

# Never gets old

by Joe Sage

Dodge Charger and Challenger have maintained their fundamental builds for longer than is typical, resulting in hugely positive reliability ratings and ever more popularity with each passing year. Sadly, they keep reminding us that these are the last we'll see of these wonderful muscle cars we've all come to know and love so well, as they vow to make way for EVs. By means of both warning and celebration, their finale is like that of an especially great fireworks display, with one special edition or package after another, each one as dazzling as the rest.

A series of "Last Call" packages (shown in the news pages of our previous issue) recently added

numbers five and six. One is a 2023 Dodge Charger King Daytona, a limited build of 300 units, tracing its heritage to the 1960s and '70s West Coast drag-racing scene. This version bumps an SRT Hellcat Redeye Widebody to 807 horsepower and is painted in Go Mango orange with an equally orange emphasis for the interior. The other recent Last Call is the 2023 Dodge Challenger Black Ghost, a modern manifestation of an original that cruised the strip in the 1970s, also limited to 300.

The Charger we are driving here (one of our last 2022 models, arriving late in the year) seems to follow suit, but is not technically a Last Call build. This is a return of the HEMI® Orange Appearance

Package, itself a nod to touches on the 426 HEMI of the late 1960s, available in 2021 on both Charger and Challenger rear-drive GTs.

Our sample starts out strong, as a Scat Pack Widebody with 392 HEMI V8, then takes things over the top with its special HEMI Orange Package. Although this sounds as though it would also be in Go Mango paint, this build is in fact available on five shades of basically black, grey and white. The namesake orange is all in the details—which are set off boldly against the neutral grey Smoke Show paint job on ours.

The Scat Pack Widebody package already adds the V8, all-speed traction control, Brembo 6-piston fixed front caliper brakes, performance shift indicator, body-color fender flares, flat-bottom steering wheel, Widebody competition suspension,



adaptive damping suspension and Pirelli three-season tires, for \$5995.

On the outside, the special HEMI Orange Package adds a black stripe with orange tracer, front to rear, orange brake calipers, "392" fender badges, "HEMI Orange" badges and a satin black "Dodge" tail lamp badge, and 20x11 carbon black warp-speed wheels. Its interior HEMI Orange Package upgrades include Nappa/Alcantara seats with inset "/" logos, a premium-stitch dash with a "392" instrument panel badge, orange interior accent stitching, and gloss black instrument cluster trim rings. Upgraded creature comforts in the package

include power front seats, ventilated front seats, a two-way power lumbar passenger seat, illuminated rear cupholders plus rear armrest with a cupholder, radio-mirrors-driver seat memory and heated rear seats, all for \$1500. (Note that some features are duplicated in our Plus Group package.)

We took ours for a spectacular predawn drive up the Beeline Highway and out to Saguaro Lake. Righteous performance. Righteous acoustics. We would love to do that every day, in this build.

You will definitely want to get your hands on one of these or one of the other various Last Call special builds—while you still can. ■



## SPECIFICATIONS (2022)

ASSEMBLY	.....Brampton, Ontario, Canada
ENGINE / TRANSMISSION	.....Mexico / USA
CONTENT	.....US/Canada 71% / Mexico 18%
BUILD	.....unitized steel body, aluminum hood
ENGINE	.....392 (6.4L) HEMI® V8 by SRT, 90° V, deep-skirt cast iron block w cross-bolted main bearing caps, alum alloy heads w hemi chambers, 16v pushrod OH valves, hydraulic lifters w roller tips, sequential multipoint returnless electronic fuel inj, w Fuel Saver mode (cylinder deactivation)
HP/TORQUE	.....485 hp / 475 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	.....10.9:1
ALT / BATT	.....220A / H7 case 730 CCA
EXHAUST	.....dual 2.75-in electronically controlled, performance-tuned active exhaust system w 4-in chrome round tips
TRANSMISSION	.....8HP70 8-spd auto
DRIVETRAIN	.....RWD
SUSPENSION	.....F: indep short- & long-arm w high upper A arm, lateral & diagonal lower links, coils over gas-charged Bilstein adaptive damping shocks, 32mm hollow stblzr bar; R: 5-link indep w coils, gas-charged Bilstein ADS shocks, 22mm stblzr bar
STEERING	.....elec power w multi-mode assist
BRAKES	.....F: 14.2 x 1.26 vented, 1.73 Brembo 4-piston fixed alum; R: 13.8 x 1.10 vented, 1.26 Brembo 4-piston fixed alum
WHEELS	.....Warp Speed 20x11 granite/alum
TIRES	.....(opt) Pirelli P Zero 305/35ZR20 three-season performance
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....201.0 / 120.0 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....5.2 in
TURNING CIRCLE	.....39.0 ft
HEADROOM (F/R)	.....38.6 / 36.6 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	.....41.8 / 40.1 in
CARGO CAPACITY	.....16.5 cu.ft
WEIGHT / DISTRIB	.....4361 lb / 55/45%
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....91 oct prem unl / 18.5 gal
MPG	.....15/24/18 (city/hwy/comb)

BASE PRICE	.....\$47,385
PAINT: Smoke Show	.....95
SCAT PACK WIDEBODY 21V: see text	.....5995
HEMI ORANGE PKG: see text at left	.....1500
PLUS GROUP: vented front seats, rear armrest w cupholder, illum rear cupholders, blind-spot indicator, memory-power-heated mirrors, premium-stitch dash, power front seats, 2-way power lumbar passenger seat, heated rear seats, front overhead LED lighting, driver/passenger lower LED lamps, exterior mirror courtesy lamps, radio-mirrors-driver's seat memory, auto adjust-in-reverse side mirrors, power tilt/tele wheel, blind spot detect, cross-path detect	.....2095
CARBON-SUEDE INTERIOR PKG	.....1595
DRIVER CONVENIENCE GRP: bi-function HID projector headlamps, locking lug-nuts	.....890
NAV & TRAVEL GRP: GPS nav, Uconnect 4C Nav w 8.4-in touchscreen, SiriusXM Travel Link & Traffic Plus w 5 years subscrip	.....995
HARMAN KARDON AUDIO: 19 GreenEdge speakers, GreenEdge amp, surround sound	.....1795
TIRES: 305/35ZR20 3-season front/rear	.....695
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1595
TOTAL	.....\$64,635