

**25TH**

**ANNIVERSARY**  
AMERICA'S PREMIER  
MOPAR MAGAZINE  
1983-2008

**SIX TO EIGHT: A-Body Big-Block Install**



# MOPAR



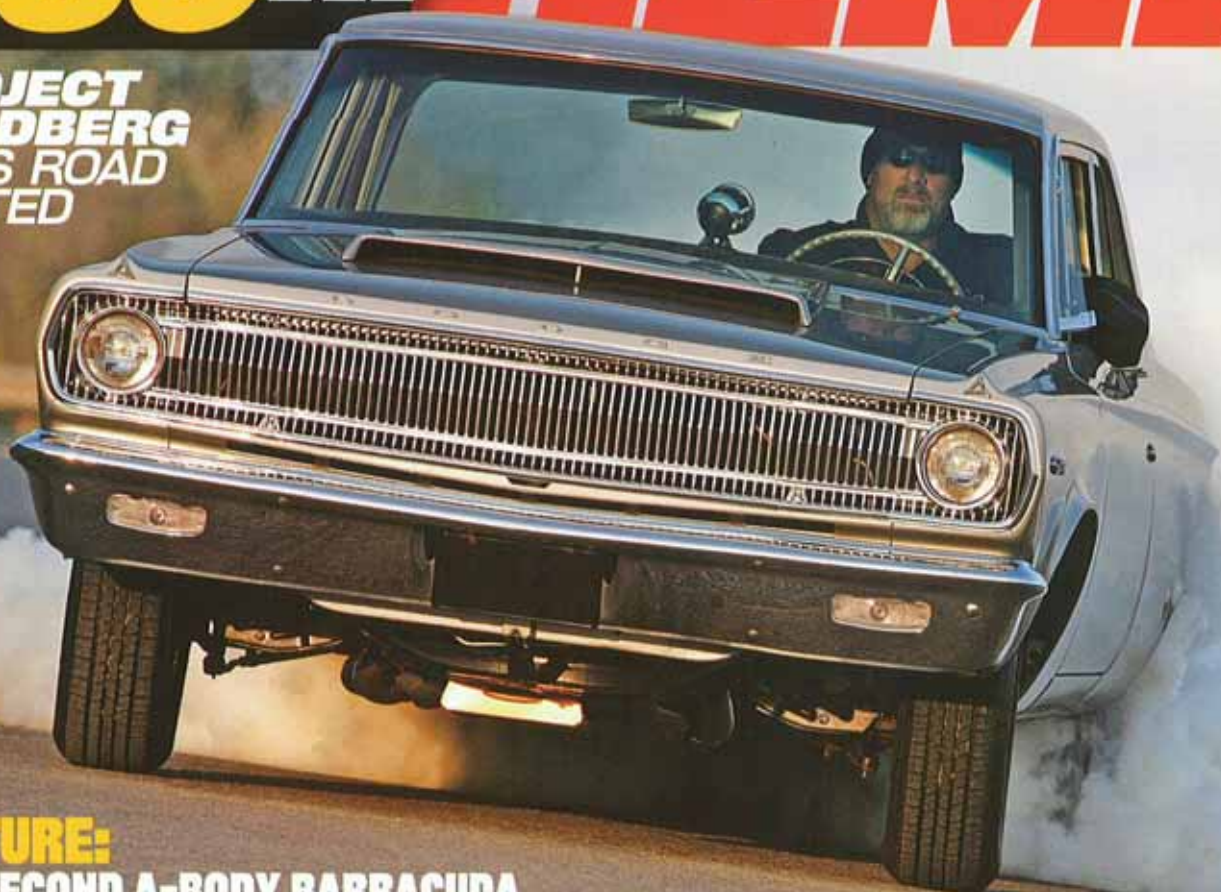
**15** **MUSCLE**  
READERS' RIDES

WWW.MOPARMUSCLEMAGAZINE.COM

NOVEMBER 2008

# 650HP HEMI

**PROJECT  
GOLDBERG  
GETS ROAD  
TESTED**



**FEATURE:**

● **10-SECOND A-BODY BARRACUDA  
STREET BEAST**

**HOT PART**

New E- and B-Body Consoles



**TECH YOU NEED!**

**LATE-MODEL TECH** COOL GLASS ROOF INSTALL

**SIX-PACK EFI** A NEW TWIST ON AN OLD IDEA

**A BUDGETARY BUILD** PART 2 OF OUR 318 SHORT-BLOCK ASSEMBLY

\$5.99 NOVEMBER 2008



0 70989 34958 2

A SOURCE INTERLINK MEDIA PUBLICATION

**PROJECT GOLDBERG**

# THE FINISHING TOUCHES

IT'S BAD AND IT'S FINISHED

**TEXT & PHOTOS:** ROBERT GENAT



# A

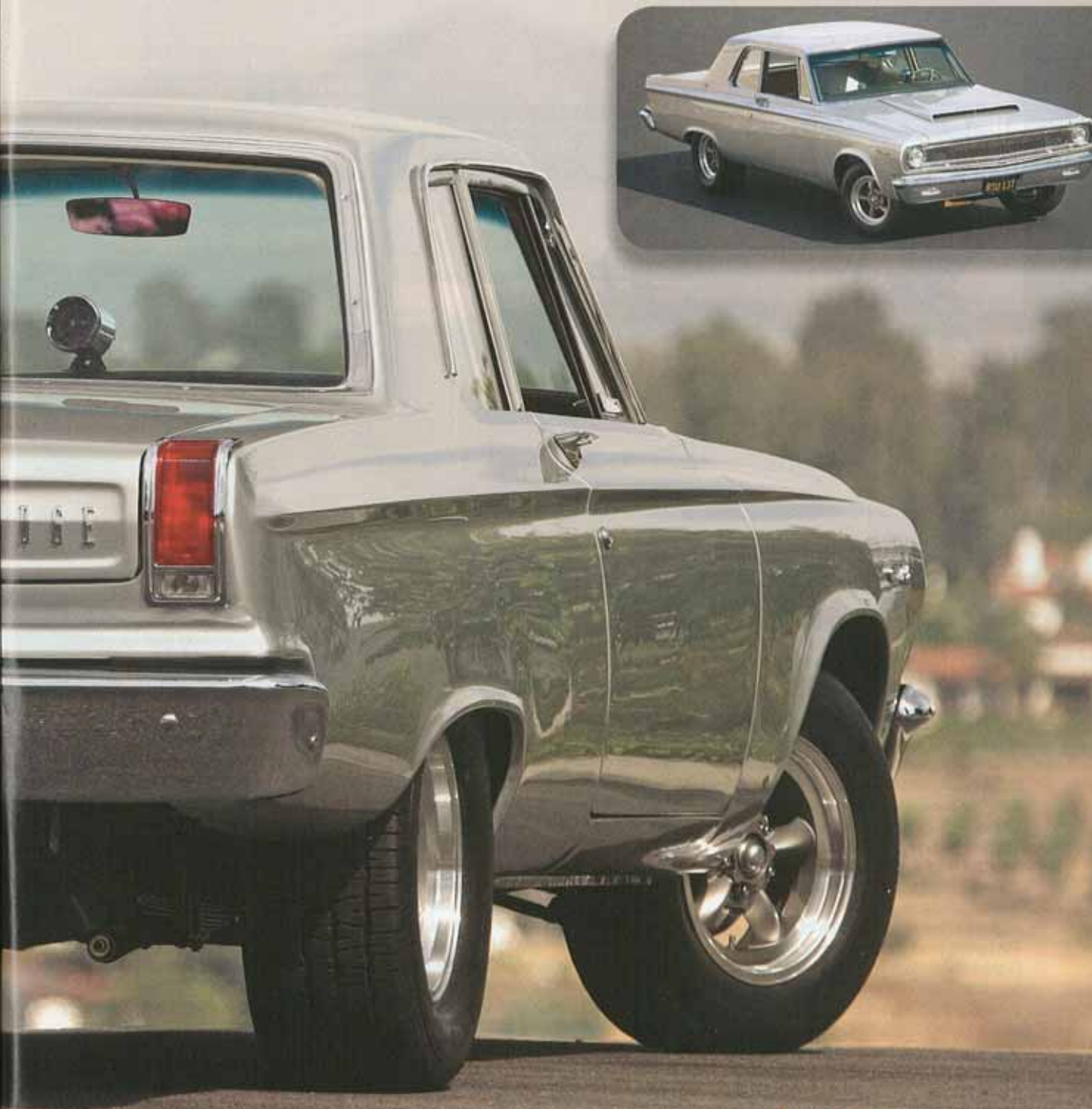
s you've seen on these pages, Bill Goldberg has built a '65 Dodge Coronet two-door sedan with a Hemi engine. It's quite a nice car, but the finishing touches transformed it from a Hemi-powered Coronet sedan to the undeniable look of a '65 factory A-990 Super Stock. The inspiration for its transformation into a race car look-alike was a photo Goldberg found on eBay of an original A-990 sedan owned and raced in 1965 by Richard Schroder. This photo became the roadmap for the period look he wanted for his Dodge.

## EXTERIOR

In 1964 and 1965, Chrysler used a large hood scoop with a rectangular opening on its Hemi cars. This scoop is as good or better than any "Hemi" fender emblem in defining what's under the hood—it's an icon for the '64 and '65 Hemi cars. Today, Kramer Automotive makes an excellent fiberglass reproduction of that scoop. The bottom flange has tabs on which J-nuts are fitted. The installation is straightforward and calls for centering the scoop on the hood with the rear edge of the scoop matching the rear edge of the hood. The outline of the scoop

was drawn on the hood with a grease pencil. With the scoop flipped over, a template was made of the mating surface and its tabs. This was placed on the hood, and the holes were drilled for the mounting screws. There is a small flange at top of the scoop for a J-nut for the center support. A piece of  $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch steel fuel line was cut to length for that support.

The Who's Next Hemi with its high-rise manifold sits high in the Dodge engine compartment. So high in fact, the vent tube on the Demon carburetor contacted the underside surface of the hood. The center of the carburetor was marked on the hood,





In 1965, the color was attractive and it included details in the seat covers and trim panels that added interest while not adding weight. The rear seat was deleted, and a cardboard panel covers the area where the seatback was previously located.



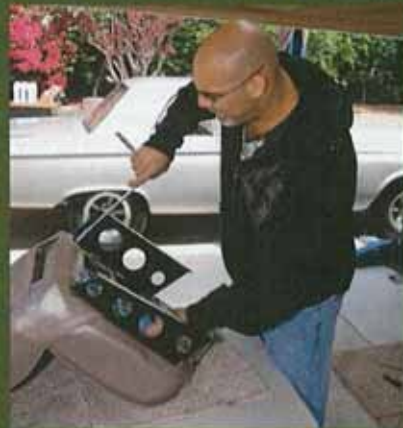
The instrument panel features a heater- and radio-delete. Also missing is the control for the blower switch; the hole has been capped with a decorative stainless steel plug. An era-correct Sun Super tach is attached to the top of the instrument panel—redline 6,500.

and a circle was drawn for the area to be cut away. The air cleaner selected was a 16-inch-diameter K&N unit designed to fit over the large 850 Demon carburetor. A slightly oblong hole was cut in the hood surface with a saber saw using a fine blade. The hole measures 17.5-inches front to back and 18.5-inches side to side. The extra half-inch on each side is to ensure the air cleaner will not contact the hood when the engine torques side to side on its mounts. The hood's inner structure was cut away by Orange County Rod 'N' Custom when the bodywork was being done. After the hole was cut in the hood's surface, Goldberg used a highly flexible, black plastic, door edge molding to cover the raw cut edge—a low-cost solution that gives a professionally finished look.

## INTERIOR

Chrysler created a functional, but bare bones, interior for its '65 A-990 cars. This '65 Coronet would be an exact reproduction of Chrysler's minimalist approach to race car interiors. Chrysler didn't feel that coat hooks, armrests, or sun visors were required for the original A-990 cars, and neither did Goldberg.

Gary Ball was selected to create the highly accurate door and quarter trim panels. Chrysler replaced the front bench seat with a pair of Dodge A100 van bucket seats, and Ball located a pair and expertly recovered them in the original Champagne colored vinyl in the original pattern. Chrysler attached these small bucket seats to the floor with lightweight fabricated aluminum brackets. Goldberg acquired a set of these



Chrysler attached the small bucket seats to the floor of the A-990 Dodges and Plymouths with a pair of fabricated aluminum brackets. There were no adjusters, but the brackets could be mounted to the floor through the original seat mounting holes in a forward or aft position. Here, Goldberg mounts a pair of Joe McCaron's reproduction brackets to the bottom of one of the seats.



With the driver-side bucket seat bolted to the floor in the rear-most stock position, Goldberg and his 6-foot, 4-inch frame felt too cramped to drive comfortably. He relocated the seat 3-inches rearward to a more comfortable driving position.

brackets from Joe McCaron. Once installed, these brackets provided no adjustment for the seat. In the rear-most installed position, Goldberg was so close to the steering wheel he felt as if he was driving his son's pedal car. He measured the distance from the seatback to the gas pedal on his daily driver. It scaled 43 inches—3 inches longer than the factory installed position of the buckets—so new holes were drilled in the floor, and reinforcements added to the attaching bolts to relocate the seat brackets 3-inches rearward. These brackets usually attach to the floor with two bolts each, but Goldberg added an additional bolt to each seat for safety. Now his 6-foot, 4-inch frame fits comfortably in the car.

Dodge also built the original A-990 cars without heaters or radios. Ebay was the



Like the rest of the car, the exhaust installation is simple but elegant. The relocated rear springs and large-diameter exhaust pipes prevent the installation of rear exiting pipes.

Because of the large rear wheelhouse (even without mini-tubs) it's easy to "over" tire the rear of the '65 B-Body, thereby skewing the car's proportions.

Other small items gleaned from the vintage photo include the absence of a sideview mirror and driver-side windshield wiper. These cars were only fitted with one wiper, but most racers removed it, and so did Goldberg. The stance on Schroder's car is slightly nose high, typical of the Super Stock cars of the era.



In 1965, Coronets came with quad headlights. A-990 cars did not and required the melding of multiple grilles. The headlight grille is one of the signature visual items on a '65 A-990 Dodge.

source for the original radio-delete panel, and Special T's Unlimited provided the rare heater-delete panel and refinished the chrome on the original instrument cluster. An era-correct, original, one-piece Sun Super tach was also found on eBay. It's mounted on top of the instrument panel, '65 style. No heater meant that there was no need for the blower switch so Chrysler engineers deleted it from the production A-990 cars. To cover the hole, they added a small plug. Goldberg found a similar plug at the local hardware store. Kramer provided the carpet and rear panel that covers the area normally occupied by the rear seatback.

## BATTERY

Starting in 1963, Chrysler engineers

relocated the batteries to the trunk on Super Stock cars, which helped with balance and traction. In 1965, Chrysler similarly relocated the battery on all its Dodge and Plymouth A-990 cars. In addition to relocating, they added the largest battery they could find. Kramer makes a complete relocation kit that includes the battery tray and all the heavy-duty cables required. Originally, Chrysler simply routed the positive cable over the top of the trunk mat and then under the carpet, exiting through the firewall. This routing was rather random and not very elegant. The positive cable that Kramer provided was long enough to be routed neatly across the inside of the rear taillight panel, and up and over the left wheelhouse, then along the sill plate to the firewall. Kramer also offers a small terminal block similar to the one Chrysler originally installed on the A-990 cars. It mounts on the lefthand wheelhouse and allows the installation of a shorter positive cable to be attached to the starter.

## WHEELS AND STANCE

The photo of Richard Schroder's original A-990 was again looked at to establish the wheel/tire combination and stance. The wheels on Schroder's car are American five-spoke sans center caps. Goldberg selected 6-inch-wide American Torq-Thrust wheels for the front and 7-inchers for the rear. Just as on Schroder's car, the center caps were left off. Because this car is designed to be driven, Goldberg selected radial tires: Fronts are 205/75-15; rears are BFG 275/60-15.

## GRILLE AND HEADLIGHTS

In 1965, Dodge did everything it could to save weight on its '64 and '65 Hemi race cars. Weight removal is one of those accumulative endeavors that adds up by removing many small components. One of the things Chrysler's engineering staff did that removed a few pounds of weight and made a significant visual statement to the '65 Dodge A-990s was to eliminate the inboard (high-beam) headlights. When they removed these lights, they cut the headlight bezels and spliced in another section of grille to fill the gap. This reconfigured headlight/grille became a signature element for the '65 Dodge A-990 race cars. Goldberg took the original grille, a spare grille, and two good original headlight bezels to the King of Trim in Hollywood, California. There, they cut and spliced the grilles exactly as Dodge engineers did decades ago and then bright dipped them to the original finish. At assembly, Goldberg pop riveted the headlight bezels to the grille, similar to the way it was assembled in 1965. The front of the radiator support on the production '65 Dodge cars was painted flat black to make the grille stand out. On the A-990 cars, the radiator supports were left body color. Goldberg made the decision to paint the radiator support black because he felt the silver body-color radiator support would not allow the grille to stand out. It's a small detail, but one that makes the unique grille work pop on Goldberg's Dodge.



## DRIVING GOLDBERG'S A-990

As an automotive journalist, I get to drive a lot of high-performance cars—Vipers, Z06 Corvettes, Hemi Road Runners, and new Shelby Mustangs. After the final photo shoot with Bill Goldberg and his Dodge, he asked me if I'd like to take it for a drive. He barely got the words out of his mouth before I grabbed the keys and made for the car.

When I got into Goldberg's Dodge, the first thing I noticed was the simplicity of the interior: no radio, heater, sun visors, back seat, or armrests—less is more. The A100 van bucket seat is small compared to one in a modern car. It almost feels like the seat on a forklift (yes, I've driven one of those, too). As documented, Goldberg moved the seat back 3 inches from its stock location to accommodate his 6-foot, 4-inch frame. I'm 6-foot and found the wheel and pedal location comfortable. Since we had just finished the burnout photos, the engine was still warm when I turned the key. The starter gave one long tug before it spun the engine and then it quickly exploded to life. "Exploded" is the best word I can think of because this 650hp Indy Cylinder Head Hemi doesn't simply start; it makes the grandest of entrances and lets you know that it's something special. The needle on the Sun tach was bouncing around 1,200 rpm at idle as I sat there acclimating myself to the car. As I looked to my left, Goldberg was standing there with a big grin on his face and said, "Run it as hard as you'd like." I'm sure the underlying thought was "If you break it, you buy it."

Years ago I had the chance to drive one of Bob Mosher's '65 Plymouth A-990 clones. It had a Dale Reed-built Hemi with a cross-ram and dual Holley carbs. I remember that car as being very sensitive to any throttle input and the automatic had to be shifted

manually. It was fun for the first five minutes of driving, and then it became a chore. Goldberg chose to have his transmission built so it could be driven fully automatic or shifted manually. I chose the full automatic approach—the less distractions the better when driving someone else's brand-new car. I dropped it into Drive and slowly motored off, trying to look as confident as possible, but I think Goldberg could see the beads of sweat forming on my forehead.

First impressions included how much I liked looking across the big Hemi hoodscope and how large this car is for a midsize. It's physically long and wide, but the car handles exceptionally well for its size. The ride is amazingly smooth, considering the front is jacked up and it has Super Stock springs in the rear. I'm sure the radial tires play a major part in the ride quality. I also liked how the Magnaflow exhaust note sets off car alarms as I drove past, but is not annoyingly loud inside.

After 10 or 15 minutes, I started to feel comfortable behind the wheel. This was scary because I was feeling like I wanted to pick a fight with a Viper, Z06 Corvette, or one of those snooty Southern California Porsche guys. I headed for the freeway, secretly hoping I would come across something—anything—I could race.

The freeway entrance ramp gave me a clear path to open it up for the first time. From a slow roll, I barely cracked the secondaries and within a few seconds was passing the 70-mph traffic as I merged and quickly left them behind. I've taken this same freeway entrance ramp in this manner with several new high-performance cars, but found that Goldberg's '65 Dodge handles as well or better in straight-line acceleration than the modern high-zoot sports cars. I

eased back on the throttle and settled into a righthand lane cruise with the tach indicating about 2,600 rpm. Oil pressure was steady at 60 psi, and the water temperature was 180 degrees. I didn't find anyone to race, but got several thumbs-up from people in other cars. On one long open stretch of freeway, I pressed down on the accelerator and watched as the speedometer quickly climbed to well over 100. It wanted to go faster, but my fear of the CHP and of having the car impounded (with a subsequent pounding from Goldberg) made me ease up. I was amazed at how smoothly this Hemi engine accelerated—no hesitation and no complaining in any rpm range. It just runs hard and begs for more.

Back on the surface streets, the engine was quite docile and could, with restraint, be driven like any other average passenger car. While stopped at a light, the torque converter gave a steady light tug when pedal pressure was required to keep the car from creeping and engine temperature edged up to 200 degrees; but as soon as traffic started to move, it settled back in the 180 range. The transmission shifts in traffic were firm but not harsh. While user friendly, this car never lets you forget that you're holding a hand grenade with the pin pulled.

On my way back to Goldberg's, I stopped to add the gas I had burned up on my drive. Even at \$5 a gallon for 91-grade pump gas, driving this car is a better bargain than any amusement park ride. While I was filling the tank, a guy in a new Charger SRT8 pulled in and got out to look at the car over. He asked if it was a Hemi, and I answered in the affirmative with the coolness of a professional poker player. He then said, "That is one bad mother!" I smiled and nodded as if the car were really mine. I wish.



The Muse for the build is this photo found on eBay of an original A-990.

## EXHAUST

Jim Warner, at Warner Muffler, installed the MagnaFlow stainless steel mufflers. The ones selected feature 3-inch inlets and outlets. Warner also added MagnaFlow's Tru-X crossover pipe. This crossover pipe features smooth radiuses that enhance noise cancellation. Without adequate room for full tailpipes, Warner suggested small turndowns at the back of the mufflers, cut at a 45-degree angle. If the downturns were cut at a 90-degree angle, they would act like a pair of leaf blowers kicking up massive amounts of dust. This angle also reduces the resonance created between the ground and floorpan that a 90-degree pipe would create.

## ON THE ROAD

The early shakedown drives were exceptionally trouble free. Goldberg found that the Demon 850 carb was sensitive to any kind of adjustment as compared to a Holley. This sensitivity became a plus in tuning the engine for street driving when it became apparent that the big Hemi engine could be driven slowly through city traffic without any problems. "This car feels and drives a lot like my Candymatic '63 Dodge, except it's much more civilized," says Goldberg. The only problem that cropped up was an overheating situation in heavy city traffic on a 90-degree day when the engine temperature reached 250 degrees. A simple 1-inch fan spacer solved the problem, and the stout Indy Cylinder Head Hemi shook off the high-temperature soak without any damage.

Using amazing restraint, Goldberg put about 200 easy miles on the car so all the moving parts would be well broken in before he started to hammer it. At that point, the oil and filter were changed; all of the other fluids checked; and while the car was on the rack, every fastener was checked for tightness.

With fresh oil and a full preflight, Goldberg was ready to see if this Goldberg Who's Next Hemi would stand up to the kind of punishment he could dish out. For the car-to-car photo shoot we went out on the freeway. Goldberg's enjoyment of the car was evident by the nonstop smile on his face. From my point of view in the next lane, this car looked fantastic at speed. The stance is perfect, and at 70 mph, the big Hemi was sounding great. As soon as I finished shooting the photos, I gave Goldberg the thumbs up so he would know I got my shots. He gave us a show by flooring it, and with a mighty Hemi roar, the front end kicked up another inch or two, and he left us in the dust.

Goldberg is quite pleased with all aspects of his A-990 Dodge. He says, "I can't thank the guys at YearOne enough for their help with dozens of small parts, and thanks to my friend Charlie Blankenship, who introduced me to some of the top Mopar suppliers in the country whose components I used to make this one killer car."

*Over a couple of past issues, we brought you articles about the buildup of Bill Goldberg's A-990 clone, but there is a lot we just didn't have room for in print, so we put a lot of unused images at [www.moparmuscle.com](http://www.moparmuscle.com). Check them out! —Ed. **MM***

## SOURCES

### A-990 INTERIOR

**GARY BALL**  
SYRACUSE, IN  
574/529-0850

### A-990 SEAT BRACKETS

**JOE MCCARON**  
AZUSA, CA  
626/827-9164

### A-990 SPECIFIC COMPONENTS

**KRAMER AUTOMOTIVE SPECIALTIES**  
HERMAN, PA  
724/285-5566  
KRAMERAUTO.COM

### BRITE DIP OF ALUMINUM TRIM AND GRILLE MODIFICATION, KING OF TRIM

**KING OF TRIM**  
NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CA  
818/326-6924  
KINGOFTRIM.COM

### EXHAUST INSTALL WARNER'S MUFFLER

**WARNER'S MUFFLER**  
OCEANSIDE, CA  
760/433-2240

### EXHAUST SYSTEM MAGNAFLOW PERFORMANCE EXHAUST

**MAGNAFLOW PERFORMANCE EXHAUST**  
RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA, CA  
800/932-8664  
MAGNAFLOW.COM

### HEATER-DELETE PANEL SPECIAL T'S UNLIMITED

**SPECIAL T'S UNLIMITED**  
PROSPECT HTS., IL  
847/255-5494  
SPECIAL-TS.TRIPOD.COM

### MISC. COMPONENTS YEAR ONE

**YEAR ONE**  
BRASELTON, GA  
800/932-7663  
YEARONE.COM

### WHEELS AMERICAN RACING

**AMERICAN RACING**  
RANCHO DOMINGUEZ, CA  
AMERICANRACING.COM