

# FEATURE ARTICLE from Hemmings Muscle Machines

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## DOCUMENTATION TRANSLATION

Hemmings Muscle Machines - AUGUST 1, 2006 - BY [JIM BLACK](#)

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### It's time to find out if what you got... is what you thought you bought

During the past few years I've talked with many owners of classic muscle cars and one thing is clear: Many of them have never bothered to decode a VIN plate or fender tag; search for a build sheet; or get any kind of documentation done on their cars. Sure, if you purchased your car brand new there's little concern that it's anything other than what you'd expect. But if it was purchased years later without verification, when it comes time to sell you might find yourself on a growing list who thought they had legitimate GTOs, Charger R/Ts, and the like, and found out otherwise.

With today's muscle car prices soaring into the stratosphere, the risk of buying a fake is even greater, so "verify before you buy" should be the standard operating procedure when purchasing. "Verify before selling" also is important, and even if you don't plan to sell your car anytime soon, now is the time to get it documented and be confident that what you got, is indeed, what you thought!

In this article, we'll follow some step-by-step procedures to verify a car, and later, we'll look at where to go to get it documented. Specifically, we'll cover only the B-body Mopars, 1968-'71, and verify and document a 1971 Charger Super Bee as an example. Even though the procedures are Mopar-specific, the methods used and information checked will be similar on all makes and models. Purchasing books that are make- and model-specific, and linking up with those-in-the-know is the way to go.

Our '71 Super Bee project was purchased a few months back and the seller was truthful in his presentation of the car. Both the engine and transmission were not original but still provided the necessary information for a verification check.

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### VIN Plate

Riveted to the top of the driver's-side dash, it is located at the base of the windshield. Chrysler used a thirteen-digit number on the VIN plate which contained information about the car, including the model, sub-model, engine size, model year, assembly plant and serial number. If the car is "numbers-matching" this VIN should appear elsewhere on all the items checked as indicated. The VIN breakdown is as follows: first digit is the car line (model); second digit is the price class (sub-model); third and fourth digits are the body style; fifth digit is the engine type and size; sixth digit is the model year; and the eighth through thirteenth digits are the car's serial number. See the listing of model and body style codes, engine codes, model year codes, and assembly plant codes below.

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### Safety Sticker

All makes and models were required to have a Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards sticker affixed to the driver's-side door. The safety sticker included the date of manufacturer as well as the complete thirteen digit VIN and should match the above VIN plate. As a matter of information, accurate reproductions of this sticker are available to restorers, as many were destroyed during a repaint. But be forewarned and check with your state department of motor vehicles before applying a reproduction sticker. It is illegal to do so in some states, but not others.

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## Data Plates

Also called fender tags, data plates are considered one of the key elements in documenting your Mopar. All 1968-'71 B-bodies used fender tags that included specific coded information about the car. Usually found screwed to the driver's-side inner fender, there were two different layouts; one used in the 1968 models, and one used for 1969-and-newer models. Each data tag included the VIN, engine and transmission type, exterior color, interior trim and options. On heavily optioned cars, two fender tags may be used, but even so, not every option code was included. All fender tags are read left to right and bottom to top. The complete VIN is located on the bottom line of the data tag and should match those previously discussed. If it doesn't match, suspect a bogus car!

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## Build Sheet

Commonly referred to as a broadcast sheet, a build sheet served as a detailed blueprint for the car's assembly and is perhaps the most important piece of documentation that could be found in the car. The broadcast sheet is usually found under the rear seat, but they have also been found under the front seat, under the carpet, in the headliner, under the package tray, or taped to the backside of the glove box. The assembly line worker did not have any specific location for placement. Multiple build sheets have also been found in a single car, so be sure and check the VIN on each sheet to make sure it's correct for your car. If you can't locate a build sheet, or if the one found doesn't match your VIN, it's still possible that it may be found. Galen Govier provides a service to reunite missing build sheets with their cars, and extra sheets should be sent to him in hopes that he can find the proper owners. You need only provide him with a photo or pencil rubbing of the data tag for a check.

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## Body Stampings

Starting with the 1971 model year, Chrysler began stamping the last eight digits of the car's VIN, readable upside down, located on the backside of the radiator support (the radiator must be removed to see the stamping). Check this number against the car's VIN for a match. If the stamping does not match, suspect the car has either been "re-bodied," or perhaps a replacement radiator core support from a donor car was installed in the event it was hit in the front end. Another stamping found on the car is the body style code, which is a three-letter stamping located in the trunk weatherstrip opening, near the base of the rear window. This aided the line worker in identifying the correct body for each assembly. The body code stamping should match up to the first, third and fourth digits of the car's VIN.

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## Engine Identification

For the four years specified, Chrysler offered five different V-8 engine types. Identification starts with the distributor location in the rear for the small-block engines (318 & 340), and in front for the big-block engines (383, 440, and the 426 Hemi). The big-block 383 is referred to as a B-engine and the 440 as the RB engine. While the 383 and 440 engines are visually similar, the 426 Hemi is easily identified by its extremely large cylinder heads. The casting numbers for all these engines can be found on either side of the block with the casting date usually found on the driver's side. The casting numbers are as follows:

318-cu.in. 3806030  
340-cu.in. 2780930-340  
383-cu.in. 2468130  
440-cu.in. 2536430  
426-cu.in. Hemi 2468330

These casting numbers were the same for all four years and the casting date will determine the model year to aid in identification. Although engine serial numbers, block pad numbers and other unique markings exist on these engines, we'll focus on the important HP2 stamp located on the front block pad, which identifies it as a high-performance engine. This is of concern because there were many generic 383 and 440 engines found in bigger cars that may have been installed in muscle cars and passed off as the high-performance versions.

Starting in late 1968, Chrysler began stamping the last eight digits of the car's serial number on the rear of the engine where the block and transmission meet. In 1969, the VIN stamping was moved to the lower passenger side of the block. Early 1969 models used the full VIN while later models used only the last eight digits. Warranty engines will have no numbers on this pad. If the number differs from the car's VIN tag, the engine was probably taken from another car and would not be considered "numbers-matching."

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### **Manual Transmission Identification**

Three-speed and four-speed manual transmissions can easily be identified by the identification number stamped into an ID pad located on the right-hand side of the gearbox. The number consists of thirteen digits, beginning with a two-letter code for the assembly plant. PP = New Process Gear division or PK = Kokomo. This is followed by a three-digit number for the transmission type. The 1968-'69 manual three-speed was coded as a type 745, and the 1970-'71 code was 230. The four-speed manual transmission was coded as a type 833 all four years. Following the transmission code was the build date, which is difficult to decipher based on the complex 10,000-day Chrysler calendar. Also located immediately above the transmission ID on this same pad is the car's VIN stamp which should match if the car is touted as numbers-matching. Some 1968-'69 models used the full thirteen digit VIN while the 1970-'71 models used only the last eight digits.

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### **Automatic Transmission Identification**

Three different TorqueFlite transmissions were used in B-body cars for the 1968-'71 model years. All 318-cu.in. V-8s used either the type-904 (coded A-904-LA), or a type-727 (coded A-727) heavy-duty transmission used with the trailer package. The type-727 transmission was also used with the big-block and Hemi engines and was coded A-727-B that had even more heavy-duty internals. The transmission type code was located on the lower left side of the bell housing in 3/8-inch letters. Each transmission also carried a VIN stamping located on the identification pad at the right front of the transmission housing. In 1968, very few transmissions were stamped with the VIN. In 1969, some were stamped with the complete thirteen-digit number, but only the last eight digits were included on the pad for 1970 and later transmissions. As previous, the VIN should match if it's original to the car.

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### **Registry and Decoding Package**

Govier is a familiar name in the Mopar hobby. For years, he has worked with Chrysler Corporation, acquiring build information, production data, assembly plant info, missing broadcasts sheets, etc. He has also established the Chrysler Registry in an effort to build a data base documenting surviving Chrysler Corporation cars as well as providing a tag and broadcast sheet decoding service, among others. All that's required for registering your car is to send Grovier the VIN and either a photo or pencil rubbing of the fender tag(s) and copy of your broadcast sheet. His completed package will include a registry letter with production info, an options and accessories report, and fender tag and broadcast sheet decoding if required. Here are the costs for some of his services: Chrysler Registry letter, \$10; fender tag decoding, \$48; and broadcast sheet decoding, \$63. All are via mail.

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### **Ownership Records**

Along with verifications made and the build sheet, etc., a complete ownership record with names and addresses of previous owners would be beneficial. Some owners have even acquired copies of all "titles of transfer" as a part of their documentation efforts. Collecting this information can be a daunting task, but nearly all state DMVs now have websites established and specific forms can be downloaded for certain services. Be advised though, that many states have "privacy acts" in place that can make getting copies of old titles difficult, if not impossible. In many cases, release forms signed by previous owners may be a requirement.

Well, now that we've verified and documented our '71 Super Bee, we're confident that it's a legit car even if not numbers-matching. Following entry into the Registry we learned that only 4,325 Super Bees were built in the U.S. in 1971. Of this number, 463 were painted Hemi orange, and only 121 (2.8 %) of the total got the code A54 colored bumper group, which is a pretty rare option. Getting your car verified and documented is the only way to get information like this, so why wait? Get it done today and be confident that what you got is, indeed, what you thought.

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### VIN body type

1968-70 Coronet R/T hardtop	WS23
1968-70 Coronet R/T convertible	WS27
1968-70 Super Bee pillar coupe	WM21
1968-70 Super Bee hardtop	WM29
1971 Super Bee	WM23
1968-69 Charger	XP29
1968-70 Charger R/T	XS29
1969 Charger 500 and Daytona	XX29*
1970 Charger	XH29
1970 Charger 500	XP29
1971 Charger coupe	WH21
1971 Charger hardtop	WH23
1971 Charger 500 and Charger SE	WP29
1971 Charger R/T	WS29
1968-70 Road Runner pillar coupe	RM21
1968-70 Road Runner hardtop	RM23**
1969-70 Road Runner convertible	RM27
1971 Road Runner hardtop	RM23
1968-70 GTX hardtop	RS29
1968-69 GTX convertible	RS27
1971 GTX hardtop	RS23

\*Early models were coded XS29

\*\*Code also was used on 1970 Super Bird

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### Engine displacement

#### 1968

318-cu.in. V-8

F

383-cu.in. 2-bbl. V-8 290hp G  
383-cu.in. 4-bbl. V-8 330hp G  
383-cu.in. 4-bbl. V-8 335hp H  
440-cu.in. 4-bbl. V-8 375hp L  
426-cu.in. 2x4-bbl. V-8 425hp J

#### 1969

318-cu.in. V-8 F  
383-cu.in. 2-bbl. V-8 290hp G  
383-cu.in. 4-bbl. V-8 330hp G  
383-cu.in. 4-bbl. V-8 335hp H  
440-cu.in. 4-bbl. V-8 375hp L  
440-cu.in. 3x2-bbl. V-8 390hp M  
426-cu.in. 2x4-bbl. V-8 425hp J

#### 1970

318-cu.in. V-8 G  
383-cu.in. 2-bbl. V-8 290hp L  
383-cu.in. 4-bbl. V-8 330hp L  
383-cu.in. 4-bbl. V-8 335hp N  
440-cu.in. 4-bbl. V-8 375hp U  
440-cu.in. 3x2-bbl. V-8 390hp V  
426-cu.in. 2x4-bbl. V-8 425hp R

#### 1971

318-cu.in. V-8 G  
383-cu.in. 2-bbl. V-8 290hp L  
383-cu.in. 4-bbl. V-8 330hp N  
340-cu.in. 4-bbl. V-8 H  
440-cu.in. 4-bbl. V-8 370hp L  
440-cu.in. 6-bbl. V-8 385hp V  
426-cu.in. 8-bbl. V-8 425hp R

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#### Model Year

1968: 8  
1969: 9  
1970: 0  
1971: 1

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## **Assembly plant**

Lynch Road: A

Hamtramck: B

Los Angeles: C

St. Louis: G

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This information was found at:

[http://www.hemmings.com/mus/stories/2006/08/01/hmn\\_feature21.html](http://www.hemmings.com/mus/stories/2006/08/01/hmn_feature21.html)