

'72 Dodge Demon..... by Jeff and Liz Carter



It all began in 1997 a few months after opening the new shop. A phone call, a trip to Austin, and \$300 netted a 1972 Dodge Demon desperately in need of attention. It had a slant-6 that didn't run, the under-hood area had the distinct rust color of an engine that burst a hose or radiator, in fact it had been run with the upper radiator hose missing.

The original seats were missing, replaced with electric Cadillac buckets that were mounted poorly. The vinyl and metal surfaces had been painted white with a spray can and had not been cleaned for quite some time. The right rear quarter glass had been etched with what appeared to be a previous owner's favorite tattoo.

The truck was rusted out as well as the quarter panels and it leaked around the lower corners of both front and rear windows. The grill was all busted out and the bumpers were in bad shape. All-in-all the car was not a pretty sight.

The first thing to do was to get rid of those items that would not get used. Out came the slant-6 and the Cadillac seats. Next the car was completely stripped. The glass was removed, the dash taken out as was the wiring harness (which was trash) and the pedals. The hood, truck, doors, fenders, and bumpers were also taken off of the car. Everything was removed until there was just a shell with four wheels.

Now it was time to start the cleaning and rebuilding process. Everything on the car was reconditioned, every nut, bolt, screw, or other part was completely cleaned or replaced with new. Countless hours were spent in the glass bead cabinet, and solvent tank. If something didn't turn out the way it should, a replacement was found from a donor car. In all, three different cars would eventually be used to create the car you see here.

The body had all rust removed and patch panels installed in the rear quarters. The entire trunk floor was replaced and the under hood area and interior were sand blasted. The best available body panels were matched to the shell and bolted on and the car was placed under a cover while some of the mechanicals were done.

A stock 340 was assembled with a Mopar Performance reproduction camshaft, balanced and topped off with a Edelbrock Performer intake manifold, port matched to the 340 X-heads, and a Carter carburetor.

Backing the potent small block is a 727 automatic transmission with a reverse-pattern, manual-shift valve body with a 3500 RPM stall converter and a B&M ratchet shifter. The power ends up going through an 8 3/4 rear end with 3.91 gears and a clutch style limited slip differential riding on super stock springs.

The car retains the original 5 x 4" bolt pattern on all corners with Cragar SS wheels and BF Goodrich T/A radial tires. Summit racing finally provided the wheels after 8 months of back order time.

The car was sent to the body shop in the spring of 1999 where all the body work was completed and the Moulan Rouge (Panther Pink) paint and Mr. Norms style striping were applied.

The car returned from the body shop and was ready for reassembly. The bumpers and other trip pieces were rechromed or polished and the grill was pieced together for various parts and painstakingly painted. The dash was reinstalled and the glass was put back in.

The rear end was assembled out of the car complete with leaf springs and installed as a single unit. The same thing is true of the engine, transmission, headers and K-member were installed from the bottom of the car. The engine compartment did not suffer a single scratch.

Next was the under-dash area and wiring harness. The wiring harness was made up from the harnesses of a number of different cars, and when all was grounded properly everything worked fine. The dash was cut and fitted with a CD player with front and rear speakers. The front utilizes two small speakers mounted side-by-side in the original speaker mounting bracket giving true stereo sound without cutting up the car. The rear uses a pair of Jensen 6" X 9" deck mounted speakers.

The console is hand fitted and features the previously mentioned B&M shifter in place of the stock unit. It is amazing what can be done with a die grinder and an old console. The seats and carpets were supplied by Year One as were many of the rubber and plastic pieces.

What started out as a project to build just a street car turned into a 2 year, 3,000 plus hour, labor of love resulting in the car you see here. It has only been finished since September 15 and has already garnered 3 trophies at car shows. Its first week out it got second place in A-body Dodge Modified and the Houston Raceway Park Managers Choice Award at the Houston MOPAR Show and Race. The very next week, it took first place in 65-76 A-Body Dodge at the San Antonio MOPAR show. An incredible start for an awesome car. See you on the street.

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