

# WHY A HEMI®?

In 1951, Chrysler Corporation introduced its entry in the post-war horsepower race, a V-8 engine designed with hemispherical combustion chambers. Quickly dubbed the “HEMI®,” its power and efficiency made it an instant favorite for all sorts of motor sport vehicles. Although reluctantly retired in 1959 due to high manufacturing cost, the HEMI design was still unsurpassed. In 1964, NASCAR competition sparked the HEMI’s return, and it has remained available for motorsport use ever since. Now, 50 years after the original, there’s a new HEMI whose efficiency and power make it ideal for today’s needs.

## HEMI® Milestones

A journey through a remarkable engine’s remarkable history . . .

- 1939** Chrysler begins design work on first HEMI®, a V-16 for fighter aircraft.
- 1951** Chrysler stuns the automotive world with 180 hp HEMI V-8 engine.
- 1951** Chrysler New Yorker convertible paces Indianapolis 500 race.
- 1951** Saratoga first in Stock Car Class; second overall in Carrera Pan-Americana road race.
- 1951** Briggs Cunningham chooses HEMI engines for his Le Mans race cars.
- 1952** A special HEMI is tested in a Kurtis Kraft Indy roadster; it’s banned by racing officials as too fast.
- 1953** Lee Petty’s HEMI Dodge wins five NASCAR races and finishes second in championship points.
- 1953** Cunningham’s C-4R HEMI wins 12 Hours of Sebring and finishes third at Le Mans.
- 1953** A Dodge HEMI V-8 breaks 196 stock car records at Bonneville Salt Flats.
- 1954** A Chrysler HEMI with 4-barrel and dual exhausts makes 235 horsepower.
- 1954** Lee Petty wins Daytona Beach race in a Chrysler HEMI.
- 1954** Lee Petty wins NASCAR Grand National championship driving Chrysler and Dodge HEMIs.
- 1954** Cunningham HEMIs win Sebring again, third and fifth at Le Mans.

- 1954** Dodge Red Ram HEMI convertible paces Indy 500.
- 1955** Chrysler introduces the legendary 300 as America's most powerful stock car.
- 1955** Chrysler "300" with dual 4-barrel 331 c.i.d. HEMI is first production car to make 300 horsepower.
- 1955** A Carl Kiekhaefer-prepared Chrysler 300 wins at Daytona Beach with Tim Flock driving.
- 1955** Chrysler bumps HEMI to 250 horsepower in New Yorker and 280 horsepower in Imperial.
- 1955** Frank Mundy wins AAA Championship in Kiekhaefer-prepared Chrysler 300.
- 1956** DeSoto Fireflite HEMI convertible paces the Indianapolis 500.
- 1956** Chrysler 300-B HEMI increased to 354 c.i.d. and 340 hp with dual 4-barrels.
- 1956** Buck Baker wins NASCAR Grand National Championship in Chrysler 300-B with 14 wins.
- 1956** Chrysler 300-B sets World Passenger Car speed record at Daytona Beach – 133.9 mph.
- 1956** Don "Big Daddy" Garlits begins 46-year winning association with Chrysler HEMIs.
- 1957** Chrysler 300-C HEMI increased to 392 c.i.d. and 375 horsepower.
- 1958** Last year of HEMI engine in Chrysler 300 models.
- 1958** Don "Big Daddy" Garlits breaks the 170 mph barrier in his "Swamp Rat" HEMI dragster.
- 1958** Chrysler 300-D HEMI sets a Class E speed record at Bonneville at 156.387 mph.
- 1959** Original Ramchargers debut "High & Mighty" HEMI-powered C/A (altered class) 1949 Plymouth to win NHRA Nationals.
- 1964** Richard Petty debuts the 426 HEMI and laps the field while winning the Daytona 500, as three HEMI -powered Plymouths and a HEMI® Dodge sweep Daytona 1-2-3.
- 1964** A.J. Foyt wins Firecracker 400 at Daytona; Plymouths or Dodges lead every lap.
- 1964** HEMI-powered stock cars win 26 of the 62 NASCAR Grand National races.
- 1964** Richard Petty captures his first of seven driving championships with eight wins, 37 top five finishes.
- 1964** Don Garlits breaks 200 mph quarter mile barrier in HEMI dragster – 201.34 mph in 7.78 seconds.
- 1964** Jim Thornton wins 1964 U.S. Nationals in Ramcharger's "Candymatic" 426 HEMI Dodge.
- 1964** Jim Paschal wins NASCAR World 600 at Charlotte Motor Speedway in HEMI-powered Plymouth.

- 1965** NASCAR outlaws HEMI by setting minimum production levels for street use.
- 1965** Bob Summers sets present 409.227 mph Land Speed Record for vehicles with powered wheels and normally-aspirated engines in “Goldenrod” using 4 HEMIs in tandem.
- 1965** Shirley Shahan becomes first female to win major NHRA event driving a HEMI Plymouth.
- 1966** Chrysler introduces the “Street HEMI” and returns to NASCAR racing.
- 1966** Richard Petty again wins Daytona 500 in his HEMI Plymouth Belvedere.
- 1966** HEMI Dodge Charger wins the NASCAR Championship, Plymouth is second.
- 1966** Norm Nelson wins USAC stock car championship with seven wins in a HEMI Plymouth.
- 1967** Richard Petty wins an incredible 27 Grand National races in HEMI Plymouth; 10 in a row.
- 1967** Richard Petty wins his second NASCAR championship in his HEMI Plymouth.
- 1967** Don White’s Charger gives HEMI cars second USAC championship in a row.
- 1968** Sox and Martin win three major AHRA events; Ronnie Sox named AHRA Driver of the Year.
- 1968** Road Runner, first budget muscle car, is introduced by Plymouth; available with 426 HEMI option.
- 1969** Dodge introduces Charger 500 HEMI, which wins 22 NASCAR races.
- 1969** The “winged” 1969 Dodge Charger Daytona with HEMI power reigns over NASCAR super speedways.
- 1970** Buddy Baker is the first to break 200 mph on a closed course in a HEMI Dodge Charger Daytona stock car.
- 1970** Bobby Isaac sets a closed course speed record – 201.104 mph – in a Dodge Charger Daytona after winning the NASCAR championship.
- 1970** Sox and Martin HEMI Plymouths win 17 major championships and are runners-up in all other major events.
- 1971** Bobby Isaac breaks 28 records at Bonneville in a Dodge Charger Daytona; top speed is 217.368 mph.
- 1971** Richard Petty wins his 3rd NASCAR Grand National championship in a HEMI Road Runner.
- 1971** Don Garlits introduces HEMI-powered rear engine dragster at NHRA Winter Nationals.
- 1971** Sox and Martin win six of eight NHRA events; they represent drag racing at a presidential

reception.

**1991** Al Teague sets 409.986 mph wheel-driven Land Speed Record in the Supercharged class with single HEMI.

## HEMI® IN POP CULTURE

Race tracks, cruise events and museum exhibits aren't the only places where HEMI®-powered vehicles take center stage. They've been immortalized over the years through parts on big and small screens alike. And their star power is still strong.

From 1996-2001, a 1971 Plymouth HEMI'Cuda played sidekick to Don Johnson and Cheech Marin in CBS's popular Nash Bridges television series.

HEMI's film work also includes roles in such flicks as:

- Bullitt (1968)
- Dirty Mary and Crazy Larry (1974)
- Phantasm (1979)
- Heart Like a Wheel (1983)
- Phantasm II (1988)
- Natural Born Killers (1994)
- Blade (1998)
- Gone in 60 Seconds (2000)
- The Fast and the Furious (2001)
- Blade II (2002)