

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

Plymouth Road Runner Satellite 1968

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1968 Plymouth Satellite

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 Satellite

The Plymouth Satellite began in 1965 as the top trim of the Belvedere line, and by 1968 it had grown into a full model range of its own: the B-body family car that carried Plymouth's middle class. The 1968 Satellite arrived with the 'Coke bottle' redesign in a complete lineup — two-door hardtop and convertible, four-door sedan, and wagons — and introduced the Sport Satellite, with its standard 318 V8 and blacked-out horizontal-blade grille, as the sporty step-up within the family.

The Satellite's mission never changed: comfortable, stylish, affordable mid-size transportation with V8 power available for those who wanted it. The 1968-1970 cars are the classic B-body Satellites — the same fundamental architecture as the Road Runner and GTX, which is why Satellite bodies have RESTORATIONESSENTIALS — 1968 Plymouth Satellite donated so many clones. The 1970 model year was the last for the Belvedere name entirely; the Satellite carried the family-car mission forward alone.

For 1971 the Satellite moved to the fuselage-styled B-body — the rounded, aircraft-inspired generation — with a reorganized trim ladder. The two-door hierarchy ran from the base Satellite through the Sebring and Sebring Plus, with the Road Runner and GTX continuing as the performance expressions of the same fundamental car. The two-door cars rode a 115-inch wheelbase; sedans and wagons used 117 inches.

For 1972-1973 the Satellite continued as Plymouth's mainstream mid-size, with the 1973 two-doors receiving squared, more conventional front-end sheet metal and revised rear side windows. The performance era's end barely touched the Satellite's mission — the slant-six and 318 were the volume engines throughout — but the cars' B-body bones mean every Satellite shares its



on, brakes, and much of its structure with the muscle cars.

For the restorer, the Satellite is the rational Mopar: purchase prices are a fraction of the Road Runner's or GTX's, parts interchange across the enormous B-body family, and the cars are honest, comfortable drivers. The authentication standard is the VIN's trim prefix — RH (Satellite/Sebring), RP (Sport Satellite/Sebring Plus), RL (base, 1971+) — with the engine code, fender tag, and broadcast sheet as supporting evidence. Buy the best body you can find; everything else is available.

3. What Makes the 1968 Unique

The 1968 Satellite is the first year of the 'Coke bottle' B-body and the debut of the Sport Satellite — the sporty step-up within the family line, with a standard 318 V8, bucket-seat interior options, and the blacked-out horizontal-blade grille that set it apart from the base Satellite. The 1968 cars are the sharpest-looking Satellites of the classic generation, and the Sport Satellite is the enthusiast's pick of the family-car lineup.

The 1968 engine program reflects the Satellite's family-car mission: the 225 slant-six and the 273 V8 at the base end (one reference lists the 273 as the base V8), the 318 as the volume V8 and the Sport Satellite's standard engine, and the 383 two-barrel and four-barrel for buyers who wanted B-body muscle without the Road Runner's insurance profile. No Hemi, no Six Barrel — the Satellite's performance ceiling was the 383 four-barrel's 330 hp.

Federal safety mandates reshaped every 1968 car: round side marker lights, shoulder belts, and revised controls are the 1968 identifiers. The 1968-only grille and trim details are one-year parts — verify part numbers, because 1969 cosmetics do not interchange. The round side marker lights are RESTORATIONESSENTIALS — 1968 Plymouth Satellite the quick visual check against the 1969's rectangular markers.

Production data for the 1968 Satellite is thin in the references consulted. One enthusiast reference reports approximately 22,500 non-wagon Sport Satellites for 1968 — a single-source figure this guide reports as such, not as verified production data. Full-line 1968 Satellite totals were not located; the omission is recorded rather than filled with a guess. The Satellite's family-car status means survivors are fewer than the production volumes suggest — family cars were used up, not preserved.

Restoration notes specific to 1968: the Sport Satellite's blacked-out grille and trim are model-specific — verify part numbers. The B-body rust pattern applies in full: lower fenders and quarters, trunk floor, frame rails, cowl. The LA small-block and corrected B/RB torque tables in this guide cover the 1968 engines. Authentication is the RH/RP VIN prefix, the engine code, the fender tag, and the broadcast sheet.

The 1968 Satellite restorer works with an upscale trim car, not a muscle car — which means the authentication focus is on trim codes and options rather than drivetrain heroics. The C/D/F/G/H engine codes cover everything from slant-six to 383 4-bbl; verify the fender tag against what is in the car.

Satellites are the affordable entry to the 1968 B-body world: the same coke-bottle styling and chassis as the GTX and Road Runner for a fraction of the money. The Sport Satellite hardtops with buckets are the ones collectors want; the sedans are drivers or donors.

Mechanical parts interchange freely with the entire 1968 B-body line — the best-supported Mopar chassis in the hobby. Trim is the challenge: Satellite-specific grille, taillight, and interior trim is less reproduced than the performance models'. Buy complete.

Year-to-year changes at a glance.

- New B-body; Satellite tops the Belvedere line as the upscale trim series.
- Engine spread: 225 slant-six through 383 4-bbl (H code).