

DODGE

STORY AND IMAGES: RICHARD TRUESDELL

DUKE OF

WALLZARD

**TURNING A 4-DOOR SEDAN CHARGER INTO
A 2-DOOR PILLARLESS HARDTOP IS NOT
EASY – AND NOT CHEAP EITHER...**

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Just about a year ago, when the first spy photos were surfacing of what would become the 2008 Dodge Challenger — concept photos taken in a remote desert area — Ryan Haus at West Coast Customs was putting the finishing touches on his own Dodge LX-based 2-door, that would bear an uncanny resemblance to the factory-built concept.

Identity crisis?

The WCC effort, dubbed the General Lee, after the original Dukes of Hazzard Charger, may very well be the Charger that Dodge should have built all along, quieting the critics who say the current Charger is in reality, a 4-door Magnum sedan.

"Yes, the build was done with the intention of striking a nerve," says WCC chieftain Ryan Haus, "But it wasn't directed to a certain group or fan base. We wanted everyone who saw that car to have a big reaction. We were really looking to create a car to that would set us apart from everyone else and I feel we did that."

You would think that with such a radical modification, this project would take months and months but such was not the case. The WCC team worked 24 hours a

day, seven days a week for three weeks to get that car the way they wanted it.

Ryan would be remiss if he didn't mention everyone directly involved in the project. The Charger's build team included Sean Mahaney, Ish Jimenez, Buck, Chad Utt and Cesar — all contributed to that build as well as a lot of the other guys in the shop.

Some price to pay

Though Ryan told *InCar Entertainment* that the process of turning a 4-door sedan Charger into a 2-door pillarless hardtop is something of a state secret, suffice it to say the process isn't cheap.

All told, it will take a cheque for something north of \$US125,000 (approximately \$AUS165,340), plus your Charger (or sister car, the Chrysler 300) to duplicate the process.

But Ryan made sure to mention that everything, including paint and trim, was done in-house, at WCC's new and expanded Corona, California facility, less than 90 minutes from downtown LA.

The wheelbase was shortened from 120 to 112 inches, with most of the rear seat legroom sacrificed in the quest for perfect

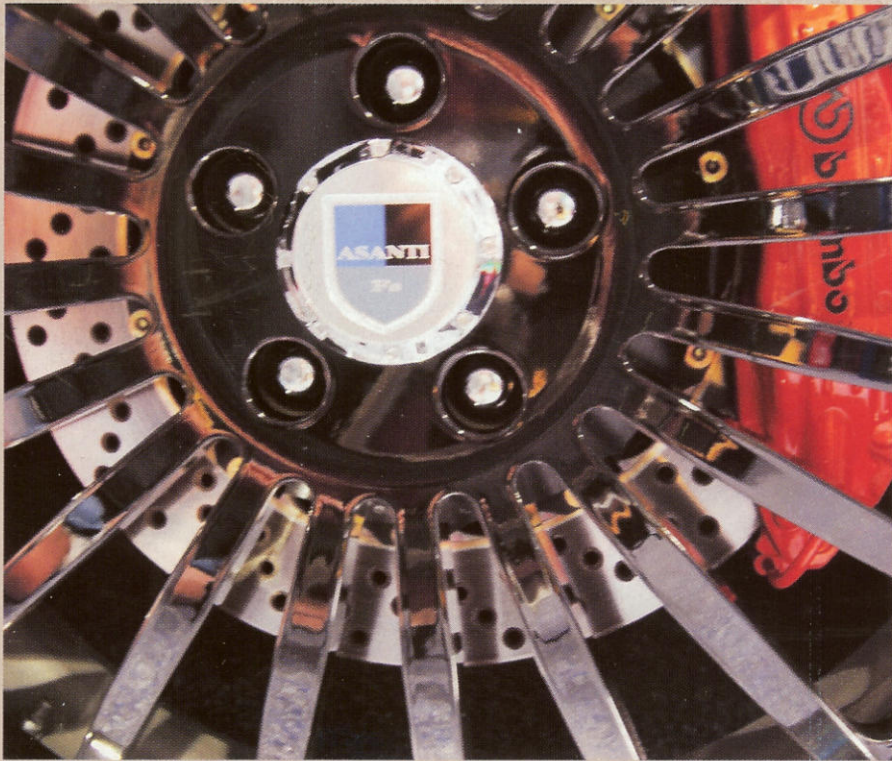
proportions. The roofline benefitted from a 3-inch chop, further contributing to the car's sinister, bad-boy look.

The custom bodywork included eliminating the rear door and B-pillar while extending the length of the remaining doors by 12 inches.

Because of the tight constraints of getting the car to the SEMA Show floor, performance modifications were limited to an Eibach coil over suspension. The 345-horsepower 5.7-liter Hemi V8 residing under the hood is left stock. The stock exhaust note is enhanced with the changeover to a Gibson catback exhaust while a Brembo big brake kit peers out through the 22-inch Asanti AF 122 Wheels with Black Centre sections. As for rubber, Ryan turned to Pirelli with 265/30 section tires up front, 295/25s in the rear.

Directed Electronics Is Major WCC Partner

Ryan makes no bones about his close working relationship with Directed Electronics; there is a separate line of high performance WCC amplifiers, speakers and subwoofers as part of Directed's Orion brand.



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"We use DEI for the cars we build in the shop so creating a line with them seemed like the natural thing to do. We also get a lot of people asking what we use in our cars and really try to achieve our look and feel at home. By having that line available our fans are able to get what they are looking for through their own work."



The system

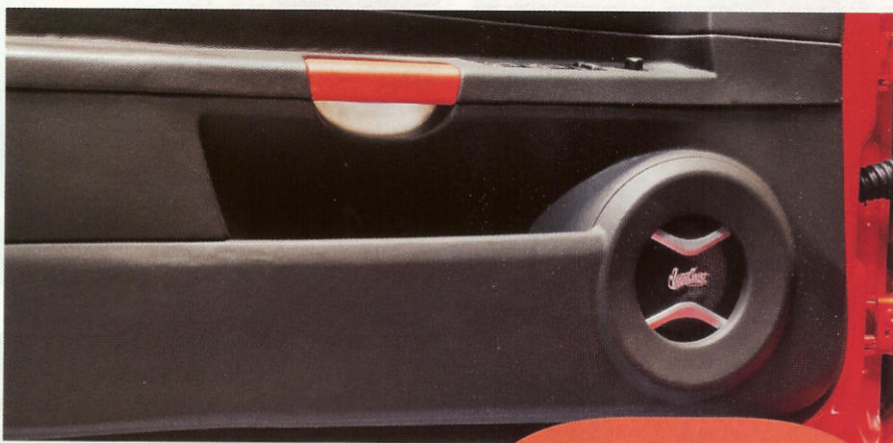
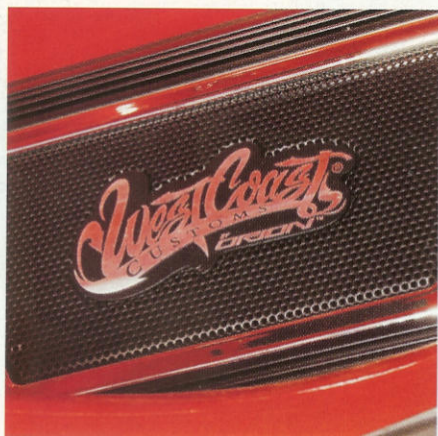
When asked about the philosophy behind the system as it's installed in the Charger, Ryan just laughed saying that there was no philosophy.

But he added, "We always want to put our touch on everything. So that's what we keep in mind when we do any build."

The system is dominated by what goes on under the rear boot, with two West Coast Customs-branded WCC-8001 Orion amplifiers mounted in a custom, colour-matched fibreglass tub. These two mono amplifiers together power the four 10-inch (25cm) WCC-104 subwoofers, mounted in an array around the trunk.

On the inside, WCC-652cs 6.5-inch separates are mounted up front, with the midwoofers mounted in a custom trim panel and the tweeters mounted in the dash, all powered by their own stereo WCC-6002 stereo amplifier with a 4-channel WCC-6002 powering two pairs of concealed WCC-652cs separates in the rear compartment.





The system is controlled by a Sony XAV-01 AM/FM/CD/DVD AV control receiver which is mounted in a custom panel providing a stable mount for the single-DIN component in the space usually occupied by a factory-installed Dodge head-unit in the centre stack.

Mod cons

The modifications to the interior trim, with orange leather accents, brighten up an otherwise monochromatic interior scheme. The orange accents pick up the exterior colour, House of Color Tangelo Candy Paint with a ghosted 01 on side doors and a Confederate Flag on the roof.

The final touch to the car is a custom-fabricated front grille, eliminating the original Dodge crosshair grille, giving

the front clip a very distinctive look which distances it from its production counterpart.

Team work

Obviously it takes a special shop and an extraordinary team of craftsmen to chop and channel a contemporary sedan in the classic hot rod tradition but from every angle, Ryan's team at West Coast Customs was up to the task.

In fact, looking at photos of the West Coast Customs Charger and the very similar Dodge Challenger Concept, which is a precursor of a production-based model coming in mid 2008, you might have a difficult time picking one over the other.

We're certain that Ryan and his team will be flattered by your indecision. ☺

INCAR INFO

Subwoofer amplifiers: 2 x West WCC-8001 Orion monos

Subwoofers: 4 x 10-inch WCC-104 subwoofers

Front speakers: WCC-652cs 6.5-inch separates

Speaker amplifiers: WCC-6002 stereo amplifier with a 4-channel WCC-6002 powering two pairs of concealed pair WCC-652cs separates in the rear compartment

Head-unit: Sony XAV-01 AM/FM/CD/DVD AV control receiver