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# HYBRID

The **BY JEFF KOCH**

Sometimes it is to the hot rodders' advantage that car companies work on economies of scale. Though some decry this (believing that the engineers are lazy for not designing an all-new part if an old one can suffice), all car builders stand to benefit. By using similar designs for decades, or else designing replacements that bolt right in, millions of earlier cars can take advantage of the latest upgrades. How many cars can thank the Lincoln Versailles or WS6 Trans Am for cheap and easy rear disc brake swaps? How many boneyards have been picked clean of their overdrive automatic trannies in a quest for improved driveability? Think about it: If every single part of every single car were different than all others in a manufacturer's lineup and were not interchangeable (or even compatible), cost would be prohibitive, and they'd be bloody difficult to tinker with. Swapping axles, engines, transmissions, what have you, are all the hot rodder's prerogative. It's what we base our hobby on, maximizing what we have with boneyard and aftermarket parts alike. We may decry badge engineering as being the demise of personality in cars, but it's been going on for decades, and boy does it help.

Witness the lowly Mopar L-body. That's the Omni/Horizon, to the layman. *Motor Trend's* '78 Car of the Year. Nearly killed dead in its tracks by a *Consumer Reports*-fueled steering scare. Versions were even sold in Europe under the more-or-less-deceased Talbot name. A year after the five-door Omnirizon twins, the Omni 024 and Horizon TC3 sport coupes came out—sharp-

looking little 2+2s. Steady mechanical improvements made them ever more interesting. Soon, the Dodge coupe's name changed to Charger. In '82, the Rampage/Scamp mini-pickup twins were introduced. Whether they were meant as a competitor to the VW Rabbit pickup (virtually extinct by then) or as something to fill the gap in the car-truck-hybrid market left by the demise of the

Ranchero was never made clear, but it only lasted a couple of seasons. It never got in on the 2.2L turbo mills that were doled out across the Mopar line in the latter half of the '80s, and definitely missed out on the whole Omni/Charger GLH (Goes Like Hell) phenomenon.

Yet everything fits in like it was built for it—in a sense, it was. What the factory couldn't or wouldn't do, the enthusiast

steps in to fill. Sean Murphy has done exactly that. And honestly, if the factory didn't do it first, how many people would have bothered to hop up an Omni? When his recently freshened '87 GLH-S Charger was rear-ended and totaled a few years back, he didn't want to let all the hard work and parts go to waste. Murphy spied a Rampage in *The Auto Trader* and figured by cannibalizing the wreck, the little trucklet would make a fine parts-hauler for the 340 Demon he's currently restoring. And so it has.

The Turbo II upgrade appeared in 1987, adding a bigger turbo, and air-to-air intercooler, a bigger throttle body, tuned intake runners, and bigger fuel rails. It was rated at 175 hp at 5,300 rpm and 175 lb-ft at 2,200 rpm. The whole engine/transaxle/front suspension unit bolted right in, as did much of the interior from the GLH-S, including the gauge

**UTILITY OF A RAMPAGE, SOUL AND FIRE OF A CHARGER GLH-S**

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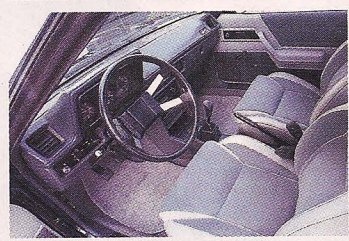
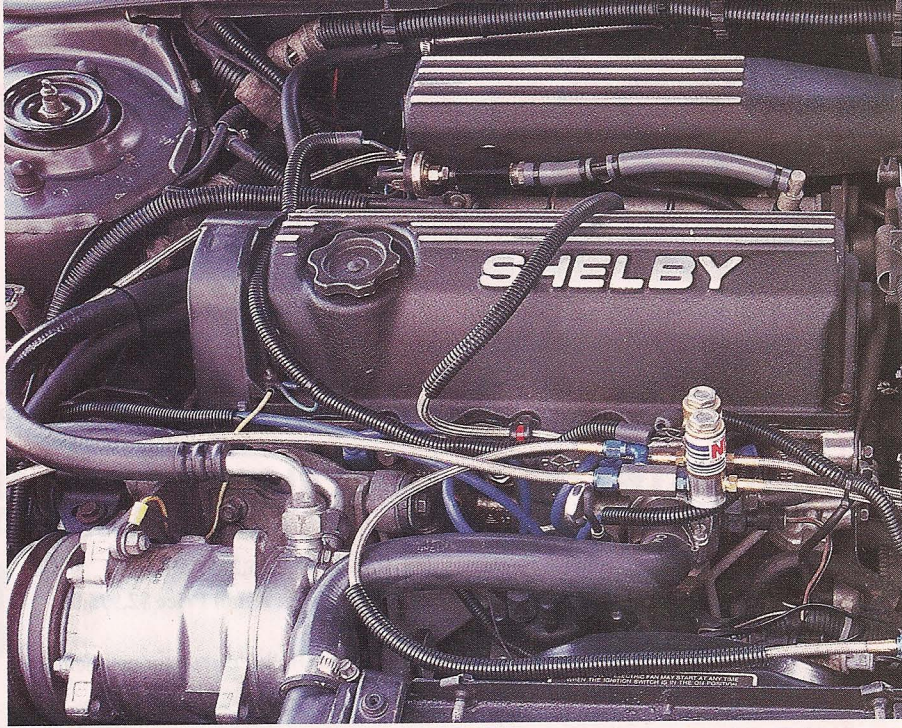
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## HYBRID

cluster and 125-mph speed. A choice selection of aftermarket and Mopar Performance parts brings the party closer to the ground and helps balance out some of the traditional front-drive understeer. Some extra helping hands, in the form of pals Steve Post and Mario Ramero, got things back together and running without delay.

Of course, it wouldn't be a real hot rod without a couple of additional custom touches. Extra head bolts were added by Chrysler to prevent the dreaded milkshake—early 2.2L turbos were notorious for blowing head gaskets. With the extra clamping force, Sean felt he could safely turn up the wick; stock Turbo IIs allowed 12-psi boost in First and Second, dialing back to 9 in the other gears, but the wastegate has been altered to allow a still-streetable 16 psi in all gears. And of course, there's the mild 45-horse shot of laughing gas hidden behind the passenger's seat. All conspire to get him through the quarter-mile traps well into the 13s at 100-plus mph—Sean figures 275 hp all told.

Best of all, budget fans, because Sean was able to keep his totaled car and get money from his insurance carrier, the Rampage as you see it here ran him less than \$6,000—a large chunk of that for bodywork and the Kenwood stereo. Speed on a budget can be yours... and the factory can even help. **HR**

## Quick Inspection

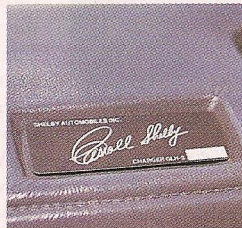
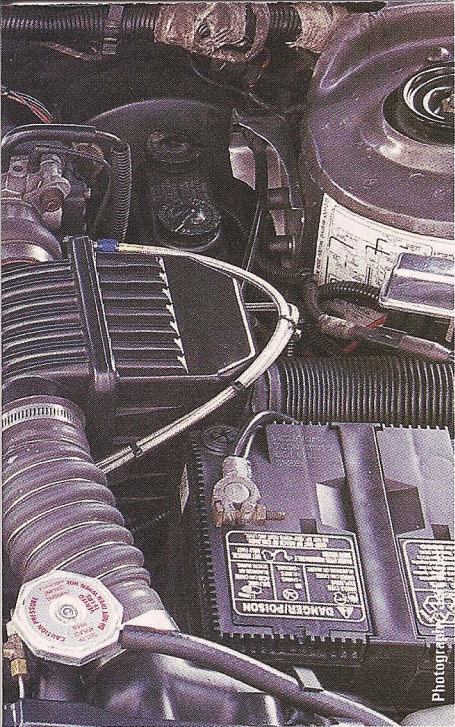
**Sean Murphy**  
**Westminster, CA**  
**'84 Dodge Rampage**

### ENGINE

- Type:** '87 Dodge Turbo II, 2.2L (142ci)
- Induction:** Turbocharged and intercooled, factory MPFI with 30 lb/hr injectors, tuned length Turbo II two-piece intake
- Turbo:** Factory Garrett, wastegate modified to allow 16-psi boost in all gears
- Head:** Stock Turbo II (taller ports), retained with four extra head bolts, stock 41mm/36mm valves
- Cam:** 0.460 lift/212 degrees
- Pistons:** Stock 8.2:1 compression
- Rods:** Heavy-duty forged, shot-peened
- Crank:** Stock
- Ignition:** Stock, set 12 degrees initial
- Exhaust:** Stock manifold with mandrel-bent 2.5-inch pipe, high-flow Walker cat and Flowmaster muffler
- Nitrous:** NOS 45hp, throttle-switch activated

### DRIVETRAIN

- Transmission:** '87 A525 New Process close-



ratio five-speed, Centerforce clutch, Shelby-spec shifter with Heim-joint style pivots

**Half-shafts:** Heavy-duty Turbo II

**Final Drive:** 3.54:1

**CHASSIS**

**Front Suspension:** Mopar Performance autocross springs (1-inch drop), Koni fully adjustable shocks, GLH-S 1-inch sway bar

**Rear Suspension:** Re-arched leaf springs (3.5-inch drop), KYB shocks

**Steering:** Fast-ratio rack from '87

**Brakes:** Stock (10.5-inch disc front, 9.0-inch drum rear)

**WHEELS & TIRES**

**Wheels:** 15x6 Omni Turbo polished aluminum

**Tires:** 205/50-15; BFGoodrich drag radials (front), Goodyear Eagle ST (rear)

**BODY & PAINT**

**Repairs:** Stripped to bare metal, cowl rust repaired, bedrails smoothed, rear bumper removed

**Materials:** '99 Dodge Durango Patriot Blue Pearl-coat Metallic, Line-X bed coating

**By:** A&A Auto Body, Santa Ana, CA

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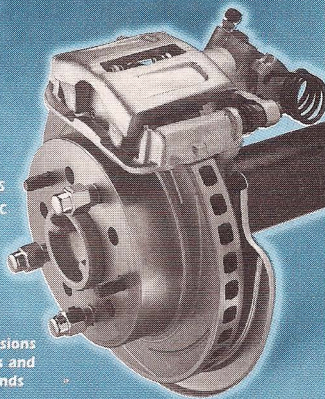
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