



The '69 $\frac{1}{2}$  Hurst SC/ Rambler was a unique finish to the production of America's first compact

text and photography by Richard Truesdell



# RED, WHITE & BLUE AMERICAN

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**O**n March 8, 1969, in an abrupt turnaround from past practice, American Motors unleashed at the Chicago Auto Show what many enthusiasts believe is the ultimate low-buck, factory-built musclecar—the '69½ Hurst SC/Rambler, a high-performance version of its ubiquitous American compact. The first run of 500 cars featured a bold—even for that era—red, white and blue paint scheme that stood out in any crowd.

Featuring the most powerful four-barrel version of AMC's 390 cubic-inch small-block V8, pumping out 315 gross horsepower, the SC/Rambler could scamper down the quarter mile in the low-14 second range, according to road tests of the time. The unibody frame of the 2-door hardtop had to be beefed up given that 425 pound-feet of torque could twist it like a pretzel, to the degree that the doors would not open properly.

The SC/Rambler served its intended purpose well, drawing a new, younger breed of owner into AMC showrooms where they could see that with the Javelin and two-seat AMX, AMC was turning over a new leaf. The first run of 500 cars sold out quickly leading to a second run of 500 SC/Rambler with a slightly toned-down paint package, known as the B-scheme (an additional 512 A-scheme cars rounded out the production run). This impeccably restored B-scheme example, once a part of Reggie Jackson's extensive musclecar collection, is now the prized possession of Frank Indriso, a 31-year-old middle school librarian from Turnersville, New Jersey.

"I remember my father buying me a book on collectible automobiles back in the mid-'80s at the local mall bookstore," relates Indriso. "It was arranged by make and year of vehicle and had pictures of every car listed. Upon opening the book,

there was the 1969 Hurst SC/Rambler with its bold paint scheme. Needless to say, it caught my eye!"

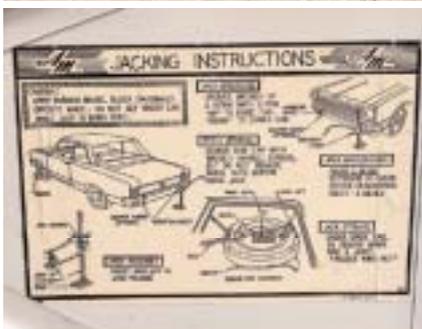
"Ten years later and recently married," continues Indriso, "I began looking for an SC/Rambler. It wasn't easy finding one for sale. Luckily for me, I was one of the first to respond to an Internet ad posted by a gentleman living in New Hampshire. I called him and he said the previous owner from the Atlanta, Georgia area won a few trophies as well. I knew at that point that this car had to be show-worthy so I decided to drive up there that weekend. As soon as I saw the car, I knew it was the right car. Just about everything was perfect. I knew someone in the past invested a lot of money in this car. Halfway through the sale, the guy then told me that he had some paperwork showing Reggie Jackson's former ownership of this vehicle. This was some great information because I then knew that someone did in fact invest a lot of money and that the restoration was done right. The guy was really hesitant to sell the car but due to an illness he was forced to sell it. It was in my garage within two weeks. In October 1998."

As can be seen from the photos, the car is in excellent shape and only needed very minor cosmetic items to reach perfection. Indriso installed a fresh exhaust system (factory fitment included Thrush mufflers), a rechromed instrument cluster bezel, a period-correct

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## AMC HURST SC/RAMBLER SPECS

Base Price	\$2,998
Wheelbase	106.0
Overall length	181.0
Overall height	54.2
Overall width	70.8
Displacement	390
Horsepower	315
Torque	425
1/4-mile	14.20 @ 100.8 mph (Car Life)
	14.14 @ 100.9 (Road & Track)
	14.31 @ 98.9 mph (Super Stock & Drag Illustrated)



AMC Clear Power Battery, and he gave the car a thorough detailing. Indriso has shown the car locally in the Philadelphia area but in the aftermath of the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks, the car started attracting even more attention. "Right after 9-11, every time I drove the car people would honk their horns and wave or give thumbs up," says Indriso. "I was offered \$20,000 for the car by a gentleman in his early fifties visiting the area from Kentucky in the fall of 2001. He was impressed with the car and the overall condition of it. I thanked him for his offer but I told him I wasn't interested in selling the car. He repeatedly thanked me 'for giving him the opportunity to see such a car' in excellent shape. He then went onto say how he never saw one in person before, even back in the early '70s."

When photographing the car for

Musclecar Enthusiast we asked Indriso what he thought was his SC/Rambler's best attribute and he replied its rust-free, arrow-straight body. He feels that Reggie Jackson, a man with deep pockets, spared no expense ten years ago to insure that the car was done right. The other aspect mentioned by Indriso is that this car came from the factory with a smog pump system and he's seen only one other SC/Rambler with the correct setup. Considering that these cars were hot rodded when new, probably the first items removed were the exhaust manifolds and any smog equipment and that they quickly found the trash bin.

AMC musclecars are an acquired taste and Indriso's SC/Rambler is a special car. With the escalation of musclecar prices over the last several years, it represents one of the most

reasonably priced ports-of-entry to true musclecar ownership, a viable alternative to more mainstream Ford, GM and Mopar compact muscle cars. SC/Rambler are rare, all told 1,512 A- and B-scheme SC/Rambler were built before the Rambler nameplate passed into oblivion at the end of the 1969 model year. A sad end but it went out with a bang, its legacy being that for about a dollar per pound at \$2,998 (currently well restored examples similar to Indriso's have changed hands for almost ten times that figure), it provided a performance-per-dollar-ratio that was unmatched.

If you want to get an in-depth look at the enthusiasm that SC/Rambler engender from its owners, check out the SC/Rambler registry at [www.RamblerRogue.com](http://www.RamblerRogue.com).