

Mr. Norm's 1972 Dodge Demon GSS

The year was 1972 and every street racer knew that factory performance cars were a dying breed. The coffin was nailed down tight by ever-increasing federal emission requirements and insurance company mandates. Compression ratios dropped like a rock and carburetors were re-tuned for clean air rather than rocket like performance.

Apparently, "Mr. Norm" didn't get the memo. Case in point was the 1972 Demon GSS, arguably the fastest production vehicle for that year. Norm Kraus A.K.A. Mr. Norm was responsible for causing much of the muscle car meham during the late 60's and early 70's. His Dodge dealership at the corner of Grand and Spaulding in Chicago produced some of the fastest American iron in history.

Norm's first attempt to upstage factory muscle cars began when he dropped a 383 in a lightweight 1967 Dodge Dart. That mix became the prototype for the production Dart GTS. A year later Norm was at it again, dropping a 440 in a 1968 Dart. Chrysler's Dodge division saw the light and followed with the 440 Dart GTS. In 1971, Norm began topping 340 Darts with a six-pack of carbs marketing it as the Demon GSS.

By 1972 many new car dealers began closing their performance departments. But once again, it appeared Mr. Norm didn't get the

memo as he introduced the supercharged 1972 Demon GSS. The previous year's GSS six-pack induction system was replaced with a Paxton centrifical blower that bumped up horsepower to 360 from the stock 240, the highest rating of any domestic vehicle for 1972. Incredibly, the GSS package had a sticker price of only \$3,595 F.O.B. Chicago and Mr. Norm claimed to have 100 in stock ready for delivery.

The GSS began as a base 340 Dart. The package added the supercharger, oversize pulleys, modified fuel pump and pressure regulator, competition oil pump, heavy-duty valve spring retainers and Sure-Grip 3:55 ratio rear axle. Every GSS had its distributor curve adjusted and carburetor recalibrated and re-jetted. Before delivery the car was dyno-tuned and Sun-Scoped. Transmission choices included a four-speed manual or heavy-duty Torqueflight.

Customers could order the GSS as a plain vanilla bench seat sleeper with little externally to identify it as a muscle car or as an *in your face* factory hot rod with twin functional hood scoops, 8,000 rpm hood mounted tach, bold body side striping and rally wheels. Headers were also available. All received a multi-colored "*Demon 340*" emblem on the front fender. Buyers could add high-back bucket seats and center console for a sportier look and added comfort.

Because detailed dealership records weren't kept, it's impossible to know exactly how many GSS's were sold or remain today.

Enthusiasts have Mr. Norm to thank for keeping the flame alive

during the dark days of early 70's for it was the Demon GSS that was left stoking the fire. Ultimately, 1972 was the end of the road for Mr. Norm's performance packages as Grand Spaulding Dodge began cashing in on the every increasing van market. And while Norm Kraus sold his ownership in Grand Spaulding Dodge in 1977, his legacy lives on today in cars like the Demon GSS.