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Dodge Coronet Rt 1968

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1968 Dodge Coronet R/T

Factory-Correct Restoration Guide

Key facts at a glance

About This Guide

This is the RestorationEssentials factory-correct restoration guide for the 1968 Dodge Coronet R/T — 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: Dodge

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: Dodge Coronet R/T

The Coronet R/T arrived for 1967 as Dodge's top-dog B-body: R/T stood for Road/Track, and the package

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siness — the 440 Magnum V8 (375 hp) standard, heavy-duty suspension and brakes, and bold R/T badging. Where the Super Bee (arriving in 1968) was the budget brawler, the R/T was the gentleman's muscle car: full trim, full equipment, and the biggest engine as standard rather than optional. The formula never changed across the R/T's four-year run (1967-1970): the 440 Magnum standard, the 426 Hemi as the sole engine option, and the Coronet's mid-size B-body platform underneath. What changed was the wrapper — the 1966-1967 B-body's crisp lines, the 1968-1969's Coke-bottle curves, and the 1970's dramatic loop-bumper front end.

The 440 Magnum deserves its reputation: 4.32-inch bore, 3.75-inch stroke, 10.1:1 compression, 375 horsepower at 4,600 rpm, and 480 lb-ft of torque at 3,200 rpm. It was the largest standard engine in any intermediate muscle car, and it gave the R/T effortless, big-block thrust. The Hemi option — 425 hp, dual four-barrels, and a price tag that doubled the cost of the performance — was for the serious and the wealthy.

R/T production was always limited: under 11,000 in 1967, similar in 1968, just over 7,000 in 1969, and about 2,600 in the final year of 1970. Hemi R/Ts are among the rarest Mopars ever built — reported at 287 (1967), 229 (1968), 107 (1969), and either 16 or 14 (1970) depending on the source. The 1970 figure is genuinely disputed, and this series' 1970 guide says so openly.

For the restorer, the Coronet R/T is pure B-body Mopar at its most refined: 440 or Hemi power, A833 or TorqueFlite, 8-3/4-inch or Dana 60 rear, torsion-bar front suspension. The R/T-specific trim — badges, hood scoops, stripe options, and the R/T-only interior details — is the originality battleground, because the mechanical parts interchange across the B-body line while the trim does not.

3. What Makes the 1968 Unique

The 1968 Coronet R/T wears the B-body's dramatic 1968 redesign — Coke-bottle curves, the new grille, and the rounder, more muscular proportions that defined the 1968-1970 Mopars. The R/T formula continued unchanged: 440 Magnum standard, Hemi optional, heavy-duty everything, R/T badging inside and out.

1968 brought the federal safety standards — round side marker lights (1969 switched to rectangular), front shoulder belts, and revised controls — and the R/T got them all. The 1968 cars are distinguished from 1967s by the full redesign and from 1969s by the round markers, the 1968-only grille, and detail trim differences.

1968 Dodge Coronet R/T

VIN coding: WS23L8 (hardtop) / WS27L8 (convertible), L = 440 Magnum, J = 426 Hemi. The 1968 R/T continued the L-code signature — the 440 standard, the Hemi the only alternative. A reported 229 Hemi R/Ts were built for 1968.

Production was similar to 1967 — approximately 11,000 cars (approximate). The 1968 R/T hardtop in bright colors with the 440 Magnum is the quintessential late-1960s Dodge muscle car: big, fast, and unapologetic. The convertibles (WS27) are the rare body style and carry a real premium.

Restoration notes specific to 1968: the 1968-only grille, trim, and round side markers are the visual identifiers. The R/T hood scoops, badges, and stripe options are the originality checkpoints — all reproduced, so verify against the tag. The 440 Magnum's Carter AVS, unsilenced air cleaner, and dual exhaust are the drivetrain details. Hemi cars need documentation.

Year-to-year changes at a glance.

- Full B-body redesign — Coke-bottle curves and new grille.
- Federal safety updates: round side marker lights, shoulder belts.
- R/T formula unchanged: 440 standard, Hemi optional.
- Convertible continued as the rare body style.

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