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HEMI® Milestones

A Journey through a Remarkable Engine's Remarkable History

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1939

Chrysler begins design work on first HEMI®, a V-16 for fighter aircraft.

1951

Chrysler stuns automotive world with 180 hp HEMI V-8 engine.

Chrysler New Yorker convertible paces Indianapolis 500 race.

Saratoga first in Stock Car Class; second overall in Carrera Pan-American road race.

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.

Cunningham's C-4R HEMI wins 12 Hours of Sebring and finishes third at Le Mans.

A Dodge HEMI V-8 breaks 196 stock car records at Bonneville Salt Flats.

1954

A Chrysler HEMI with four-barrel and dual exhausts makes 235 hp.

Lee Petty wins Daytona Beach race in a Chrysler HEMI.

Lee Petty wins NASCAR Grand National championship driving Chrysler and Dodge HEMIs.

Cunningham HEMIs win Sebring again, third and fifth at Le Mans.

Dodge Red Ram HEMI convertible paces Indy 500.

1955

Chrysler introduces the legendary 300 as America's most powerful stock car.

Chrysler 300 with dual four-barrel 331 c.i.d. HEMI is first production car to make 300 hp.

A Carl Kiekhaefer-prepared Chrysler 300 wins at Daytona Beach with Tim Flock driving.

Chrysler bumps HEMI to 250 hp in New Yorker and 280 hp in Imperial.

Frank Mundy wins AAA Championship in Kiekhaefer-prepared Chrysler 300.

1956

DeSoto Fireflite HEMI convertible paces Indianapolis 500.

Buck Baker wins NASCAR Grand National Championship in Chrysler 300B with 14 wins.

Chrysler 300B sets World Passenger Car speed record at Daytona Beach – 133.9 mph.

Don “Big Daddy” Garlits begins 46-year winning association with Chrysler HEMIs.

1957
Chrysler 300C HEMI increased to 392 c.i.d. and 375 hp.

1958
Last year of HEMI engine in Chrysler 300 models.

Don “Big Daddy” Garlits breaks the 170-mph barrier in his “Swamp Rat” HEMI dragster.

1959
Original Ramchargers debut “High & Mighty” HEMI-powered C/A (altered class) ’49 Plymouth to win NHRA Nationals.

1964
A.J. Foyt wins Firecracker 400 at Daytona; Plymouth or Dodge vehicles lead every lap.

Chrysler introduces the 426 c.i.d. race HEMI into competition.

Richard Petty debuts the 426 HEMI and laps the field while winning the Daytona 500.

Three HEMI-powered Plymouth cars and a HEMI Dodge sweep Daytona 1-2-3.

HEMI-powered stock cars win 26 of the 62 NASCAR Grand National races.

Richard Petty captures his first of seven driving championships with eight wins and 37 top-five finishes.

Don Garlits breaks 200-mph quarter-mile barrier in HEMI dragster – 201.34 mph in 7.78 sec.

Jim Thornton wins 1964 U.S. Nationals in Ramcharger’s “Candymatic” 426 HEMI Dodge.

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.

Bob Summers sets present 409.227 mph Land Speed Record in “Goldenrod” using four HEMIs in tandem.

Shirley Shahan becomes first female to win major NHRA event driving a HEMI Plymouth.

1966
Chrysler builds the “Street HEMI” and returns to NASCAR racing.

Richard Petty again wins Daytona 500 in his HEMI Plymouth Belvedere.

HEMI Dodge Charger wins the NASCAR Championship, Plymouth is second.

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.

Richard Petty wins his second NASCAR championship in his HEMI Plymouth.

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.

Dodge and Plymouth produce a limited number of 426 HEMI Super Stock Darts and Barracudas.

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.

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.

Bobby Isaac sets a closed course speed record of 201.104 mph in a Dodge Charger Daytona after winning the NASCAR championship.

Sox and Martin HEMI Plymouth vehicles 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.

Richard Petty wins his third NASCAR Grand National Championship in a HEMI Road Runner.

Don Garlits introduces HEMI-powered rear engine dragster at NHRA Winter Nationals.

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.

2003
5.7-liter HEMI develops up to 345 hp (257 kW) at 5,400 rpm and 375 lb.-ft. (508 N•m) of torque at 4,200 rpm.

5.7-liter HEMI in Ram 2500/3500 series trucks delivers best-in-class power, acceleration and towing capacity.

5.7-liter HEMI is 56 lbs. lighter, has 41 percent more power and 12 percent more torque than the 5.9-liter Magnum wedge head engine it replaces.

5.7-liter HEMI is the first Chrysler production gasoline engine with electronic throttle control or “Drive-by-Wire.”

The 5.7-liter HEMI meets all federal emissions standards, delivers 8-10 percent better economy than the engine it replaces.

5.7-liter HEMI is the first Chrysler production engine to use two spark plugs per cylinder.

The new HEMI is named one of Ward’s 10 Best Engines.

2004
The Ram 1500 and all-new Dodge Durango are available with 5.7-liter HEMI.

The 5.7-liter HEMI is named one of Ward’s 10 Best Engines for the second year in a row.

2005
After nearly 50 years, the HEMI engine returns to a Chrysler brand passenger vehicle in the new Chrysler 300C and, after nearly 30 years, to a Dodge brand passenger vehicle in the Dodge Magnum R/T, fitted with the 5.7-liter HEMI V-8.

HEMI-powered Chrysler 300C and Dodge Magnum R/T produce 340 hp (254 kW) at 5,000 rpm and 390 lb.-ft. (525 N•m) at 4,000 rpm.

Chrysler 300C and Dodge Magnum R/T are the first modern, production North American vehicles to feature cylinder deactivation – the Chrysler Group Multi-Displacement System (MDS) turns off four cylinders in the 5.7-liter HEMI engine when V-8 power is not needed for up to a 20-percent fuel savings.

The Street and Racing Technology (SRT) team develops a 6.1-liter version of the HEMI to power future Chrysler Group SRT8 models – the 425 hp engine is the highest-rated specific-output naturally-aspirated V-8 ever offered by the Chrysler Group. Its 69.8 horsepower-per-liter rating exceeds even that of the legendary 1966 “Street HEMI.” Torque is rated at 425 hp (317kW) at 6,000 rpm 420 lb.-ft. (596 N•m) at 4,800 rpm.

The 6.1-liter HEMI engine has more displacement with larger cylinder bores compared to the 5.7-liter.

The compression ratio was boosted from 9.6:1 to 10.3:1 for more energy in the combustion process.

Engine breathing in the 6.1-liter was increased with new high-flow cylinder heads, a specially designed intake manifold and exhaust “headers” with individual tubes encased in a stainless-steel shell. Exhaust is routed through a 2.75-inch exhaust system.

A unique camshaft profile maximizes power in the 6.1-liter HEMI.

The Chrysler 300C SRT8 is the first two SRT8 products announced – both packing the new 6.1-liter HEMI engine.

For the first time ever, a HEMI is available in a Jeep® – the all-new Jeep Grand Cherokee is available with 5.7-liter HEMI.

MDS is standard equipment with the HEMI in Jeep Grand Cherokee – the first time cylinder deactivation is offered in a sport utility vehicle.

The 5.7-liter HEMI is named one of Ward’s 10 Best Engines for the third year in a row.

The one-millionth modern HEMI engine roars off the assembly line.

2006
The all-new Dodge Charger R/T powers it's way back to the streets and racetracks across America with 5.7-liter HEMI, paying homage to the muscle cars of the '60s, and adding 21st century performance and functionality.

The Dodge Charger Daytona includes a unique high-performance exhaust and induction system to allow the 5.7-liter HEMI to produce 350 hp (261 kW) with a distinctive throaty exhaust tone.

Chrysler Group is the first to offer cylinder deactivation in a pickup truck – MDS made standard equipment with the HEMI 5.7-liter engine.

MDS is added to HEMI-powered Dodge Durango.

Chrysler Group MDS is standard equipment on Chrysler 300C and Dodge Magnum R/T, Charger R/T, and it is standard on 5.7-liter HEMI-powered Jeep Grand Cherokee, Jeep Commander, Dodge Durango and Ram 1500.

The SRT lineup is expanded to now include the Dodge Magnum SRT8, Dodge Charger SRT8 and Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT8 – all powered by the 6.1-liter HEMI.

2007
There will be nearly one million vehicles on the road equipped with Chrysler Group’s MDS.

With the addition of MDS to HEMI-equipped Dodge Durango and Ram, MDS-equipped vehicles through the end of the 2007 model year will save more than 60 million gallons of fuel each year.

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