

1969 Ford Torino Talladega



The Ford Torino Talladega was a car produced by the Ford Motor Company during 1969 only. Named after the Talladega Superspeedway racetrack in Alabama, it was a special racing version of the Ford Torino produced specifically to make Ford competitive in NASCAR racing, and was sold to the public only because homologation rules required a certain number of sales to the public. 754 cars were built, including prototypes; production examples were constructed during January and February 1969 at Ford's Atlanta, Georgia plant.

The car was based on the Fairlane 500 "Sportsroof" (Ford's trade name for a fastback) 2-door hardtop. To make the car more aerodynamic at speed, a sleeker front section was added. Regular production Fairlanes and Torinos had a then-fashionable inset grille and headlights, which fared poorly in the wind tunnel. The Torino Talladega replaced this nose with one extended by six inches, with a flush-mounted grille on a more rounded front end. The close-fitting bumper was actually a rear bumper cut and reshaped to fit the front end. The rocker panels were reshaped and rolled to allow Ford to run the racing cars closer to the ground within NASCAR rules.

Racing versions of the car were fitted with the Ford Boss 429 engine, the Ford 427 Cammer having been banned by NASCAR. Unusually, Ford homologated the engine separately from the car it was to race in; production Talladegas received the Ford 428

Cobra Jet, which while powerful was not intended as a racing engine, while the racing engines were installed in the limited-production Ford Mustang Boss 429.

The only option on the production vehicles was the color; choices were Wimbledon White (286 built), Royal Maroon (258 built) or Presidential Blue (199 built) above.

The Torino Talladega did exactly what Ford hoped on the racing circuit, winning 29 Grand National titles and the 1969 championship. Chrysler's initial competitor was the Dodge Charger 500, which proved inferior to the Talladega; the later Dodge Charger Daytona and Plymouth Superbird were more effective competition. After the 1970 season, NASCAR effectively banned the "aero cars" and the Talladega's competitive history was over.

Today, a Torino Talladega is a fairly collectible car, although for some reason their values have not risen nearly as high as the Mopar "aero cars" - possibly the sheer outrageousness of the Charger Daytona and Superbird, with their huge rear wings, have eclipsed the far more subtle Torino Talladega.

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