide Football Club, Richmond
Concours d'Lemons Downunder	Saturday September 23rd, 10am-3pm	Edwards Park: West Terrace, Adelaide parklands
Bay to Birdwood <i>Probably meet as a group somewhere along the route, but NOT at the start. TBA at September Monthly Meeting.</i>	Sunday September 24th	TBA - or contact the club
CCCSA October 2017 Monthly Meeting <i>Monthly Meeting - come and join and chat to fellow Chrysler enthusiasts. Visitors welcome. Meetings are informal and friendly. Dinner available from 6pm prior to the meeting</i>	Tuesday October 3rd, 7:30pm	West Adelaide Football Club, Richmond
Roseworthy Show N' Shine <i>See Facebook / Roseworthy Hotel</i>	Sunday October 15th, 10am-3pm	Roseworthy Hotel, Roseworthy
SMASA Show N'Shine <i>www.smasa.com.au</i>	Sunday October 29th, 10am-3pm	Regency Park Oval: South Road, Regency Park
CCCSA November 2017 Monthly Meeting <i>Monthly Meeting - come and join and chat to fellow Chrysler enthusiasts. Visitors welcome. Meetings are informal and friendly. Dinner available from 6pm prior to the meeting</i>	Tuesday November 7th, 7:30pm	West Adelaide Football Club, Richmond
25th SpringNats <i>www.autofest.com.au</i>	Weekend of November 24th-26th	Shepparton, VIC
Christmas Cruise	Weekend of December 2nd-3rd	Wallaroo (Copper Coast Cruise)
Adelaide Motorsport Festival <i>Hosted by the Sporting Car Club of SA</i>	Weekend of December 9th-10th	Victoria Park Racecourse

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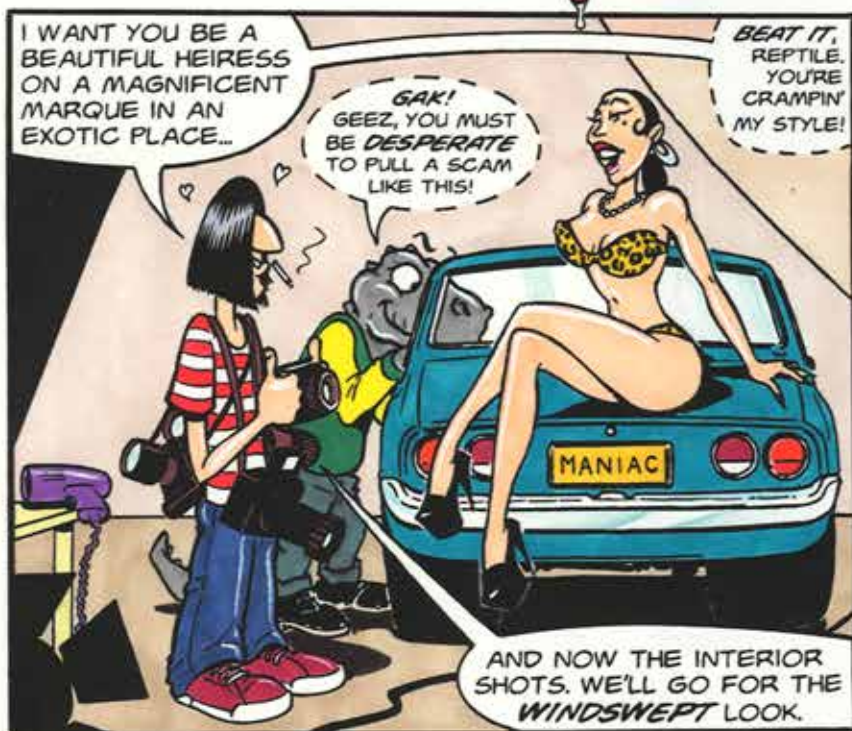
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