

Latest Update 30/07/18

The Americans are Coming!

Those of you who visited last years show cannot help but remember the quality and sheer size of the American “automobiles” that graced our show, including a fantastic Chevrolet Corvette, a massive Buick Roadmaster and the winner of the Best in Show Award, Mick Dearing’s fabulous 1947 Dodge Pick Up (albeit a South African built example). Even the live music provided by Horncastle based band “Sticky Fingers” has a distinctive American flavour this year, so watch out, it may not be an American invasion but, to miss-quote a familiar saying, they are definitely “over here and oversized”!!!

Entries received thus far for this year’s show, alongside Mick’s Dodge Pick Up, include a 1970 Chevrolet El Camino and a 1971 Mercury Cougar. Both cars having somewhat of a cult status among American automotive enthusiasts.

The El Camino was introduced for the 1959 model year two years after the Ford Ranchero. Like the Ranchero, it was based on an existing and modified platform, the new-for-1959 Brookwood two-door station wagon, itself based on the completely redesigned, longer, lower and wider full-sized Chevrolet. Highly stylized, it initially sold 50% more briskly than the more conservative Ranchero. The 1970 model was the third generation of the marque. Chevrolet launched the longer El Camino in 1968, based on the Chevelle station wagon/four-door sedan. For the first time, the Chevrolet 350 V8 was used in an El



Camino. The Super Sport group included a 265- or 325-horsepower 396-cubic-inch V8 beneath a double-domed hood, along with a black-out grille displaying an SS emblem. More potent editions of the 396 engine, developing 350 or 375 horsepower (280 kW) also made the options list. For 1970 models the new SS396, which actually displaced 402 cu in (6.6 L) (although all emblems read 396) was available. Chevrolet’s largest and most-powerful engine of the time was also put into a select few El Caminos. The LS6

454 CID engine, rated at 450 hp (336 kW) and 500 lb·ft (680 N·m) of torque, gave the El Camino 1/4-mile times in the lower 13-second range at around 108 mph (174 km/h). Almost 250,000 third generation El Caminos were manufactured between 1968 and 1972. Some 1,000,000 of all versions of the El Camino were built in total.



The Mercury Cougar was manufactured from 1967 to 1997. While most examples were produced as two-door coupes, at various times throughout its production life, the Cougar was also sold as a convertible, four-door sedan, station wagon, and hatchback. During its production life, as was common practice within the Mercury division, the Cougar shared much of its underpinnings with a Ford counterpart. At the time of its introduction, it was based upon the Ford Mustang. The

second generation of Cougars were built between 1971 and 1973. The engine line up was revised and only three engines were offered—the standard 240 hp (179 kW) 351 Windsor two-barrel V8, the 285 hp (213 kW) 351 Cleveland four-barrel V8, and the 370 hp (276 kW) 429 Cobra Jet four-barrel V8. The big-block engines were gone for 1972 and 1973. The days of performance-oriented muscle cars were coming to an end. Approximately 175,000 second generation cougars were built with some 600,000 manufactured in total.



Dodge Pick Up. Ever since the beginning of its history in 1914, Dodge has offered light truck models. For the first few years, these were based largely on the existing passenger cars, but eventually gained their own chassis and body designs as the market matured. In 1936, Dodge entered the large truck arena with “D” series trucks (as in “MD.”) They had “Fore-Point load distribution,” similar to Cab Forward, in that the front axles were moved forward so they carried more weight, increasing stability. Moving the engine and cab forward increased the usable bed space. In



1939, Dodge introduced the concept of Job Rated, aimed at getting the customer the truck that fitted the job that he was buying it for. 1939 brought a complete redesign, with streamlined styling. In 1940,



engineering started on a military four-wheel drive truck, leading to the first stock light-duty four-wheel drive pickup in 1946; these were made in a massive new truck plant. Dodge also made their first diesel truck, using their own diesel engines, joining Mack as the only two American automakers to use their own diesels before World War II. The 1939 styling continued through to 1947 as the company focused on engineering and production improvements. The engine initially produced 70 horsepower from 201 cubic inches, with

an unsynchronized three-speed manual transmission (a synchronized three-speed was optional). Performance was aided by steep rear axle ratios. In 1937 the six cylinder block was expanded to 218 cubic inches, producing 75 horsepower.