

## 1970 Dodge Challenger TransAM



The Challenger is described in a book about 1960s American cars as Dodge's "answer to the Mustang and Camaro." It was one of two Chrysler E-body cars, the other being the slightly smaller Plymouth Barracuda. "Both the Challenger and Barracuda were available in a staggering number of trim and option levels" and were intended "to compete against cars like the Chevrolet Camaro and Ford Mustang, and to do it while offering virtually every engine in Chrysler's inventory."

In 1970 Dodge introduced the SE (Special Edition) Dodge Challenger T/A (Trans Am), with a sport "A" rear window. 1970 was the only year this trim package was produced. In order to race in the Sports Car Club of America's Trans American Sedan Championship, it built a street version of its race car (just like Plymouth with its Plymouth 'Cuda AAR) which it called the Dodge Challenger T/A (Trans Am). Although race cars ran a modified version of the 340, street versions took the 340 and added a trio of two-barrel carburetors atop an Edelbrock

aluminum intake manifold, creating the 340 Six Pack. Dodge rated the 340 Six Pack at 290 bhp (216.3 kW), only 15 bhp (11 kW) more than the original 340 engine. It breathed air through a super-sized air scoop molded into the pinned down, hinged matte-black fiberglass hood. Low-restriction dual exhausts ran to the stock muffler location under the trunk, and then reversed direction to exit in chrome tipped "megaphone" outlets in front of the rear wheels. Options included a TorqueFlite automatic or pistol-grip Hurst-shifted four-speed transmission, 3.55:1 or 3.90:1 gears, as well as manual or power steering. Front disc brakes were standard. The special Rally suspension used heavy duty parts and increased the camber of the rear springs. The T/A was among the first production vehicles to use different size tires front and rear: E60x15 fronts, and G60x15 in back. The modified camber elevated the tail enough to clear the rear rubber and its side exhaust outlets, thick side stripes, bold ID graphics, a fiberglass ducktail rear spoiler, as well as a fiberglass front spoiler added to the image. The interior was strictly stock Challenger. Unfortunately, the race Challenger T/A was not competitive, due to the fact that they had to be large enough to accommodate engines as large as the 426 Hemi, and 440, the street version suffered from severe understeer in fast corners. It could turn mid 14s in the quarter mile, which would do any small block muscle car proud. The T/A would only be available for 1970 as Dodge pulled out of Trans Am racing. Only 2,142 T/As were made. A 1971 model using the 340 engine with a 4-barrel carburetor was planned and appeared in period advertising, but was not produced. However they were "a rather late response to the muscle car wave the Ford Mustang had started." The author of a book about "Hemi"-powered muscle cars says that the Challenger was conceived in the late 1960s as Dodge's equivalent of the Plymouth Barracuda.

The Challenger's longer wheelbase, larger dimensions and more luxurious interior were prompted by the launch of the 1967 Mercury Cougar, likewise a

bigger, more luxurious and more expensive muscle car aimed at affluent young American buyers.



1970 Dodge Challenger R/T

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