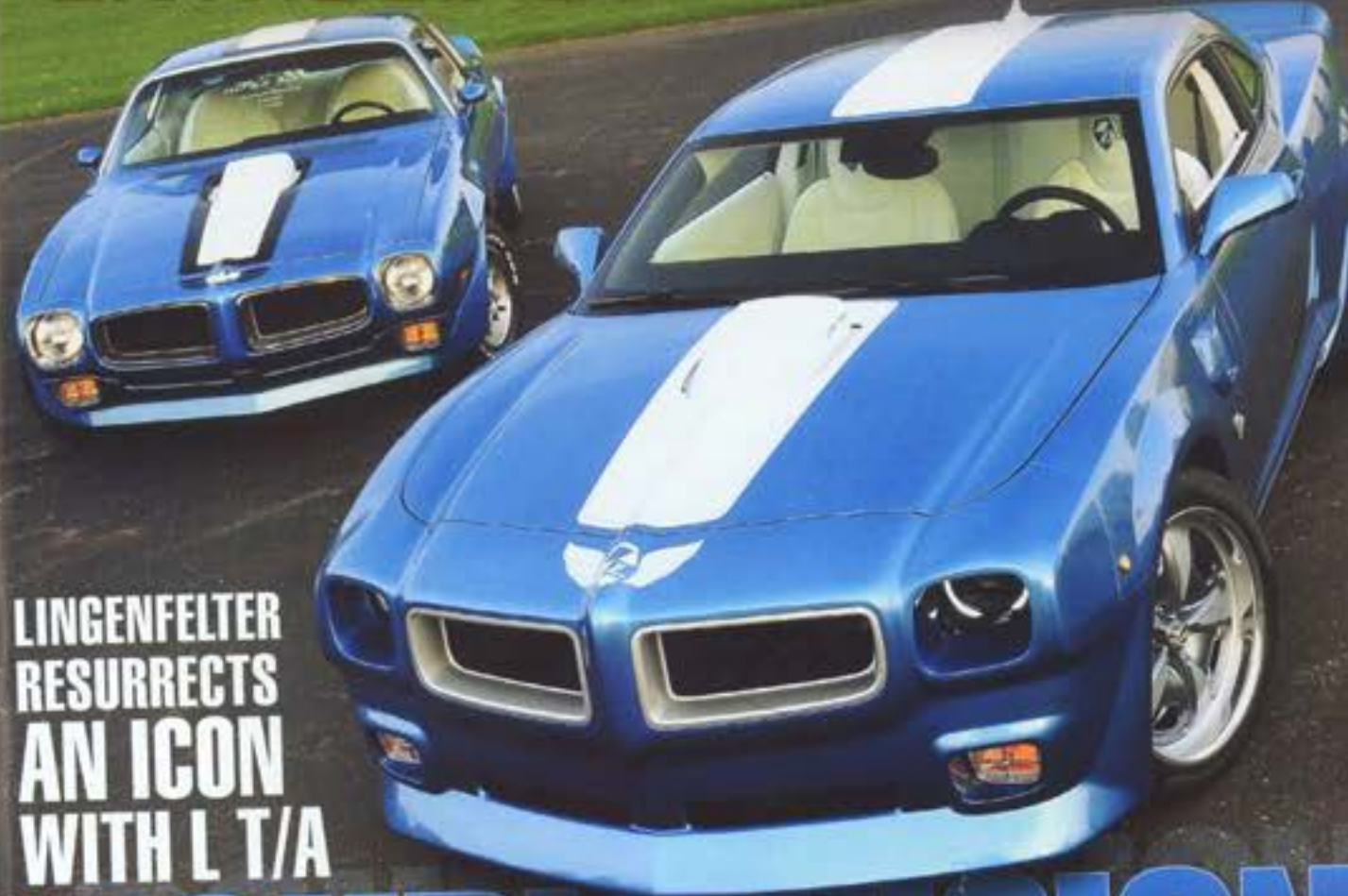


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YOU CAN NOW BUY YOUR VERY OWN SOX & MARTIN CUDA FOR THE STREET — OR PERHAPS YOU PREFER A RE-CREATION OF THE 1968 CUDA SS/CA RACER MADE FAMOUS BY RONNIE SOX?

MODEL: COURTNEY DAY, COURTNEYDAY.COM

BY RICHARD TRUESDELL / PHOTOGRAPHY BY RICHARD TRUESDELL

DOUBLESHOT

THE NAME RONNIE SOX NEEDS LITTLE INTRODUCTION TO MOST READERS OF MUSCLECAR ENTHUSIAST.

Known as "Mr. Four Speed" due to his power-shifting mastery of the 4-speed transmission in drag racing's golden age of the factory-backed Super Stocks, Ronnie passed away more than four years ago at 67 after a lengthy battle with prostate cancer. Over his long career,

which started with him running his dad's 1949 Oldsmobile Rocket 88 out of his family's Sinclair service station and repair shop in Burlington, North Carolina, Ronnie was known by all as a consummate professional and a true gentleman as well as a fierce competitor.

The turning point for Ronnie came in 1963 when the soft-spoken Sox partnered with another local Burlington, North Carolina, competitor, Buddy Martin. Together they teamed up to campaign in the new A/Factory Experimental (A/FX) class in a Z-11 1963 Impala, a

lightweight that featured an aluminum front end. The Sox & Martin partnership lasted 13 years, moving to a factory-backed A/FX Mercury Comet for the 1964 season and adding engine builder Jake King to the team, before moving on to becoming Chrysler's go-to team over the next decade. They ran a wide variety of red, white and blue Mopars

in the A/FX, Super Stock and Pro Stock classifications, winning championships wherever they competed. At the same time, the team became Plymouth's public face in drag racing circles as it conducted performance clinics at Plymouth dealers nationwide.

"They had often ran a multi-vehicle team that toured the country represent-

ing not only themselves, but Chrysler," said Sox & Martin fan Larry Weiner, who handles publicity for Mr. Norm's Garage, which now offers the modern interpretation shown here of the legendary Sox & Martin Cudas based on the current Dodge Challenger. "They were leaders in building professionally prepared vehicles that were all painted to match,



a matching rig and even team members wearing color-coordinated apparel with team logos. Each year they built multiple vehicles to compete in numerous classes, in addition to redundant vehicles in the event of one getting damaged or conflicting dates at different events on the same weekends. They also hired professional racing drivers such as Herb McCandless so that they could meet these demanding schedules. Their cars were always show-quality, they were consistent winners and a real credit to Chrysler Corporation's commitment to racing and winning."

SOX & MARTIN SUPER STREET CUDA

It's that legacy of winning, fondly still remembered by fans even today, that led to the creation of the 2010 Sox & Martin Collectors Series Super Street Cuda by Mr. Norm's Garage, of which Bill Seltan is one of the owners along with Mike Staveski. Together the duo offers a



number of modern Mopar hot rods.

Central to the proposition of the Sox & Martin tribute car, is the Cuda exterior styling package. Inspired by the Sox & Martin Hemi Cuda that won the 1971 NHRA Pro Stock National Championship, the Collectors Series Sox & Martin Hemi Cuda package transforms the new

Dodge Challenger into a vintage-look Plymouth Cuda using a new front grille, a pair of new rear quarter panel inserts with the Cuda-specific horizontal character line, and a revised Cuda tail panel with actual 1971-style Cuda taillights. While there's no disguising the fact that the Challenger serves as the donor car, the Cuda elements are fully integrated into the overall package, giving one pause as you start to consider that had Plymouth survived this is exactly how a modern day Cuda would look.

In the case of the Sox & Martin car, as opposed to other Mr. Norm's creations, the car is painted in a modern version of the Sox & Martin red, white and blue paint scheme. The appearance package also includes Sox & Martin-specific badges on the radiator core support and on the rear spoiler, as well as embroidered logos on the front seats of the custom Katzkin-supplied custom leather interior along with the Sox & Martin logo stitched into the floor

In the case of the Sox & Martin car, as opposed to other Mr. Norm's creations, the car is painted in a modern version of the Sox & Martin red, white and blue paint scheme.

WIN THIS CAR

Paying tribute to Ronnie Sox, Bill Seltan and Mike Staveski from Mr. Norm's Garage, working in conjunction with Diane Sox and Buddy Martin, will offer the first new Sox & Martin Collectors Series Super Street Cuda as the centerpiece of a nationwide charity drive for the benefit of the Ronnie Sox Foundation.

This Collectors Series Sox & Martin Super Street Cuda is Serial Number 1. It mirrors the appearance of the legendary Sox & Martin 1971 Pro Stock Hemi Cuda from the world famous red, white and blue paint scheme to the vintage Sox & Martin lettering, classic wheels and aggressive

hood scoop. Unveiled by Diane Sox, Bill Seltan and Mike Staveski at Mopars at the Strip on March 26, 2010 where it was a huge hit, the Sox & Martin Super Street Cuda will tour throughout 2010 at major events from coast-to-coast. At a cost of \$25 per raffle ticket (\$40 for two tickets), fans of Mr. Four Speed will have an opportunity to meet Diane Sox and at next year's Mopars at the Strip will have the chance to win this incredible Cuda. The net proceeds from the Sox & Martin Super Street Cuda will be donated to the Ronnie Sox Foundation, which supports the children at St. Jude

and teaches awareness and early detection for prostate cancer. (Tickets are available through Mr. Norm's Garage if you're unable to see the car in person this year.) Bill Seltan and Mike Staveski from Mr. Norm's Garage said, "It's a real privilege to work with Diane Sox, Buddy Martin and the Ronnie Sox Foundation. The proceeds from the Sox & Martin Super Street Cuda will help make a real difference in the lives of many people."





mats. Finishing up the interior appearance upgrades is a numbered dash plaque signifying its limited production status. We're also told a lower-key version will be available for those who don't want to hit the streets every day in full Super Stock colors.

No self-respecting Sox & Martin car would remain untouched under the hood, and the 2010 interpretation is no exception. The central upgrade is a 2.8-liter twin-screw supercharger, air-to-water intercooler, cold air intake and engine management system supplied by the supercharger wizards at Kenne Bell. Depending on the pulley selected and the state of tune specified, this blower package can extract 625hp (Super Street Edition), 725hp (Super Stock Edition) or 900hp (Pro Stock Edition) from Chrysler's 6.1-liter modern day Hemi. The improved exhaust note comes from a cat-back exhaust system provided by Corsa Performance Exhaust.

Mr. Norm's Garage decided to toss aside the stock SRT rolling stock, replacing the factory-installed 20-inch

wheels with choices more in keeping with its upgraded performance capabilities. Their choice included a two-piece forged wheel inspired by the original Keystone Kustomag wheels used by Sox & Martin, 20 x 8.5 inches wide up front and 20 x 10 inches wide in the rear. Getting the power to the pavement is a set of four Pirelli P Zero 265/45ZR-20s. At an outing at this year's Mopars at the Strip both cars took a ceremonial run down the track with Buddy Martin behind the wheel of the 1968 Cuda re-creation shown here, with Diane Sox piloting the 2010 version.

But the Sox & Martin Super Street is more than just straight-line speed; it's also about cross-country touring at extra-legal speeds and to this end Mr. Norm's Garage turned to Hotchkis for their Stage 1 TVS sport suspension upgrade. The package, which lowers ride height by almost 1½ inches, not only enhances the look of the Sox & Martin Super Street Cuda, but helps keep the sticky Pirelli P Zeros glued to the pavement while helping the driver better

cope with the Challenger-based Cuda's not insubstantial bulk.

If you've ever dreamed of owning a genuine Sox & Martin Hemi Cuda, get ready to stop dreaming and start driving. Endorsed by both Diane Sox and Buddy Martin, the 2010 Sox & Martin Collectors Series Super Street Cuda is available for order, with a portion of the proceeds from each sale going to the Ronnie Sox Foundation.

1968 CUDA RE-CREATION

The 1968 season was one of the most successful in the long Sox & Martin partnership and an important cog in the program was the team's Barracudas. The car shown here, in SS/CA trim was built by Greg Fernald of SS and AFX in New River, Arizona, for Bill Sefton of Mr. Norm's Garage and is a representation of a 1968-era factory Mopar Super Stock. Fernald, who has garnered quite a reputation in Mopar circles as the go-to guy when it comes to building the most accurate A-body drag cars as well as his signature 1965 altered wheelbase



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B-bodies, offers both Dodge Dart as well as Plymouth Barracuda versions starting at just under \$100,000.

In the case of the Sefton car, like all SS and AFX creations, it starts out with Fernald finding the best possible, most rust-free donor car then rebuilding it from scratch. This involves replacing any damaged or rusted panels before

MP aluminum Hemi heads, a 4.15-inch Keith Black forged crank, along with custom Ross 10.5 pistons, special Crane mechanical roller cam (.628 lift, 316 duration) with MP rockers on KB billet rocker stands, Comp Cams valve springs and Smith Brothers custom pushrods.

To make sure that the engine is properly lubricated, Fernald specifies a

pair of buckets mounted on the expected "Swiss cheese" mounting brackets, a product that SS and AFX offers along with a number of other A/FX and SS-specific parts now in their catalog. What's unexpected is what's underneath the dash — a fully integrated air conditioning system, something that was never factory installed on Hemi-equipped cars. (In a testimony to the robustness of the cooling system, years ago I drove another SS and AFX Cuda on a 109-degree Arizona day and was amazed that the temperature gauge never went above the midpoint with the air conditioning going full blast.)

When it comes to the quarter-mile numbers, like the original, this Cuda can cover 1,320-feet in the mid-10s, yet the car is docile enough for commuting ... well, almost.

When it comes to the quarter-mile numbers, like the original, this Cuda can cover 1,320-feet in the mid-10s

the entire car is chemically stripped and Fernald works his magic. Much of the magic is under the hood, where Fernald eschews the easy route of dropping in a crate motor between the shock towers, opting instead for building his own Hemi. In this case it's a 472ci elephant that turns out more than 600hp. The internals include ported and polished

Milodon eight-quart oiling system while the whole package is kept cool by a Griffin aluminum cross-flow radiator. Fuel management is handled by a pair of 780 cfm Holleys. Other drivetrain upgrades include a Gear Vendors overdrive for the car's three-speed TorqueFlite 727 as well as a Dana 60 rearend.

The interior is trimmed out with

SOURCE

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