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The opening pages of

1969 Dodge Dart Restoration Guide

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RESTORATIONESSENTIALS

1969 Dodge Dart

Factory-Correct Restoration Guide

Key facts at a glance

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ufacturer 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 1967 A-body redesign gave the Dart wider frame rails and room for big engines, and Dodge used it. The GTS arrived late in 1967 with the 383; for 1968 the GTS standardized on the new 340 small-block (275 hp) with the 383 as the option - the Dart's entry into the factory muscle wars, complete with Scat Pack bumblebee stripes.

1969 was the peak: the GTS 383 went to 330 hp, the Swinger 340 gave buyers a $2,836 performance hardtop (16,637 built), and the M-code 440 stuffed the 375-hp big-block into about 640 Darts for the ultimate street sleeper. 1970 brought a facelift, the 198 Slant Six replacing the 170, and the end of the 383 and the convertible in the Dart line.

For 1971 Dodge replaced the Swinger with the fastback Demon - a Duster sibling on a 108-inch wheelbase - and the Demon 340 (10,098 built at $2,721) became the performance Dart. The Demon continued through 1972 (240 net hp, electronic ignition on the 340), then became the Dart Sport for 1973 when the devil imagery drew complaints. The 340 Sport carried the torch at 240 net horsepower - and the 360 never appeared in a Dart until 1974.

Terminology enforced in this guide: the 1971-1972 Demon is a Dart-line fastback sharing A-body/Duster architecture - not an ordinary Dart model without qualification. And there was no factory 1970 Dart 360 and no 1973 Dart 360; any such claim is builder-grade fiction this guide does not repeat.

3 — What Is Unique About This Model Year

1969 was the Dart's peak muscle year. The Swinger 340 gave buyers a $2,836, 275-horsepower hardtop - 16,637 of them - while the GTS 383 went to 330 hp and the M-code 440 (about 640 built, 516 automatics and 124 four-speeds) became the stuff of legend.

The M-code deserves its own warning: with only ~640 built, any claimed M-code car needs the VIN engine code (M = 440), the fender tag, and ideally Chrysler Historical documentation. The money is entirely in the proof.

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uction is reported around 6,874 (5,602 hardtops, 1,272 convertibles), though some references cite 6,702 - both figures are in the ledger. Either way, the GTS convertible is the rare one.

1969 was the last year for the Dart convertible and the first year of the High-Impact color palette - the end of one era and the start of another on the same car.

Year-to-year changes

- Swinger 340 new: $2,836, 16,637 built
- GTS 383 up to 330 hp; M-code 440 (~640 built)
- Last year for the Dart convertible
- High-Impact colors arrive

4 — VIN Decoding

1969 Dart VINs are 13 digits with an engine code. Pattern: LS23H9B100001.

Position 5 engine codes: A = 170, C = 225, G = 318, H = 340, L = 383 2bbl, N = 383 4bbl, M = 440 (M-code).

Verify 383 coding against Govier/factory references; H = 340 and M = 440 are the authentication codes that matter.

Position 6: 9 = 1969. Position 7: plant. Positions 8-13: sequence.

5 — Cowl / Fender-Tag Decoding

1969 IBM-card fender tags. The Swinger 340, GTS, and M-code equipment must agree across VIN, tag, and broadcast sheet.

M-code cars: the tag, VIN M-code, and Chrysler Historical documentation must all agree - the production count (~640) makes every claim high-stakes.

6 — Engines

Factory engine lineup

Engine
Compression
Horsepower
Torque

170 Slant Six
8.2:1
115 hp
155 lb-ft

225 Slant Six
8.2:1
145 hp
215 lb-ft

318 2-barrel (LA)
9.2:1
230 hp
320 lb-ft

340 4-barrel (GTS/Swinger)
10.5:1
275 hp @ 5000
340 lb-ft @ 3200

383 4-barrel (GTS opt.)
10.0:1

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