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The opening pages of

1971 Plymouth GTX Restoration Guide

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RESTORATIONESSENTIALS

1971 Plymouth Gtx

Factory-Correct Restoration Guide

Key facts at a glance

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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 GTX

The Plymouth GTX arrived in 1967 as the 'gentleman's muscle car' — Plymouth's answer to buyers who wanted big-block performance without the Road Runner's stripped-down austerity (the Road Runner itself would not arrive until 1968). Based on the Belvedere hardtop and convertible bodies, the GTX came standard with the 440 Super Commando four-barrel (375 hp) and offered only one option in the engine bay: the 426 Street Hemi. It was performance with manners, and it sold 12,690 cars in its first year.

For 1968-1969 the GTX rode the B-body's famous 'Coke bottle' redesign — the rounded fuselage-preview styling with the sweeping character line that defines the era's Mopars. The formula

RESTORATIONESSENTIALS — 1971 Plymouth GTX did not change: standard 440, optional Hemi, upscale trim, and distinctive GTX badging. Production peaked in 1968 at 18,940 cars, then settled to 15,602 in 1969 as the Road Runner — cheaper, louder, and deliberately anti-establishment — ate into the GTX's market.

The 1970 GTX wore the B-body's one-year loop-bumper restyle and gained a new option: the 440 Six Barrel (390 hp), available for the first time in the GTX. But the market had moved on — only 7,748 GTX hardtops were built in 1970 (convertibles were gone from the GTX line), including 72 Hemi cars and 768 Six Barrel cars. The GTX was becoming a rare car in real time.

1971 was the GTX's last year as a standalone model, and the fuselage-styled cars are among the most distinctive Mopars ever built. Just 2,942 GTXs were produced for 1971 — with secondary sources reporting only 30 Hemi cars and 135 Six Barrel cars — making the 1971 GTX one of the rarest production performance Mopars of the muscle-car era. After 1971, the GTX name survived



an option package on the 440-powered Road Runner.

For the restorer, the GTX's appeal is its specification: every GTX left the factory with a 440 or a Hemi, upscale trim, and heavy-duty running gear. The cars were expensive when new and are rare today, which means restoration costs are high but the finished cars are blue-chip. Authentication is straightforward — the RS VIN prefix is GTX-only — but verify the engine code (U, V, or R in 1970-1971; L or J in 1967-1969) against the car's equipment, because drivetrain swaps are common after fifty years.

3. What Makes the 1971 Unique

The 1971 GTX is the end of the line — the last year the GTX existed as a standalone model — and the rarest GTX ever built: 2,942 cars. The fuselage-styled B-body gave the final GTX its most distinctive shape, and the combination of last-year status, dramatic styling, and tiny production makes the 1971 GTX one of the most significant Mopars of the muscle-car era.

The 1971 engine program carried the 1970 lineup into the detuning era: the standard 440 four-barrel dropped to 370 hp (9.5:1 compression), the 440 Six Barrel to 385 hp (10.3:1), while the 426 Hemi held at 425 hp. Secondary sources report just 30 Hemi cars and 135 Six Barrel cars among the 2,942 — figures that circulate in marque references but should be treated as reported rather than factory-confirmed, as this guide's Omissions note records.

After 1971, the GTX survived only as an option package on the 440-powered Road Runner — the 'Road Runner GTX' of 1972-1974. The standalone RS-prefix GTX was gone. This makes the 1971 car the final expression of the gentleman's-muscle-car formula that began in 1967, and the market RESTORATIONESSENTIALS — 1971 Plymouth GTX

treats it accordingly: 1971 GTXs in documented condition are blue-chip cars.

The fuselage styling is the 1971 GTX's visual signature: the rounded 'fuselage' body sides, the loop-type front bumper treatment, and the aircraft-inspired interior. The 1971-only trim and details are one-year parts — verify part numbers, because 1972-1973 fuselage cosmetics differ. The High Impact palette continued with 1971's colors: Plum Crazy, Green Go, Top Banana, Hemi Orange, Curious Yellow.

Restoration notes specific to 1971: with only 2,942 cars built, parts specific to the 1971 GTX are scarce — verify availability before committing to a project missing trim. The B/RB torque table uses the corrected 70 ft-lb iron-head figure; Hemi cars use the dedicated Hemi table. Authentication is the GTX standard — RS prefix, engine code U/V/R, fender tag, broadcast sheet — applied with extra care, because the car's rarity makes it a target for misrepresentation.

The 1971 GTX's authentication hinges on understanding what it is: the final year of the GTX as a standalone model with its own RS-prefix VIN series — not a Road Runner trim package (that came in 1972). The VIN will decode as a GTX (RS23U/V/R); the fender tag and broadcast sheet confirm the details. A seller who does not understand this distinction is a seller to be careful with.

Final-year status and tiny production make the 1971 GTX one of the rarest Mopar muscle cars — the market knows it, and documented cars bring strong money. The Hemi 1971 GTXs are among the rarest Hemis ever built. But rarity without documentation is just a story; demand the paper.

Fuselage-specific trim is the restoration challenge: the 1971-only front end and GTX-specific details are scarce. Mechanically, it is all standard 1971 B-body — the 440s and the Hemi are well-supported. This is a car to buy finished or nearly so.

Year-to-year changes at a glance.

■ Final year of the standalone GTX (RS VIN series); from 1972 the GTX name continued only as a Road Runner option package.