

1969 Dodge Super Bee 440-6Pack



The original Super Bee was based on the Dodge Coronet. It was a two-door coupe model only and was produced from 1968 through 1970. It was the company's low-priced muscle car, cousin of the Plymouth Road Runner, and was priced at \$3,027. Plymouth Division had introduced the Road Runner first and the car sold well, prompting Dodge Division General Manager Robert McCurry to have the Dodge Styling office create a competitor. During that time, both divisions were competing to be the "Chrysler Performance Division". The designers were assigned the task of creating a name and identity for the Dodge version. Senior designer Harvey J Winn won the "contest" with the name Super Bee and a new logo design around the Dodge "Scat Pack" Bee medallion. The first Super Bee was based on a '68 Coronet convertible. The show car was built at Alexander Brothers Custom Shop under Winn's direction and was introduced at the 1968 Detroit Auto Show.

Although the two cars are very similar in external appearance, the Super Bee was slightly heavier (approx 65 lbs) and rode on a 117-inch (3,000 mm) wheelbase compared to the Road Runner's 116-inch (2,900 mm) wheelbase. In addition to the slight aesthetic external differences, such as larger rear wheel openings, the bumble bee tailstripe and fancier grille and taillight ornamentation, the Super Bee also used actual diecast chrome plated "Bee" medallions. These three-dimensional medallions were prominently mounted in a raised position in the grille/hood area and the trunklid/taillight area of the car throughout the first three years of production and added a touch of class and panache. The interior of the Super Bee borrowed the race car-inspired and more sophisticated gauge and speedometer dash cluster from the Dodge Charger while the four-speed cars received an actual Hurst Competition-Plus shifter with Hurst linkage, compared to the budget-minded Road Runner's less expensive Inland shifter and linkage. All these niceties did add to the higher purchase cost of the Super Bee compared to its Plymouth cousin and ultimately affected its sales numbers over the years it was produced. The Super Bee, like nearly all Chrysler musclecars of that era was available with the Hemi engine, however this option raised the price by 33% and only 125 were sold. The 1968 model only came as a two-door coupe and two engine options, the base 335 hp (250 kW) 383 Magnum, and the 426 Hemi rated at 425 hp (317 kW).

The Super Bee included a heavy-duty suspension, an optional Mopar A-833 four-speed manual transmission, and high-performance tires. Outside, a stripe (with the bee logo) was wrapped around the tail.

A hardtop version joined the existing pillared coupe body for 1969, and a new optional twin-scooped air induction hood was now available and became known as the "Ramcharger". This particular option was coded N-96 and was the counterpart to the Plymouth Road Runner's "Coyote Duster" air induction hood. The Super Bee's "Ramcharger" hood featured forward-facing scoops which were

far more efficient than the Road Runner's "twin vents" which merely lay flat on the hood, not forcing air in to the carburetor(s) as the Super Bee's did. Regardless of whether it was a Road Runner or Super Bee, the N-96 option commands immediate, extra respect whether it was at a stoplight or at the ever-present, modern day collector car auctions, as this option will drive up the selling price over a non N-96 equipped car. A "six-pack" (three two-barrel carburetors) version of Dodge's 440 cubic inch engine was added to the offering list mid-year. This option fell half-way between the standard engine and the Hemi as a \$463 option. The 1969 model year gave Chrysler customers several engines to choose from. The base 383 hp (high performance), 440 Six Pack, and the 426 Hemi. The 440 Magnum (4bbl) was not an available option, and was reserved for the Coronet R/T. For 1970 the Super Bee received a cosmetic redesign and was given a new front end that consisted of a twin-looped front bumper that Dodge PR referred to as "bumble bee wings". Sales plummeted for the year, but ironically this particular design change is what makes it the most popular year of Super Bee to own in present day. Despite the new looks, the engine choices, as well as the "ramcharger" hood carried over from 1969. The 1970 cars from Dodge were chock-full of new and improved options; for example: a "double hockey stick stripe" variant of the bumble stripe was offered in addition to new high-back bucket seats, steering column-mounted ignition as well as a "pistol-grip" Hurst shifter on four-speed models.

2nd Generation Dodge Super Bee

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