

CAR OF THE QUARTER

1970 PLYMOUTH ROADRUNNER



by Ronnie Rohde

In early 2010, I started getting serious about finding myself another Roadrunner after being without a car for 30 years. Long, long ago, in 1972 I was a sophomore in high school and was lucky enough to have bought a rare canary yellow 1969 Roadrunner with white interior. The car was rare not only for the color combination but because it came with factory ac, am/fm radio and, a two tone bench seat. What made the car known around town was the massive 440ci motor loaded with a 513 lift cam, aluminum intake, Holly 750 carburetor, Mallory dual point ignition, and Hooker Headers tied to Hemi Mufflers that were geared up with a 410 Sure Grip Dana rear end and a 4 speed manual transmission that would lay rubber in every gear. Sadly I sold the car in 1978 and parted ways with those wild times for a more sensible life with a steady construction job and gearing towards starting a family. I was married to the love of my life Mary in 1980 and was blessed with four wonderful children that really changed our priorities through the years to sports and raising show cattle for ag projects. Now 33 years later we've got 11 grandkids and 2 more on the way and now is papa's time to reignite a faded hobby.



So now here we are in August of 2011 when my son comes across this Lime Green 1970 Roadrunner on Ebay and with no reserve; that no reserve really got me thinking that it might be time to relive some of those younger days. After studying all the photos and reading through all the information on the car everything was looking pretty good. With some encouragement from my son and a chat with my wife, we threw out a bid on the car and two days later owned what we believed to be a pretty good deal at \$17,000. Six weeks later the car shipped and when the doors opened up, my heart sank with disappointment as this was not the car I saw in the photos that I bought. As it turns out, the information wasn't completely accurate or complete and I believe that the photos listed were younger glamour shots of the car with an earlier fresh paint job. So here I am thinking I had a deal when the old saying bites again, "if it's too good to be true, might just be and in the end, you're going to get what you pay for". Well with the lesson

learned, I was left to sell the car or build it back. I couldn't sell the car for what I've got in it, I thought and I'd like to at least burn the tires once. Fortunately, I had met Paul Gaspard, who convinced me that while I might have paid too much, that I've got the start of something really cool. Paul agreed to take the car in and help me to remember how all the parts go back together since it had been so long since I had work on a car. After an extensive review and more heartache, we ended up replacing nearly the entire drive line, brake system, exhaust system, springs, rear end, grill, bumpers, shocks, motor, transmission, fuel system, and a problematic electrical system. While replacing nearly everything of importance on the car, Paul introduced me to his friend and paint consultant Dewey Perankovich. Dewey changed the game on this Roadrunner with a wet sand and buff that seem to have never been done originally that really brought the paint back to life.



Alright now for the nuts and bolts; I mentioned that we changed nearly everything of importance, so in doing so let me tell you this may get a little lengthy. Most importantly yet oddly enough, we pulled the 1978 440ci doggie motor out and replaced it with a rebuilt 1970 383ci; yes I went to a smaller motor that would grab the RPMs quicker with the shorter stroke giving me the zip through the gears. The 70' model rebuilt stock short block with 8.75 compression was equipped with a comp 511 inch solid lift cam and set of Edelbrock Performance Aluminum RPM heads. To breathe life into the monster, we installed an Edelbrock Victor Aluminum intake manifold with a Holly 750 carburetor and MSD ignition system. The transmission is a 727 torque flight with a stall speed converter going into an 8 3/4" Sure Grip rear end with 391 gears loaded with a set of super stock springs. If you have the option, go with the TTI headers and 3" exhaust system that really makes this car sing.

Finally after a lengthy and expensive lesson in buying and rebuilding a muscle car, the car has been brought back to life in 2013! WOW!, I had forgotten what it was like to drive a "real" car, and all

the memories came rushing back. I would like to mention a special thanks to all those who helped me through the process of rebuilding a mess of a car. I'd like to thank Dewey Perankovich for the assistance with the paint, Pat Kotzur for his expertise in rebuilding the 727 transmissions, and Josh Gaspard for the welding and fabrication of frame connectors and brackets. A big thanks to Paul Gaspard who mainly orchestrated the work on the car and encouraged me to push on with the rebuild of this car and who helped allow me to relive my dream of once again owning and living those younger days of muscle cars thru him and his friends. Last and most importantly, I have to thank my wife, Mary, for having the patience with me throughout the entire challenging process of disappointments in anticipation of the end result. Thanks to everyone for all your support in making my 1970 Plymouth Roadrunner your Mopar car of the quarter. I look forward to meeting all of you at the many car shows in the coming years.

