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# DODGE CHALLENGER
# THE FASTEST AND MOST FURIOUS PONY

**When Dom Toretto first drove the 1970 Charger R/T at the end of *The Fast and the Furious* (2001), the public once again caught muscle car fever. So much so, in fact, that in 2007, Chrysler FCA decided to create a modern model in the spirit of the original 1970 Dodge Challenger. While the new generation certainly paid homage to its iconic forebears, extensive changes were made to modernise the design and add every conceivable innovation possible. Some of these changes were soon reflected in new instalments of the *Fast & Furious* franchise.**

In everyday language, the Dodge Challenger can be referred to as the 'other' famous Dodge model in the *Fast & Furious* series, and would usually be described as 'small but powerful'. Indeed, it's not a showy or large car, but as we see in *Fast & Furious 7*, a true beast dwells within: a high-performance HEMI® engine that enables it to perform the most incredible feats, feats that last in the memory.

## THE LAST OF THE 'PONY CARS'

The Dodge Challenger is the last of the so-called 'pony cars'. What does this machine have in common with a type of horse that is of small stature but very resistant which, in some cases, preserves the features of the most primitive of equines?

The term 'pony car' was coined by the editor of *Car Life* magazine Dennis Shattuck to describe a new style of affordable, compact, high-performance vehicle, and with a sporty image, inspired for the most part by the 1964 Ford Mustang (mustangs being wild horses whose large size contrasts starkly with the compactness of ponies). The latter began to take shape in the late 1950s, around the time Elvis Presley sang *King Creole*. Ford

**The Dodge Challenger is another key vehicle in the *Fast & Furious* franchise. Appearing on screen in many different models, it has been driven by well-known characters such as Letty Ortiz, Roman Pearce and Dominic Toretto himself.**



• The rear spoiler of Letty's vehicle was added to give it a sportier look.

• The entire Challenger SRT8 range had high-performance brake systems.

**Since its inception, when it was originally made from the Dodge Coronet chassis, the Dodge Challenger has evolved over the years to adopt a sportier look.**

transformed its legendary two-seater Thunderbird into a deluxe four-seater, that was hugely successful, but which immediately led to a demand for a more affordable type of car. After several firms had done tests, it was the 1964 Ford Mustang that provided the basis of what a genuine 'pony car' should be: two doors and four seats; a wide range of options to fully customise each vehicle; an affordable price, and advertising campaigns targeting a young audience. Within the category of 'muscle cars', the 'pony car' style was enormously successful, although its development was rather erratic. The last one to arrive was the Dodge Challenger, which used the Plymouth Barracuda chassis, lengthening the wheelbase by a couple of inches to obtain more room inside.

## THE FIRST-GENERATION CHALLENGER

The history of the Dodge Challenger spanned three very different generations, not including the limited edition of the Dodge Silver Challenger, a 1959 sedan produced using the Dodge Coronet chassis. The first stage of the authentic Challenger covers the years from 1970 to 1974. Like many other pony cars of the time, the new Dodge model came in two versions: hardtop and soft-top, making it possible to lower the roof, weather permitting. The exterior design was by Carl Cameron, who had been given the job of creating the Dodge Charger in 1966. The more powerful R/T and the more exclusive SE models, with their spectacular leather seats, soon followed the basic model. The traditional engine was the 335hp 383, but other, bolder offers were launched, such as the powerful 425hp 426 HEMI®. In those years, different variations came out that tried to compete against prestigious rivals like the Chevrolet Camaro or the famous Ford Mustang. Perhaps due to its late arrival, the Dodge Challenger did not achieve remarkable levels of sales, despite being billed as the most powerful pony car the world had ever seen. Nevertheless, it enjoyed a certain degree of popularity that would see it take to the cinema and television. For example, a 1970 Challenger R/T 440 Magnum played a leading role in the popular race and chase movie *Vanishing Point* (1971), while a 1974 Challenger Rallye became the main character's vehicle of choice in one of the latter seasons of the television series *Mannix* (1967–75).

**The Dodge Challenger SRT8 is a rear-wheel-drive coupé with awesome straight-line acceleration. In the *Fast & Furious* franchise, they strengthened its front with impressive-looking bull bars.**



## A CLASSIC RETURNS...

The appearance of Toretto with the 1970 Charger R/T in the first film of the franchise, *The Fast and the Furious* (2001), helped fuel a resurgence of interest in muscle cars. Dodge decided to create a new generation of vehicles inspired by it, introducing some changes in the design and applying every possible innovation. The vehicle's height and the length were increased slightly and the wheelbase was shortened, although it maintained its two doors and its characteristic sporty appearance.

One of the most popular was the Dodge Challenger SRT8, released in 2006. In the *Fast & Furious* saga, this powerful car is linked to the character of Letty, Toretto's great love, who, after believing her to be dead in the fourth movie of the franchise, is reunited with her in *Fast & Furious 6*. Letty's relationship with this model was reinforced even further in the seventh film of the series, when she got behind the wheel of an incredible green Challenger SRT8 that caused a sensation, and in which she would even airdrop from a plane over the Caucasus mountains.

In this last generation, there have been countless versions of the Dodge Challenger, but as the years go by it just gets better and better. In 2015 the Dodge Challenger SRT Hellcat appeared, equipped with a 707hp HEMI® V8 engine, 6-speed manual transmission (or an optional 8-speed automatic transmission), 20-inch wheel rims and

## Letty likes motorbikes, too

Many of the stars of *Fast & Furious* have got behind the wheel of a Dodge Challenger throughout the series, but the actress Michelle Rodriguez in particular has shone at the wheel of this model. For example, the green Dodge Challenger SRT8 that her character, the daring Letty, drove in the seventh film in the series caused a real sensation among fans. However, despite being a skilled driver and performing many of her own stunts, people who know her say that she is really into motorcycles. Maybe that's why she was allowed to drive one through the streets of Havana in the first scenes of *Fast & Furious 8*.



In the eighth movie in the series, Dom Toretto got behind the wheel of the 2018 Dodge Challenger SRT Demon, the fastest muscle car in the world, to take part in some action sequences at blistering speed.

a top speed of nearly 200mph. To get some idea of its power, suffice it to say that it goes from 0 to 60mph in under 4 seconds.

## THE FASTEST IN THE WORLD

Just when it seemed that there could not be a Challenger more powerful than the SRT Hellcat, the trailer for the eighth film in the series, *Fast & Furious 8* (2017) was released. It aroused incredible excitement because it showed Dominic Toretto at the wheel of a Dodge Challenger that appeared to be superior to the SRT Hellcat. After a swirl of rumors and unanswered questions, Dodge officials admitted that the film would feature the 2018 Dodge Challenger SRT Demon, the fastest muscle car in the world, an authentic rocket on wheels. Its figures are simply awe-inspiring: it covers a quarter of a mile in under 10 seconds and accelerates from 0 to 60mph in 2.3 seconds. It is an absolute demon weighing in at 4,280 lb. So much so, that for the driver to keep it under control, it comes with two keys: a black one, which limits the power to 500hp, and a red one, which unleashes the beast, allowing it to reach up to 808hp. It takes off!

## The Dodge Challenger in 'Fast & Furious'

Universal Pictures' famous series has shown an extensive variety of Dodge Challenger models. These are the main vehicles that we have seen so far:

- *2 Fast 2 Furious* (2003). The character of Roman Pearce drove an orange 1970 Dodge Challenger R/T.
- *Fast & Furious 5* (2011). Dominic Toretto challenged Brian to put his skill at the wheel to the test, Dom in a 2009 Dodge Challenger SRT8 and Brian in a Nissan GT-R.
- *Fast & Furious 6* (2013). The movie began with the same race that concluded the previous movie, with Dom and Brian handling the same cars.
- *Fast & Furious 7* (2015). Letty Ortiz hit top speed in a green and black 2011 Dodge Challenger SRT8, a car that has become one of the icons of the series.
- *Fast & Furious 8* (2017). Universal Pictures' decided to shine the spotlight on the most powerful model in the franchise, the Challenger SRT Demon. Three of these silver beauties flew through the streets of Berlin. Behind the wheel, Dom, Letty and Roman.







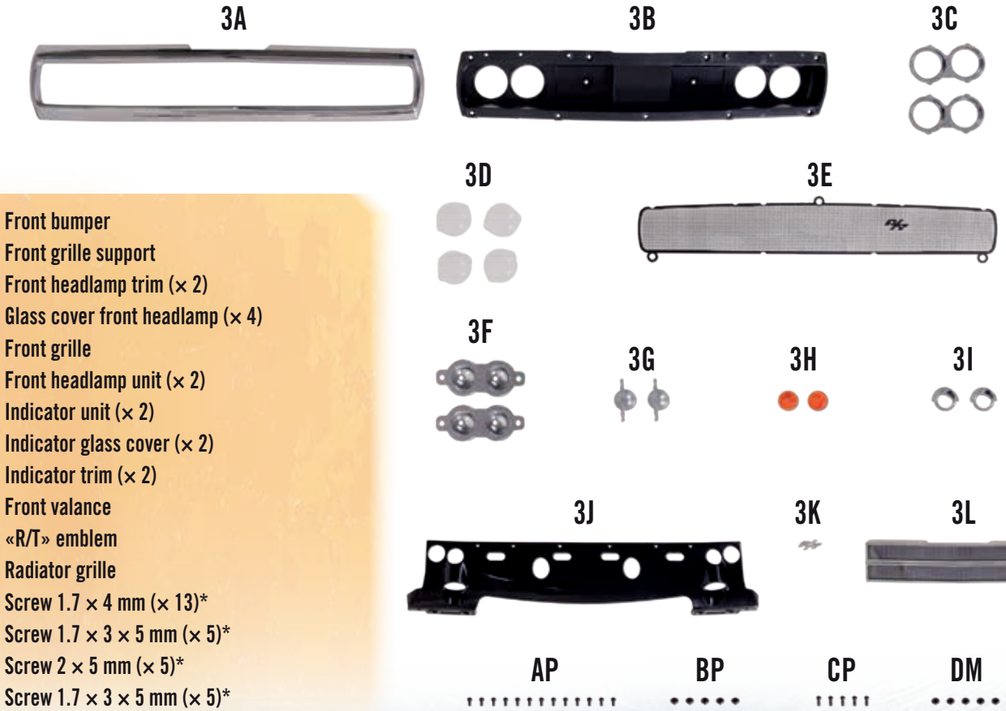


# NOSE WITH GRILLE AND FRONT HEADLAMPS

Thanks to the new parts attached, you can start assembling the nose of your Dodge Charger R/T.

**Editor's note:** The parts shown here may differ slightly from the parts supplied with this issue. This does not affect the quality or the assembly instructions in any way.

## PIECES FOR THIS STAGE




- 3A Front bumper
- 3B Front grille support
- 3C Front headlamp trim (× 2)
- 3D Glass cover front headlamp (× 4)
- 3E Front grille
- 3F Front headlamp unit (× 2)
- 3G Indicator unit (× 2)
- 3H Indicator glass cover (× 2)
- 3I Indicator trim (× 2)
- 3J Front valance
- 3K «R/T» emblem
- 3L Radiator grille
- AP Screw 1.7 × 4 mm (× 13)*
- BP Screw 1.7 × 3 × 5 mm (× 5)*
- CP Screw 2 × 5 mm (× 5)*
- DM Screw 1.7 × 3 × 5 mm (× 5)*

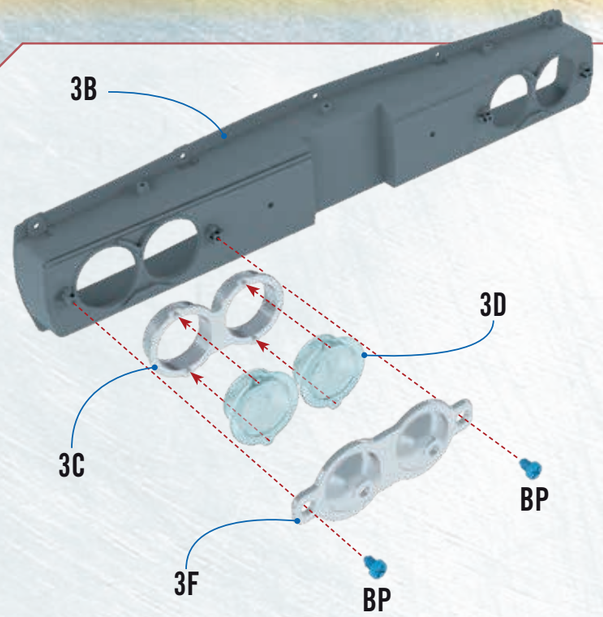
* Some of the parts are spares.

## ASSEMBLY AREA

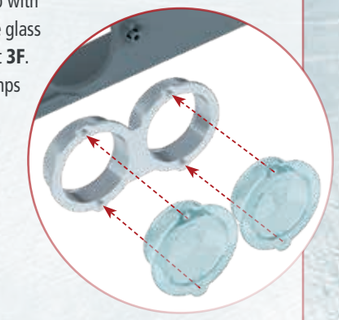


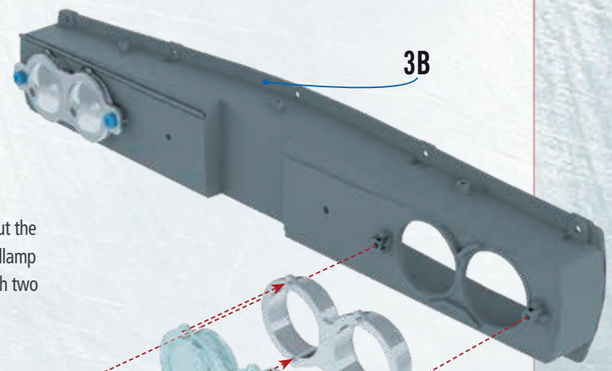
NOSE AND FRONT HEADLAMPS

# Nose with grille and front headlamps

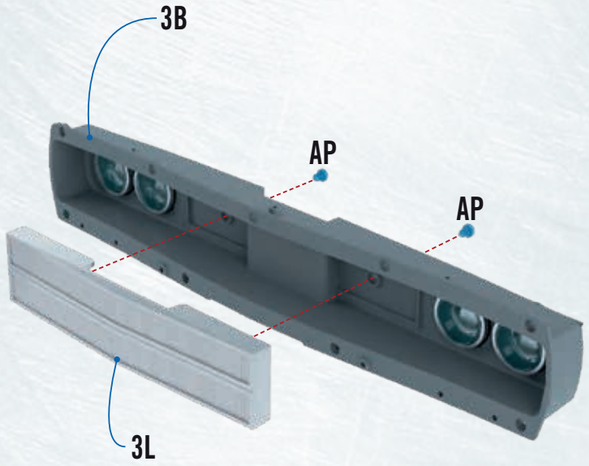



**3.1** **Position** the front grille support **3B** so that you can work on its inner side. Assemble the parts of the front left headlamps in the following order: front headlight trim **3C**, two headlamp glass covers **3D** (the pins on the frame must line up with the corresponding holes in the glass covers) and the headlamp unit **3F**. Attach the completed headlamps to the grille support **3B** with two type **BP** screws. ◄



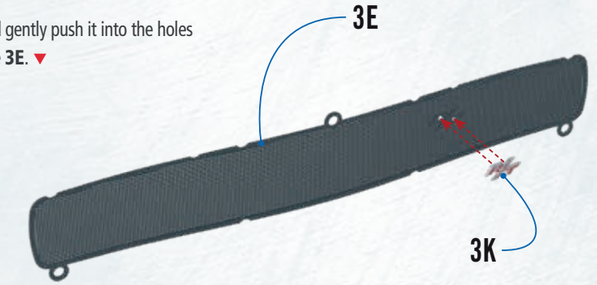


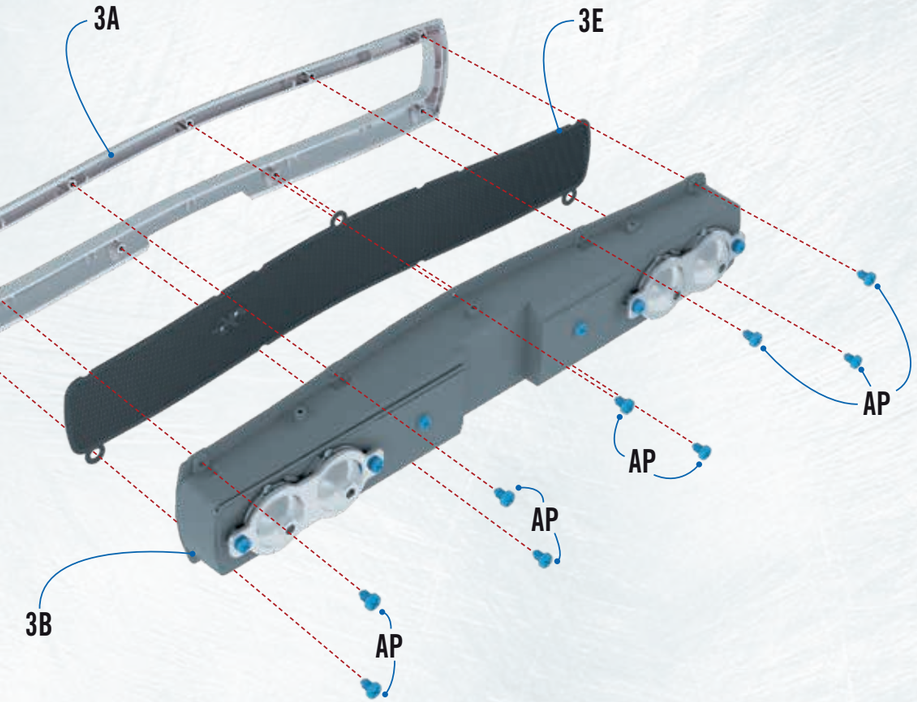

**3.2** **Mount** the front right headlamps in the same way: put the headlamp trim **3C**, the two glass covers **3D** and the headlamp unit **3F** together; attach to the front grille support **3B** with two type **BP** screws. ►



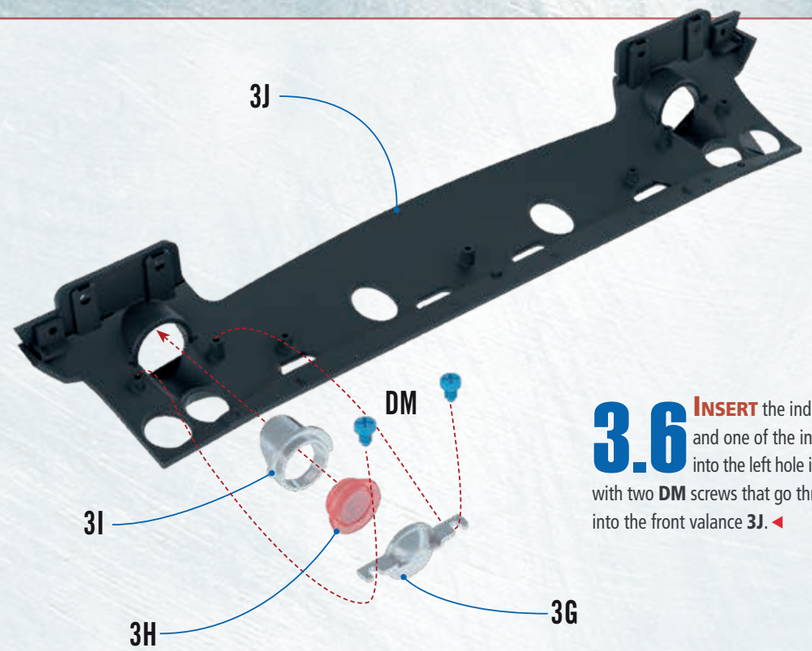

**3.3** **Insert** the radiator grille **3L** into the middle of the outside of the grille support **3B**. From the other side, insert and tighten two **AP** screws. ◄

**3.4** **Take** the «R/T» emblem and gently push it into the holes in the outside of the front grille **3E**. ▼

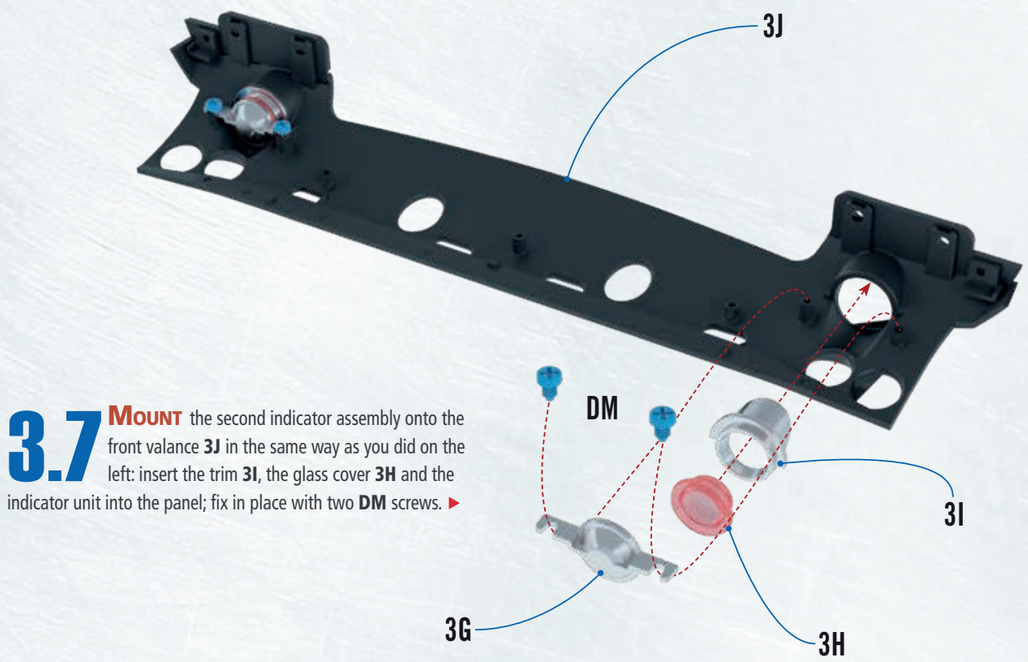


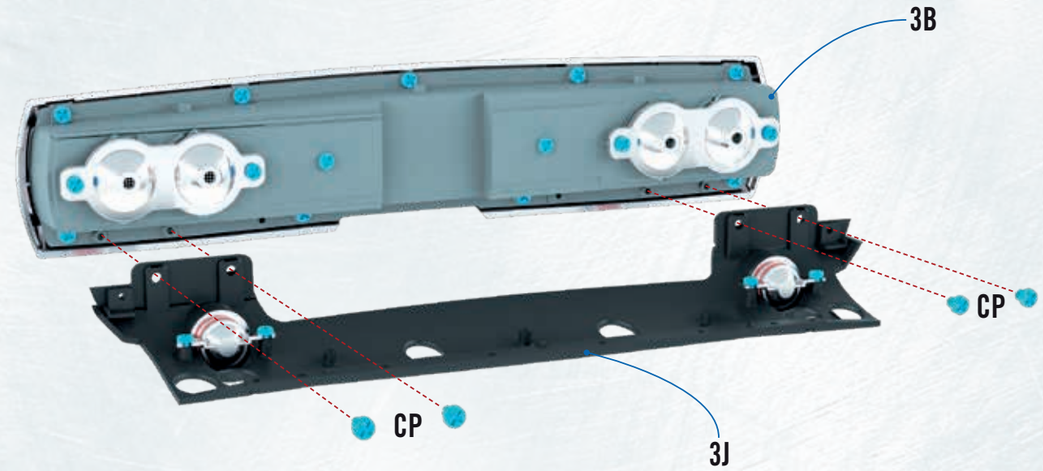

**3.5** **Put** the front bumper **3A**, the front grille **3E** and the front grille support **3B** together, in the order shown. Once you are sure all the pieces are facing the right way, join them together with eight **AP** screws. ▲




**3.6** **INSERT** the indicator trim **3I**, the glass cover **3H** and one of the indicator units, in the order shown, into the left hole in the front valance **3J**. Fix in place with two **DM** screws that go through the indicator assembly and into the front valance **3J**. ◄




**3.7** **MOUNT** the second indicator assembly onto the front valance **3J** in the same way as you did on the left: insert the trim **3I**, the glass cover **3H** and the indicator unit into the panel; fix in place with two **DM** screws. ►




**3.8** **JOIN** the front valance **3J** and the front grille support **3B** together, ensuring that the assembly holes match up, as shown. Fix them together with four **CP** crews. ▲

## STAGE 3 FINAL RESULT

**The nose of your Dodge Charger R/T is now finished. Put it in a safe place.**



# AMERICAN TUNING: A QUESTION OF STYLE




**Tuning is not a uniform activity. A great variety of tastes, styles and creative ideas are in a constantly changing and evolving. In the United States, where this phenomenon began, all kinds of examples of this can be seen that go beyond the purely technical, and show how transforming a car is also an art form.**

**Derived from hot rods, T-buckets have open bodywork, an exposed engine and parts from the Ford Model T. The wheels are reminiscent of those on dragsters.**

In general terms, tuning consists of modifying an automobile to obtain another with a very different appearance, mechanical structure and engine performance. These three facets are not always changed simultaneously; sometimes only the appearance is changed, while the mechanics remain untouched, or vice versa. There is great freedom of choice with respect to the transformations that can be made. This choice may be determined by a variety of conditions, such as the available budget, the specific skills and know-how of the garage that does the customisation, without forgetting, obviously, the customer's tastes.

But above all, tuning is not immune to new trends or new ideas about art or style. Just like so-called subcultures, it is a melting pot of continually changing ideas and intuitions, in constant contact with the world around it. To understand its development, other more or less related areas must be borne in mind, such as music, dancing, language and fashion.

Nevertheless, when we talk about this phenomenon, its raw material must not be overlooked: the automobile. No matter how many modifications are made, they must always be adapted to the basic characteristics of the model in question, on which the success of the process will greatly depend. An old Ford Model T from before the Second World War will never give the same results as a Cadillac manufactured in the 1980s. All in all, the artisan's skill is measured mainly by his ability to enhance the essential personality of the original car without distorting it, seeking the way to reinforce it with his changes.





**Two Hi-risers parade in Chicago during the celebrations for Puerto Rico Day. The large-diameter wheel rims raise the car to a considerable height.**

If we remember how car production has developed, and that tuning already has a long history, consolidated after more than 70 years and spread all over the world, we can talk authoritatively about trends and well-coded styles, with very specific aesthetic references.

Here is a list of the main characteristics of the most familiar styles spread all over the United States, which we will now examine in greater detail.

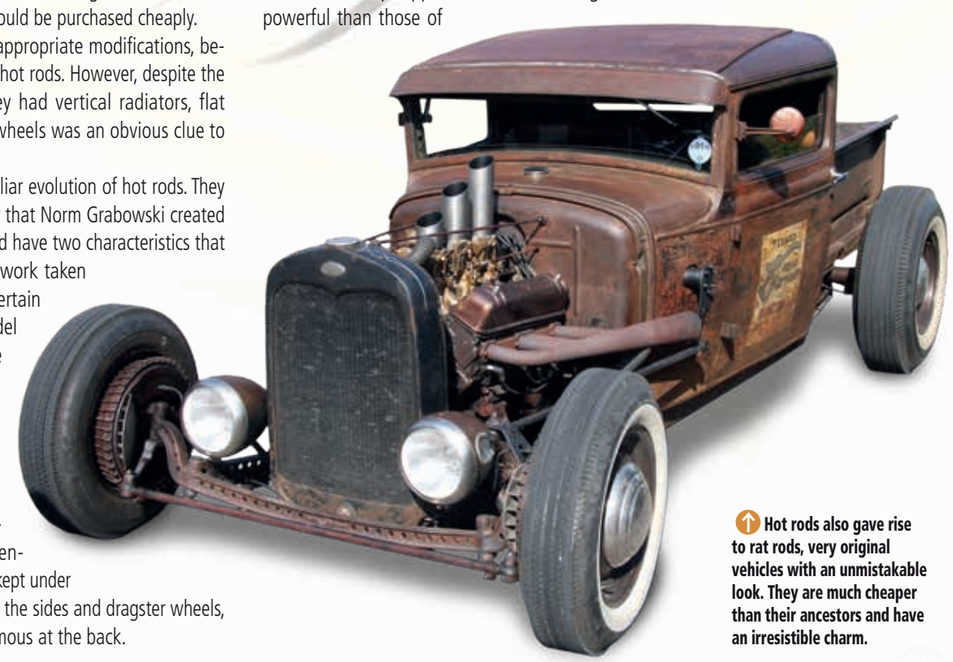
## THE HOT ROD FAMILY

As is well known, tuning emerged shortly after the end of the Second World War thanks to the large number of cars made before the war that could be purchased cheaply.

Those models, with the appropriate modifications, became what were known as hot rods. However, despite the changes, the fact that they had vertical radiators, flat windscreens and exposed wheels was an obvious clue to the original vehicle.

T-buckets are a very peculiar evolution of hot rods. They date back to the Kookie Kar that Norm Grabowski created in 1955. Vehicles of this kind have two characteristics that set them apart: open bodywork taken from a Ford Model T or certain features typical of that model at least. Parts similar to those of that car were in fact often used, since it was becoming more difficult and more expensive to find original ones. There are other similarly notable characteristics, such as huge engines that generally are not kept under a bonnet, flames painted on the sides and dragster wheels, small at the front and enormous at the back.

As well as the T-bucket, a classic from the 1950s onwards, another one to mention is the rat rod. Its style became established in the 1980s as a reaction to the classic hot rods, which were by then expensive and better looked after, with very elaborate decoration, an abundance of chrome plating and leather-upholstered seats. The rat rod, on the other hand, is much cheaper, to the extent that it looks like it is in bad condition. The fact that it is called 'rat' fits these cars perfectly, with their shoddy, unfinished appearance, with a coat of primer instead of paint, full of dents and rust marks. Even the interiors, sober and Spartan, have an unkempt appearance. Also, the engines are less powerful than those of



**Hot rods also gave rise to rat rods, very original vehicles with an unmistakable look. They are much cheaper than their ancestors and have an irresistible charm.**



A 1964 Chevrolet Impala modified as a Lowrider. Hydraulic suspensions make it possible to change the vehicle's position.

hot rods. In short, a rat rod is typically cheap, has only original parts and is very easy to handle.

**FOR ALL TASTES**

Beyond hot rods there is a whole world of very original shapes, colours and mechanical ideas. In the United States, there is a class of modified cars that cannot be ignored: the Lowrider, with its low profile.

Reducing the clearance between the platform and the ground makes a very particular design possible, with a very low floor and the wheels almost embedded in the mudguards.

But Lowriders go much further than a simple intervention that modifies the suspensions. The objective is not only to reduce the clearance between the car and the ground, but also to allow for the height of the car to be changed using hydraulic or compressed-air systems. With just a simple push of a button the Lowrider can jump and adopt unusual positions, leaning to one side on the road or rising up on the rear wheels. Obviously, all this is accompanied by artistic changes to the bodywork and paintwork.

An incredible SLAB car, with huge 'swanga' wheel rims. These peculiar features are the defining characteristic of the style, created in Houston, Texas.



Lowriders first appeared in California, specifically in the Hispanic communities in the suburbs of Los Angeles, before expanding all over the country. They were generally based on American saloons or coupés from the 1960s or 1970s.

In contrast to the Lowrider there is the Hi-riser, which is the exact opposite with regard to ground clearance. First appearing in the Afro-American communities of the American south, they are based on enormous American saloons whose original wheels have been replaced by other, massive ones, measuring 20, 30, or even 50 inches in diameter. As you can imagine, this change makes it necessary to modify the suspensions, in such a way that the vehicle is a bit higher at the front than at the back, a characteristic that gives the car a distinctive look. These models, also known as donks or dubs, are usually painted in bright colours and equipped with very powerful sound systems.

**MADE IN TEXAS**

Besides California, there is another American state that has become an indisputable reference for tuning fans: Texas.

One of the most recent original trends arose in the city of Houston: the SLAB (Slow, Low And Bangin'). Deluxe American cars, rear-wheel drive automatics, manufactured from the 1970s onwards are used to achieve this look.

The customisation process includes shiny bright paintwork, a boot-opening mechanism called Pop Trunk, a powerful sound system and, above all, incredible conical wire wheel rims that stick out a long way from the bodywork. They are known as 'swangas', and there are usually four of them, for the wheels and a fifth, a spare, which is attached to the roof or the boot.



# The Cal Look style: Californian beetles

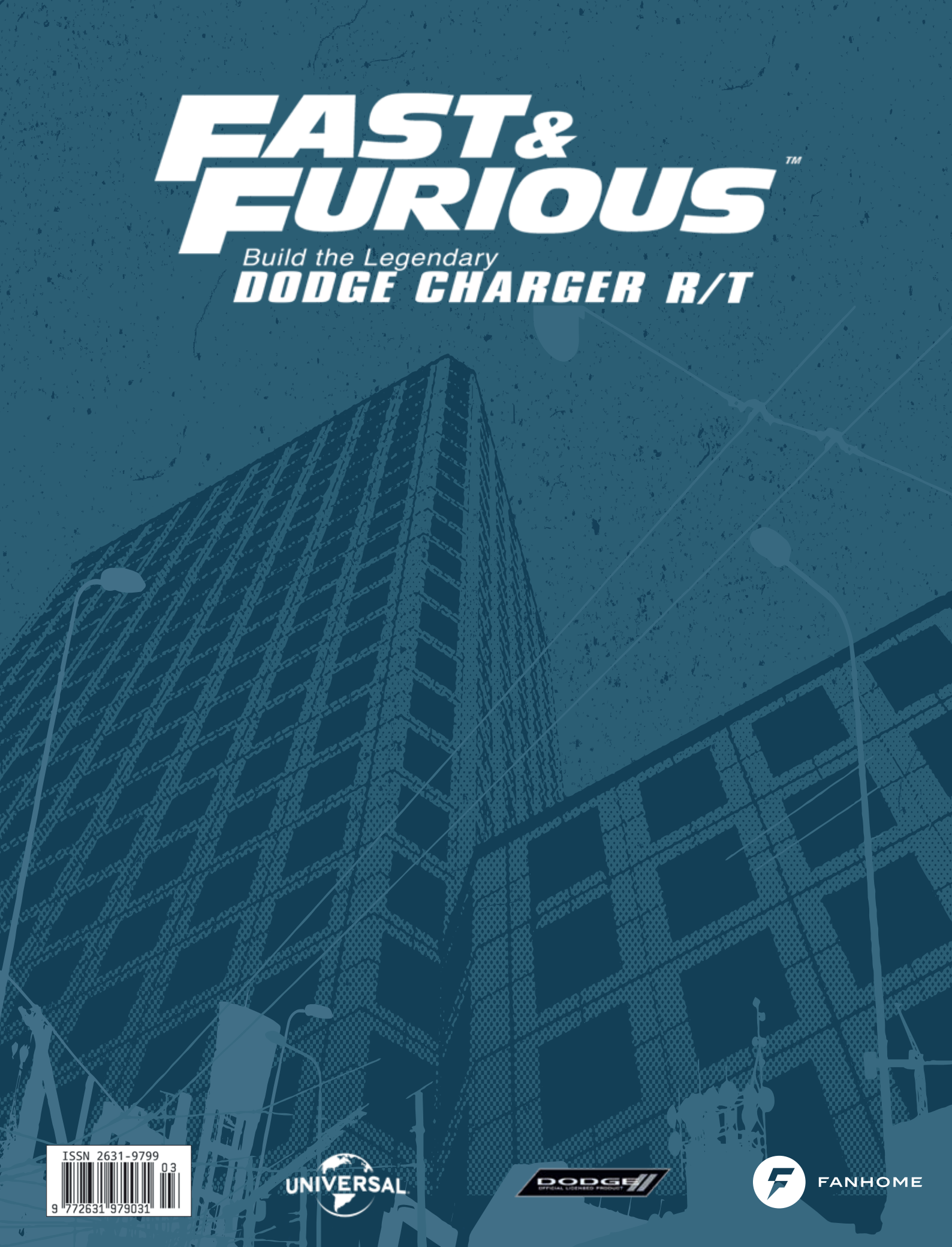
In the world of tuning, as usually happens with other cultural trends, not every style enjoys the same popularity. Some are in decline or have fallen into disuse. This would be the case with the Cal Look, the Californian style, which emerged in Orange County in the late 1960s and was very popular for the next 20 years before it began to lose its appeal. The Cal Look is based on the famous Volkswagen Beetle, which was modified to adapt it to the sun-kissed streets of California. The changes are not particularly striking. They are usually limited to an adjustment of the engine, the removal of the bumpers and the replacement of the original wheel rims with other chrome-plated ones with spokes. In some cases, other classic Volkswagen models were also used, such as the Bulli camper van, or cars by other manufacturers, generally European.



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