

IT'S MY HALLOWEEN CLASSIC: 1971 DODGE 340 DEMON

A devil of a time finding a Demon

Religious groups took offence to badging

GREG WILLIAMS
FOR THE CALGARY HERALD

Halloween's all about ghouls and goblins, so how about throwing a Demon into the mix?

Neel Roberts of Vulcan owns a 1971 Dodge 340 Demon that he bought last year through eBay.

The Demon joins his growing collection of Mopar vehicles. Roberts, 43, also owns a 1969 Charger and a 1970 Duster, and he's always looking for more.

His passion for Mopars started when he was 16 years old. While attending high school in Toronto, where he was born and raised, Roberts owned a 1971 Demon as well as a 1972 Dart.

“When you're 16, you don't really have the funds to get more elaborate,” Roberts says. As a result, he couldn't keep his Mopars. But lately life's been good for Roberts and he's investing in memories and nostalgia. This is the second Dodge he's purchased from an eBay auction.

“I do a daily search just to see what's out there,” Roberts says of his eBay habit. “If a car looked reasonable, I'd put in a bid and see what happens or just watch the action.”

Ironically, Roberts had watched this car sell in an earlier listing.

Thanks to a deadbeat bidder (the winner didn't pay for the car) the Demon was relisted.

This time, Roberts won. He gave the seller a 10 per cent deposit, hooked up a trailer to his Chevy Canyon pickup truck and drove to Tacoma, Wash., to view his purchase.

“Apparently, (the vendor's) mom had bought the car brand new, and he got it a couple of years ago,” Roberts says. “He ended up selling it because he needed the money.”

Roberts was pleased with the car. He notes the vehicle has never been apart for a complete restoration and says it is in very good original condition.

There is still some original sheen in the factory orange paint and Roberts says that is the way he will leave the car.

The Dodge Demon was a new model to the Dart line of vehicles in 1971.

The Demon, which was based on its cousin the Plymouth Duster, was available with two different power plants, one a 3.2-litre inline-six cylinder and the other the a 5.5-L V-8.

The 5.5-L was one of Chrysler's small block engines and it produced 275 horsepower with a four-barrel carburetor on top and dual exhausts.



Neel Roberts hires a mechanic to help maintain his growing fleet of Mopars. So far he has amassed a 1969 Charger, a 1970 Duster and, recently, a 1971 Demon.

By 1971 the Demon, a two-door fast-back, was considered a compact car. Options for the model included hood scoops and rear spoiler and a four-speed manual or TorqueFlite automatic transmission.



Mopar enthusiast Neel Roberts bought this 1971 Dodge 340 Demon last year through auction website eBay after a deadbeat bidder was unable to purchase the car. Roberts won it the second time around.

All of the Demon models came with a cartoon devil decal — complete with a pitchfork — affixed to the front fenders and rear valance.

Some religious groups took offence to the badging and in 1973 Dodge renamed the Demon the Dart Sport.

Roberts has opted to fit the optional hood scoops to his car — his Demon didn't come with them as purchased.

“I think the car looks a lot sharper, and the scoops give it more character,” Roberts says.

After getting the Demon back home Roberts had to complete an out of province inspection.

He hires a mechanic to help maintain his growing fleet of Mopars and says it cost him about \$2,000 to perform some of the tasks, such as replacing the ball joints, the brakes, some electrical work and a tune-up.

“There were just some loose ends here and there,” he says.

“But now it's on the road and licensed, and I intend to keep it as straight as it is now, and won't do much other than maintain it.



The Demon even comes with a cartoon devil logo on the rear valance—something religious groups objected to, so the car was renamed the Dart.