

2008 Dodge Avenger Product Heritage

The First Avenger

Plans for the first car to carry the Avenger name were initiated by the Rootes Group (later to become Chrysler Europe) in England in 1963. Intended to replace Rootes' best-selling vehicle of the time, the Hillman Minx, the project was delayed by funding issues; another car, the Arrow, would become the replacement for the Minx. Still, Rootes executives saw the need for a smaller car, and consideration of what they would call the "B-Car" began in earnest in November 1965. It would prove to be the first and last car developed by Rootes, following its 1967 takeover by Chrysler Corporation.

Said to have drawn its inspiration from Detroit, the new car featured a readily identifiable "semi-fastback" design that would become its trademark. Much consideration was given to the needs of female customers; fashion consultants were employed during the design phase. The Hillman Avenger would feature a four-link rear suspension in place of traditional leaf springs, standard front anti-roll bars and a selection of four inline-four cylinder engines.

The Hillman Avenger was introduced in February 1970 to popular acclaim. This B-class vehicle, built in sedan and wagon versions to compete with the Austin 1300, Ford Escort, Vauxhall Viva and other small cars, was designed to be the basic no-frills Hillman, with a four-speed manual gearbox and an all-iron overhead valve engine. Four-door saloons were built first, followed by two-door saloons and five-door "estate" models. Many variations of the basic Avenger appeared over the years. When production ceased in 1981, 638,631 had been built.

The Hillman Avenger achieved success in motor sports as a frequent winner in the British Touring Car Championship; a four-door road-going version, the Avenger Tiger, is now a popular collector's car.

Avengers were also built in Argentina (by Volkswagen-Audi) until 1991, and in Brazil between 1971 and 1980 (by Chrysler do Brasil), where they were marketed under the Dodge 1500 nameplate. Chrysler saw the Avenger as a potential "world car" and launched it in the United States during 1971 as the Plymouth Cricket, but buyer apathy toward small cars at the time brought the program to an end after the 1973 model year.

The Second-generation Dodge Avenger

For the 1995 model year, Dodge brought back the Dodge Avenger nameplate on an all-new, two-door coupe that replaced the Dodge Daytona and the Mitsubishi-based Dodge Stealth. The new Avenger and a similar Chrysler small coupe, the Sebring, were built by Diamond Star Motors, a Chrysler-Mitsubishi joint venture in Normal, Illinois.

Both cars traced their underpinnings to the Mitsubishi Eclipse. With the wheelbase lengthened to 103 inches, the Avenger and Sebring gained considerable head and leg room, especially in the back seat. A 2.5-liter available V-6 gave the new cars much improved performance over the four-cylinder engines that were standard equipment in their predecessors.

The Avenger utilized either a 2.0-liter I4 Chrysler 420A engine or a Mitsubishi-designed 2.5-liter V-6. The four-cylinder was coupled to either a five-speed manual transmission or a four-speed automatic. The V-6 was available only with the A604 automatic transmission.

In keeping with Chrysler's brand distinctions, spring rates in the Sebring were tuned for a smoother ride while those in the Avenger were set up for a slightly stiffer ride, supporting Dodge's reputation as the company's performance-oriented brand.

The Avenger sport coupe gained fame in its first year of production by being selected as the car for the International Race of Champions (IROC) racing series, in which twelve professional race drivers drove identically-prepared Avengers in a winner-takes-all format on four different high-banked speedways.

The Avenger was freshened in 1997, with new front fascia, trunk lid and rear bumper designs and standard 16-inch wheels. In 2000 the four-cylinder engine was dropped and the V-6/automatic transmission combination made

standard.

After six successful years as the “sporty small Dodge,” the Avenger was replaced by the Dodge Stratus Coupe in 2001.

In 2007, those roles were reversed: another all-new, aggressively-styled Dodge Avenger with segment-leading performance and safety features succeeded the Stratus, writing the next chapter in the story of Dodge innovation in this class.

Then and Now:

	1997 Dodge Avenger ES	2008 Dodge Avenger R/T
<u>Wheelbase:</u>	103.7 in. (263 cm)	108.9 in. (277 cm)
<u>Length:</u>	190.4 in. (487 cm)	193.8 in. (492 cm)
<u>Weight:</u>	3,084 lbs. (1,399 kg)	3,567 lbs. (1,618 kg)
<u>Engine (one example):</u>	OHC V-6	SOHC V-6
<u>Horsepower:</u>	163 hp (218.6 kw)	235 hp (175 kw)
<u>Displacement:</u>	2.5 L (152 cu. in.)	3.5L (213.6 cu. in.)
<u>Bore/Stroke:</u>	3.29 in. x 2.99 in. (8.4 cm x 7.6 cm)	3.78 in. x 3.19 in. (9.6 cm x 8.1 cm)
<u>Compression ratio:</u>	9.4:1	10.0:1
<u>Transmission:</u>	Four-speed automatic	Six-speed automatic with Auto Stick
<u>Suspension:</u>	Front: Double-wishbone, coil spring Rear: Double-wishbone, coil spring	Front: MacPherson strut, coil spring Rear: Multi-link independent, coil spring
<u>Brakes:</u>	Front disc, rear drum	Anti-lock four-wheel disc

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