

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1968 Plymouth Road Runner Restoration Guide

Read these pages exactly as they appear in the full guide.
Nothing here is rewritten or summarised — it is the product itself,
so you can judge the depth before you spend a dollar.

Full guide: <https://restoreessentials.com/product/RE-GD-1968-PLYMOUTH-ROAD-RUN>

RestorationEssentials — instant PDF download after checkout.



RESTORATIONESSENTIALS

1968 Plymouth Road Runner

Factory-Correct Restoration Guide

Key facts at a glance

restorationessentials.polsia.app

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

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



1. Manufacturer History: Plymouth

Plymouth was created in 1928 by Walter P. Chrysler as his answer to Ford and Chevrolet: a low-priced car with engineering a step above its price class. The first Plymouth, the Model Q, carried hydraulic brakes at a time when its rivals still used mechanical brakes, and the brand's reputation for value engineering was set early. Through the Depression, Plymouth grew into America's number-three brand by selling honest, durable transportation.

The 1950s brought Virgil Exner's 'Forward Look' styling, tailfins, and torsion-bar front suspension ('Torsion-Aire'), which gave Plymouths handling their competitors could not match. The 1960s were Plymouth's performance decade: the Max Wedge Super Stock cars, the 1964 Barracuda (which beat the Ford Mustang to market by two weeks), the GTX, and the 1968 Road Runner — a back-to-basics muscle car that proved performance could be affordable.

Chrysler's engineering culture shaped every Plymouth of this era: the slant-six, the LA small-block V8 family, the B and RB big-blocks, the 426 Hemi, the TorqueFlite automatic (widely considered the best automatic of its day), and unit-body construction that made Mopars lighter and more rigid than their body-on-frame rivals. For the restorer, this is good news: mechanical parts interchange broadly across the corporation, and factory service manuals are unusually thorough.

The 1970s brought emissions controls, insurance surcharges, and the end of the high-compression era. Plymouth soldiered on with Volare, Horizon, and a string of rebadged Mitsubishis before the brand was discontinued in 2001. But the 1964-1973 performance cars — Barracuda, GTX, Road Runner, Duster 340, and the Superbird — remain the heart of the hobby, and factory-correct restoration of these cars is supported by one of the deepest reproduction ecosystems in the business.

2. Model History: Plymouth Road Runner

The Plymouth Road Runner arrived in 1968 and rewrote the muscle-car formula: take a mid-size Belvedere coupe, install the biggest standard engine in the class (the 383 four-barrel, 335 hp), add heavy-duty suspension and brakes, strip out the luxury, and price it at \$2,896 — within reach of the young buyers the muscle car was built for. Plymouth paid Warner Bros. \$50,000 for the cartoon bird's name and likeness, plus \$10,000 for the 'beep-beep' horn, and Motor Trend named the Road Runner its 1969 Car of the Year. The back-to-basics performance car was a phenomenon.

The 1969 Road Runner was the peak: over 80,000 cars built, the new A12 option (440 Six Barrel, lift-off fiberglass hood, Dana 60 axle — the ultimate factory drag package), and the 'beep-beep' horn as standard equipment. The Road Runner had done what the GTX could not — it made Plymouth the youth-performance brand, and it outsold its upscale sibling by multiples.

For 1970 the Road Runner wore the B-body's one-year loop-bumper restyle and shared its showroom with the most radical Plymouth ever built: the Road Runner Superbird, the winged NASCAR homologation special. The standard 383 continued, the 440 Six Barrel and 426 Hemi remained on the option sheet, and the convertible — 824 built per Hemmings, in conflict with other sources — became an instant collectible. This guide covers the standard 1970 Road Runner; the Superbird has its own dedicated guide.

The 1971 Road Runner moved to the fuselage-styled B-body — the rounded, aircraft-inspired generation — and the engine program began its long retreat: the 383 dropped to 300 hp, the 440 to 370, the Six Barrel to 385. For 1972-1973 the big-block era effectively ended for the standard Road



the 340 (1972) and then the 318 (1973) became the base engines, with the 400 and 440 as options — and ordering the 440 created the 'Road Runner GTX,' the GTX name living on as a package rather than a model.

For the restorer, the Road Runner is the volume Mopar performance car: reproduction support is excellent, parts interchange across the huge B-body family, and the cars' values support serious investment. The authentication standard is the RM VIN prefix (1968-1971) — with the engine code as the fifth character — and the fender tag and broadcast sheet as supporting evidence. The 1972-1973 cars' 'Road Runner GTX' package is documented by the U (440) engine code, not by a separate model prefix.

3. What Makes the 1968 Unique

The 1968 Road Runner is the original — the car that proved a stripped-down mid-size coupe with a big standard engine could outsell the establishment. At \$2,896, the Road Runner undercut the GTX by hundreds of dollars while offering the same 383 four-barrel (335 hp) as standard equipment. The formula was deliberately anti-luxury: bench seat, minimal trim, heavy-duty running gear, and the cartoon bird on the side. It worked immediately.

The 1968 engine program was a two-choice menu: the standard 383 four-barrel (335 hp) or the optional 426 Street Hemi (425 hp). No small-blocks, no six-cylinders — the Road Runner's identity was big-engine standard, and the Hemi option (code J) created the first Hemi Road Runners, among the most collectible Mopars of the decade. The A12 Six Barrel package would not arrive until 1969.

RESTORATIONESSENTIALS — 1968 Plymouth Road Runner

The 1968 model year brought the federal safety mandates that reshaped every American car: side marker lights (round on the 1968 Mopars), shoulder belts, and revised controls. The 'Coke bottle' B-body styling was new for 1968, and the Road Runner's clean, unadorned version of it — with minimal badging and the dust-trail bird decals — is the definitive 1968 performance look.

Production was 44,134 cars per body-style figures — though a body-style breakdown attributed to production records sums to 43,294, a disagreement this guide reports rather than resolves. Either way, the 1968 Road Runner outsold the GTX several times over and established the model as Plymouth's volume performance car. First-year status, the Hemi option, and the car's cultural impact keep the 1968 cars at the top of the Road Runner market.

Restoration notes specific to 1968: the round side marker lights are the quick identifier against the 1969's rectangular markers. The 1968-only trim details are one-year parts — verify part numbers. The B/RB torque table in this guide uses the corrected 70 ft-lb iron-head figure (some references print 95 ft-lb, which belongs to the LA small-block — see the torque note); Hemi cars use the dedicated Hemi table. And check the 'beep-beep' horn — it is a Road Runner signature, and a correct restoration has it working.

The 1968 restorer's checklist: RM VIN prefix, H-code 383 or J-code Hemi, and the fender tag to confirm the rest. The stripped-down formula means there is less trim to source — but also less trim reproduced, so incomplete cars can be a long hunt. The cartoon decals and horn are reproduced; the sheet metal is the question.

First-year status gives the 1968 a permanent market premium within the Road Runner line, and the Hemi cars are blue-chip. But the 383 cars are the heart of the model — affordable, honest, and the purest expression of the budget-muscle formula. Buy the best body you can afford.

Mechanically, the 1968 is simple and fully supported: the 383 Magnum is one of Mopar's most documented engines, and the B-body chassis parts are everywhere. This is an ideal first Mopar restoration — straightforward, well-supported, and unlikely to surprise.