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The opening pages of

1970 AMC AMX Restoration Guide

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RESTORATIONESSENTIALS

1970 AMC Amx

Factory-Correct Restoration Guide

Key facts at a glance

Wheelbase	97 in — new dogleg-port heads, Ram Air available
Engines	360 (285 hp), 390 (325 hp) — 290 dropped
Transmissions	Borg-Warner T-10 4-speed standard; 3-speed automatic optional
Production	4,116 total (scarcest AMX year) Identifier VIN AOM397_ — the 397 model code is the AMX marker Single-year coverage. Factory-correct specifications....

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

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



About This Guide

This is the RestorationEssentials factory-correct restoration guide for the 1970 AMC AMX — one model, one year, nothing else. Every specification in this guide was checked against marque references, factory literature excerpts, and enthusiast documentation before it was written.

Our operating ethic is simple: we don't lie and we don't steal, we offer value. That means three things for this guide. First, no invented specifications — every number has a source. Second, where reputable sources disagree, the disagreement is disclosed in the text and in the Sources, Conflicts & Omissions section rather than papered over. Third, where a detail could not be verified, it is omitted and the omission is recorded — an honest gap beats a confident fabrication.

How to use this guide: start with the VIN and fender-tag (or door data plate) decoding sections to establish exactly what your car was when it left the factory. Use the engine, transmission, axle, paint, and casting sections to verify that what is on the car today matches what should be there. Use the rust and restoration-sequence sections to plan the work. And keep this guide in the shop — it is a working document, not a coffee-table book.

A final note: these cars are sixty years old. Parts have been swapped, tags have been lost, and memories have faded. Trust

the metal — casting numbers, date codes, and stampings — over stories. When in doubt, photograph everything and verify

against the factory service manual for your year.

1. Manufacturer History: American Motors

American Motors was formed in 1954 by the merger of Nash and Hudson — the last independent American automaker of consequence, a company that survived by being cleverer than the Big Three rather than bigger. Under George Romney, AMC found its identity: the Rambler, an honest compact that sold on value while Detroit sold on size.

AMC's performance era arrived in the late 1960s. The 1968 Javelin and AMX gave AMC a genuine pony car and a two-seat sports car, both powered by the new AMC V8 family (290/343/390). The 1969 SC/Rambler — built with Hurst — was AMC's drag-racing statement: a 315-horsepower 390 in the compact Rogue body with red-white-and-blue paint, built to dominate NHRA's F/Stock class. It did. AMC's engineering was genuinely innovative: the unit-body construction, the 1966 V8 family with its thin-wall casting, and — from 1970 — the purchase of Jeep, which would eventually be AMC's salvation and legacy. For the restorer, AMC's small production volumes mean thinner reproduction support than the Big Three, but a passionate marque community and the American Motors Owners Association.

AMC survived as an independent until 1987, when Chrysler bought the company — mostly to get Jeep. The 1968-1974 performance cars (Javelin, AMX, SC/Rambler, Rebel Machine) are the heart of AMC collecting: low production, high character, and still attainable. Factory-correct restoration rewards patience and marque-community connections.

1970 American Motors AMX

2. Model History: American Motors AMX

The AMX grew out of American Motors' 1965-1966 show-car program: the AMX (American Motors Experimental) prototypes, built under design chief Dick Teague, were two-seat sports-car studies that stole the show circuit and convinced management that AMC could build a genuine performance car. The production AMX was approved as a fast, low-cost way into the pony-car market: take the new Javelin, cut 12 inches out of the wheelbase ahead of the rear axle, delete the back seat, and you had a two-seat



... for thousands less than a Corvette.

The AMX went on sale in February 1968 as a mid-year introduction — the only American-built steel-bodied two-seater in production. Standard equipment included the four-speed manual (Borg-Warner T-10), front disc brakes, and heavy-duty suspension; the base engine was the 290 V8, with the 343 and the 390 optional. The formula worked: the AMX won the Society of Automotive Engineers' Best Engineered Car award in both 1969 and 1970, and Craig Breedlove's AMX speed-record runs at Goodyear's Texas track in early 1968 — 106 records — gave the little car giant-killer credibility. The racing program cemented the legend. In 1969 Hurst Performance built 52 SS/AMX Super Stock drag cars — 390s with dual four-barrels rated at 340 horsepower, the most ferocious AMXs ever built. On the road-racing side, the Javelin Trans-Am program (1968-1970) shared the AMX's engineering. For 1970 the AMX got the new 360 V8 and a stronger 390 with dogleg-port heads and Ram Air; then the name moved onto the Javelin as a trim level in 1971, and the stand-alone two-seat AMX was gone after just 19,134 cars — one of the great what-ifs of the muscle era.

3. What Makes the 1970 Unique

The 1970 AMX is the last of the two-seaters — and the scarcest, with 4,116 built — and it got the most serious engine package of the three years. The 290 was dropped; the new 360-cubic-inch V8 (4.08 x 3.44 inches, 285 horsepower) became the base AMX engine, and the 390 grew to 325 horsepower with new dogleg-port cylinder heads and available Ram Air. The 1970 AMX is the best-driving two-seat AMX and, by the production numbers, the one you'll wait longest to find.

The dogleg-port heads are the 1970 390's signature: the exhaust ports were reshaped with a distinctive dogleg bend, improving breathing and — with the Ram Air system — pushing output to 325 horsepower. The 360 (P-code) was no consolation prize: 285 horsepower from 360 cubic inches, in a 97-inch-wheelbase car weighing barely 3,100 pounds, made the base 1970 AMX quicker than most 1969 390 cars' street manners would suggest. Both 1970 engines run the 1970-only head castings — date-code discipline is absolute, because 1968-1969 heads bolt on and unscrupulous sellers know it.

Styling for 1970 was a facelift rather than a redesign: new grille, new striping, revised interior, and the continued Big Bad color attitude. Standard equipment held the line — T-10 four-speed, front disc brakes, heavy-duty suspension, twin exhausts — with the Shift-Command automatic optional. Production by engine and transmission (planethoustonamx): 360 — 836 four-speed, 747 automatic; 390 — 1,632 four-speed, 901 automatic, for the 4,116 total. The 390 four-speed is the blue-chip 1970 AMX; the 360 1970 American Motors AMX

cars are the value play with 90 percent of the experience.

The 1970 AMX's historical position is its value proposition: the last year of the two-seat AMX before the 1971 redesign stretched the wheelbase and added a back seat. The two-seat AMXs — 1968 through 1970, 19,134 built across all three years — are the purist's AMXs, and the 1970's 4,116 cars are the scarcest of the three. The 1970's new front end, the dogleg-port heads, and the 360's introduction make it the most developed of the two-seaters. For the collector, the two-seat years are the investment-grade AMXs, and the 1970 is the scarcest of them.

The 1970 AMX's options list is the customizer's menu: the Big Bad colors — Big Bad Blue, Big Bad Green, Big Bad Orange — continued the AMX's loudest tradition, and the factory options (Ram Air, the handling package, the upgraded interior) let buyers build anything from a street cruiser to a strip car. For the restorer, the options are documentation work: the data plate codes every factory option, and a 1970 AMX's value follows its equipment. A base 360 car is honest transportation; a Big Bad 390 four-speed with Ram Air is the collector's target. Verify the options against the data plate before paying for them — dealer-installed and owner-added equipment is common, and only the plate tells the factory story.