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Chevy Blazer K/5



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WHEELS OF FURY



'57 Plymouth Fury
#AW272

**Don't miss these
NEW 1:18 releases
from Auto World!**

Auto World's new 1:18 '57 Plymouth Fury is all the rage.

The Fury was a sub-series of the Plymouth Belvedere from 1956 through 1958. For both '56 and '57, it was sold only in Sand Dune White as a two-door hardtop with gold anodized aluminum trim. The 1957 models were restyled making them longer, wider, large vertical tailfins, and a new torsion bar front suspension replacing the previous coil springs.

Under the hood was a new powerplant for 1957—the V-800 318ci engine, complete with dual 4bbl carbs, producing 290 hp. This engine was unique to Plymouth for both 1957 and 1958, but other Chrysler vehicles began using it in 1959. This was the highest output version of the Chrysler "A" engine.

Auto World replicates this Plymouth in furious detail from the opulent trim to the commanding 318 engine under the hood.

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'57 Chevy Cameo
#AW287



'47 Cadillac Series 62
#AW273

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Starring roles and close calls



Photo courtesy of Ford Media Center



Photo courtesy of GM Media Archive

One of the responsibilities I take most seriously in putting together an issue of *DCX* (and the thing I most frequently second-guess!) is weighing the balance of competing subjects and interests. There are only so many pages, and trying to decide how to divvy those up to make readers happy ties me in knots! Sometimes it comes down to deciding between a popular mainstream subject and giving some attention to a less broad category that happens to be the most compelling or newsworthy story of the moment. Take this issue as a perfect example. The Super Sport feature takes on a perennial favorite in Chevy's most iconic muscle car brand. That story is always going to be a hit and it's always going to be relevant. But the flip side of that is that it's kind of timeless—meaning it won't ever be the kind of story that is now or never! Contrast that with the Bronco v Blazer story. With its much-ballyhooed return after 25 years, to say nothing of its captivating retro-modern looks and unprecedented off-road chops, the 2021 Bronco is having a spotlight moment right now. And then there's

ACME's new '69 Blazer—a first-year K/5 has been on a lot of collectors' wish lists for a long time. After two years of anticipation, the model is finally here, making it one of the top news stories in the world of diecast right now...which left me with the dilemma of whether to actually shove Chevy's signature muscle car family into a supporting-cast role in the issue! It was a close call, and in the end, we gave both pretty equal page space. And while the trucks get top billing on the cover, those SS Chevys are not far below.

You will note that we have a third big feature in this issue—one that I am not ashamed to admit filled me with envy for my good friend and longtime *DCX* contributor Bill Bennett, who got the unique privilege of sitting down for a chat with drag racing's living legend, "Big Daddy" Don Garlits himself! There could not be a more perfect guy to do that story than Bill, who has decades of passion for the sport and a depth of knowledge (to say nothing of the depth of his diecast collection!) few can match. And if that weren't enough, a couple weeks later Bill jumped in a black supercharged Dodge himself (although not one named "Swamp Rat") and ran the Nevada Open Road Challenge—and won the 100mph class! (See more on Bill's excellent adventure in Rear View on page 66.) Bill is unquestionably living his best car-guy life! While we can't all have those kinds of thrills, I hope you find a few thrills in the pages of this issue. Thanks for coming along for the ride!



Matt Boyd
Executive Editor
mattb@airage.com

EDITORIAL

Executive Editor

Matt Boyd >> mattb@airage.com

Copy Editor

Leslie Ballard

CONTRIBUTORS

Bill Bennett, Peter Celona, Alan Paradise, Justin Sharp, Mike Zarnock

PRODUCTION

Production Director David Pandey

DESIGN

Valpro Media Services

DIGITAL MEDIA

Web Producer Holly Hansen

ADVERTISING

Ben Halladay

>>203.482.8093 | benh@airage.com

Brian Vargas

>>203.939.9901 | brianv@airage.com

CONSUMER MARKETING

Mast Circulation Services

PUBLISHING

Group Publishers

Louis V. DeFrancesco Jr.,
Yvonne M. DeFrancesco

Associate Publisher

Leigh Guarneri



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Comments may be sent to: [DCX@airage.com](#)

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Wright's Media

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EDITORIAL

MAIL 11 Grumman Hill, Wilton CT 06897 USA
Phone (203) 529-4635 **Email** [DCX@airage.com](#)



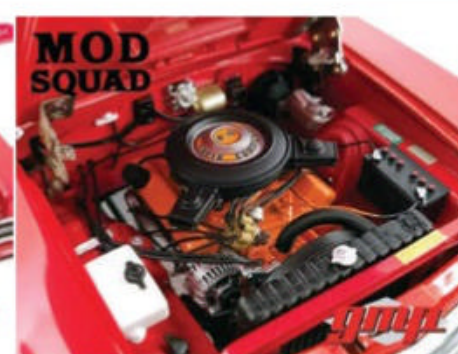
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Scale: 1:18



1988 Chevrolet Corvette C4 - Dark Blue with Yellow Stripes - Corvette Challenge Race Car

#GL13597 - \$64.95

Scale: 1:18



1988 Chevrolet Corvette C4 - White with Orange Stripes - Corvette Challenge Race Car

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ROCKY II



31120-A 1:64 1981 Chevrolet C-10 Custom Deluxe with Rocky's 1979 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am in Enclosed Car Hauler Rocky II (1979)

CHRISTINE



31120-B 1:64 2018 Ram 2500 with Scorched 1958 Plymouth Fury on Flatbed Trailer Christine (1983)

THE CARS THAT MADE AMERICA



31120-C 1:64 1967 Ford F-100 with 1965 Ford Mustang Fastback in Enclosed Car Hauler The Cars That Made America (2017-Present TV Series)



RAIN MAN

1:18 Charlie Babbitt's 1949 Buick Roadmaster Convertible
Rain Man (1988)



SERIES 33



BRONCO FROM TUNING
 44555-A • 1:64 1984 Ford Bronco (Limited)
 Beverly Hills, 90210-11500 (2000 TV Series)



ACE VENTURA
 44555-B • 1:64 1984 Ford LTD Crown Victoria
 Miami Police (Engine Mount)
 Ace Ventura: Pet Detective (1994)



Drive
 44555-D • 1:64 (1984) Ford Crown Victoria Police Interceptor
 Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD)
 Since (2011)



JOHN WICK
 44555-E • 1:64 1984 Dodge Charger R/T
 Since 90-0-0 (2014)



Drive
 44555-C • 1:64 1974 Chevrolet Blazer (Malibu)
 Since (2011)



JOHN 3 WICK
 44555-F • 1:64 1974 Chevrolet Blazer (Malibu R/T)
 90-12, Red 450-00
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Spellbinding Muscle Truck

Auto World 1977 Dodge Warlock

1:18 | \$100

With muscle car performance on the wane in the mid-1970s, Dodge turned to its D-series trucks to take up the slack. With a full slate of V8 engines, beefy drivetrains, and free of the emissions restrictions that strangled car engines, it was an ideal solution. All it needed was some muscular graphics to match—and that's just what the Warlock delivered. Introduced in late 1976 as a '77 model in either red, black, or the metallic green you see here, with gold pinstripes and accents, gold wheels, authentic oak bed sideboards, and chrome running boards on the stepside short bed. The Warlock package could be ordered with either two- or four-wheel-drive, and with any engine offered in the D-series truck line, from a Slant-6 up through the 440 big block. Auto World's has the Police Package 360 with cold air induction made famous by the Lil Red Express the following year, and it was one of the quickest vehicles you could buy in 1977! We love the green color and the simulated oak sideboards on this model. Now we just need to talk Auto World into doing a 4x4 Warlock with a 440!

Autoworldstore.com



Virtual Vision comes to life in scale

Maisto Lambo V12 Vision Gran Turismo

1:18 | \$35est

The Vision Gran Turismo project started with a challenge from Kazunori Yamauchi, video game designer and professional race driver. Yamauchi is the creator of the Gran Turismo franchise, one of the most successful racing video games in history, with participation from most of the world's most prestigious manufacturers—which include Ferrari, Mercedes, and Lamborghini, among dozens of others. With its most recent iterations of the game, he asked those manufacturers to design a concept car—complete with authentic engine, suspension, and aerodynamic features—that represents their vision for the future of the sports and GT classes. Realistic engineering was of paramount importance, as these cars were then rendered—down to the hyper-accurate physics that the Gran Turismo franchise is known for—within the game for players to drive, bringing the concept car to exciting new levels of engagement. That's just what Lamborghini did with its Lambo V12 Vision Gran Turismo—a single-seat hypercar that combines the hybrid powertrain of the limited-production wild Sian FKP 37—a 6.5L V12 coupled to a supercapacitor to produce 775hp—with a massive downforce body featuring a central driving position and the wheels mounted in pods away from the body tub, somewhere between an open-wheel racer and a sports prototype. Maisto has taken the design which, until now, has existed only in the virtual world of the Gran Turismo game, and rendered it in 1:18 diecast. That makes it not only a visually striking concept but a unique one.

Maisto.com

Topless exotic beauties

GT Spirit 1968 Lamborghini Miura P400 Roadster and 2018 McLaren 720S Spider

1:18 | \$140ea

How do you improve the looks of one of the most beautiful cars in existence? Well, if you're famed styling house Bertone—whose chief designer Marcello Gandini had penned the original Lamborghini Miura two years earlier—you remove the roof and louvered rear window, exposing the glorious transverse mid-mounted V12 that is the heart of Lamborghini's first supercar. Bertone subtly re-sculpted the windscreen, not just to enhance the topless profile but also to minimize turbulence at the car's alarming 174mph top speed! Bertone also reshaped the rear bodywork to give it more stability-enhancing downforce. The resulting one-off was presented at the 1968 Brussels Auto Show, and following a meticulous restoration remains perhaps the most original, most exclusive Miura in the world. The 2018 McLaren 720S doesn't (yet) have the provenance of the Miura, but it is every bit as much a high-performance exotic in its role 50 years later. And the Spider version adds open-air excitement and even more style to the 720hp supercar. Both are perfect fodder for GT Spirit's exquisite 1:18 resin models. The Miura shows the exposed V12, the unique white leather interior, and azure blue metallic paint, just as it appeared in Brussels 53 years ago. The 720S arrives with its fighter-jet style body bathed in a modern take on the classic McLaren hue called Papaya Spark Orange. Both are available for pre-order now.

[GTS-models.com](https://gts-models.com); distributed by [Acmediecast.com](https://acmediecast.com)



Godzilla lives!

Kyosho 2020 Nissan GT-R NISMO

1:18 | \$200est

Japan's mighty supercar the R35 Nissan GT-R earned the nickname "Godzilla" when it first arrived on the scene by being big, powerful, and able to stomp competitors previously thought to be formidable. But that was more than a decade ago, which might tempt some to dismiss the GT-R (like its namesake) as some sort of dinosaur. But while Nissan has not yet replaced the R35 version of the GT-R, it has treated its techno-marvel coupe to a steady dose of upgrades designed to keep it not just current, but dominant. For 2020 the king of the monsters was the NISMO edition. The 601hp beast received a host of chassis upgrades, a race mode for its 6-speed sequential gearbox, and gargantuan carbon-ceramic brakes. There is a carbon fiber hood, roof, and front fenders—the latter of which now sport vents to release built-up air pressure in the wheel wells to increase downforce. All of that made the 2020 NISMO not only the fastest GT-R ever, but the fastest road car Nissan ever built. Kyosho pays tribute to the NISMO with its Samurai 1:18 resin series in two colors—silver or white. All the aerodynamic tweaks are recreated with precision, along with the exclusive wheels, those gigantic carbon brakes, and the special Recaro seats in the interior. Both should be available for pre-order by the time you read this.

[Kyosho.com](https://kyosho.com); distributed by [Acmediecast.com](https://acmediecast.com)



The Boss's Boss

Bunkie Knudsen's 1969 Mustang Boss 429 Prototype from ACME Diecast 1:18 | \$135

The most memorable muscle cars usually have a good story behind them, but the story behind the 1969 Boss 429 Mustang is better than most—and the story behind this particular one-of-a-kind Black and Gold Boss 429 Prototype is better still! As we describe in our feature story on page 44, Semon "Bunkie" Knudsen was instrumental to the creation of Chevy's Super Sport, but at the height of the muscle car era, Knudsen was poached from Chevy to become the President of Ford Motor Company in 1968. One of his first acts was to order that the 500 forthcoming 429 NASCAR-homologation engines be installed not in the Ford Torino where they would be raced (and where they actually fit) but instead be shoehorned into a special edition of the 1969 Mustang (where they did not fit!) Making them fit required major—and majorly expensive—surgery by fabrication contractor Kar Kraft. One of the first prototypes to receive the big 429—and the nickname "Boss" that was to accompany it—was a black fastback with a beige interior that also received a special gold hood, rear window louvers, and Boss 302-style C-stripes, but with the numerals "429" substituted instead. It was destined to go to the father of the Boss 429 project, but the story has one last twist. In September of 1969, right before Bunkie's Boss was scheduled to be delivered to him, he was unceremoniously fired from Ford! Bunkie's Boss Prototype was diverted to the employee resale lot where it was bought by a young Ford technician instead and subsequently disappeared. Now, the only way to see it other than in grainy 1969 photos is to pre-order one of the 1:18 versions ACME has just announced!

Acmediecast.com



Attitude meets Ability in Subie's first SUV

DNA Collectibles 1985 Subaru BRAT 1:18 | \$155

If you ask most Americans—at least those of us who were around in the 1980s—what is the first Subaru they remember, the answer won't be the WRX. It won't be the Outback. Chances are, the car they will remember will be the quirky little coupe/pickup hybrid called the BRAT. Goofy as that nickname was, it was way better than what it stood for "Bi-drive Recreational All-terrain Transporter." Essentially a Japanese compact interpretation of the same concept as the Chevy El Camino, but rather than offer merely a single row of seats the little BRAT was a 2+2—with the second pair facing rearward and placed out in the elements in the tiny utility bed! The "bi-drive" part of the acronym signified the Subaru staple of four-wheel-drive, which made the BRAT uniquely capable and hugely popular all over the globe. DNA had previously released an early-style 1978 BRAT and now follows up with this facelifted 1985 model. The model is an upscale GL with a dual-range transfer case, white wagon wheels, bed-mounted seats, and even the optional T-tops! DNA Collectibles is taking pre-orders on their website now.

Dnacollectibles.com



The return of the Black and Gold

IXO 1982 Pontiac Trans Am 1:43 | \$40

Pontiac's Firebird was all-new for 1982, featuring an exotic wedge profile with flip-up headlights and, for the first time, a fuel-injected V8. Despite all the modern upgrades, Pontiac wanted to make sure customers remembered the Trans Am's glory days of five years previous when black and gold T/As with extravagant "screaming chicken" murals sprawling across their hoods were the coolest, most popular muscle cars around. So Pontiac included options for the '82 Trans Am that channeled those old Bandit 'Birds—among them, black paint with gold trim, a WS6 handling package with beefed-up springs and 4-wheel disc brakes, and T-tops. A "Turbo Bulge Hood" with an offset (non-functional) cowl scoop replaced the old shaker scoop, and the screaming chicken painted on it was more modest in size. "Turbo Cast" wheels replaced the old snowflake pattern, and the top engine option was the Crossfire-Injection V8, which now displaced 5.0L instead of the old 6.6, and peaked at 165hp. IXO has produced this stylish Firebird in 1:43 with all the goodies mentioned, together with a beige interior featuring the special Recaro sport seats. Available now from Model Car World or your favorite 1:43 dealer.

Ixomodels.com; distributed by Modelcarworld.com



Muscle Car Six-Pack

Johnny Lightning Muscle Cars USA 2021 Release 1
1:64 | \$8ea

Johnny Lightning just keeps dishing up great classic American iron with its Muscle Cars USA series. This latest six-pack even includes an actual Six Pack! Specifically, the set features a 1969 ½ Dodge Coronet Super Bee with the A12 option that was one of the two budget track pack cars (the other being the Plymouth Road Runner) that introduced the world to the 440 Six Pack engine. This one comes in Bright Green Poly with a White vinyl roof. There's another Super Bee in the pack too—this one is a '71 in B5 Blue with a 440 Magnum (four-barrel) with a 4-speed. That does it for the Mopars, but there is also a pair of Super Sport Chevs. First up is a Glacier Gray 1965 Impala SS. The '65 is the crossover point for SS Impalas—the first year for the new fastback body, and the final year for the 409 engine. This one is just one of 742 with the top-spec 400hp 409. After that comes a beautiful Emerald Turquoise '67 Chevelle SS 396 with a black vinyl roof. The lone Buick in the bunch is a good one—a '70 GS 455 with the coveted Stage 1 option in classy Desert Gold paint. And rounding out the set is a proper drag racing legend—the Ford Thunderbolt raced by Bill Lawton for Tasca Ford that set the 1964 NHRA A/FX record! The cars can be bought separately or as a six-car set and are available now.

Johnny Lightning; distributed by Autoworldstore.com



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Track and touring E36 Bimmers

Solido BMW M3 Lightweight and **OttOmobile BMW 328 Touring M Pack**
1:18 | \$50 (M3); \$85 (328)

The E36 3-series propelled BMW to new heights of popularity and reputation in the automotive world. Available as everything from a practical station wagon to a stylish convertible to a race-ready performance coupe, more than any other car of its time the E36 could truly be almost anything to anyone. For the US market, the 1995 M3 Lightweight was the most track-focused 3-series; it cut out the radio, most of the sound insulation, and replaced the door skins with aluminum to shave 200 pounds from the standard M3 coupe, making the already extraordinary handling and balance of the M3 even more spectacular. Solido is releasing a 1:18 version of the Lightweight with the appropriate modifications to the interior (viewable through opening doors), the special Motorsport wheels, the taller rear wing, and the checkered flag graphics that were all unique to the M3 Lightweight.

If you are headed to a track day in your M3 Lightweight, what better way to transport your crew and your spare parts than in an E36 Touring wagon wearing the same bodywork that makes the M3 look so beautiful and purposeful? OttOmobile's BMW 328 Touring M Pack takes the practical people-mover 3-series and adds the air dam and rocker cladding from the M car since the wagon was one of the two E36 models (the other was the Ti hatchback) that were not offered in full M3 guise. OttOmobile's version comes in Estoril Blue with a black interior as a sealed body resin model. Both are available for pre-order.

Solido.com; Otto-models.com



Raucous Rally RS Fords

Laudoracing Bud Spencer and Terence Hill 1968 Ford Escort RS1600s
1:18 | \$135ea (or \$250/set)

A couple of issues ago we showed you Laudoracing's models of the Puma Dune Buggies driven by actors Terrence Hill and Bud Spencer in the zany '70s-era Italian racing comedy *Watch Out, We're Mad!* Those buggies proved so popular for Laudoracing that they've now come out with the pair of Ford Escort RS1600 rally cars that appear in the wild opening scene of the movie. (If you've not seen it, it's on YouTube and worth a watch for the vehicular mayhem!) Like those previous models, these are decked out just as they appear in the film—including a patina of dust from the track. Each comes complete with detailed a driver figure of Bud Spencer and Terrence Hill. The cars can be pre-ordered individually or as a two-car set.

Laudoracing-models.com



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BRONCO V BL

A new generation of off-roader rekindles the classic Ford/Chevy battle

BY MATT BOYD

PHOTOS COURTESY OF FORD MEDIA CENTER AND GM MEDIA ARCHIVE



AZER



As it had with its entry in the pony car rivalry two years previous, Ford landed the first shot in what would become the battle of the mainstream sports utility vehicles in 1966 with the introduction of the original Bronco. But it wasn't Chevy that Ford had its sights on, at least initially. It was Willys that had owned the market for small, utilitarian 4x4 vehicles since the end of WW II when its military MB had been decommissioned and morphed into the civilian Jeep CJ. Toyota had copied the CJ design with its early Land Cruisers and Land Rover had its British take on the concept, but it wasn't until International Harvester released the first of its Scout series in 1961 that Jeep had any serious domestic competition. The Scout was a huge success for International, selling more than 28,000 units in its first year alone. That immediately drew the notice of both Ford and GM, and both started sketching out ideas for similar vehicles. Neither Ford nor Chevy had anything like the Jeep or Scout in its stable at the time, so it would require an all-new platform.

Ford was also developing the Mustang at the time—and in fact, some of the same design team were assigned to work on both projects. The overwhelming success of the Mustang bolstered Ford's image and its bottom line, helping gain momentum and resources to complete the 4x4 Bronco. Chevy, on the other hand, was left with a dilemma. Development was already underway for a complete redesign of Chevy's full-size truck line to arrive in 1967—the same year it was slated to release its new Mustang competitor. Chevy management determined it did not have the resources to develop a new small 4x4 at the same time so the project—referred to internally as the "Blazer"—was shelved just as the Bronco came to market with what its advertising literature coined as a "Sports Utility" vehicle.

While some at Chevy might initially have regretted the decision to table the Blazer, it turned out to be the right one. First-year Bronco sales were less than a 1/5 of what the Mustang had done. In fact, the Bronco didn't even overtake Jeep or Scout numbers. But after Chevy successfully launched the Camaro and released its brand new full-size "Action Line" C/K truck in '67 it revisited the idea of the Blazer. The Bronco's modest sales made Chevy rethink the idea of a clean-sheet design. Instead, Chevy engineers adapted the slick new tooling from the C/K, chopping 11 inches out of the wheelbase of the short box K/10 and adding a removable wagon top onto it. The Blazer debuted in 1969, and the battle for the burgeoning "Sports Utility" segment was fully joined!



1966-77 **FORD BRONCO**

Ford's first Broncos rode on a 92-inch wheelbase, slotting neatly between its contemporaries the 81-inch Jeep CJ-5 and the 100-inch Scout 800. It was offered initially as an open roadster, an open-top pickup, and a conventional three-door wagon with a removable hardtop—covering all of the configurations offered by Jeep and Scout. Late in 1966, Ford added a V8 to the option list, followed by a Sport trim package in '67 to ensure the Bronco had the most complete lineup in the SUV segment. Ford had planned to replace the Bronco in 1974 with a larger model to compete with Chevy's new Blazer. Before they could, the first oil crisis struck, and Ford, fearing the fuel efficiency penalty of a larger Bronco would tank its sales, postponed the redesign and extended first-generation Bronco production all the way to 1977. It sold steadily, but could not compete with the wildly popular Blazer. In the decades since, the original Bronco has gained quite a collector following.



The original 1966 Bronco was introduced in three body styles, including this open roadster version without a roof or doors. It never found its audience and was canceled after the '68 model year.



The wagon with the removable hardtop is the configuration most often seen. Greenlight has made numerous variants of the Bronco in 1:18, including this 1970 wagon that appeared in the movie *Speed*.



The first-generation Bronco served as the basis for some pretty successful off-road race trucks, including the legendary Parnelli Jones/ Bill Stroppe "Big Oly" that won the Baja three years in a row! This is ACME's Real Art Replicas 1:18 model from several years ago.



By the end of its 12-year run Ford had beefed up the Bronco with more off-road capability to try and close the gap to the Blazer.



The C/K truck-based Blazer had much more cargo capacity than Ford's Bronco, and the optional 350 V8 offered a much higher tow rating. It was quicker too, outdoing Ford in both the 'Sport' and the 'Utility' categories.

1969-72 **BLAZER**

Chief Engineer of Chevy's Truck division Paul Hitch is credited with the idea of the Blazer. Instead of tooling up an expensive stand-alone 4x4 to vie for a relatively small niche market, he asked why not leverage the brand new "Action Line" C/K hardware? It was his notion to shorten the K10 pickup and cut the rear cab and forward bed bulkheads out of it to connect the two areas and turn it into a wagon. To save money on stamping new body panels they slapped a removable fiberglass top on it, thereby making it a convertible just like the Jeep, Scout, and Bronco. Chevy built the Blazer using full-size truck mechanicals primarily to save money, but it also made the Blazer more comfortable, more powerful, and more all-around capable than the Bronco. The extra size and power resonated with customers and by 1972 the Blazer was outselling the Bronco 2-to-1—just in time for a styling update in 1973!



By 1972 the Chevy was outselling Ford 2-to-1 in the SUV segment. This is a look at the prototype of ACME's upcoming second Blazer release, a 1972 model with larger off-road tires.



Even Hot Wheels gets in on the first-gen Blazer with this custom 1970 model with Real Riders tires.

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1973-91 **BLAZER**

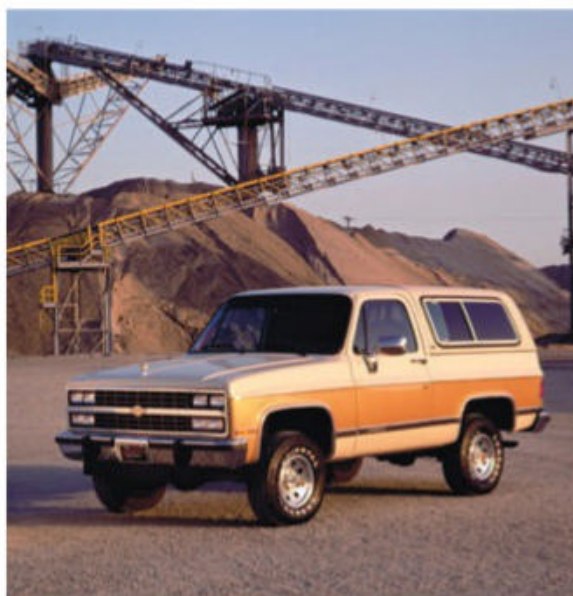
The Blazer was already outselling the Bronco, but Chevy kept its foot on the gas and extended the advantage. By 1973 the C/K trucks were due for a refresh, so the Blazer got one too, adopting the "Square Body" contours that served Chevy for nearly 20 years! More modern and aerodynamic, the new Blazer also got a more comfort-oriented and car-like dashboard and interior. In 1975 a bigger 400ci V8 was added to combat the smog-era power reduction of the 350, and in 1976, to combat complaints about leaky roofs, the Blazer switched to a half-cab design that put a fixed steel roof over the front seats, with the removable fiberglass cap over the rear seats and cargo area only. A diesel option was added in 1982, but the Blazer would continue with only minor cosmetic changes until 1992.



Early "Square Body" Blazers had round headlights and a full-length fiberglass roof. There were also plenty of off-road goodies offered for them like a brush bar, lights, and a winch.



After 1976 Chevy switched to a half-cab design where a fixed steel roof covered the front seats, while a removable fiberglass cap remained over the back part of the cabin, as is depicted by this Jada 1:24 Just Trucks 1980 Blazer.



The second-generation Blazer underwent numerous cosmetic revisions during its 19-year run, but behind the new grille and trim schemes was the same basic bodysell that had been there since the 1970s.



1978-79 **BRONCO**

It took Ford until 1978 to reverse course and offer a full-size Bronco based on the F-100 truck line. Codenamed "Project Shorthorn," it copied the Blazer formula almost exactly, chopping 13 inches out of the short-bed F-Series to give a 104-inch wheelbase, fitting a half-cab with a removable fiberglass top behind the front seats, and installing a Dana 44 solid front axle and New Process 205 transfer case. Ironically, the F-Series only had two years left on its life cycle when the second-generation Bronco came out, so it was sold only in 1978-79. And because it is the only full-size Bronco with an off-road friendly solid front axle it is highly prized by enthusiasts and collectors.



Despite its popularity, diecast models of the 1978-79 Bronco are relatively rare. This 1:43 '78 is by Premium X, distributed by Model Car World.



Two feet longer and nearly a foot wider than the original Bronco, the '78-79 models countered every advantage the Blazer had previously enjoyed. With big V8 power and a stylish "Free Wheelin'" tri-color graphics package on the F-100-based bodywork, the new Bronco was a huge hit with customers, helping Bronco sales surpass the Blazer for the first time in nearly a decade.

1980-96 **BRONCO**

This technically spans three generations of Bronco, but they use a common chassis and suspension, with the difference largely limited to styling and interior features. The biggest change from the '78-79 Bronco was the switch to Ford's new Twin Traction Beam independent front suspension. While it offered a superior on-road ride, it lacked some of the previous model's off-road prowess and beefy durability. And certainly, the new styling was rather bland by comparison. Those two factors saw sales dip significantly, although the Bronco maintained its advantage over the Blazer.



The two-tone Eddie Bauer was the most prestigious and luxury-oriented of late-production Broncos, and a white XLT was the most notorious! LS Models offers both in 1:18 resin, distributed by Fivediecast.com.



The Bronco adopted tamer the '80s-era F-series styling, but a boost to horsepower from an H.O. 351 V8 and later the EFI 5.0L from the Mustang kept things interesting under the hood.

1992-94 **BLAZER**

Chevy redesigned the C/K trucks in 1988 but it took another four years for the new architecture to trickle down to the Blazer. By that point, four-door SUVs were far outselling two-door models, and the Blazer lasted only three more seasons before it was renamed the Tahoe—and a longer-wheelbase four-door model was added to the range, splitting the difference between the two-door and full-length Suburban models. The Blazer name carried on in the compact S-10 for several more years before being discontinued altogether in 2005.



The final vehicle to represent the original Blazer concept of a two-door SUV based on full-size truck architecture was the 1994 model, ending the model's 25-year run. Starting in '95 it was renamed the Tahoe and the two-door model was phased out in 1999, while the Blazer name continued on the SUV version of the compact S-10 (see Sidebar).

2019+ **BLAZER**

The Blazer name returned just in time for the 50th anniversary of the original. The new Blazer is far different in concept, eschewing a truck frame for an on-road-focused unit-body crossover platform with all-wheel-drive in place of a proper 4x4 setup. It is also offered only as a four-door, all of which has outraged some fans of the original, but sales for the 2020 model were the highest ever recorded for a Blazer, so it's hard to argue with Chevy's calculus.



The new crossover Blazer is much more carlike, and its all-wheel-drive and 308hp V6 make it fun to drive—as long as you don't plan on taking it off-road! Not surprisingly, it hasn't inspired much interest in the diecast space beyond some commissioned dealer-exclusive versions.

BABY BLAZERS AND BRONCOS—THE S10 AND BRONCO II

As the Bronco and Blazer were duking it out for the full-size SUV market, both sought to leverage the name recognition of the larger vehicles by launching compact versions. Chevy announced their S-10 Blazer as a 1983 model based on the compact S-10 pickup, and just a couple months later Ford announced the Bronco II would arrive in 1984, based on the new Ranger compact truck.



Chevy's S-10 Blazer was launched as a two-door compact SUV to capture the market below its full-size brother. While not terribly exciting, it handily outsold both its big brother and the competing Bronco II. A four-door model was added in 1991 to combat the success of Ford's Explorer, and even after the larger Blazer was discontinued in 1994 the Blazer name lived on for another 10 years on the S-10.



The Bronco II was built to almost the exact dimensions of the first generation (1966-77) Bronco, but unlike its ancestor, it never offered a V8. Still, it sold nearly 700,000 of them in 7 years, but persistent worries about its lack of roll-over stability eventually doomed the Bronco II, and it was replaced in 1990 by the Explorer Sport.

2021+ **BRONCO**

While Chevy went the tame pavement-centric crossover route with its new Blazer, Ford decided to try to have its 55th birthday cake and eat it too! It has split the Bronco moniker between two vehicles—a crossover-based compact SUV along the lines of the Blazer called the “Bronco Sport” and a full-tilt trail basher called simply the Bronco.



The Bronco once again has its sights squarely on the Jeep Wrangler with an impressive list of off-road hardware, from beefy suspension and 35-inch tires to exotic options like hydraulically disconnecting front swaybars and a rock-crawling mode for its Go Over Any Terrain (G.O.A.T.) traction control system. It once again offers a removable hardtop and doors too!



Like Jeep does with its Wrangler Unlimited, Ford is also offering a four-door version of the Bronco with all the same off-road goodies. Greenlight has produced it in 1:64.



Maisto already has several versions of the Bronco out in 1:18 and 1:24. We review two on page 24 but those will soon be joined by a 1:18 resin model from GT Spirit seen here in test pattern form.



Maisto

Special Edition 2021 Ford Bronco Wildtrak and Badlands

The return of an off-road icon

I grew up around a large family farm and I have distinct memories of the vehicles we used. The first is of the huge tractors—some that stood upwards of two stories tall—that were still dwarfed by the 5000 acres of crops they tended. I also have memories of an old truck that, although small, could—and did!—take quite a beating. It was a vehicle my uncles would take off-road, pull fallen trees out of the many hollows that surround the fields, or just whip it up and down the dirt roads for fun. It was a work truck, one with scuffs and dents from long seasons on a commercial farm. I think it was originally red, but the scratches and rust made that hard to tell. What I do know is that it could do what needed to be done on the farm, and it wasn't a tractor. It was a Ford Bronco.



AT A GLANCE

MODEL
2021 Ford Bronco
Badlands & Wildtrak

MANUFACTURER
Maisto

GENRE
Modern SUV

SCALE
1:18

ITEM NO.
31456 & 31457

PRICE
\$30 (estimated; varies with dealer)

WHAT WE LIKE

- + Wildtrak and Badlands versions offer great variety
- + Accurate trim-specific wheel packages
- + Paint quality far above price point



The orange Badlands Bronco has the model's base suspension and 17-inch machined aluminum wheels, while the Wildtrak comes with the top-option Sasquatch package and its black 17-inch bead-lock wheels.

In 1965, Ford changed the automotive industry forever when it introduced the Bronco—and with it a brand new term: the Sports Utility Vehicle. Designed by the same team that developed the Mustang, it was envisioned as not only a recreational vehicle for the outdoorsman but also as a compact workhorse for farmers and anyone who worked in a rugged environment. But it was also intended to be versatile enough to transport the family to town or to church on Sunday. Ford targeted the iconic Jeep, but they banked that customers wanted something more comfortable, more modern, more powerful—something that had the energy and gumption of a stallion and versatility of the American quarter horse. That's the Bronco.

Over the years, the Bronco grew in size, moving away from the original compact concept, but ultimately the market changed, and it was phased out in favor of a tamer on-road SUV—the Explorer. But even after more than 20 years off the market, the Bronco maintained a loyal fan base that continually petitioned Ford to bring back a proper off-road SUV. In 2017 they finally got their wish, when Ford teased a new version of the Bronco—one to once again rival the Jeep Wrangler and to bring back the iconic Bronco nameplate. Now, in 2021, the production Bronco is here.

The rough-and-tumble 2021 Ford Bronco is distinctive, and Maisto captures its retro styling well in 1:18 scale with both the Wildtrak and Badlands

trims—two of seven offered in 2021. They have the bold front fascia that conveys the power and attitude of the new-generation Bronco while the upright angle, the big, round headlights, and the bisected grille clearly recall the 1960s Bronco. Maisto's version of the Badlands has the doors and roof removed, while Wildtrak has its doors and flat black hardtop roof fixed in place. The models have the heavy-duty modular front bumper with the bash plates under it and the tube steps/rock sliders—all of which are standard on the Badlands and optional on the Wildtrak. The open-body Badlands has Cyber Orange paint while the full-body truck is painted Race Red with a flat black hood insert with "Wildtrak" printed into it.

The fully modeled interiors are identical. It is much easier

to see on the Badlands, but the Wildtrak's doors do open, and both have a rear hatch with a spare tire hanging off of it that opens to the small trunk behind the rear seats. The interiors are loaded with high-tech options like the leather-trimmed power-adjustable seats and the premium 12-inch LCD touchscreen, and the "smart" steering wheel with radio and nav controls built-in. Both of these Broncos have the 10-speed SelectShift automatic transmission which you can tell by the large, octagonal shifter handle on the console. Maisto has done a great job modeling even the smallest buttons on the center console, along with details like the diff lock buttons right at the driver's fingertips.

The new Bronco offers



The rear tailgate swings open to reveal a small trunk area behind the rear seats.



Maisto does a great job with the iconic bucking Bronco badge that has been absent from the SUV market for 25 years!



Both Broncos share the same nicely detailed interior moldings, loaded with upscale tech features. Note the octagonal shifter for the 10-speed automatic that is the Bronco's top transmission option.



The models have the top engine option as well—a 330hp twin-turbo V6. The nest of hoses and lines is a pretty accurate depiction of how the 2.7L EcoBoost engine actually looks.

two different engine options, and when you open the hood you can see by how tightly packed the engine bay is that both of these trucks have the larger 2.7L EcoBoost twin-turbo V6. It makes 330hp and 415 lb-ft of torque, making this the most powerful Bronco Ford has ever produced. There are lots of accurately molded hoses and lines, but just like on the real Bronco the model's engine parts are all black so spotting specific components is difficult. But you can appreciate just how well Ford was able to pack

all the mechanical pieces in such a small space.

This new Bronco is all about off-road, and the Badlands and Wildtrak are the two most capable. All Broncos come with what Ford calls G.O.A.T. (Go Over Any Terrain) driving modes for the traction control system and the Wildtrak comes standard with the Sasquatch package; (it's optional on the Badlands.) It includes locking front and rear diffs, Bilstein shocks for extra suspension clearance, black 17-inch wheels with bead-lock rings (like the

red Wildtrak truck has), and 35-inch Goodyear 315/70R17 Mud-Terrain tires—the largest offered. The Badlands model here has the standard 17-inch machined aluminum spoke wheels and slightly smaller 33-inch All-Terrain tires, but it adds its own cool Badlands-exclusive features including a hydraulically decoupling front sway-bar and an extra Rock Crawl setting to the G.O.A.T. modes. Maisto's models feature functional coil springs in addition to the correctly styled wheels and big, knobby tires.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The Ford Bronco started as a rugged yet civilized alternative to the Jeep in the 1960s, and the new Bronco is vying to knock the Jeep Wrangler off its perch in the 2020s. Maisto captures the excitement the Bronco brings and delivers it in two interesting 1:18 diecast models. If you're an off-roading enthusiast, or just appreciate the design of the resurrected Ford work and play SUV, you should pick up the Maisto Special Edition 2021 Bronco Wildtrak or Badlands when you get the chance. 🚙

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ACME

1969 Chevrolet Blazer K/5

Blazing trails with this first-year SUV classic



It seems like Chevrolet spent much of the 1960s playing catchup. Caught flatfooted by the overwhelming success of Ford's Mustang it took Chevy nearly three years to build their own sporty compact to compete. But even before the pony car wars began, another battleground was brewing. Jeep had dominated the passenger-carrying 4x4 market throughout the 1950s, and in 1961 it was joined—with surprising success—by International Harvester's Scout. Ford and Chevy both took immediate note and started working up concepts for small 4x4s to compete. When the Mustang began raking in cash for Ford, it decided to use some of those profits to bring its other equine-themed project—the Bronco—to market for 1966. Meanwhile, Chevy was forced to make some tough choices.

Ultimately Chevy decided the market would be stronger for its Camaro than for the small 4x4 referred to internally as the 'Blazer' so that project was shelved just months before the rival Bronco hit the streets. And again Chevy had to watch as Ford beat them to market and hauled in the bucks!

Chevy's full-size truck line was being revamped for the following year, and with the Camaro now out and selling well, Chevy returned to the idea of a 4x4 in the market Ford had begun referring to in its sales literature as the "Sports Utility" segment. Chevy management was concerned the niche wasn't big enough to justify the cost of developing a bespoke platform as Ford had done with the Bronco. Instead, it decided to adapt the new C/K series truck platform to the task, chopping 11 inches out of the wheelbase and removing the bulkhead between the cab and the bed to create a two-door wagon with a removable top. This approach had three big advantages. First, because the suspension, powertrain, and the forward half of the body and interior were already in production, development costs were drastically reduced. Second, all the mechanical components were already proven reliable. Third, because the vehicle was based on the full-size C/K, it would be larger, more comfortable, more powerful, and ride better than the competition. The Blazer finally arrived midway through 1969, and just 4935 examples were built. But Chevy had landed on the right formula and sales grew rapidly. Within three years the Blazer was outselling Bronco 2-to-1, and ultimately it was Ford who at last had to copy Chevy to catch up!

	
AT A GLANCE	WHAT WE LIKE
MODEL 1969 Chevy Blazer K/5	+ First-ever first-year Blazer in 1:18
MANUFACTURER ACME Diecast	+ Superior detail on the most desirable configuration
GENRE Classic SUV	+ Paint and trim is first-rate
SCALE 1:18	
ITEM NO. A1807701	
PRICE \$135	



The white-painted steel rims have non-descript P01 wheel covers with the manually locking hubs poking through them.



Beautiful paint and photo-etched trim pieces help the Blazer make a first-class presentation.

With so few built that first year, '69 Blazers are highly prized by collectors. And their historical significance makes them ideal subjects for diecast—so much so that it's rather surprising that ACME's outstanding replica is the first such casting in 1:18. This model has been highly anticipated since it was first announced more than two years ago. It was an agonizing wait, but now that it is here it seems well worth it. Like the full-size K/5, the model features a lift-off composite hardtop so it can be displayed as a convertible

or in wagon form, and this is one model that looks equally good with the top on or off. The paint looks spot on to Chevy truck red and it contrasts nicely against the white top and polished chrome of the grille, blue bowtie emblem, and the faux wood molding on the lower body. The body contours look very authentic and the photo-etched badges are crisp and precise. Now, because this is an open-top body with very little lateral or longitudinal support there is some flex, particularly at the tops of the door seams, so

you will want to be cautious when lifting the model.

With the top removed you really appreciate the effort ACME went to with the interior. The dashboard is body-colored, with a gloss black instrument panel trimmed in metallic paint around the edges and gauge bezels. Blazers offered three transmission choices—the base 3-speed column-shifted manual, a TH350 automatic, or a floor-shifted 4-speed manual. This truck has the latter, with a separate shift lever for the New Process 205

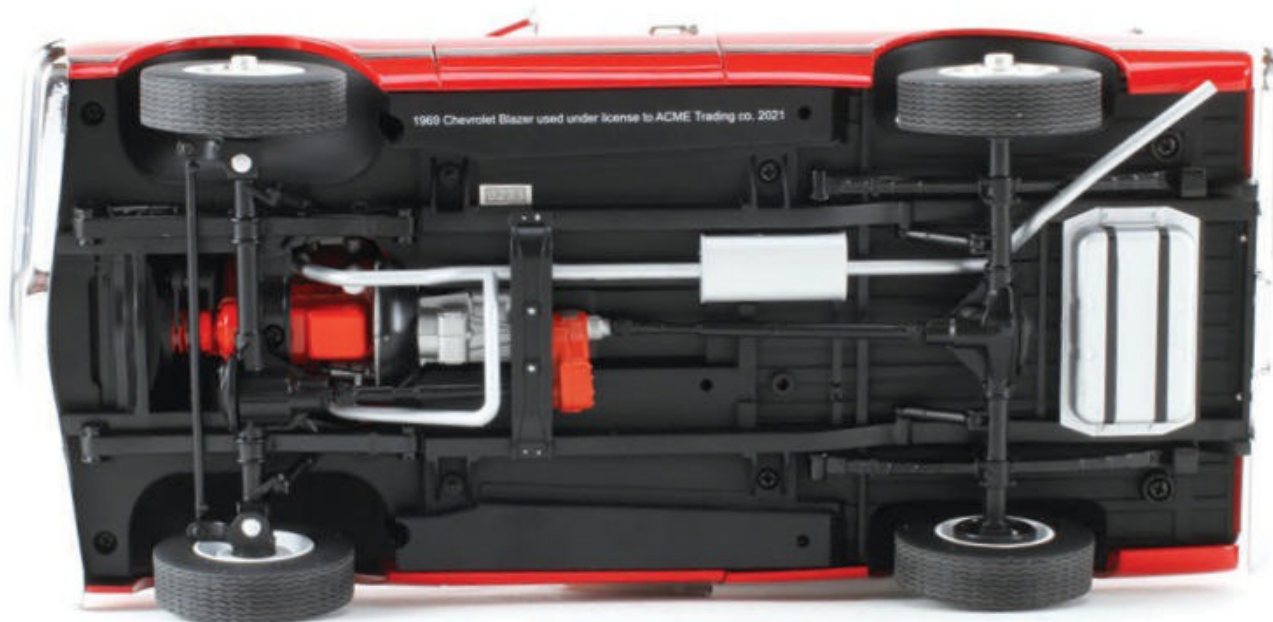
4x4 transfer case. Detail is excellent on them, right down to the shift pattern stenciled on the shifter balls. The floorboards are covered in black flocking and soft-touch rubber simulates the black vinyl seat surfaces. The seats have woven fabric lap belts with photo-etched buckles that have blue GM logos on them. I do wish the rear bench seat was removable like it is on the full-size Blazer, but the passenger seat does pitch forward to give access to the rear seats from the front, and the tailgate also opens.



Blazer has the most desirable engine offered in 1969—the 255hp 350 V8. I love the thin-gauge wire used for brake and fuel lines!



With the top removed the view of the highly detailed interior is excellent. ACME nails even the smallest details like the shift pattern on the floor-mounted 4-speed and transfer case levers.



Chevy created the Blazer by chopping 11 inches out of the C/K pickup frame. Detail is great here too, with the New Process 205 transfer case, the Dana 44 front axle, and the GM 12-bolt out back.

The Blazer offered a choice of three engines in its first year. Standard engines were a 155hp 250 Inline-6 or a 200hp 307ci V8, but a 350 V8 with a four-barrel carb and 255hp was the top option, and thankfully that's the one ACME installed. It is loaded with detail too; it has the correct 350 single-snorkel air cleaner and there are plug wires of appropriate thickness and hoses for the radiator and heater core. There are even lines running from the windshield washer reservoir. ACME uses bent wire for the brake

lines running from the brake booster and another from the carb to the fuel pump to simulate the fuel line. It has the correct "ram's horn" style manifolds that mate up to the full exhaust system under the chassis.

When we look at that chassis we see yet more gratifying attention to detail. The shortened C/K ladder frame has leaf springs suspending realistic-looking axles—a GM corporate 12-bolt in the back and a Dana 44 in front. There is a wide transmission crossmember suspending the 4-speed

with a nicely molded and painted transfer case bolted to the back of it. Tires look small by today's standards, but the square-shouldered bias plys are correct to the original equipment, including the manual locking hubs poking through the white 15-inch steel wheels with their rather plain P01 wheel covers.

FINAL THOUGHTS

This model marks the first in what ACME promises will be a series of 1969-72 Blazer models. That it is a first-year model and an

inaugural release of a first-ever casting means it will surely have collector appeal even beyond the merits of the model itself. But for me, it's the model that matters most, and after two years of anticipation, I'm happy to report that this one delivers. It's got the right engine, the right features, and the right look. If, having seen the photos on these pages, you agree my advice is to act now—ACME is only planning a 1452 model production run, and I expect those will get snapped up pretty quickly. 🙌

SOURCE

Acmediecast.com





MY BIG DAY WITH BIG DADDY

A visit with Don Garlits and His Museum of Drag Racing

By Bill Bennett | Photos by Author



Don and friend Mike Smith took a break from our interview to check emails and phone calls in Don's museum office, so I took the opportunity to take a couple pictures.



The car that started the Swamp Rat tradition! This is Swamp Rat 1 with a set of Stromberg 97 carburetors. GMP did a version of this car in 1:18 many years ago.

There is no one in the world whose name is more synonymous with the sport of drag racing than Don Garlits. "Big Daddy" has been so good for so long that he has left his indelible imprint on the entire sport. He is unquestionably in a class of one among top fuel drag racers; it is hard to imagine anyone ever eclipsing his accomplishments. When the NHRA compiled their list of the Top 50 most important and influential racers during the "First 50 Years of Drag Racing" (1950–2000) Garlits was listed Number 1. Behind him were John Force, Don Prudhomme, Bob Glidden, Shirley Muldowney, and Kenny Bernstein. Where there might be some argument about the relative positioning of other individuals within the Top 50,

no one who follows the sport closely would argue about Garlits deserving the top slot (and maybe even numbers 2, 3 & 4, to boot!). Imagine, then, what a thrill it was for me to sit down and chat with the living legend himself!

But before we get to that, a bit of historical context first. Drag racing really came alive after World War II, particularly in Southern California. There were thousands of young men returning from serving overseas, and others who had worked in the aircraft plants and shipyards of SoCal who had honed their mechanical and fabrication skills building and maintaining America's war machine. For sport, these guys built the hot rods that were raced on the streets of Los Angeles and on the dry lakes north of LA. This eventually expanded

to include drag racing at local drag strips, Bonneville, and even the Indy 500. With Southern California seeming so much the center of the racing universe, it was very unsettling, then, for these multitudes of West Coast hot rodders to have a guy come out of rural Central Florida, towing his car all the way to Pomona, California in 1963 to kick their butts. But that is just what Don Garlits did. And he was the real deal. Where a lot of his competitors were primarily drivers, or builders, or tuners, Garlits did it all. His engineering acumen was self-taught and was bolstered with hours of seat time done 8 seconds (or a lot less!) at a time.

If you have read this far, you probably love drag racing enough that I don't need to go into his record of wins

and losses—you probably have a pretty good feel for that already. But I should mention the thing he will probably be best known for: perfecting the rear-engined (or, more properly, mid-engined) dragster. This single accomplishment simultaneously pushed forward performance and safety, doubtlessly saving countless lives, and is without question his greatest gift to the sport and the drivers who compete in it. Mickey Thompson had been the father of the "slingshot" dragster layout. In this configuration, the driver sat behind and straddling the slingshot's rear axle. Directly in front of the driver were the engine and the blower which, by the early 1960s, were producing 1000–1500 horsepower. But as horsepower increased



Swamp Rat 13 was the infamous car that blew its transmission on the starting line at Lions Drag Strip in Long Beach, California in 1970, injuring Don and causing him to completely rethink the front-engine "slingshot" design for dragsters.



One of the most influential dragsters of all time, Swamp Rat 14 is the car that changed dragsters to rear-engine configuration almost overnight.



Don Garlits has been an innovator for his entire career. Swamp Rat 27 is known as the “Sidewinder” because it has its engine sitting sideways so the rotational torque could be used to “plant” the car. Great in concept, ultimately it wasn’t workable because flexing in the crank and gear set made it unreliable. Swamp Rat 28 used a General Electric T-58-10 turbine to turn 6.4-second passes at 219mph.

and “tipping the can” (increasing the percentage of nitromethane put into the fuel tank) became a common practice, the slingshot layout became increasingly dangerous as exploding blowers or clutches positioned directly in front of the driver and the ensuing fire and shower of shrapnel were burning and even killing too many drivers. Garlits, himself, had two significant and potentially lethal fires during his career. But he kept on pushing the limits.

On March 8, 1970, Garlits was driving Swamp Rat 13 at Lion’s Dragstrip in Long Beach, California when an explosion of the car’s transmission cut the car in half behind the firewall and severed part of Garlits’ foot. After the accident, during

his long and painful recovery, Garlits set about designing a car where the driver was moved to a safer position with a cockpit ahead of the engine.

This had actually been tried before, but with relatively little success, and was perceived by competitors and race track officials as being unworkable at the speeds and horsepower the cars were producing. Early experimenters found that their cars were extremely “twitchy” at speed, often turning right or left arbitrarily without warning toward the end of the quarter-mile. But Garlits was undeterred. After a few early failures with his new rear-engine design, and with a lot of encouragement from his wife, Pat, to make

it work “or else,” he and fellow racer and chassis builder Connie Swingle figured it out. With the car’s different weight distribution, the front tires were now more firmly planted on the race track and thus more effective than they’d been on their tail-heavy, wheel-standing slingshots. They discovered they could slow the steering down, remove the 250 pounds of lead in the front axle needed to keep a slingshot’s nose down, and the rear-engine car would be stable throughout the run—and maybe even faster! A year later, Garlits debuted his controversial new rear-engined design, Swamp Rat 14, at Lion’s. After a lot of grief from his Top Fuel competitors and track officials alike, Garlits

set low-qualifying E.T. and then won Top Eliminator. Within virtually no time at all, slingshot dragsters became the dinosaurs of drag racing.

An Interview with Big Daddy

On a recent road trip to Central Florida from my home in San Diego, I called and asked “Big Daddy” Don Garlits (or “Big” as he answered the phone) if I could write an article about his “Museum of Drag Racing” and maybe even get a short interview with the man himself. He agreed. On the day of my visit, I arrived 15 minutes early for our 10:30am appointment. His secretary said he was ready, but that he had a meeting with a home builder at noon so he’d have to leave in time for that. Noon came



Big Daddy ran Swamp Rat 6 in 1964 and 1965. The original look is depicted by GMP’s 1:18 model, while the updated livery with the “Wynn’s Jammer” sponsorship is in the museum.



Swamp Rat 7 was built, raced—and eventually wrecked—by Don's longtime friend Connie Swingle. More than 30 years later Don rebuilt the car using the original cage and it now lives in the museum. It also lives in 1:18 thanks to GMP.

and went and we were still talking. We finished up about 1:00pm and what a time it was for me. We talked about life, love, family, God, politics, extraterrestrials, infinity, Covid-19, Smokey Yunick, and even a little bit about drag racing. Very few of us ever get to spend time with one of our childhood heroes, and even fewer of us get to spend time with someone who is the world's best that there ever was—and probably ever will be—at something, at anything. In 2

hours and 45 minutes, I did both!

The Museum

I had initially gone to Florida to see Don's museum. I have a great number of drag cars in my 1:18 collection and looked forward to seeing parts of my collection in 1:1 real life. I have been to the NHRA Museum on the Pomona Fairgrounds outside of LA and the Petersen in LA's Wilshire District, but I knew, for sheer volume, Garlits's museum would

be the motherlode. The museum and its grounds include three buildings: the Main building, with the pedestal-mounted Navy A-7 Corsair jet in front, houses all of the race cars, the gift shop, and Don's office. The Antique Automobile building contains primarily street cars and memorabilia including a recreation of the work area from the original "Don's Garage". The third building is the new Don's Garage and is off-limits to the public. It is Don's workshop

and presumably where the mechanical side of the consulting work he did for Dodge was accomplished. I asked about it and was told that time wouldn't permit a tour that day, but if I could return later, it could be arranged.

The main building has, unquestionably, the most complete collection of dragsters in the world. The most famous slingshots from the '50s, '60s, and early '70s are tightly packed into this building. Additionally, there

In the course of my nearly 3-hour conversation with Don, we covered a huge variety of topics. Here are just a few of the highlights:

Sticky Race Tracks: One of the things I really wanted to ask Don was his opinion of the practice of "prepping" a drag strip. At the California Hot Rod Reunion at Famoso Dragstrip a few years back, spectators were allowed to walk among the race cars parked on the strip's racing surface. The surface was prepped with a VHT product that was so sticky that it was very difficult to walk on the track without walking out of your shoes! Don said that he thought the practice was a big mistake on the part of the sanctioning bodies and track operators. This has caused there to be lower E.T.'s and higher speeds, no doubt, but now sanctioning bodies have shortened the track length because the speeds have gotten to dangerous levels. In Top Fuel, the race can be over in 3 seconds. Don alluded that at the Gator Nationals in Gainesville this year, some of the stickiness had been "dialed down."

Maybe this will be a trend in the future?

Throttle and Clutch Control: I asked Don about what he thought made him so successful in racing. He felt that his throttle and clutch control played a big role in his success. He felt that a lot of rail drivers in his day would side-step the clutch and mash the throttle. He felt that his ability to feather the clutch and modulate the throttle kept him from over-powering his slicks, which produced better E.T.'s.

Smokey Yunick: In the 1960s, Don got to know fellow Floridian Smokey Yunick. Smokey's "Best Damn Garage in Town" had become famous because Smokey was doing creative things with race cars—and specifically their engines—that were far ahead of the rest of the pack and sometimes even "over-interpreted" the racing rules. On one occasion early on, Don trailered his rail over to Daytona, behind his Cadillac convertible to show Smokey the car he used to "smoke" all the West Coast hot shoes. Smokey was impressed with its effectiveness,

but also its "rough edges." He excused himself and when he returned he handed Don a piece of paper with a name and phone number. He told Don to get up to Flint, Michigan, and call the number. There would be a GMC Carryall waiting for him so he could have an appropriate tow vehicle instead of the "piece of crap" (Smokey's words) Caddy!

Consulting for Dodge: Don is no longer consulting for Chrysler. I asked him about this and he related that once the Chinese purchased a significant part of Fiat-Chrysler, his consulting contract with the company was one of the first contracts canceled.

Future of the Museum: The Don Garlits Museum of Drag Racing is not owned by Don Garlits himself, but is owned by a foundation that is controlled by a board of directors that is made up of family members and non-family members, thereby helping to ensure it will be around for future generations to learn about drag racing's history.



We might call this one “Swamp Rat Minus 1”! It is a recreation of the Ford flathead car Don ran in the mid-‘50s in Florida, years before he showed up in California and his competitors slapped the nickname “Swamp Rat” on him.



Swamp Rat 22 is one of Don's most prized cars, winning the 1975 NHRA World Championship and setting NHRA records for speed (250.69mph) and low ET (5.63 seconds) at the finals in Ontario, California that would stand for seven years!



Don built Swamp Rat 30 to take advantage of aerodynamics including a canopied cockpit, Moon discs on the rear wheels, and enclosed front wheels. It was fast, but at Englishtown, New Jersey he caught a little air under the nose and performed a beautiful but violent “blow-over.” Don liked the design a lot and built Swamp Rat 31 to be almost identical. At the ADRA Championships in Spokane, Washington, Swamp Rat 31 did essentially the same blow-over and remains the unrestored mass of parts that were brought home from Washington.



Swamp Rat 11 was built in a hurry so it did away with the forward body-work. It covered the quarter-mile in a hurry too—delivering Big Daddy his first 6-second pass and a Nationals win in 1967.



The museum has plenty of memorable cars from other drag racing luminaries as well. Connie “The Bounty Hunter” Kalitta was a top driver of fuel dragsters in the '60s and '70s and one of Don's fiercest rivals. The “Wanted Poster” painted on the side of his car shows who Kalitta thought his top competition was.





“Red” Greth’s famous Speed Sport Roadster ran in the Modified Roadster class. It was essentially a front-cockpit, short-wheelbase dragster with a Ford ’27T bucket utilized as a part of the bodywork. The car was never beaten in its class and often won Top Eliminator honors when it ran.



Shirley Muldowney was beautiful, supremely competent, and exceptionally fast. Determined to be known as a racer, she and Don did a Billy Jean King/Bobby Riggs match race thing that made them both a lot of money. Her husband, Rahn Tobler, served as her crew chief.



The museum’s race car building is crammed tight with slingshots. On display are many of the last-generation, long-wheelbase slingshots that Swamp Rat 14 immediately made obsolete.



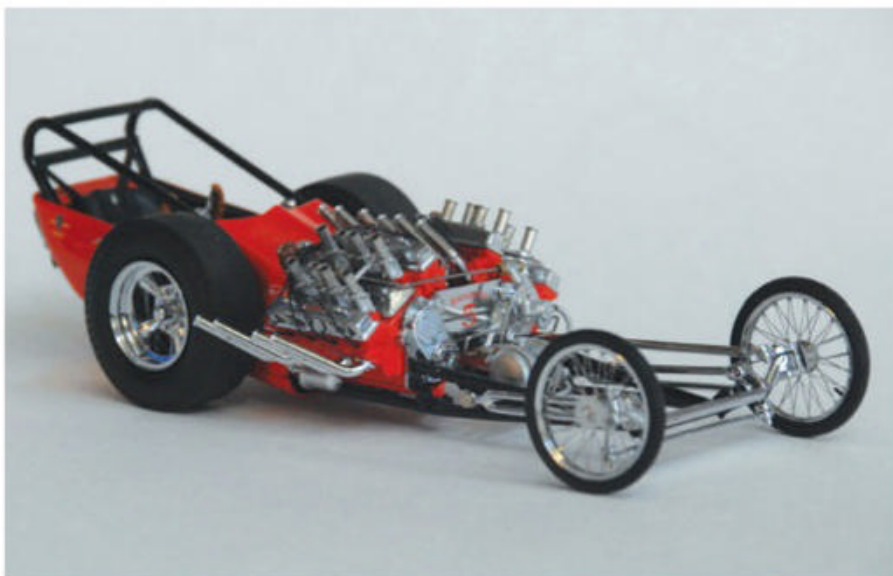
Obviously, drag racing is the primary focus of the Don Garlits Museum but there is also an impressive collection of antique cars in one of the other buildings.



The Mooneyham & Sharp ’34 Ford coupe is as beautiful as it was fast for its era and won Top Eliminator many times. Next to it is the pale blue ’34 of “Ohio George” Montgomery—the beginning of a legend. Over in the corner, almost out of sight, is “Big Al”— an all-fiberglass ’34 Ford sedan powered by an Allison V12 that was the first Flopper! Fran Hernandez, Competition Director at Ford, got the idea for the Ford and Mercury Funny Cars provided to Nicholson, Strickler, Chrisman, et. al. when he saw how Jim Lytle hinged the fiberglass ’34 body at the back.



Bill “Grumpy” Jenkins was already a talented engine builder and tuner before he tried his hand at driving and was equally accomplished at that. He built a series of “Grumpy’s Toy” cars that were based on various Chevy compacts.



"TV Tommy" Ivo was a child actor and he had lots of money from his TV and movie career to indulge his hot rod bug. His cars were always creative and beautifully executed. His twin-injected "Nailhead" Buick car was probably the most beautiful dragster of its era. Its beauty can be admired in GMP's 1:18 version too.



Don "The Snake" Prudhomme learned early that you had more advertising space with a Funny Car than a rail. His Cuda ran in 1974 with sponsorship from the U.S. Army.



Shown here are Swamp Rat 4B and the Logghe Streamliner. Two iterations of the same design philosophy: light weight. Don's car uses an all-aluminum, blown wedge-head Mopar engine and the Logghe Stamping car uses an injected small-block Chevy. Logghe gained great fame building drag racing chassis and the injected SBC car was incredibly successful, put away much more powerful (and heavy) blown Chrysler-powered competitors.

are rear-engined dragsters, funny cars, and an assortment of other race cars from stockers to gassers. There are even some jet cars in the mix. Supporting the individual cars on display are the trophies, fire suits, media releases and so much other memorabilia from the "Golden Age of Drag Racing." I can't think of a significant drag racer that isn't represented somewhere here. It would be quite easy to spend a whole day combing through Don's collection.

The second building with Don's collection of antique cars is heavily focused on pre-WW II cars. The vast majority are Fords from the late '20s, '30s, and early '40s. But there are so many cars and displays that almost anyone will find many things to educate and pique their interest. Have you ever seen an air raid siren from the 1950s powered by a Chrysler Hemi?

If you ever find yourself anywhere near Ocala in Central Florida, the museum is a "must-stop"—unless you're taking somebody to the Emergency Room of the nearby hospital. Even then, you could drop them off and go back to the museum! Seriously, it is an amazing place—and you might even bump into "Big Daddy!"

Author's Note: I want to say a personal and heartfelt thanks to Don for being so cordial and generous with his time and his thoughts. 🙏



This Milestone 1:16 scale Garlits dragster is not technically a "Swamp Rat." Don had retired from driving in 1992 but when some of his old friends and competitors started turning 300mph runs, he wanted to join in but he didn't have a car that would pass the new NHRA rules. He borrowed a car from Gary Clapshaw and painted it in Garlits livery with a sponsorship from Matco Tools. At the 2001 NHRA US Nationals in Indianapolis, Don and Chris Karamesines did side-by-side passes with both cars exceeding 300 mph. I took the nose panel with me and Don was gracious enough to autograph the underside of it.



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1932 Austro-Daimler ADR8
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1955 Oldsmobile Super 88
Holiday Coupe



1938 Maybach SW38 Cabriolet A



1952 GMC Suburban ambulance



1932 Austro-Daimler ADR8
Alpine sedan



1955 Oldsmobile Super 88
Holiday Coupe



1934 Duesenberg sedan by
A.H. Walker



1946 Invicta Black Prince
sedan by Charlesworth



1948 Kurtis Omohundro



1955 Oldsmobile Super 88
Holiday Coupe



1934-41 Adler Trumpf Junior
2-door sedan



1948 Invicta Black Prince
sedan by Charlesworth



1934 Hispano Suiza J12
Cabriolet by Vanvooren



1955 Oldsmobile Super 88
Holiday Coupe



1939 Cadillac Series 75
convertible sedan



1939 Cadillac Series 75
convertible sedan



2010 Devon GTX



2010 Devon GTX



1956 Chevrolet 150 Handyman
2 door station wagon



1956 Chevrolet 150 Handyman



1953 Maverick Sportster



2010 Devon GTX



1956 Chevrolet 210 Handyman
2 door station wagon



1956 Chevrolet Bel Air
Beauville
4 door station wagon



1938 Maybach SW38 Cabriolet A



2010 Devon GTX



1955 Willys Aero Bermuda
2 door hard top



1929 Cord L-29 Coupe by
Hayes



1921 Pierce Arrow Model 32
7-Seat Limousine



1934 Hispano Suiza J12 Drophead
Coupe by Fernandez & Darrin



1928 Cadillac 341A Town Sedan
Al Capone's armored car



1951 GMC Series 100
5-window pickup



1933 Ford Model 40 roadster



1934 Hispano Suiza J12 Drophead
Coupe by Fernandez & Darrin



Eaglemoss Die-Cast Club Eleanor from *Gone in 60 Seconds*

Movie star Mustang in mega-scale



Hollywood's Walk of Fame has hundreds of movie stars' names pressed into the sidewalk, but if they ever make a Hollywood Drive of Fame there will only be two sets of Mustang tire tracks burned into its tarmac. One of them will belong to the beauty you see on these pages. As you probably know, "Eleanor" is the name given to the custom 1967 Mustang GT500 lookalike from the 2000 remake of the cult car classic *Gone in 60 Seconds*. It's been more than 20 years since that blockbuster reboot (and more than 37 since the low-budget original) but Eleanor has taken on a life of her own, eclipsing even her human costars Nicolas Cage and Angelina Jolie as the face of that film. She is now easily one of the most recognizable movie cars of all time—arguably even more so than the



This photo really gives you a sense of the scale of the model!



The interior is a mix of retro and modern. We like the cool extras like the nitrous arming switch on the console and the trigger on the “Go-Baby-Go” shift lever. They match the NOS bottle in the trunk!

other fastback Mustang megastar from Bullitt.

A star car of Eleanor’s stature from the big screen deserves a big diecast replica, but Eaglemoss takes it to blockbuster dimensions with its new Die-Cast Club offering. Like other models in the Club series, the Eleanor replica is a gigantic 1:8 scale, measuring nearly 23 inches long and weighing in at 17.6 pounds! Also like other Die-Cast Club replicas, the Eleanor Mustang is a build-it-yourself model that is delivered as individual sub-assembly kits—110 of them to be exact—and they arrive four at a time about every three weeks.

It should come as no surprise that a model this size would be big on authenticity and detail. It’s loaded with cool features too. Highlights include:

- A full set of working headlights, taillights, and GT500-inspired driving lights triggered by the light switch on the dashboard

- Brake lights triggered by the brake pedal
- Functional hood pins release to reveal a big-inch, big-horsepower Windsor small-block V8
- Realistic engine soundtrack triggered by the gas pedal
- Functional steering with an operable horn button
- Special movie-specific “Go-Baby-Go” gearshift with a nitrous button to go with the NOS tank in the trunk

Obviously, the construction process itself is a big part of the draw with a model like this, but Eaglemoss matches the grandeur of the model itself with a grand presentation. Accompanying each kit is a 32-page magazine. A handful of those pages contain kit assembly instructions, but most of it is dedicated to the background and the technical breakdown of Eleanor, how she was conceptualized and built, as well as the rich history behind the production

of the 2000 film. You’ll also learn tons about the original 1974 film, the original Eleanor (a 1971 Mustang Mach I clone), and the visionary behind that film—writer, director, actor, and stunt man H.B. “Toby” Halicki. An interesting footnote and one that gives an extra aura of authenticity to the model is that it was created in collaboration with Halicki’s widow, Denice Shakarian Halicki, who was also an Executive Producer of the 2000 film.

Eaglemoss sweetens the deal further with a steady stream of cool extras for subscribers. You get exclusive access to a video library that includes interviews with Denice Halicki talking about various aspects of the films and Eleanor. There is also footage of the technicians who built the movie car discussing what went into creating her and what unique challenges the filming, stunts, and look of the car presented. And there are free gifts delivered throughout



The magazines included with each kit have tons of interesting background and technical data on Eleanor and on the movies.



Eleanor has power to match her beauty thanks to a fuel-injected small-block Windsor stroker. The detail is impressive.



The issues also contain beautifully photo-illustrated instructions for the kits they accompany.

the subscription term. Among them, an exclusive poster of Eleanor, a binder to hold all the issues of the magazine, a heated travel mug with the movie logo, a precise replica license plate from the movie with Eleanor’s California tag reading “LYN 274,” and a polished display base plinth on which to park your completed Eleanor model.

Building Eleanor is a big job but not a difficult one. The sub-assemblies are designed so that even novice builders can be successful using simple hand tools that are included with the kits. The model requires no glue or paint—it all goes together with screws and fasteners that are part of the kits too. Subscribing to the kit program isn't difficult either, and you are not locked into anything. If you can't keep up with the pace of the kit arrivals you can pause your kit shipments and resume when you're caught up. Or, you can cancel altogether without penalty so there is no risk or obligation. Eaglemoss has a ton of experience doing these subscription-type assembly kits, and a long-standing history in the business so you can be confident in signing up for a project of this scope. They have a bunch of other cool large-scale models to choose from too—movie cars, military vehicles, classic sports cars—and there are links to those from the Die-Cast Club link on the website. 🚗

SOURCE

diecastclub.com/mustang-dcx



Functional features on the model include working hood pins and headlights and driving lights activated by a switch on the dash.



When you sign up you get some bonus gifts. Movie buffs will appreciate the precise replica of Eleanor’s license plate.



From any angle, the Eaglemoss Eleanor is the spot on to the movie car.

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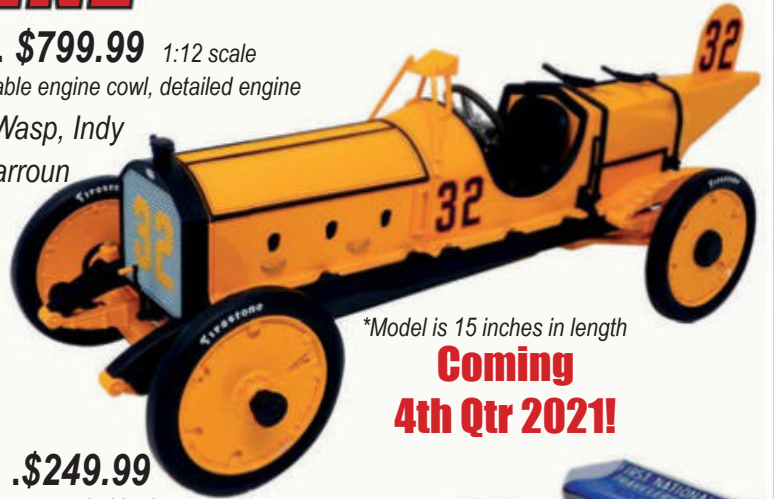
*Includes display case

• model is 23 inches long

R12003 . . . \$799.99 1:12 scale

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1911 Marmon Wasp, Indy
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60 ^{YEARS} OF CHEVY'S SS

SUPER SPORT EQUALS SERIOUS SPEED

BY MATT BOYD

PHOTOS COURTESY OF GM MEDIA ARCHIVE



The Chevy Super Sport is among Detroit's most storied performance nameplates and it has tantalized members of the Bowtie Brigade for more than 60 years. The SS moniker came to prominence thanks to the efforts of two of General Motors' most iconic heroes: "Father of the Corvette" Zora Arkus-Duntov and one of the fathers of the muscle car, Semon "Bunkie" Knudsen. The first car to officially carry an SS badge was a one-off 1957 Corvette show car built by Duntov and his team to explore the competition potential of the Vette platform. It debuted at the New York Auto Show in December 1956 and made some demonstration test runs at the Sebring 12-hour race a few weeks later. It also served to introduce the Rochester Ram Jet fuel-injected 283 to the world that would debut in production Chevys later that year. But it was never put into production and the Super Sport name it introduced would lie fallow for another four years.

The man responsible for bringing a Super Sport Chevy to production—and for making it a performance icon—was Bunkie Knudsen. Fresh off his success reinventing Pontiac's performance image, Knudsen was promoted to General Manager of Chevrolet in 1961 with a mandate to do the same for the Bowtie brand. His very first action was to introduce a mid-year sporty option package for the freshly redesigned '61 Impala. For a name, he cribbed off Duntov's paper and revived "Super Sport." He followed much the same formula he had at Pontiac, combining sporty trim, upscale features, and up-rated engines, resulting in the legendary Impala SS.



Zora Arkus-Duntov—the father of the Corvette—created the original 1957 SS show car to explore the competition potential of the Vette platform.



Many years ago AUTOart produced the Corvette SS in 1:18, and more recently in 1:43 (pictured.)

IMPALA: MUSCLE MASS



They are long gone now, but collectors still fondly remember Franklin Mint's Impalas like this '63 SS 409. They can still be found occasionally on the secondary market.



The "bubbleback" 1961 Impalas were the very first production Super Sport cars and they have since become superstars, like this Jada 1:24 model of the SS 409 from the 8th installment of the *Fast & Furious* franchise.

FIRST GENERATION (1961–64):

The first Super Sport to be offered to the public arrived in the spring of 1961. At the launch engine choices included three versions of the W-Series 348 V8. The 348 was Chevy's biggest V8 at the time, but with most of its rivals offering engines close to 400ci that didn't last long. Soon after the Impala SS was introduced Chevy announced a bored and stroked version of the W-engine displacing 409ci, and a legend was born!

In that first year, the SS package could be ordered on any Impala body style, including the sedan and even station wagon models, but virtually all cars produced were "bubbleback" two-door coupes or convertibles. Despite costing just \$53.80, the SS package's late arrival and unfamiliarity among buyers meant only 453 SS Impalas were ordered in 1961—and just 142 of those were 409s. Starting in 1962 the SS package was limited to coupes and convertibles (a production SS with four doors would not be offered again for more than 30 years!) and was separated from engine selection, so SS trim could theoretically be ordered with any powertrain, but the hot ticket would remain the SS 409 through 1965.

SECOND GENERATION (1965–69):

The 1965 redesign marked a new era for the Impala SS, and welcomed a new engine family which would become synonymous with the SS—the Mark IV V8—better known as simply *the Big Block Chevy*. It debuted in 1965 as a 396 simultaneously in the Corvette, Chevelle, and Impala—the latter two becoming the first of five different models to carry the “SS 396” designation. The full-size Chevys were big cars, and the 396 had plenty of room to grow, so for 1966 it was bored out to 427ci, thereby creating one of the company's all-time great engines. Two versions were offered in the Impala SS: a hydraulic cam/small valve L36 with 390hp and boat-loads of torque was a perfect everyday performance cruiser. Aspiring racers opted for the big-valve/solid-lifter L72 which was available only with a 4-speed transmission and without creature comforts such as air conditioning. Initially rated at 450hp but later listed at “just” 425, the L72 was still feisty on the street but was more drivable than the previous 425horse 396. More importantly, it was a match for anything from Chrysler or Ford. The L72 would be an option through the end of 1969 when the SS was discontinued, and it remains the most potent engine ever offered in an Impala.



Auto World has done several gorgeous 1967 SS Impalas. We're partial to this L72-powered SS 427 we reviewed a few years ago.

THIRD GENERATION (1994–96):

It had been a quarter-century since Chevy had offered an SS Impala when the model came roaring back in 1994—as a muscular version of the stately Caprice sedan powered by the Corvette's LT1 5.7L V8. It was the first production four-door SS model offered since 1961, and the first not to be sold alongside a non-SS Impala. The SS borrowed heavily from the Caprice 9C1 police package for its upgrades, and its big 17-inch wheels, blacked-out trim, and menacing black paint (dark red and dark grey were added as options in 1995) utterly transformed the look of the car. In production for just three years, the '94–96 models are among the rarest SS Impalas, and even 25 years later they are sought after by collectors both in full-size and in scale.



Johnny Lightning has 1:64 collectors covered with its 1996 Impala SS casting.



The only large-scale model of the 1994–96 Impala SS we know of was done by UT models back in the 1990s. They're pretty scarce today and command a healthy premium on the secondary market.

FOURTH AND FIFTH GENERATIONS (2004–05 AND 2006–09):

The Impala SS returned in 2004, again as a sedan, but this time on the midsize W-platform shared with the final Monte Carlo SS coupe. As with the Monte, the top engine in 2004–05 was a supercharged V6, but a V8 returned in 2006—the first powering the front wheels in any SS model. Even so, the 4th- and 5th-gen cars are generally disregarded by enthusiasts and collectors alike.

NOVA: THE SS FOR LE\$\$

FIRST AND SECOND GENERATIONS (1963–65; 1966–67):

The second Chevy to receive the Super Sport treatment was (appropriately enough) the 1963 Chevy II. Available on the sport hardtops and convertibles of the upscale Nova trim level, the SS was an appearance package without specific performance content. It wasn't until 1965 that the Nova SS got serious about performance. For the first time, Chevy made available the 250hp and 300hp versions of the 327 smallblock that had been offered in the Chevelle and Impala lines the previous year. With the 1966 restyling came an even hotter 327—the 350hp L79, the strongest smallblock ever offered in the Nova from the factory and one that turned the sub-3000-pound Nova into one of the most potent performers in Chevy's catalog.



The 350hp L79 version of the Nova SS wasn't well-publicized, but racers knew all about the hot 327, and today they are worth big bucks at auction!



By contrast, Johnny Lightning's '67 Nova SS 327 can be had for just a few bucks!

THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATIONS (1968–72; 1973–76):

The Nova got extensively redesigned for 1968, adopting "baby Chevelle" fastback styling, losing the convertible option, and again expanding the engine option list. The SS also became its own performance model rather than just a trim package. The base engine became the 295hp 350 and it received an upgraded suspension and driveline components as standard equipment. Just as important from a performance perspective was the availability of a pair of big-block V8s for the first time, thereby earning the Nova membership in the SS 396 Club. And because the Nova was lighter than its SS 396 stablemates, when equipped with the 375hp L78 it was the quickest factory SS car available in 1968! Sadly, the big block would last only through 1970, but even as the SS option was retired from most other platforms, the Nova SS not only persevered but thrived, scoring its best sales year in 1973 and surviving through 1977.



Starting in 1971 the 350 became the sole engine for the Nova SS, but sales continued to be strong until the SS was retired in 1977.



From 1968–70 the optional 375hp 396 made the Nova SS one of the fastest cars in Chevy's stable. The Auto World's model represents the final year that the SS 396 was available in the Nova.

SUPER SPORT ODDBALLS AND ONE-OFFS



COBALT SS (2005-10)

By 2005 Chevy had fully embraced the concept of FWD Super Sport models. Needing to inject a little excitement into the new Cobalt compact they added an SS to the lineup using another Super Sport first—a 205hp supercharged 4-cylinder engine. In 2008 that was switched to a turbocharged inline-4 with a startling 260hp, making the Cobalt SS surprisingly quick!

MALIBU SS (2006-07)

While the SS Cobalt's performance makes the case that it belongs in the Super Sport family, the SS versions of the 2006 Malibu (and the bizarre Malibu Maxx crossover thing) do not. They lasted just two years—which was probably two years too long.

HHR SS (2008-10)

The HHR shared the Cobalt's chassis, so Chevy figured why not give it the SS treatment too? The 260hp turbo 4 and available 6-speed manual made for an entertaining trip to the grocery store or soccer practice!

CHEVROLET SS (2014-17)

Chevy returned to form in 2014 with the rear-drive V8 sedan marketed simply as the "Chevrolet SS." The SS was built on the Zeta platform along with the 2010-15 Camaro—the first time since 1961 that a two-door and a four-door SS shared the same chassis. It also shared the Camaro's LS3 V8 tuned to 415hp. On paper, the SS looked brilliant, but at \$45k it was pricey and sold fewer than 13,000 units in its four years.



CHEVELLE: QUINTESSENTIAL MUSCLE

FIRST GENERATION (1964-67):

Arguably the most famous of the SS cars, and certainly the one that gets to the essence of the Super Sport concept is the Chevelle SS. It was the first car to be designed specifically as an SS. The SS package could be ordered on Malibu-trim two-door hardtop or convertible with any available engine. The best of the bunch was the L74 300-horse 327 until midway through 1965 when the special Z16 arrived—the very first SS 396 Chevelle. Modification went well beyond the installation of the 375hp 396 sourced from the Corvette; it also utilized a stronger boxed frame and a beefier rear axle from the Impala. All 200 production Z16s were hardtops but rumor has it one prototype convertible was built personally for Bunkie Knudsen. SS 396 availability was radically expanded for 1966 and quickly became the most popular SS engine.



The 201 examples of the Z16 built in 1965 are among the most prized Super Sports, as they represent the very first SS 396 Chevelles.



Over the years Franklin Mint made both '68 and '69 model year SS 396 Chevelles as both hardtops and convertibles.

SECOND GENERATION (1968–72):

The Chevelle SS came into its own with the 1968 redesign. The SS was spun off into its own model (instead of just an option package) and came standard with a 396 big block in four states of tune topped by a special version of the 375-horse 396 called the L89 that was delivered with lightweight aluminum cylinder heads. In 1970 the Chevelle got a freshening up and GM management finally removed the corporate ban on engines larger than 400ci. Unleashed, Chevy engineers responded by stuffing the largest, most potent engine ever offered in a Super Sport—the explosive 454 cubic inch LS6. Rated at 450hp and 500 lb-ft of torque, the SS 454 immediately blasted to the front of the muscle car pack. The LS6 lasted just that one year and the 396 was gone in '72, replaced by a pair of 350 smallblocks designated the SS 350. A milder 454 soldiered on until 1973 when the Chevelle SS was discontinued.

CAMARO: PONY EXPRESS

FIRST GENERATION (1967–69):

The Camaro was a direct response to Ford's hugely successful Mustang, and upon its introduction, the Super Sport was unquestionably positioned as the performance flagship. Chevy even went so far as to design an exclusive new engine for it—an engine that would become the blueprint for the most prolific V8 in automotive history: the 350 cubic-inch Chevy smallblock. Initially, the 350 (code L48) was the only engine offered in the SS, but the Chevelle had been hugely successful in establishing the “SS 396” and Chevy quickly realized that offering that engine would do wonders to establish the Camaro's credibility and help challenge arch-rival Mustang's new 390 big block! So a 325hp SS 396 Camaro was quickly added to the option sheet, followed by the midyear introduction of the 375hp 396 that was the top option in the Chevelle. The most desirable from the collector's perspective are the Camaros that combine the Super Sport performance package with the Rally Sport appearance package. RS/SS cars were made with both 350 and 396 engines and in both coupe and convertible body styles.



Among the most desirable first-generation Camaros are the SS cars with the Rally Sport package. This 1967 RS/SS 396 convertible is by Maisto.



The top horsepower option among second-generation Camaros was the SS 396, but its styling was rather subtle compared to the Z/28s.

SECOND GENERATION (1970–72):

When the sleek new Camaro bowed midway through the 1970 model year the model hierarchy had shifted. The Z/28 had grown steadily in popularity and the 1970 model now featured a powerful new LT1 350 borrowed from the Corvette, so the SS 350 no longer offered a performance advantage—in fact, its 300hp trailed the LT1 by 60hp! The 375hp SS 396 still topped the option sheet, but it was only marginally more powerful than the Z/28 and came at a significant penalty in terms of handling and fuel economy. Sales of the SS cars dropped sharply, and both were discontinued after the 1972 season.

THIRD GENERATION (1996–02):

The 1996 Camaro was midway through the F-body's fourth generation, but it marked the arrival of the third SS model, (the Super Sport nameplate having been absent for the entire Gen-3 production run). The SS denoted the presence of the Ram-Air equipped version of the LT1 V8 which boasted 305hp—30 more than the Z28. For 1997 108 very special SS models were produced to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Camaro and featured the Corvette-spec 330hp LT4 V8.



Starting with this 1996 Camaro the SS once again took the top spot in the Camaro range, denoting the Ram Air system that added 30hp to the base V8.

FOURTH AND FIFTH GENERATION (2010–15; 2016+):

After an 8-year hiatus the Camaro returned with throwback styling reminiscent of the original 1967–69 models sitting atop a modern Zeta platform chassis with independent rear suspension—a Camaro first. The fourth Camaro to wear the SS badge was now the standard V8 model, and powered by a 426hp 6.2L LS3 V8 it was the best performing Camaro SS model to date. Relatively modest cosmetic changes hid thorough Camaro redesign for 2016. The car is slightly smaller and significantly lighter than its predecessor and now rides on the Alpha platform which it shares with Cadillac. Now powered by a 455hp LT1, it has again reset the bar for Super Sports.



Chevy celebrated the Camaro's 50th birthday in 2017 with a special Anniversary edition of the SS. This is Maisto's 1:18 version.



2018 marked an anniversary of a different kind—50 years since the introduction of Hot Wheels. Chevy and Mattel got together to produce a special Hot Wheels commemorative Camaro SS package in an exclusive color: Crush Orange. Hot Wheels of course did a scale version to match!

SUPER SPORT TRUCKS—THE LEGACY OF THE EL CAMINO



454 SS (1990-93)

After the Monte Carlo and El Camino SS models departed the market in 1988 Chevy was left without a viable car to carry the SS badge. They solved that quandary by tacking one onto a truck and playing off of one of the most prestigious models in the Super Sport stable. Chevy stuffed the giant 454 big block from the heavy-duty 3500 series truck into a short-bed 2-wheel-drive C1500, and boom—instant muscle truck! In addition to 255hp and 405lb-ft of tire incinerating torque, it came with beefed-up suspension, and a blackout trim accompanied by bold billboards displaying “454 SS.”

S-10 SS (1994-98)

Hoping to capitalize on the success of the 454 SS, Chevy introduced an SS variant of the compact S-10. Powered by the ordinary 4.3L V6 it lacked the cachet of a big block V8 and sold fewer despite a lower asking price.

SILVERADO SS (2003-07)

Chevy returned to the muscle truck genre in 2003 with a Silverado SS powered by a 345hp H.O. version of the 6.0L Gen

III LS V8. It copied the monochromatic trim of the 454 SS but this time it was offered with an extended cab in either 2- or 4-wheel-drive. A limited-edition Intimidator SS (paying tribute to the late Dale Earnhardt) was released in 2006 in all black with special trim upgrades.

SSR (2003-06)

Sold concurrently with the Silverado SS but dramatically different in both theme and utility was the Super Sport Roadster (SSR) retro-styled 2-seat convertible truck. Something of a novelty vehicle, the SSR packed LS power (300-395hp depending on the year) but offered very little truck utility.

TRAILBLAZER SS (2006-09)

Perhaps learning from the SSR, Chevy's next SS truck ramped up the utility factor, in the process becoming the first (and, to date, only) conventional SUV to carry the SS moniker. Built on essentially the same chassis as the SSR, it offered the same 395hp LS2 6.0L as the last SSR but with four doors, plenty of passenger and cargo capacity, and available AWD it was just as quick and vastly more useful.



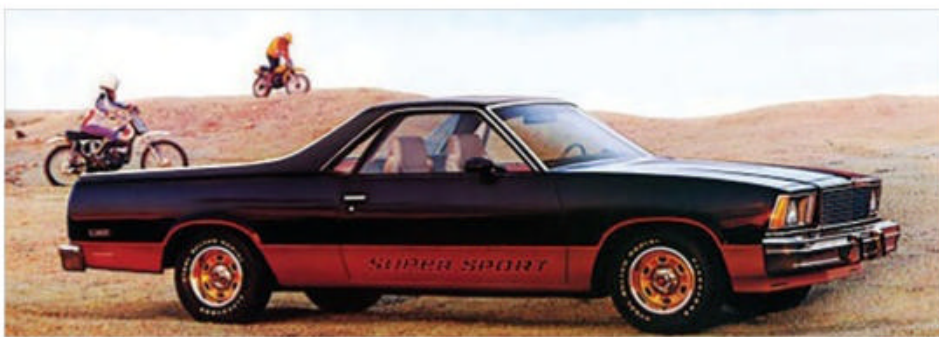
EL CAMINO: THE FIRST SSUV

FIRST GENERATION (1968–72):

Chevy's quirky half-car/half-pickup had shared the Chevelle's A-Body platform since it was reintroduced for the 1964 model year, and the El Camino got access to the Chevelle's top engine—the 396 big block—in 1966, but it took until the 1968 redesign for the grille in front of it to earn its "SS 396" emblem. That change kicked off what would be the longest—and perhaps the most unlikely—continuous production run of any SS model! The El Camino SS offered the 396 in three flavors; the mild 325hp L35 was standard, while the 350hp L34 added a slightly spicier cam, and the wild L78 added big valve heads and an even rowdier cam for 375hp. Those same pieces were slapped onto the jumbo-sized 454 for one year only in 1970 to create the most bonkers El Camino of all time—the LS6 SS 454!



For one year only Chevy offered the wildest El Camino all time—the 450hp SS 454 LS6! Auto World did this 1:18 example in Black Cherry.



The El Camino holds the distinction of the longest continuous production run of any SS model—from 1968 to 1987.

SECOND AND THIRD GENERATIONS (1973–77; 1978–87):

While the Chevelle SS was retired soon after the 1973 redesign, the El Camino SS continued uninterrupted for the next 14 model years. The "big" El Caminos ('73–77) were offered as either SS 350s or SS 454s. After the 1978 downsizing, only smallblock options remained. The final El Camino in 1987 capped an impressive 20-year run!

MONTE CARLO: EXECUTIVE CLASS

FIRST GENERATION (1970–71):

The 1970 Monte Carlo was created to fill the luxury performance coupe niche established by the Pontiac Grand Prix, and would be built on the same chassis—a stretched version of the A-Body platform under the Chevelle. The Super Sport drew upon the Chevelle not just for its chassis but for its powertrain as well, borrowing the 360hp LS5 and the designation "SS 454". There are rumors that a handful of LS6-powered SS 454 Montes may have been special-ordered. Ultimately Monte Carlo buyers prioritized luxury over performance so the SS model was retired after just two years.



Part muscle car, part luxury car, the Monte Carlo SS 454 sent mixed messages to buyers which contributed to less than 6,000 being sold, but that makes surviving examples rare and highly prized by collectors.

SECOND GENERATION (1983–88):

After a 12-year hiatus the Monte Carlo SS returned in 1983. This time around the market was primed for a muscular midsize coupe and the Monte delivered the looks and V8 power that was so scarce in the early '80s. The formula was an overwhelming success; in its six years in production, Chevy sold more than 150,000 SS Monte Carlos! There were also 6,252 examples of the special SS Aero Coupe with oversized fastback rear glass built to legalize the design for NASCAR competition.



The second go-round for the Monte Carlo SS began in 1983, and it was much more successful. The rarest and most unusual were the 6,252 Aero Coupes built in 1986–87 to homologate the large, fastback rear window for NASCAR racing.

THIRD GENERATION (2000–2007):

Chevrolet brought back the Super Sport option on the 2000 Monte Carlo, but it had the ignominious distinction of being the first SS model not to offer a V8 and the first to be built on a front-wheel-drive platform. For the final two years, a V8 option returned—a 303hp 5.3L LS. It still powered the front wheels but its performance was pretty respectable. 🏆

Auto World

Chevy Chevelle SS 396 vs Monte Carlo SS 454 vs Camaro RS/SS 350

A Super Sport Trifecta



Detroit has produced many an iconic performance package over the years. Ford has its Cobra Jets and Bosses, Dodge the R/T. But Chevy's Super Sport goes so far beyond those; it isn't a mere performance package—it's an institution. In 60 years there have been no fewer than 15 separate models to carry an "SS" badge, with 33 distinct vehicle generations among them—and counting! There have been Super Sport coupes and sedans, luxury cars and compacts, trucks, and SUVs. But of course, the core of the SS has always been the muscle car—two-door performance coupes with big V8 power, beefed-up running gear, and tough-looking trim to announce that you were dealing with Chevy's fastest and most formidable performance models. The Impala SS kicked things off in 1961, but it was soon joined by the intermediate Chevelle SS in '64, then the compact pony car Camaro in '67. In 1970 the mantle of the full-size Super Sport was handed off from the Impala to the new Monte Carlo SS.



AT A GLANCE			
MODEL	1966 Chevy Chevelle SS 396	1970 Chevy Monte Carlo SS 454	1971 Chevy Camaro RS/SS 350
MANUFACTURER	Auto World	Auto World	Auto World
GENRE	Classic Muscle Car	Classic Muscle Car	Classic Muscle Car
SCALE	1:18	1:18	1:18
MODEL NUMBER	AMM1233	AMM1237	AMM1250
PRICE	\$99.99	\$99.99	\$99.99
ADVANTAGE			
PAINT, FIT, AND FINISH	👍		
COLLECTIBILITY			👍
INTERIOR	👍	👍	
ENGINE		👍	
CHASSIS, WHEELS, AND TIRES	👍		👍



The Monte Carlo's rocker moldings are nicely cast into the body and painted.



The Chevelle casting is the most sophisticated with separately cast metal pieces for trim like the window surrounds and hood louvers.

That brings us to the trio we have on these pages which showcase the diversity of the Super Sport line. All three are part of Auto World's American Muscle series, and they span the peak of the muscle car era in 1966 through its waning days in 1971. We have a compact, an intermediate, and a full-size. And they feature three different engine combinations: a 350 smallblock, and 396 and 454 big blocks. Chronologically, we have a 1966 Chevelle SS 396, a first-year (1970) Monte Carlo SS 454, and a '71 Camaro RS/SS 350. Each is very different in character—and rather different in features too—but they share the common charisma of

Chevy's most prominent performance family. The question is: which of the three is the best of the best?

Regular readers of *DCX* will know that Auto World's American Muscle line is comprised of a mix of castings. Some trace back to the glory days of Ertl's American Muscle series which celebrates its 30th Anniversary this year (which the Camaro packaging commemorates!) while other castings are newer. The classic castings have all been thoroughly re-engineered with enhanced features to bring them up to date. That describes the Camaro and Monte Carlo. The Chevelle is a somewhat newer casting that first

appeared as part of the Ertl Authentics series several years later, which gives it a bit of an advantage with things like the window trim and wheel well moldings. The multi-layer rocker moldings on the Monte are painted with admirable delicacy while the Camaro uses a mix of painted-on (windows) and cast (rocker) trim. A big selling point in the Camaro's favor is the fact that it is an SS with the Rally Sport package (the coveted "split bumper" option!) that also has a two-piece grille with a center seam and round marker lights in place of the standard under-bumper signals. As a '71 it also has the taller three-piece rear spoiler in place of the shorter

one-piece ducktail from 1970. There are no prior-year comparisons for the Monte Carlo, as 1970 was the very first year for it. The looong hood and subtle coke bottle profile are nicely rendered with crisp character lines, and the casting has been updated to feature an opening trunk to go with the original hood and door openings.

The paint is pretty equal among the three, which is to say, very good. The Tuxedo Black on the Monte and the Camaro does tend to show fingerprints and smudges more than the Chevelle's Regal Red, but that is a product of the color, not the quality. Our sample Camaro did have a mark in the polish





The Rally Sport option delivers the gorgeous split-bumper look that is a collector favorite, and the larger three-piece rear spoiler became standard in 1971.

on the driver's door, but it doesn't look deep enough to be into the paint itself so will likely "buff out" as the expression goes! The RS/SS combo was only available on the second-generation Camaro for model years 1970 thru 1972 and Tuxedo Black was only offered for one of them—1971—giving this Camaro the advantage in collector appeal, while the extra detail on the Chevelle wins on that score.

The interiors really demonstrate how much automotive design evolved in just a few years. The SS Chevelle's cockpit is beautifully detailed with its cast metal seatbelt buckles and photo-realistic gauge faces (the best of the group)

but its chrome horn ring and sweeper-style speedometer look positively antique next to the designs of the Monte and Camaro! The console-mounted clock and the amusingly tiny "knee-knocker" tachometer are present and accounted for. About the only knock (other than to your right knee!) is the shape of the all-chrome shifter for the 4-speed, which should have a slightly angled stalk rather than the straight one on the model. The Monte 1970 Carlo has the distinctive console-mounted "horseshoe" selector for its Turbo-Hydramatic 400 automatic, the only transmission offered on the SS. It also has a woodgrain texture on that console and

on the instrument panel into which a set of round gauges (including a large, reasonably positioned tach!) are deeply set. Oddly, there are no visible safety belts on the front buckets, but lap belts are molded into the rear bench. The Camaro goes one better with folding seatbacks (a feature the Chevelle shares). Those seats are notable in that they are the high-back buckets borrowed from the Vega that were shared with the Camaro for the first time in 1971 that Auto World molded specially to differentiate from its previous 1970 castings. Also of note is the cue-ball shifter for the Muncie M20 4-speed and woodgrain trim on the dash panel and

console. The Chevelle has the best trim, the Camaro has those seats, but the mix of the dash and that cool shifter makes me like the Monte's interior the best.

Now we get to the heart of any Chevy Super Sport—the engine compartment. The Chevelle starts off strong, not just because this car carries the decal for the top-option L78 396 with its big valves and solid lifters making 375hp. It also has finer gauge ignition wires and more elaborate molding with some dimpled texture to the intake manifold which is very realistic. Unfortunately, that manifold is painted orange (well, technically "Chevy Engine Red," but it is red in name only.) L78s came with





The Chevelle's interior is old-fashioned, but the detail is tops among this trio, with photo-realistic gauge faces, folding seats, and lots of cast chrome trim.



The highlights of the Monte Carlo's interior are the wood-grain dash and the cool horseshoe transmission lever.



The Camaro gets 1971-specific high-back bucket seats and a cue-ball shifter for its Muncie 4-speed.

unpainted aluminum intake manifolds and open-element air cleaners, whereas the single-snorkel air cleaner and painted manifold are more typical of the base 325-horse 396. That still outguns the Camaro's L48 350 which, for 1971, had its compression reduced to a lowly 8.5:1, resulting in a drop to 270hp, as the decal on its (correctly shaped) air cleaner attests. The Camaro still has its old-school dogleg hood hinges (the other two cars have realistic scissor hinges) and plug wires, while thicker than the Chevelle's, are present. The paint is

correct to the L48 with orange/red on the block, heads, intake, and valve covers. Note that the latter are finned; technically these should be smooth stamped steel, but it looks like Auto World chose just to repaint the finned aluminum valve covers from the Z/28 rather than re-tool for smooth ones—a minor discrepancy. It is the big Monte's big 454 that actually puts it all together. While the mold work is not as sophisticated as the Chevelle's, its air cleaner, valve covers, intake, heads, and block are all both the right color and the right shape. It has scissor hinges and plug wires, plus a couple of extras the other cars don't





The 375-horse L78 396 was the hottest Chevelle engine option. Detail is great except for the paint on the intake manifold.



The Monte's big 454 has a couple of cool extras. There is air conditioning and the bronze-colored tube on the left-side fender is the compressor pump for the Automatic Level Control system.

have. The first is factory air conditioning, complete with the compressor, lines, and even an authentic decal. There is also a set of heater hoses running to the heater core on the firewall. But perhaps the coolest little detail is that unusual bronze-colored tube on the inside of the driver's side fender. That is the compressor pump for the Automatic Level Control system for the rear air shocks! It's a pretty unique feature, and very cool that Auto World tooled it up for the Monte. That plus the correct colors/moldings wins out over the more detailed—but less accurate—SS 396 Chevelle.

When we come to the chassis the Chevelle again

starts off in the lead with its compressible coil springs and spinning driveshaft—advanced features the other two cannot match. I also like the overspray on the bell housing. The Camaro presents well with its undercoated chassis and painted antiroll bars and shocks in addition to the exhaust and gas tank, but those functional bits on the Chevelle win out in the chassis department. When it comes to wheels, however, the argent-painted 5-spoke mag wheels on the Camaro are the prettiest of the bunch. The "Mickey Thompson Sportsman S/T" lettering isn't OEM spec, but that is absolutely realistic as a replacement tire for classic



The heart of the RS/SS Camaro is a 270hp 350 smallblock, which is accurately rendered but isn't quite as detailed as the big blocks.

muscle like the Camaro. The bias-ply red lines on the Chevelle look good too but the lack of sidewall markings relegates it to second place in the rolling stock department, so the end result here is a tie.

FINAL THOUGHTS

I love each of these three cars for different reasons. The Authentics series castings have always been my favorites in the American Muscle catalog, and the 1966-67 Chevelles are some of the best of the bunch. This Regal Red 396/375 is homerun on paper, and if they iron out the aluminum intake glitch it would be the clear winner here. Even so, it's a great model, but it leaves an opening for the other two. The split-bumper Camaro is one of the all-time great body shapes and this classic casting remains one of the nicest in the 1:18 space. The appeal of the RS/SS combo in a one-year-only color, plus pretty wheels and strategic updates to the spoiler and seats add up to a competitive package. The Monte was perhaps the most surprising to me, but by maximizing the interior impact and delivering a couple interesting bonus features under the hood it sneaks into contention against the two more traditional muscle cars. In the end, the Chevelle is still probably the best bang for the buck, but the other two make it a race. 🏆

SOURCE

Autoworldstore.com

Bburago

Signature Series

Ferrari Monza SP1

Beautiful Barchetta



To many, a Barchetta seems like the product of a bygone era. The idea of a minimalist sports car—one not only without a roof above the driver's head but with little or no windshield in front of them either—seems out of place in today's world of luxury-laden supercars. A modern open-air Ferrari is much more likely to have a power-operated folding hardtop than no top at all, to say nothing of omitting a windscreen! But the Prancing Horse has a rich history with Barchettas; so much so that the term is virtually synonymous with the beautiful 1948-53 Ferrari 166 MM, the exquisite sports racer that holds the distinction of being the only single model in history to win the prestigious the 24 Hours of Le Mans, the Targa Florio, and the Mille Miglia (for which it was named.)



AT A GLANCE



MODEL
2019 Ferrari Monza SP1



MANUFACTURER
Bburago



GENRE
Modern Sports Car



SCALE
1:18

ITEM NO.
16909



PRICE
\$60 (estimated; varies with dealer)

WHAT WE LIKE

- + Beautiful balance of retro and modern styling faithfully executed
- + Detail on the unique one-place interior
- + Wheels, tires, and brakes look great

The 166 soon gave way to larger displacement sports racers, and also to a smaller series of Barchettas powered by Lampredi 4-cylinder engines called the Monza after the famed Italian racecourse on which they excelled. In 2019 Ferrari recalled the look of those iconic Monza Barchettas from 65 years prior with the release of the Monza SP1.

What is most extraordinary is not that Ferrari pays tribute to those sports racers with a beautiful concept car like the Monza SP1. What is astonishing is that it is not a concept car; Ferrari committed to building up to 499 production versions of a topless, windshieldless, single-seat exotic! Just as newsworthy, Ferrari has announced the SP1 will be the first of what it has labeled its 'Icona' series of retro-inspired new vehicles. What makes that possible is the family connection to the company's flagship grand tourer, the 812 Superfast. That includes the chassis, suspension, and the 6.5L V12 engine (the latter two with specific tuning for the SP1), but the bodywork is completely unique to the Monza. And it is stunning. What I like best about it, and what Bburago captures so well, is the simple elegance of the

lines. So many supercars these days seem over-styled and over-embellished, adding vents and scoops and scallops and creases for look rather than function. Not so the Monza SP1; it is clean and flowing, recalling that same classic era of the Barchetta while still looking thoroughly modern. And even the retro features have a futuristic twist. You might think that a full-face helmet would be de rigueur in the absence of a windscreen, but Ferrari is so precise with its air management that it has created what it calls a "Virtual Wind Shield" that channels high-density air up under the hood and injects it up into the airflow directly in front of the driver. It creates a pocket of air, deflecting the oncoming wind—and bugs, and pebbles, and anything else!—around the driver.

The vent for the Virtual Wind Shield is one of just a few features that interrupt the flowing lines of the SP1. There is a carbon fiber textured subtle ground effects package that eliminates the need for disruptive spoilers or wings. That leaves lots of smooth bodywork to hold Bburago's Rosso Corsa paint, which shines with a liquid luster. There's a touch of orange peel on some of the flat surfaces, but nothing



bothersome. The prancing horse crests and Italian flag center stripe are straight and have clean edges. The casting nicely captures the contours of the SP1 too. About the only hint of this model's modest price point is a little roughness to the edges in the narrowest corners of the headlight openings.

Speaking of openings, Bburago's SP1 has three—a trunk area that comprises the rear third of the bodywork, including the pod behind the driver's head, the hood, and the *one* door. Under the rear deck, the chassis wears the same carbon fiber texture as the ground effects and there is a small trunk area. Carbon fiber is used liberally in the sculpted cockpit area as well, partitioning off the deleted passenger seat and hugging



Bburago does a nice job with the unique cockpit that blends a competition vibe with one leather seat and controls sourced from the 812 Superfast.



The 799hp 6.5L V12 is from the 812 as well. Buried deep in the chassis, much of it is hidden but what is visible looks pretty authentic.



Bburago even pays attention to the unusual reverse stagger of the wheels, getting the smaller diameter/taller sidewall in the rear correct. The carbon-ceramic brakes look great behind them.

the center stack, which has molded buttons and controls picked out by a bit of paint. Like all modern Ferraris, the SP1 relies on a dual-clutch sequential gearbox actuated by paddles behind a race-inspired wheel with several more controls built into it. As capable as it is, the SP1 is not an all-out race machine, as evidenced by the leather surfaces on the single sport seat, although that seat does feature a 4-point harness.

The hood opens forward clamshell-style and the engine is nestled deep in the chassis—both borrowed from the 812. In the SP1 the 6.5L V12 gets 10 extra horses (a total of 799) at a

soaring 8500rpm. In the 812 it translates to a 2.9-second slingshot to 60mph and a 211mph top speed. While the SP1 has not posted its own numbers, with 60 fewer pounds to carry its performance should be every bit as outrageous. Engine detail is decent, with a red-painted intake plenum fed by carbon fiber intake snorkels. Here and there, matte aluminum paint highlights a few other features and there are molded hoses and lines visible in front of the engine itself. Given how little of the mechanical hardware can be seen on the real car, Bburago's rendition is quite respectable.

The SP1 is unconventional to be sure—in its seating arrangement, its glassless Barchetta configuration, and its wheel and tire package. Staggering the tread width and wheel diameter of a performance car's tires is nothing new, and the SP1's Pirellis are 275mm wide in the front and 315mm in the back, just like on the 812. What is odd is that the front wheel diameter is 21 inches, while the back is only 20—reversing the usual staggered arrangement. In between the spokes you can see the giant carbon-ceramic brakes also borrowed from the 812 with their bright yellow calipers.

FINAL THOUGHTS

I tend to prefer production Ferraris over concept cars and one-offs; the more conservative and function-driven versatility makes them seem more refined. What is cool about the SP1 is that it channels the fanciful exuberance of a concept car and refines it into a production car without losing the "specialness" of a one-off. I've not seen that trick done as effectively before, and I find myself liking this car even more than I thought I would. If future Ferrari 'Icona' series cars are equally deft it is going to be a glorious era for a brand already steeped in glory. Ferrari models are the crown jewel of Bburago's product line. To be successful they need to choose the right Ferrari models to produce, and they need to execute them with the precision and panache worthy of the brand. With the Monza SP1, they definitely do that, making this a worthwhile pickup for fans of modern exotics and retro sports cars, and a must-have for Ferrari collectors. 🏁

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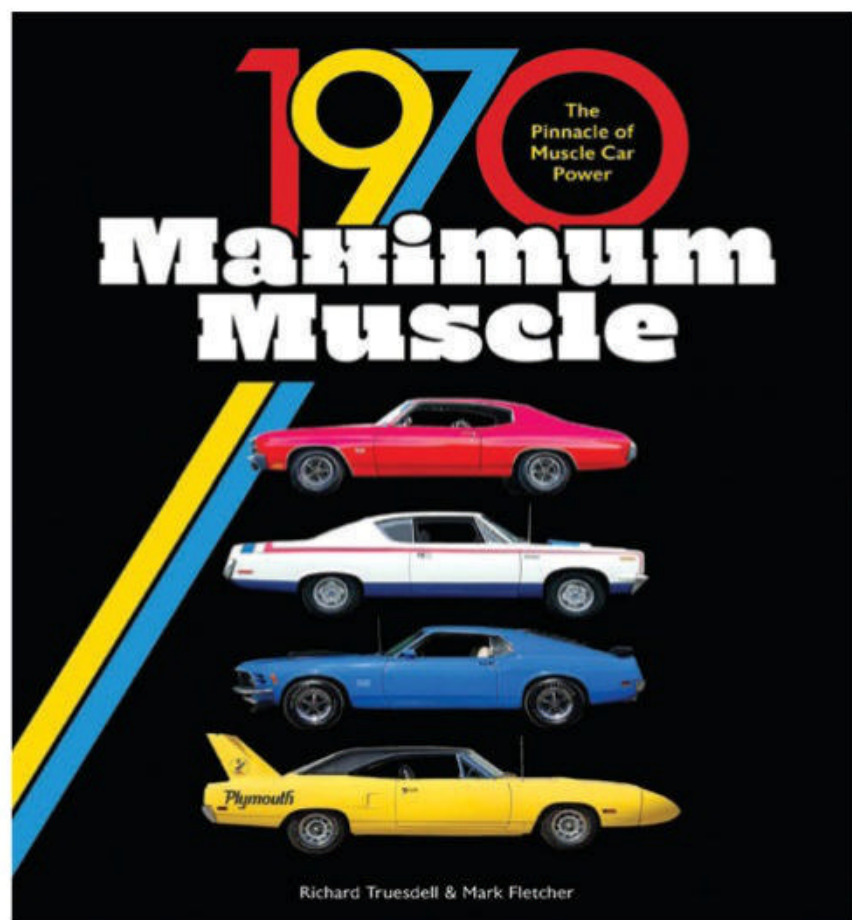
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The windshieldless single-seat configuration recalls the Monza series Barchettas of the early 1950s.

1970 MAXIMUM MUSCLE: THE PINNACLE OF MUSCLE CAR POWER

Hardcover | \$45



Lavish photos illustrate the brash beauty of numerous important muscle cars of the day.



The 176 pages are packed with technical data and historical info.

The Muscle Car Era was a singular time in automotive history. The confluence of power and panache, engineering and exuberance, culminated in a collection of some of the wildest, fastest, most over-the-top machines ever to roll off Detroit's assembly lines. If there is one year where all of it hit a crescendo—or perhaps a fever pitch—it was 1970. Fuel crises, emissions regulations, and draconian insurance premiums had yet to spoil the fun, and it seemed like every single automaker in America had been drawn into the fray. No wonder then that even now, more than 50 years later, the machines that roamed the streets in 1970 remain among the most beloved by enthusiasts and prized by collectors.

As its title suggests, *1970 Maximum Muscle: The Pinnacle of Muscle Car Power* focuses not on any specific make or model, but on a specific moment in automotive history. Flipping through its pages, it is hard to fathom that so many iconic machines were on sale at the same time. But the book is more than just a greatest hits album; authors Richard Truesdell and Mark Fletcher begin by setting the stage with an overview of the latter half of 1969 from three key perspectives: budget drag cars, Trans-Am homologation cars, and NASCAR specials. In those chapters machines like Mopar's Six-Pack A12 cars, the Boss 302, and the Ford Talladega/Dodge Daytona aero-warriors are introduced, giving context to the evolutions that would follow in 1970.

In looking at the pinnacle year itself, the book separates the cars into five chapters by manufacturer: Chevy, Ford and Mercury, the B-O-P triplets (Buick, Olds, and Pontiac), Plymouth and Dodge, and finally AMC. Chevy's lineup kicks off with the LS6 Chevelle SS 454 and includes sections on the SS 396 Nova and Camaro too. The big block party is busted up by the LT-1 in the new-for '70 Camaro Z/28. The Blue Oval chapter focuses mainly on the 428 Super Cobra Jets and the 429 trio—the Boss and the Cobra and Cyclone SCJs. The unlikely GSX headlines for Buick, while Olds gets a section on the 455 W-30, and then we take a tour through Pontiac's Ram Air cars. The Mopar section covers the winged wonder Superbird and the all-new Hemi E-Bodies, the 'Cuda and Challenger, before rounding out with the Charger R/T in both Hemi and Six Pack guise. AMC gets some love for its Rebel Machine, AMX, and Javelin.

In all, there are 176 pages full of color photos, technical tidbits, and historical context for these amazing machines. And it really is mind-boggling just how many epic muscle cars were available that year. Such an embarrassment of automotive riches couldn't last... and it didn't. The LS6 and Boss 429 were gone by '71, the Hemis and Six-Packs followed a year later. That makes 1970 a year like no other, and this book does a fantastic job showcasing exactly why!

SOURCE

Motorbooks (a division of Quarto Group);
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Every make is covered, from the super stars to some of the more obscure models.

YENKO SUPERCAR 2-PACKS

BY MATT BOYD



I always find it amusing that Don Yenke, purveyor of Yenke Supercars—some of the most hairy-chested mega-motor muscle cars ever to terrorize a drag-strip (or a local street-race spot!) actually got his start tuning one of Chevy's smallest engines to go road racing! Indeed, Yenke's first Chevy performance upgrade of note was the original Stinger, a modified 1966 Corvair Corsa with its diminutive 164ci Flat-6 tuned up to go road racing! Of course, Yenke graduated to the new Camaro in '67, and that's when the horsepower numbers—and the Yenke reputation—really took off. I love that Johnny Lightning has paired up some of

Yenke's most notable cars into special two packs to make it easier for fans of the legendary Chevy tuner to collect a full set. One set pairs a first-year Yenke Camaro with what would be Yenke's final V8-powered muscle car of the muscle car era, the Yenke Deuce Nova. The other matches up a '68 Camaro with perhaps the most unusual selection, and it kind of takes the Yenke story full-circle back to its small-displacement roots. But I'm getting ahead of myself...

When Chevy announced in 1967 that the new Camaro would be subject to the corporate ban on engines larger than 400 cubic inches in anything but

a land yacht or a Corvette, Yenke knew that he and the crew of his performance shop tucked in the back of his Canonsburg, PA dealership would have to break out the wrenches and correct this bureaucratic oversight. The 375hp L78 396 that was the Camaro's top option was a fine mill; better yet, it used the exact same block and heads as Chevy's strongest Corvette motor, the 450hp L72 427. Yenke reasoned that he could swap out the 396 for the 427 in a few hours, transforming the Camaro into a fire-breathing supercar capable of putting any factory-built muscle car on the trailer. So that's exactly what he did!



1967 YENKO 427 CAMARO

Yenko ended up making 54 427-powered Camaros in 1967, but the one Johnny Lightning has modeled—an actual survivor Yenko car—is unique. It is a '67 RS/SS car equipped with a '68 SS hood—delivered that way from Yenko! It was the very last '67 Yenko sold, and his crew had plundered the hood and air cleaner for another build, so when he sold it—in March of 1968—he tossed a '68 hood on it, along with a cowl-induction plenum like on a Z/28—perhaps the only '67 Yenko so equipped. The color combination is highly unusual too—Nantucket Blue with red interior—both of which JL gets just right, along with that '68 hood!



1970 NOVA YENKO DEUCE

Paired with the '67 Camaro is this Sunflower Yellow 1970 Yenko Deuce—one of only 10 painted this color. By 1970 the market for big-block conversions had softened so Yenko went looking for another way to offer high-performance specialty muscle cars. Chevy had come out with a hot new small-block—the 360-horse LT-1 350—but it was exclusive to the Corvette and Camaro Z/28. He figured an LT-1 between the frame rails of the light, inexpensive Nova would make it a real budget screamer. Using the COPO system, he finagled the LT-1 into a base-model Nova (not even an SS model!) along with disc brakes, heavy-duty suspension, and the same beefy 4.10 rear axles he installed in the big block cars. They were available for just that one year, but he sold 175 of them, making it one of Yenko's most popular models. JL's version nails the wild "Deuce" graphics and a nice set of Magnum 500 wheels.

Yenko Supercar 2-packs



1968 YENKO 427 CAMARO

The second set pairs another unlikely duo. The Rallye Green Camaro is a '68 car with the unique fiberglass twin nostril hood that was installed only on the 64 Camaros built in 1968. Under it sits the same 450hp 427 from the year before, along with the heavy-duty suspension, close-ratio Muncie M21 4-speed, and race-ready 4.10 rear gears that were part of the Yenko package. JL's version has a cool metal flake in the vibrant green color, and the pinstripe around the distinctive '68 white hockey stick stripe is impressively precise. I also really like the correct Yenko 5-spoke wheels wrapped in red-line tires.



1972 YENKO STINGER VEGA

The little coupe you see here the second Yenko Stinger, the spiritual successor to the original Corvair-based Stingers. Much like the original, the Vega Stingers were envisioned for road-racing and Yenko even obtained certification for it to compete in SCCA competition, as his Corvair-based Stingers had a few years before. The key to boosting the little 110hp 4-banger up to Yenko's target of 155 was the use of a turbocharger. Sadly, the EPA put a halt to the dealer-installed turbo idea, but Yenko did build 400 special Yenko Stinger Vegas, and a few of them were even delivered with the turbocharger system in the trunk for owners to install themselves! No way to tell if JL's Man-o-War Red example was one of those, but it is decked out with engine detail under its front-hinged hood. It also includes Yenko-specific 5-spoke wheels, Yenko Stinger graphics, and the special ducktail spoiler. The real rubber tires even have Goodyear Polyglas sidewall markings. 🏆

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BILL'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE AT THE NEVADA OPEN ROAD CHALLENGE

BY MATT BOYD

Frequent contributor and longtime friend of DCX Bill Bennett had a big month leading up to this issue. It started off with a road trip to central Florida to visit Don Garlits' Museum of Drag Racing, which included a sit-down with Big Daddy himself! (See page 32) Bill is not one to miss out on any opportunity for automotive adventure, so after a couple weeks back home he was off again—this time caravanning from his home in Southern California to Nevada for his birthday—but not for anything so mundane as gambling in Vegas. Nope, Bill was entered into the Nevada Open Road Challenge—the springtime event for the Silver State Classic—the world-famous high-speed open-road race held near Ely, Nevada. (Diecast fans may know the Silver State Classic races—which are held on a remote stretch of Nevada highway outside of Ely—as the events that helped originate the legend of the famous Outlaw 1969 Camaro “Big Red” that GMP made in 1:18.)

Bill's ride for the event was a 2016 Dodge Challenger Hellcat owned and driven by Bob Dietrich, while Bill manned the stopwatches (they had three!) and other timing equipment as navigator. Bob is a five-time veteran of Silver State events but this was Bill's first run. They proved to be a formidable duo, handily winning the 100mph class and missing their target average speed by less than 1% over the entire 120-mile race length. Bill and Bob competed as members of multi-car Team GT (for “Good Times”), and the two are already making plans to defend their class win at the September race!



With 707hp from the factory the 2016 Hellcat they raced already had plenty of raw speed, but owner Bob Dietrich added a Hurst front splitter for stability and a trick roll bar from Carlin Fabrication for safety.



Bill Bennett and Bob Dietrich on their way to a class win in the 2021 Nevada Open Road Challenge. (Photo by Wayne M. White courtesy of Racecardriverposters.com)



Bill (left) and Bob celebrate their NORC 100mph class win at the awards banquet with trophy presenter Maggie Wines, Ely's White Pines High School Senior Class President.

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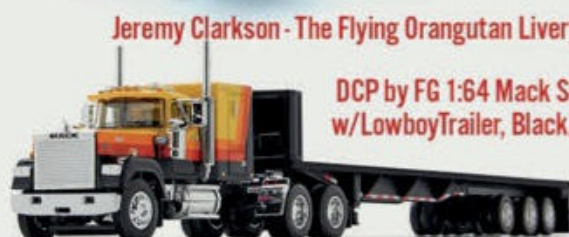
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