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The opening pages of

1964 Plymouth Barracuda Restoration Guide

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RESTORATIONESSENTIALS

1964 Plymouth Barracuda

Factory-Correct Restoration Guide

Key facts at a glance

Base engine

170 Slant Six Top engine 273 V8, 180 hp Total
production 23,443 Single-year coverage.
Factory-correct specifications. No guesswork — where
sources...

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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 1964 Plymouth Barracuda — 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: 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 Barracuda

The Plymouth Barracuda holds one of the most famous 'what if' positions in automotive history: it reached



ns on April 1, 1964 — a full two weeks before the Ford Mustang's April 17 debut. The Barracuda was America's first pony car by the calendar, but Plymouth wrapped its fastback around the humble Valiant compact, marketed it as a sporty Valiant variant, and watched Ford define the segment it had technically created.

The first-generation Barracuda (1964-1966) was essentially a Valiant with a dramatic fastback roofline and the largest rear glass ever fitted to a production car to that point — 14.4 square feet of it. The 106-inch-wheelbase A-body underpinnings meant the car was light and nimble, and the Formula S package (introduced for 1965) gave it genuine performance credibility: the 235-horsepower Commando 273 V8, Rallye suspension, a tachometer, and wider wheels and tires.

For 1967 the Barracuda got its own distinct body — no longer just a fastback Valiant. The second generation (1967-1969) rode the same 108-inch wheelbase as the rest of the A-body line but wore unique sheetmetal in three body styles: notchback coupe, fastback, and a new convertible. Engine options exploded: the 273 gave way to the 318, the 340 arrived in 1968, big-block 383 Formula S cars became street legends, and a handful of 1968 Hemi Super Stock Barracudas (built with Hurst) became the most valuable Mopars on earth.

The 1969 model year brought the 'Cuda package — a performance trim level with the 340, 383, or the new 440 big-block — setting the stage for the 1970 E-body 'Cuda, which would become one of the most collectible muscle cars ever built. The 1964-1969 Barracudas live somewhat in the shadow of their E-body successors, which is precisely why they represent strong value: the same Chrysler engineering, the same engine families, and far lower entry prices.

For the restorer, the A-body Barracuda is one of the friendliest Mopars to work on. Mechanical parts interchange across the entire A-body line (Valiant, Dart, Duster, Demon), reproduction sheetmetal and trim are widely available, and the cars are light enough that even the big-block versions are straightforward to service. The fender tag and broadcast sheet decode cleanly, and Galen Govier's Mopar references cover the line in depth.

3. What Makes the 1964 Unique

The 1964 Barracuda is the original — the car that beat the Mustang to market and started the pony-car era without getting credit for it. Introduced April 1, 1964, as a mid-year addition to the Valiant line, the first Barracuda was available only as a fastback, distinguished by its enormous wraparound rear glass. Everything from the cowl forward was Valiant; everything from the cowl back was new, and the roofline 1964 Plymouth Barracuda made it look like nothing else on the road.

Mechanically, the 1964 Barracuda was pure A-body Valiant: 106-inch wheelbase, torsion-bar front suspension, and a choice of the 170-cubic-inch slant-six (101 hp), the 225 slant-six (145 hp), or the brand-new 273-cubic-inch LA small-block V8 with a two-barrel carburetor (180 hp). The 273 was Chrysler's first LA-series V8, and the Barracuda was one of its launch platforms. There was no Formula S in 1964 and no four-barrel option — performance versions would have to wait a year.

What makes the 1964 unique among Barracudas: it is the only year with the Valiant-style front end and the original fastback-only body; the only first-generation year without a Formula S package; and the only Barracuda ever offered with the 170 slant-six. The 1964 cars also used the early A-body interior and the 1964 Valiant dashboard.

1964 Barracudas used the early Chrysler 10-digit VIN format (for example, cars have been documented with numbers in the V44/V45 sequences), and the fender tag used the early coding system. Production totaled 23,443 cars — a respectable start for a mid-year introduction, and a fraction of what the Mustang would sell. Survivors are rare, and 1964-only trim and glass parts require patience to source.