

BARN FINDS & HIDDEN GEMS OF MCACN



BY ANGELO
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Although tucked in a corner of the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, the “Barn Finds & Hidden Gems Invitational” section is probably the most popular display at each Muscle Car and Corvette Nationals in Rosemont, Ill. More than a dozen highly coveted but dusty muscle cars are gathered at each MCACN to let attendees dream of the possibility of discovering their own barn find.

This year’s MCACN (www.mcacn.com), held Nov. 23-24, brought plenty to dream about. Presented here is nearly every “barn find” displayed at this year’s event to set you dreaming of the possibilities.



Mopars5150 always brings several tons of Chrysler Corp. muscle to MCACN and did not disappoint in 2024. This 1968 Charger R/T is a factory 440-cid V-8, four-speed car that originally came from California. It had been parked since at least the mid 1980s. Mopars5150 found it inside a Pacific Northwest garage in 2024. The car still wears most of its original and rarely seen EE1 Dark Blue paint.

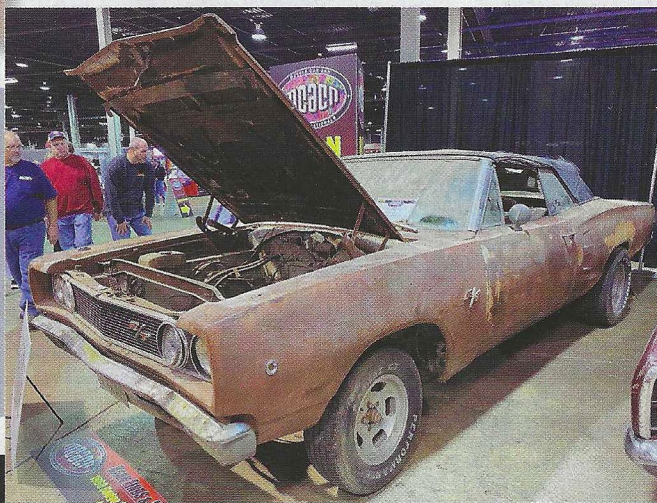
Although essentially just a shell, a 1970 Dodge Challenger with FC7 Plum Crazy paint is intriguing enough to further investigate. In this case, detectives tipped off by the car’s hood discovered the Challenger is an original T/A model powered by the 340 Six Pack setup. It’s a low-mileage Louisiana car that was disassembled for restoration in the 1980s, and the restoration never came. Luckily, most of its parts didn’t stray far from the car. The Mopars5150 crew brought the T/A to MCACN for all to drool over.





Dodge built just 58 Hemi Challengers with a four-speed in 1971, and this one had been relegated to an Arizona backyard with several other incredible muscle cars, including a Shelby Mustang and a 1969 Dodge Charger 500! This FE5 Rallye Red 1971 Challenger R/T was built with the optional Pistol Grip shifter and peripheral trim on the front fender tips and hood lip. This was another treat from the Mopars5150 crew.

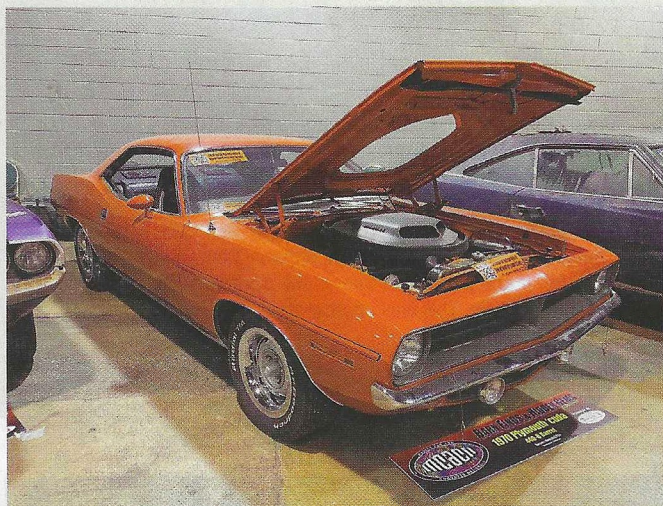
Under a light coat of patina lurks a factory silver metallic 1968 Dodge Hemi Coronet R/T convertible that was built as a pretty loaded car. The car was originally built with an automatic transmission, a red bucket seat interior with a console, front disc brakes, fender-mounted turn signals, a 3.23 Sure Grip rear axle and a full complement of exterior moldings. If restored back to its original glory, it will be a sharp car with a red interior and rear stripes to contrast its silver paint.



The dark-green front clip and dull red body may make this 1969 Charger appear asleep, but it's actually a hot red-on-red Hemi R/T, and a solid and restorable one at that! The Charger was another gem brought by Mopars5150.

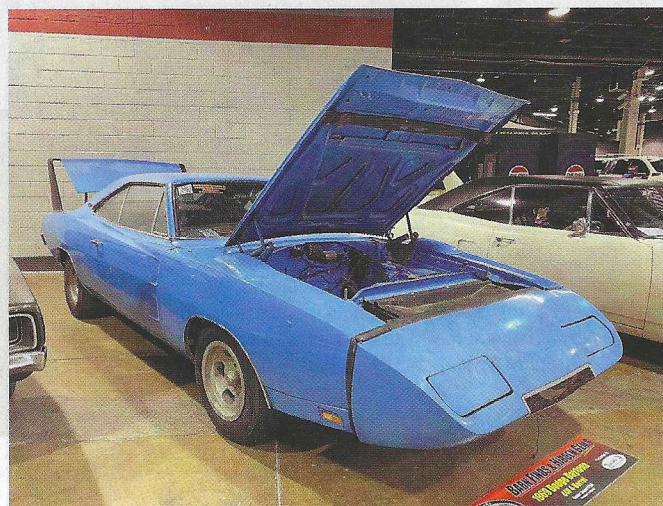
This rare 1970 Dodge Coronet R/T convertible looked dusty, but good enough to drive to the local drive-in (after a bath). The droptop muscle car was powered by a 440-cid V-8 with a four-barrel backed by a Torqueflite automatic, plus Rallye cluster, a power top, hood pins and air conditioning. The bright-yellow Dodge was brought to MCACN by owner Evan Wheaton.





Mopars5150 brought this largely original and very well preserved 1970 Plymouth Hemi 'Cuda with a Torqueflite automatic, road lamps and even period pinstripes down the body side. It was one of the many Mopars in MCACN's barn finds section.

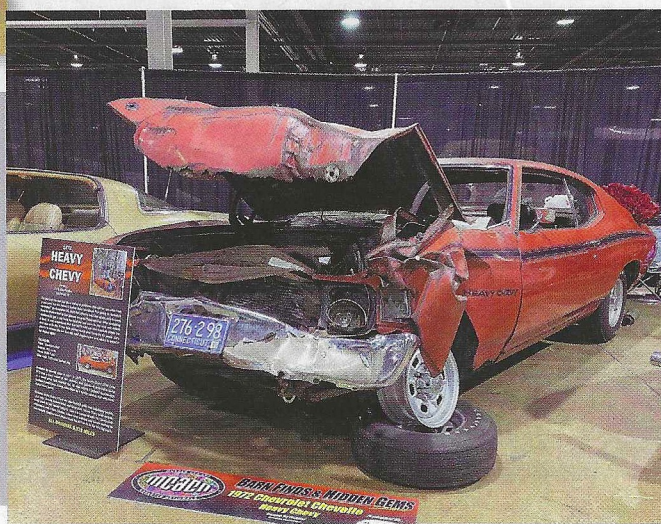
A heavy coat of dust over panels of varying colors cloaks this 1969 Mercury Cyclone 428 Super Cobra Jet with a four-speed and 4.30 Traction-Lok rear axle. This Cyclone was built with a few other nice options, including bucket seats, styled steel wheels, power ventilation and AM/FM stereo. With its combination of powertrain options, exterior paint color and convenience options, this Cyclone was the only one of its type built this way.



It's hard to believe there are still winged cars tucked away, but this 1969 Dodge Daytona showed they're still out there. The car was relatively intact but was displayed by Mopars5150 without a four-barrel 440 V-8 that would have originally powered it.

If you wait long enough, sad stories sometimes eventually get a happy ending. After seeing just 8,279 miles of roadway, this 1972 Chevrolet Heavy Chevy Chevelle was wrecked and parked outdoors at a tow yard. Current owners Ed and Kim Fischer had tried for decades to buy the wreckage from the tow yard owner and were finally able to call it theirs about a year before MCACN.

Considering the car sat outside in a Connecticut tow lot for decades, it isn't terribly rusty. The drivetrain remains complete down to the big-block 402 engine's air cleaner. The car was further built with the M20 four-speed, 3.31 Positraction rear and F41 suspension. Heavy Chevys — the Bowtie brand's budget answer to sky-high SS insurance premiums — have become very rare today, so despite the damage, this stealthy muscle car is worth restoring.





Proving that MoPar's Hi Impact colors weren't just reserved for high-performance cars is this FM3 Panther Pink 1970 Dodge Coronet 440. Giving nice contrast to the pink hue is a white top and interior that surely would have been eye-catching when the Coronet was new. Evan Edwards brought the solid Canadian car to MCACN without its engine, so perhaps it's on its way to a well-deserved restoration.

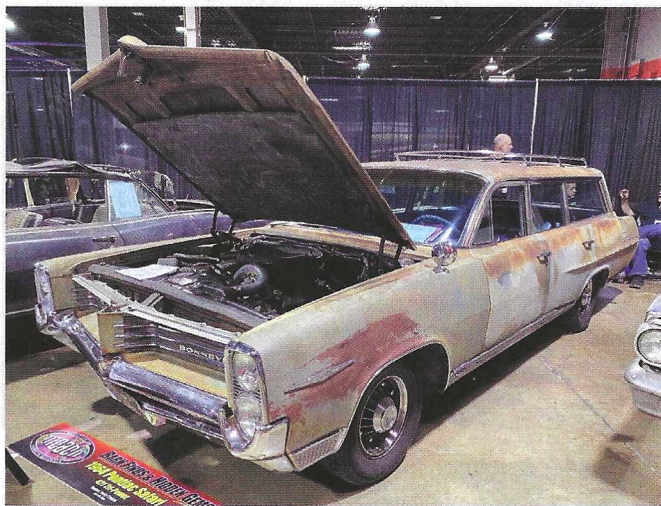
A rare 1971 AMC Hornet SC/360 affectionately known as "The Toad" was modified for fun into the 1980s and then eventually parked in a New Jersey field from which current owner Martin Metz rescued it in 2023. Metz's Hornet is one of just 306 four-speed SC/360 models originally built.



Hurst didn't only hop up Oldsmobiles during the 1970s, it also worked its magic on a Pontiac or two. From 1970 to 1972, Hurst modified Pontiac Grand Prix J models by adding a sunroof, special top covering, Hurst Firefrost Gold paint accents and SSJ emblems (additional Hurst features were optional). Only 481 Hurst SSJs were built from 1970 to 1972, and this "barn find" 1972 represents the rarest year of production, when just 52 are believed to have been built. This survivor was brought to MCACN by owner John Rogers.

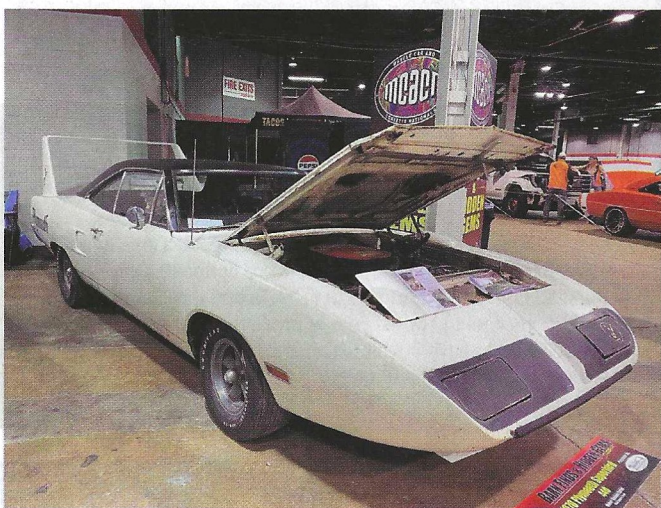
Here's one that strikes close to home for your author. My friends and I pride ourselves on knowing where all the cool cars are lurking in and behind garages around our old stomping grounds, but this 1970 Plymouth 'Cuda eluded all of us. It and a Hemi Dodge Super Bee were parked in a backyard where we often tread, yet none of us knew about them. The 'Cuda is an original V-code 440 six-barrel car, but it received the Hemi from the Super Bee. Meanwhile, the 'Cuda's original engine was tucked away in the garage for safe keeping. Owner Kyle Shay nabbed both cars and apparently plans to put the engines back where the factory originally installed them.





Before you ask what a wagon is doing at a muscle car show, know that this 1964 longroof was built by Pontiac as a 421 Tri-Power, bucket seat and console, floor-shifted Bonneville Safari station wagon with aluminum wheels, electronic ignition, locking differential and air conditioning. Pretty rad, huh? It was originally purchased in Vanderpool, Texas, and was parked outdoors there in 1977. Hopefully this rare wagon gets restored by owner Tracy Tracht and hits the highways at full speed again.

Patriotic until its near-demise, this 1970 AMC Rebel Machine still wears most of its original paint, including its reflective 3M stripe decals. The intermediate-size Rebel Machine packed a unique 340-hp 390 V-8, and although offered in a rainbow of colors, slightly more than half of the 1,936 built had this red, white and blue paint scheme. Fredrick Francis' survivor retains most, if not all, of the Rebel Machine's unique components, including the flat, wide hood and special Kelsey-Hayes wheels. Rebel Machines were a joint project between AMC and Hurst.



Packing a 440 four-barrel power, Rodney Carter brought this unrestored, 26,000-mile 1970 Plymouth Superbird to MCACN's popular Barn Finds display. The running and driving Superbird has clearly been cared for its whole life with owners saving all of the replaced parts in the car's trunk! The Superbird's appearance at MCACN came courtesy of current owner Rodney Carter of Texas.

Sporting a known SCCA race history dating to when it was new, this 1963 Corvette coupe is one of 199 Z06 cars built, and of those, just 50 also had the N03 "Big Tank" option. The Z06 option was created for race drivers and included the 360-hp 327 with fuel injection, a close-ratio four-speed transmission and Positraction rear end, plus improved suspension and braking components. Scott Andrews is the lucky owner of this rare, race-proven "Split Window."

