

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1965 Dodge Dart Restoration Guide

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RESTORATIONESSENTIALS

1965 Dodge Dart

Factory-Correct Restoration Guide

Key facts at a glance

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Single-year coverage. Factory-correct specifications. No guesswork.

SAMPLE EXCERPT — full guide available at the link on the cover sheet



Manufacturer History

Dodge began in 1900 as the Dodge Brothers Machine Shop, supplying parts — and then complete cars — with a reputation for overbuilt durability. The first Dodge Brothers automobile appeared in 1914, and the brothers' obsession with quality made 'Dependability' the brand's watchword. After both brothers died in 1920, the company was sold to Chrysler in 1928, becoming the corporation's mainstream, slightly sportier division.

Dodge found its performance voice in the 1950s with the Red Ram Hemi V8 and Exner's Forward Look styling, then doubled down in the 1960s: the 1966 Charger invented the fastback muscle car, the Coronet put big-block power in a mid-size package, and the 1968 Super Bee answered Plymouth's Road Runner with Dodge's own budget brawler. The 1969 Charger Daytona and its Plymouth Superbird sibling took the aero wars to NASCAR's fastest tracks.

Like Plymouth, Dodge benefited from Chrysler's deep engineering bench: the LA small-block, B/RB big-block, and 426 Hemi engines; the A833 four-speed and TorqueFlite automatics; the 8-3/4-inch and Dana 60 rear axles; and torsion-bar front suspension that made Mopars handle. Dodge's muscle cars were typically a half-step more upscale than their Plymouth twins, which is why survivors in factory-correct condition are so prized today.

The muscle era ended with the 1971 model year for high compression, and Dodge pivoted to personal luxury (Charger), compacts (Dart, Colt), and eventually the minivan. But the 1967-1971 B-body performance cars — Coronet R/T, Super Bee, and Charger R/T — are cornerstone collector cars, and their restoration is supported by factory documentation, Galen Govier's decoding references, and a mature reproduction market.

2 — Model History

The Dart began in 1960 as a full-size Dodge on a 118-inch wheelbase - Seneca, Pioneer, and Phoenix trim levels - built to give Dodge a lower-priced entry against Ford and Chevrolet. It worked spectacularly: over 323,000 Darts sold in 1960, 87 percent of Dodge's total output. The new 225 Slant Six debuted here, alongside 318, 361, and 383 V8 options.

The 1961 Dart wore reverse fins and a concave grille that buyers rejected, and a midyear aluminum-block 225 option that racers loved. For 1962 Dodge downsized the Dart to a 116-inch-wheelbase mid-size line (Dart, 330, 440, Polara 500) just as Chevrolet kept its full-size - and the 413 Max Wedge versions became dragstrip legends despite the showroom confusion.

In 1963 the Dart name moved to the compact 111-inch-wheelbase A-body, replacing the Lancer. The early A-body Dart (1963-1966) sold on value and the Slant Six's reputation: the 170 and 225 were the only engines for 1963, the 273 V8 joined at midyear 1964, and the Charger 273 four-barrel gave the 1965 GT genuine performance credibility.

Terminology warning that this guide enforces throughout: the 1960-1962 Dart is a full-size/mid-size unit-body car, not the compact A-body the name later meant. Parts, trim, and restoration logic do not cross the 1963 divide - verify the platform before ordering anything.

3 — What Is Unique About This Model Year

The 1965 facelift gave the Dart its Turbine-car-influenced face - the most distinctive of the early A-bodies - and the Charger 273 gave it genuine performance: a 235-horsepower four-barrel 273 that turned the GT into a credible sporty car.

The pushbutton is gone - 1965 moved the automatic to lever control. Small detail, big dating point: the interior layout changed with it.

At 40,700 GTs (commonly cited), the GT was a real slice of 1965 volume - but the GT remained a trim package available with any engine, so the VIN engine code still does the powertrain authentication.



the last of the first A-body styling cycle before the 1966 redesign - the early-A-body collector's sweet spot for the facelift look.

Year-to-year changes

- Facelift with Turbine-car styling influence
- Charger 273: 235-hp four-barrel performance engine
- Lever automatic replaces the pushbutton
- GT total 40,700 (commonly cited)

4 — VIN Decoding

1965 Dart VINs use the pre-1966 Chrysler format with year digit 5.

VIN engine codes identify the Charger 273 (four-barrel) vs. the two-barrel 273 vs. the sixes - the authentication that matters on GTs.

Decode against the 1965 Dodge manual or Chrysler Historical.

5 — Cowl / Fender-Tag Decoding

1965 fender tags in early A-body format. Charger 273, GT trim, and transmission type are identified here.

The 1965-only styling details (grille, trim) should agree with the tag's build date.

6 — Engines

Factory engine lineup

Engine

Compression

Horsepower

Torque

170 Slant Six

8.2:1

101 hp

155 lb-ft

225 Slant Six

8.2:1

145 hp

215 lb-ft

273 2-barrel

8.8:1

180 hp

260 lb-ft

273 4-barrel (Charger 273)

10.5:1

235 hp

280 lb-ft

170 Slant Six 170 cu in — bore 3.40 in × stroke 3.13 in, 8.2:1 compression, 101 hp, 155 lb-ft, 1bbl. Engine code: -. Base six. Commonly published figures.

225 Slant Six 225 cu in — bore 3.40 in × stroke 4.125 in, 8.2:1 compression, 145 hp, 215 lb-ft, 1bbl. Engine code: -. Uplevel six.

273 2-barrel 273 cu in — bore 3.63 in × stroke 3.31 in, 8.8:1 compression, 180 hp, 260 lb-ft, 2bbl. Engine code: D. Base V8. Commonly published figures.

273 4-barrel (Charger 273) 273 cu in — bore 3.63 in × stroke 3.31 in, 10.5:1 compression, 235 hp, 280 lb-ft, 4bbl. Engine code: -. The performance 273 for 1965. Torque commonly published - verify against the 1965