

MUSCLE machines

APRIL 2024 ■ No. 248 ■ \$7.99

RETRO RACER REVIVAL



BIG-BLOCK AUTO-X CORVETTE

1970 DODGE CHALLENGER 340
DAY 2 FROM NEW

CLASSIC CORVETTE TECH:
RETROFIT POWER WINDOWS

CHICAGO STYLE
MCACN DELIVERS!

'91 MUSTANG 5.0
FOX PROJECT UPDATES

ON LOCATION



MUSCLE CAR MECCA

THE 2023 MUSCLE CAR AND CORVETTE NATIONALS
HONOR THE BEST OF THE BEST

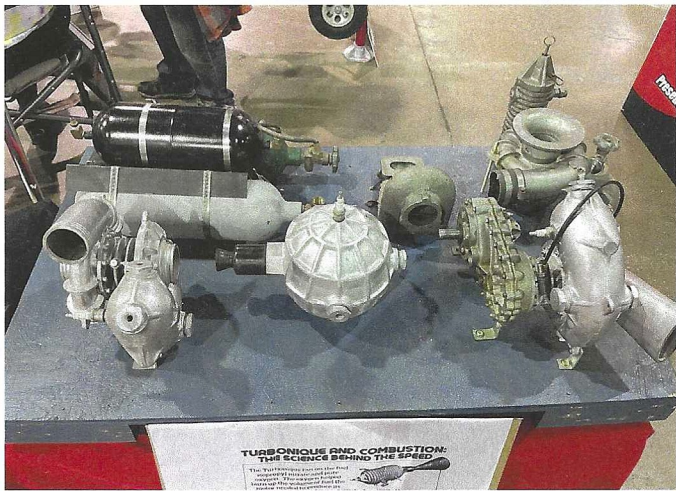
WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY EVAN PERKINS AND JOHN MACHAQUEIRO



THERE ARE CAR SHOWS, the local community gatherings that celebrate the general cult of automotive interest, and there are automotive events—yearly milestones to anchor your calendar, deplete your time-off balance, and embark on a sacred pilgrimage to. If you’re a fan of the American muscle car—and since your eyes are glued firmly on these pages, it’s a good bet you are—the Muscle Car and Corvette Nationals, held annually at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont, Illinois, is an event you don’t want to miss.

Taking place just before the Thanksgiving holiday, the show is a carefully curated who’s who of the muscle car world, featuring top restorers, iconic cars, and barn finds freshly pulled into the sunlight, still crustily cloaked in their dusty coats like badges of honor. This year’s show paid homage to Boss Mustangs, the Corvette’s 70th anniversary, the Dodge Charger, the Impala evolution, and so much more. The halls of the convention center glistened in the reverie of yesteryear, a time when cars transcended mere transportation—a better time. MCACN truly is an event all to its own and one you need to attend to truly appreciate.

Originally ordered in September of 1969 at Ziebarth Chevrolet in Saint James, Minnesota by Kurt Christensen, this 1970 L89 Chevrolet Chevelle ended up at the dealer with the wrong engine. The salesman who took the order made a mistake when checking the boxes off, and the Chevelle was ordered from the factory with aluminum heads, a \$200 option at the time. This Chevelle is the only 1970 model known to exist with this option, and it is believed that fewer than 10 were ever built.



A special exhibit on the rocket-powered parts and rides of Turbonique pays homage to the largely unrestricted motorsports and speed parts of the 1960s. The collection of Turbonique rocket-propelled dragsters, parts, and motorcycles belongs to Darryl Weflen and Jim Kramer.



This 1969 Chevrolet Camaro ZL-1 is one of only 69 produced with an aluminum 427 big-block. It is one of the most desirable GM muscle cars around with prices now surpassing the one-million-dollar mark. This example is owned by Phil Mitchell.



Every year MCACN offers a themed display right as spectators enter the show. For 2023 the Who's the Boss Invitational spanned the Mustang Boss range. Also in that mix is a Boss Bronco prototype that was originally built by Bill Stroppe and Kar-Kraft.



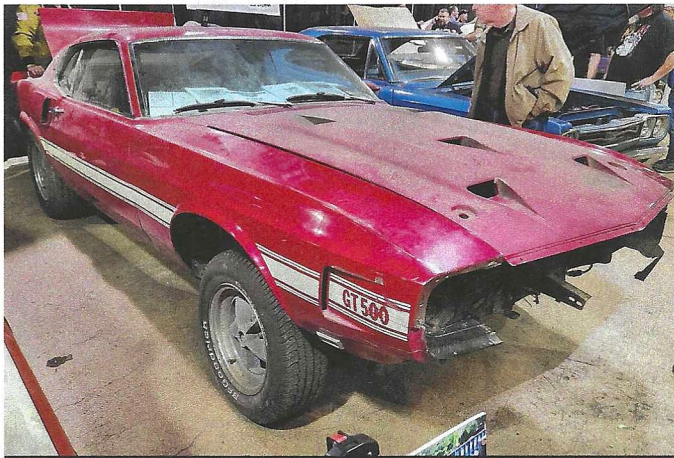
Owned by Brent and Jeff Kultgen, this 1970 Plymouth Superbird made its second appearance at MCACN in its fully restored form for its official unveiling. The previous year it was in the Barn Finds & Hidden Gems section still in its unrestored form but already showing signs of some restored sections. It is equipped with a 440 four-barrel and a four-speed and has been repainted in its original Lemon Twist yellow.



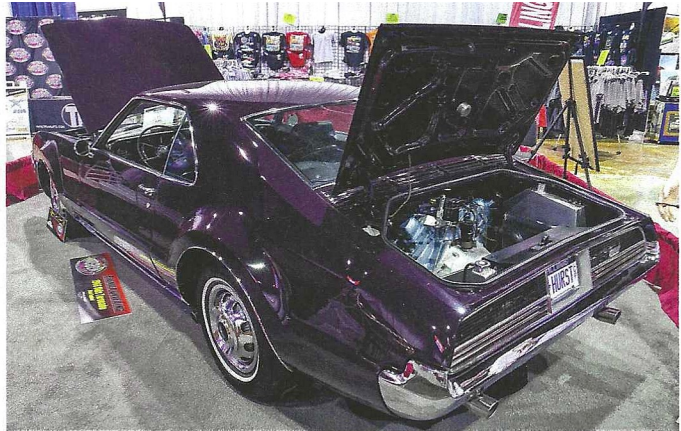
The Rapid Transit System 'Cuda was stashed away for more than 50 years. It is unrestored with only 950 miles on the odometer. Based on the serial number, BS23VOE000005, this was the second 440 Six Barrel 'Cuda produced, with the E in the VIN making it a car that was built at the Los Angeles plant.



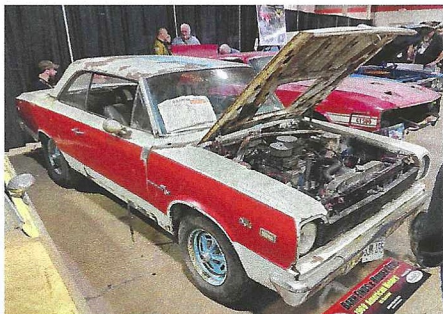
This incredible 1960 Corvette left Chevrolet's St. Louis assembly plant equipped with a full suite of road-racing options, including a 290-hp fuel-injected engine, a four-speed gearbox, a Positraction differential, heavy-duty brakes and suspension, wide wheels, and a 24-gallon fuel tank. It is one of two identically configured cars built specifically for Lloyd "Lucky" Casner's Camoradi USA racing team.



A 1969 Shelby Mustang GT500 is normally nothing to sneeze at. But this one is even more rare as it was the pilot car for the entire 1969 Shelby GT500 lineup!



Another fresh restoration was this 1966 Hurst Oldsmobile Toronado, owned by Joe Spagnoli, with two 455-cu.in. engines. This engineering transformation was accomplished by using the front frame section from another Toronado, turning it into a four-wheel-drive vehicle. The only visible change is the addition of a scoop on each side at the rear for cooling. Total output is rated at over 770 horses.



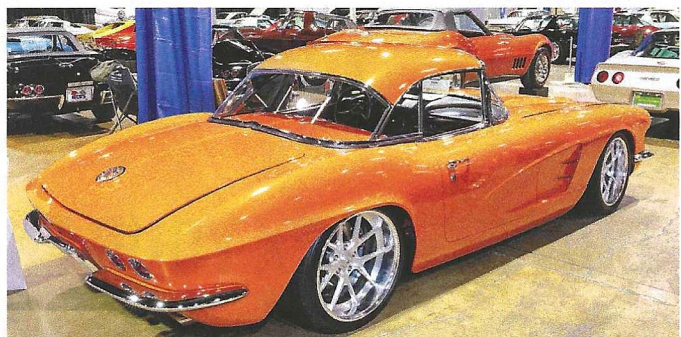
When positioning the cars in the Barn Finds & Hidden Gems section, coordinator Ryan Brutt (the "Auto Archeologist") says the loudest car of them all was a real 1969 AMC SC/Rambler. It has a factory AMC 390-cu.in. V-8 under the hood with a rare cross-ram intake.



From 1967-'69, the Corvette's L89 engine option added aluminum cylinder heads to the 427/435-hp powerplant. It added a whopping \$832.05 to the MSRP, helping explain why only 390 examples were installed in Corvettes in 1969. This one looked absolutely stunning in rarely seen Riverside Gold with the factory side exhaust, a 1969-only option, that adds immensely to its collectibility.



This 1968.5 Ford Torino GT 428 Cobra Jet has been in the same family since new. It is currently owned by actor David Sullivan and was originally purchased by his father. After the Sullivans used the car for several years as a daily driver (and for the occasional street race), it was at some point parked in a field. David pulled the car out of that field and had a full restoration done to honor his late father.



Though factory-stock cars are the norm at MCACN, some stunning customs always round out the selection on display. This 1962 Corvette, resplendent in Spies Hecker's Sebring Orange Metallic Tri-coat, is powered by an LS3 bolted up to a Tremec TKO-500 five-speed gearbox. C6 Corvette front and four-link Fox rear suspension systems mated to a Roadster Shop Fast Track chassis give the car updated handling while Wilwood six-piston front and four-piston rear calipers help bring it to a stop.



The Midwest Nostalgia Pro Stock Association was in attendance with a fleet of cars at MCACN. The organization fields match races around the country using a mix of original and tribute Pro Stock cars. This 1982 Reher-Morrison, Lee Shepherd, Camaro tribute, owned by Mark Pappas, is one of many historic rides the group campaigns.



This duo of Ram Air, Judge GTOs was an absolute showstopper at the event.



Originally purchased new by John Kroll, this Mercury Park Lane is a one-of-one vehicle approved by Lee Iacocca himself! As the story goes, Kroll, a local Detroit street racer, wanted something classy that could still haul the mail. When his purchase order was denied, he ended up on the phone with Iacocca, who approved the 428-cu.in. Police Interceptor driveline, which had to be hand-carried from a separate assembly line. The final result was a unique Park Lane.



The Malaise Era section of MCACN is always a hit. Although the last hurrah of GM muscle doesn't get nearly the respect it deserves, the lineup featured some incredibly well preserved and restored rides, including several examples of the colonnade-era Hurst/Olds as well as a Baldwin-Motion Chevelle packing 427-cu.in., big-block power. ■