

CAR OF THE QUARTER . . .

'70 Dodge Charger..... by Ray Love



Well, I guess my story starts back in the spring of '93... My wife suggested that I needed a hobby, and as I had always loved cars, I decided to get one to work on. I've had several different types, mostly Corvettes and no Mopars, but I thought this time I would get one in which the whole family could ride.

Remembering the movie 'Bullit', I decided I wanted one of those cars with the gas cap on top of the fender. After some research, I decided that the 1969 Charger was the model I wanted. I looked at one over 100 miles away. The owner told me over the phone that I could look at it, but not drive it as it had been stored (in pristine condition) for several years, it was un-registered and he didn't want to put miles on the odometer. Only \$ 4,000. After driving the distance, I found a Charger that his chickens called home, black with one red fender, running on 6 cylinders and bald tires and very rusty. I skipped that one. I started thinking maybe a Charger was out of my price range.

After about 3 or 4 months, a friend had spotted a Charger parked in front of a pizza place with a for sale on it. The passenger door had been replaced, there was a long rip in the sheet metal on the right rear quarter panel, but it was registered, inspected and the teenage owner drove it daily. He was on his way to college in the fall and wanted something that got better mileage (no kidding). We negotiated a

price; somewhere between what he wanted and what I wanted to pay. The bad news was that it was a '70 instead of a '69, the front bumper was bent, there were these two stripes around its butt and it had those ugly fake scoops on the doors. It said 'R/T' all over it, but I didn't know what that meant. The good news was it had a healthy 440 and a radio that worked.

A few weeks later, I saw some old Mopars on display at a dealership on 410 and Bandera, so I stopped to see if anybody could tell me anything about my Dodge. I met a guy with a Coronet with flames on it (I like flame jobs, so the guy couldn't be too bad). Turns out it was Danny Johnson. He talked with me for awhile and gave me the phone number for some guy named Wes. I met up with Wes the day of the Helotes Car Show in the fall of '93 in the Helotes Bank parking lot and paid my dues. (And I've been paying 'em ever since, if you know Wes.)

That day I told Wes about my plans for the car, including the fact that I saw going to take those stupid scoops off the sides. After all, The General Lee didn't have fake scoops. I've had plenty of cars with scoops, but they never were fake. Then he goes on and on about how it would desecrate the car because it was an 'R/T'. So, I copied down all the numbers and checked them out. It wasn't an R/T; someone had just gone to a lot of trouble to make it into one. It was originally a 383 car. So off came the scoops. The one on the driver's side was

real Mopar; the other one wasn't. But the 440 was real.

I got another front bumper and grille from Pick-and-Pull, put on a new rear quarter panel from Year One, \$ 50 worth of bondo, some paint and new vinyl top. I had the car painted white so I could use Liquid Paper to touch it up. The paint job cost me \$ 20 and a six-pack. Since I drank four of the beers, it looked pretty good, at the time. At least it was all one color. I got it finished just in time for the '94 Charger Meet. Got to sell those scoops there, too. That covered my bondo and paint job, so I was happy.

My plans are to re-build the transmission and rear end, then replace the left rear quarter with one from Year One, and re-paint it white again (only better).

Now I've had my 1970 Charger for a few years, which is more than I can say for the wife, and it's really grown on me. Now I actually like it better than the '68's and '69's. And I've even admired those scoops on other '70's I seen. Maybe I should have held onto them.

I owe my thanks to Wayne Keller, Phil Guidry, Wes Pieper and especially my friend Danny Phelps for the help they've given me on the car. And Wes, I do know how to put the lid on a Catsup bottle, if it's not up-side-down.

Remember, "It takes a Mopar
to catch a Mopar"