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LETTY ORTIZ

You'll just as easily find her behind the wheel of a Dodge Challenger SRT or a 1970 Plymouth Road Runner, or on a big motorbike. She's in love with anything that's fast. That's why Letty and Dom have been together since high school. And why she has earned her place as the fastest and most daring woman in the world of *Fast & Furious*.

The preparations for the first street race in *The Fast and the Furious* come to a halt when Dominic Toretto and his crowd arrive at the meeting place. As soon as he gets out of his car, Dom is approached by two women who want to wish him luck before the race. However, almost immediately Letty, Toretto's girlfriend, muscles in between them and gives them a suggestion: "Why don't you girls just pack it up before I leave tread marks on your face?"

That's how Leticia Ortiz introduces herself, demonstrating a her fierce loyalty to Dominic Toretto and establishing her character as one you do not want to mess with.

WHO'S THAT WOMAN?

It only takes a few seconds to see what kind of personality she has: she's a woman who knows what she wants, she drives her own car in a world dominated by men, and her rebellious style of dress matches her personality. Throughout the series we'll find out a lot more about her.

Letty is actually a childhood friend of Dom's, as she grew up in the same neighborhood in Los Angeles as the Toretto family. They discovered their love for cars and mechanics together. They also began taking part in the races together. And, as you might expect with all that they share, they fell passionately in love.

Letty Ortiz is one of the most iconic characters in the *Fast & Furious* franchise. Strong, sure of herself and capable of beating anyone in a 400-metre race, she has even achieved what seemed impossible: winning the heart of Dominic Toretto.

Michelle Rodríguez

The daughter of a Dominican mother and a Puerto Rican father, Mayte Michelle Rodriguez was born in Texas on 12 July 1978 and brought up in Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and New Jersey. Prepared to fight to make room for herself in the movies, she joined a gymnasium and spent five months preparing for an audition as the lead in *Girlfight*, a modest independent film that told the story of a young female boxer. She defeated 350 young hopefuls, achieved her goal and began a meteoric rise, marked from the beginning by her tough girl image. Her role as Letty in the *Fast & Furious* franchise gave her the boost she needed to become an international star. Later, she had no objection to getting on a surfboard when filming *Blue Crush*, or fighting zombies, werewolves and aliens, respectively, in *Resident Evil*, *The Breed and Battle: Los Angeles*, as well as being in the popular TV series *Lost*. A rebel and a staunch defender of women's rights, Michelle escapes the crazy pace of life in Hollywood by skating, playing the piano and playing videogames. Her motto: "Could you really imagine me playing the girlfriend that needs rescuing?"

Over time Letty developed an intense sense of loyalty towards Dom. Therefore, as you can see in *The Fast and the Furious*, even when she has doubts about some of Dom's choices, she continues to support him.

A FIGHTER

To play Letty Ortiz in the first movie in the franchise, director Rob Cohen held a casting session in which he was looking for a young woman with a fighting spirit. Michelle Rodríguez, who had just won the Sundance festival prize for best debut performance by an actress for her role as a boxer in *Girlfight*, turned up at the casting for *The Fast and the Furious*.

"It was Vin Diesel's fault," the actress jokingly remembers. "He chose me after seeing *Girlfight* and launched my career. If he hadn't, I'd still be doing independent movies."

Her incredible self-confidence helped her win the part of Letty despite not even having a driver's license at the time. She had no other choice than to practice driving during filming and obtain her license there and then. Talk about pressure!

Rodríguez gave the character of Letty true dimension. For her it was important to demonstrate that a woman could be as convincing as a man in an action movie. "When I was a kid, I loved action movies and I thought, 'Why aren't there any girls doing that?'" Michelle, who grew up admiring the work of "tough" actresses like Linda Hamilton and Sigourney Weaver, the stars of the first *Terminator* and *Alien* movies, respectively, found an excellent opportunity in *The Fast and the Furious* to make a case for the strong independent woman. "For me, the important thing is that my role as a strong woman should inspire a lot of girls. We have to change this idea people have that women are the weaker sex."

ALWAYS ON THE EDGE OF DANGER

Letty Ortiz is no stranger to danger, and matches her male counterpart's exploits scene by scene. For example, suffering a dramatic accident in *The Fast and the Furious* or carrying out the hair-raising robbery on a tanker at the start of *Fast & Furious 4*. Michelle Rodríguez admitted that it was she who insisted on pointing out that her character should always fight for her own integrity.

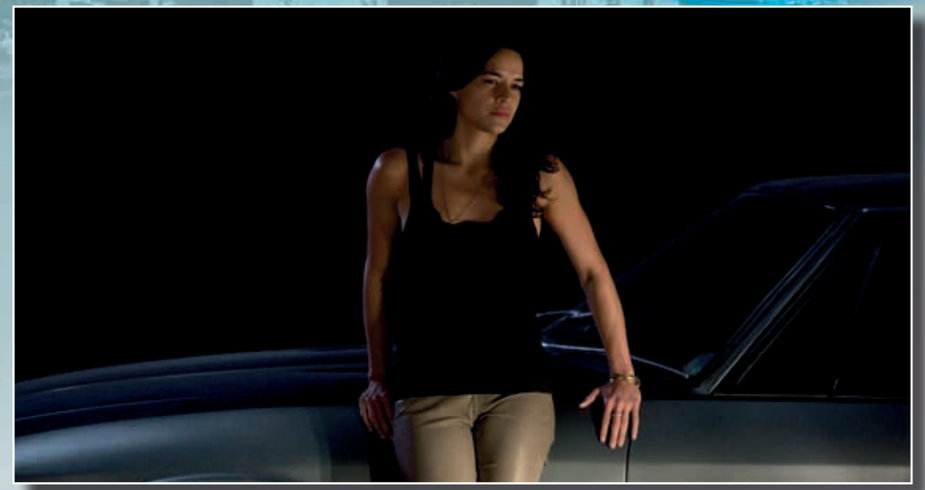
And yet, apart from the dangerous sequences, Letty's importance in the series increased thanks to the audience's support. In the screenplay of *Fast & Furious 4*, to clear Toretto's name, it was planned for Letty to accept Brian's proposal to go undercover as a racing driver in gangster Arturo Braga's organisation. During that dangerous mission, Letty was apparently killed by a violent explosion, a tremendous blow for the character's millions of fans.

Letty, about to make an electrifying leap in *Fast & Furious.*



"Nobody makes me do anything I don't want to."

Letty Ortiz



Letty Ortiz is an exceptional driver. Her passion for speed knows no limits, as you can see in the spectacular scenes featuring her in *Fast & Furious.*

BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE

After a flood of letters and protests in which fans asked for the heroine to be brought back to life, Universal Studios had the idea of giving the fifth movie in the franchise a master twist. And so it included a stunning extra scene, barely a minute long, in which agent Monica Fuentes, the female lead in *2 Fast 2 Furious*, came back to reveal to agent Hobbs that Letty was not dead after all.

The reappearance of the character in *Fast & Furious 6* was a real bombshell. To make matters even more interesting, the screenwriters had the idea of making Letty suffer from complete amnesia due to the explosion. How would Dom get her to remember their life together and the love they once shared? The challenge could not be more exciting. "The beauty of this story is that it is a lost love and there is the desperation of not being able to get it back," Michelle Rodríguez said. "Letty has all her skills intact, but she can't remember ever having used them. She is looking for her place in the world doing what she knows: … driving fast and avoiding being caught."



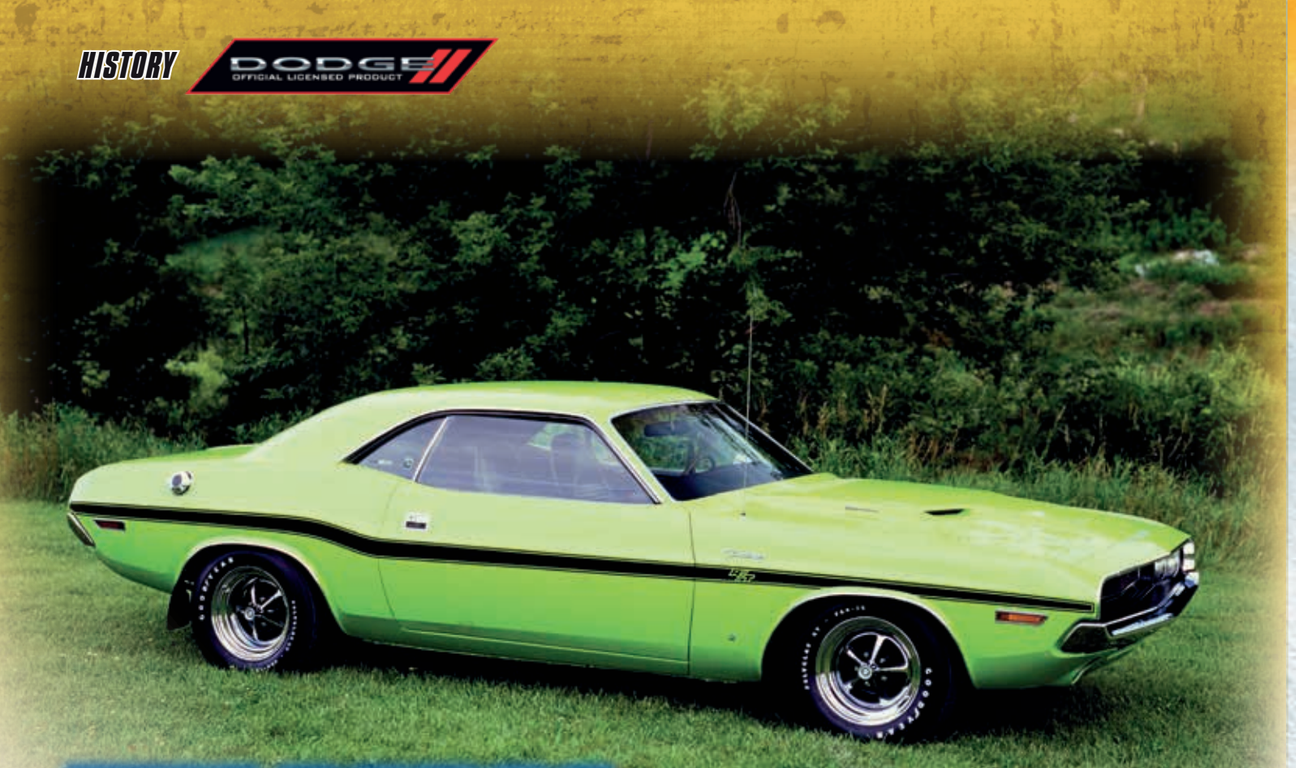
From the moment she first appeared in the franchise, Letty Ortiz clearly showed that she is her own woman. This can be seen in her personality and her style of dressing.

The reunion between Letty and Dom made fans of the franchise quiver with emotion, well aware of the huge chemistry between Michelle Rodríguez and Vin Diesel. "There's something special between Dom and Letty that goes beyond our own performances," said the actor. "It's a love that is desired, and that makes it stronger."

AN INDELIBLE MEMORY

Letty's amnesia allowed the creators of the franchise to make ingenious plot twists that would last until the end of the storyline of *Furious 7*. In it, after an electrifying chase and miraculously escaping the collapse of an entire building in his car, Dom was at death's door. In a moving scene, Letty took him in her arms and, because the situation was so terrible, she completely recovered her memory. An indelible memory then appeared on screen: their wedding, when she said at the altar: "You'll never be alone again. Wherever you go, I go. You ride, I ride. You fight, I fight. And if you ever die on me, I'm gonna die with you."

Besides making her hugely popular, through *The Fast and the Furious* Michelle discovered her passion for speed. Just a few years after appearing in this movie (and getting her driver's license), the actress admitted, "I'm an adrenaline lover. My sports car is an MP3 with pedals and I love driving it at top speed."



THE DODGE MUSCLE CARS

In the mid 1960s muscle cars flooded the American market. They were compact models with engines taken from the full-size ranges and which offered spectacular performance at a reasonable price. The Dodge company was one of the marques that made the biggest commitment to this concept of sports cars.

The 1970 Dodge Challenger R/T was the last of the generation of muscle cars. Its main advantage was the range of engines available: there were nine different options.

The recipe for a muscle car was very simple: you just needed to mount a large 8-cylinder block under the hood of a compact convertible to seduce young buyers who were looking for excitement behind the wheel, but who at the same time did not have too much money to spend. The Dodge brand launched its first muscle car in 1966, when the engineers mounted the 7-litre 426 HEMI® competition engine, so called due to the hemispherical cylinder heads, on the new Dodge Coronet, the range's intermediate model.



Street version of the 7-litre HEMI® engine giving 425 HP.

The 1966 Dodge Coronet HEMI® 500 was followed by the Dodge HEMI® Charger, a convertible model with fastback bodywork derived from the Coronet and fitted with the same engine, and the R/T version (the initials stand for Road and Track) of the Coronet, equipped with an enormous 7.2.-litre Magnum 440 block. For several years, the Dodge Charger and Coronet rubbed shoulders with the great muscle cars of the competition like the Pontiac GTO, the Plymouth Barracuda, the Ford Mustang and Torino, the Chevrolet Chevelle and Camaro or the Oldsmobile 442.

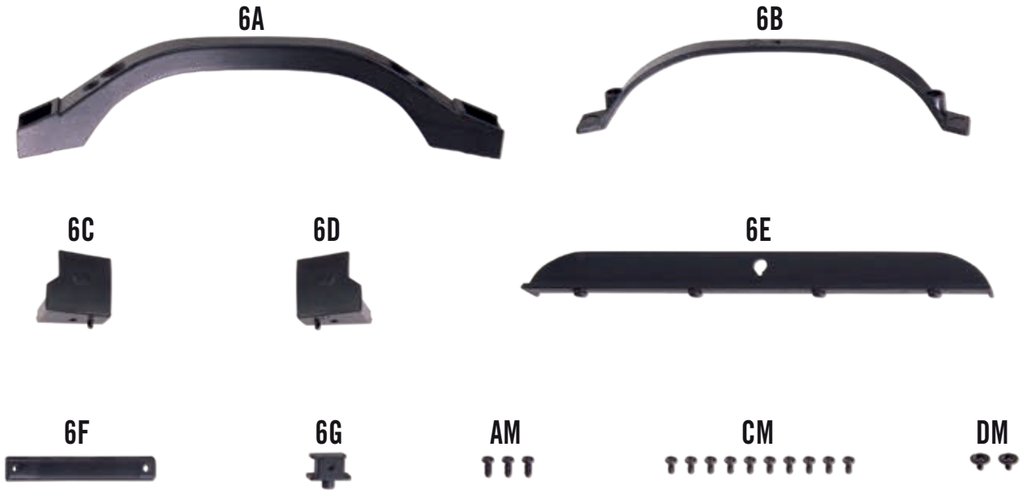
In 1968 the company introduced the Super Bee line, made up of simpler models with regard to finish and equipment, and which sold for a lower price. Two years later, in 1970, it added a new model to its range of muscle cars, the Dodge Challenger R/T, launched to compete directly with the Mustang and the Camaro.



ELEMENTS OF THE FRONT SECTION OF THE CHASSIS (I)

In this assembly session you can mount the front crossmember and the lower radiator and engine covers on the front section of the chassis.

PIECES FOR THIS STAGE



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.

6A	Front chassis crossmember	6F	Bottom radiator flange
6B	Crossmember cover	6G	Bottom radiator support
6C	Left engine support	AM	Screw 2 × 4 mm, (x 3)*
6D	Right engine support	CM	Screw 1,7 × 3 mm, (x 10)*
6E	Bottom radiator housing	DM	Screw 1,7 × 3 × 5 mm, (x 2)*

* Some of the parts are spares.

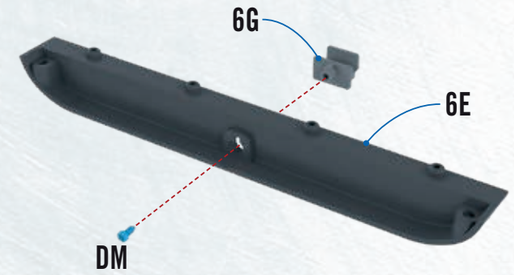
ASSEMBLY AREA



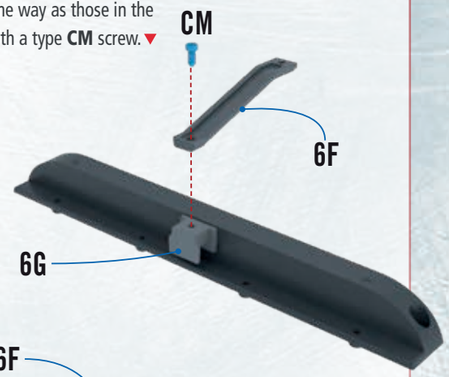
FRONT SECTION OF THE CHASSIS

Elements of the front section of the chassis (I)

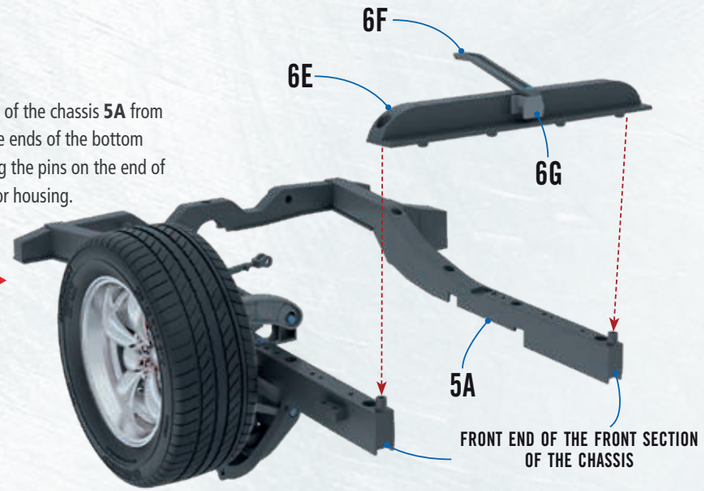
6.1 **INSERT** the bottom radiator support **6G** into the corresponding hole in the middle of the bottom radiator housing **6E**. Make sure the pieces face the same way as those in the illustration. Fix in place with a **DM** screw. ▼

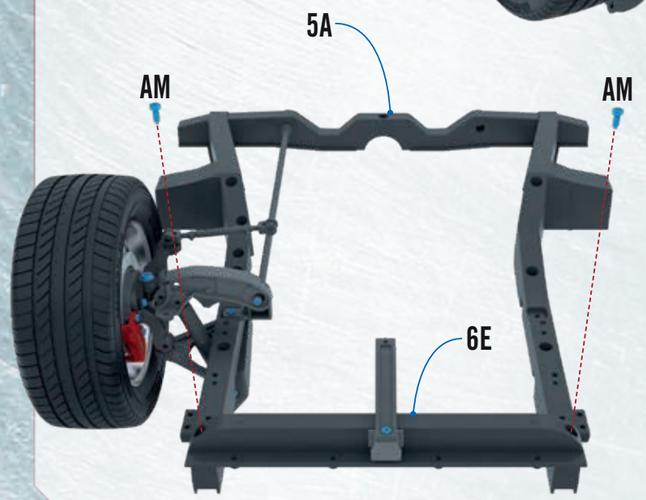


6.2 **TURN** the piece upside down and position one end of the bottom radiator flange **6F** so that the mounting hole corresponds with the hole in the bottom radiator support **6G**. Ensure the pieces face the same way as those in the illustration. Join with a type **CM** screw. ▼

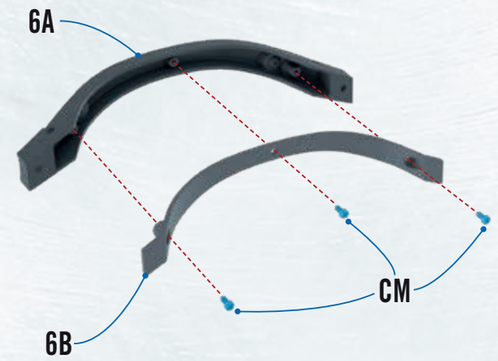


6.3 **TAKE** the entire front section of the chassis **5A** from the previous stage. Join it to the ends of the bottom radiator housing **6E** by inserting the pins on the end of the chassis into the sockets on bottom radiator housing. The bottom radiator support **6G** must be facing the front, while the bottom radiator flange **6F** points towards the rear of the car. ▶

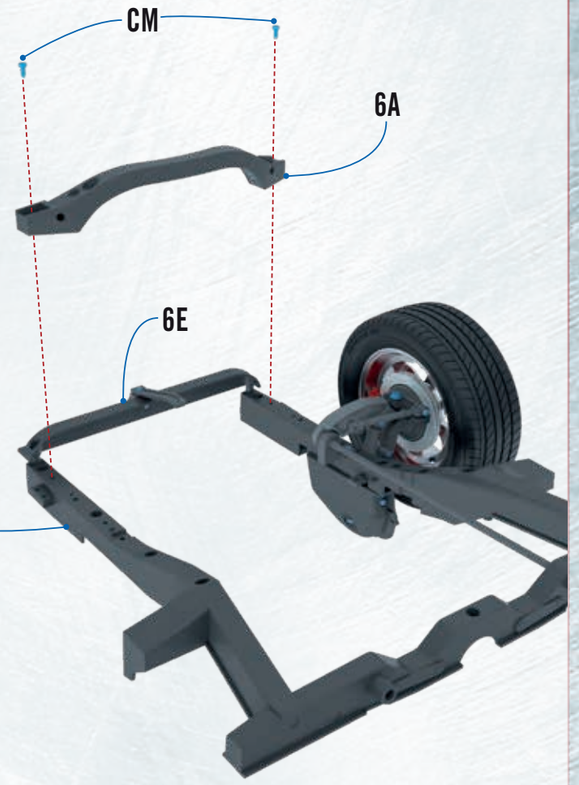




6.4 **JOIN** the bottom radiator housing **6E** and the front section of the chassis **5A** by inserting two **AM** screws into the corresponding holes. ◀



6.5 **JOIN** the crossmember cover **6B** and the chassis crossmember **6A** with three **CM** screws as shown in the picture. ◀



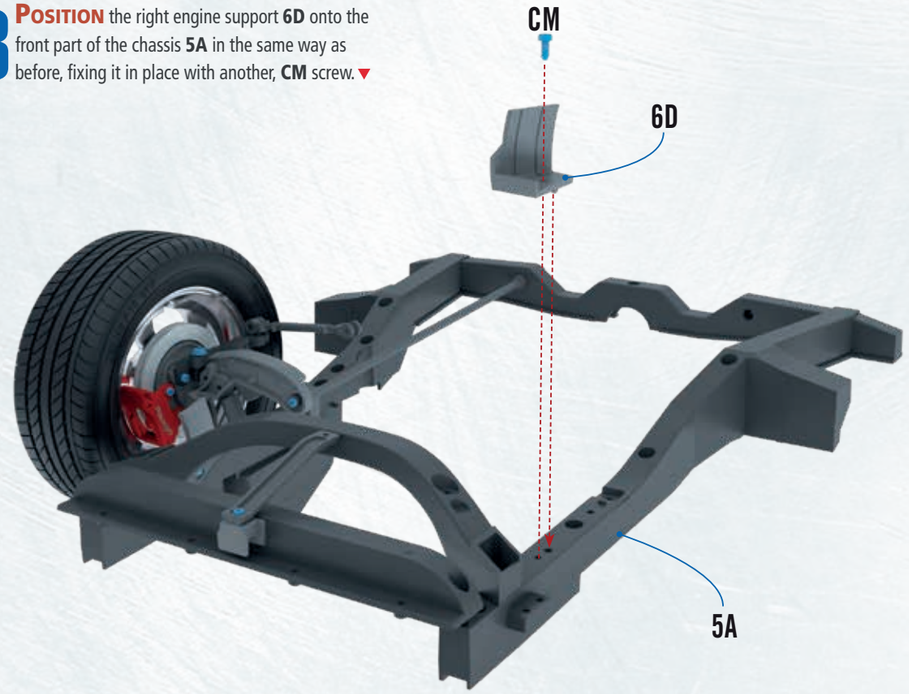
6.6 **PUT** the assembled crossmember (**6A** and **6B**) across the front section of the chassis **5A**, next to the bottom radiator housing **6E**. Align the holes in the ends of the crossmember **6A** with the smaller holes on the chassis **5A**. ▶



6.7 **POSITION** the left engine support **6C** over the two holes in the left side of the chassis **5A**: one hole is for the centering pin, the other for the screw. Ensure the piece is facing the same way as shown in the illustration and then fix in place with a **CM** screw. ◀

Elements of the front section of the chassis (I)

6.8 **POSITION** the right engine support **6D** onto the front part of the chassis **5A** in the same way as before, fixing it in place with another, **CM** screw. ▼



STAGE 6 FINAL RESULT



This is how the front section of the chassis looks at the end of this interesting assembly session. Keep it in a safe place for the next stages.

THE BIGGEST HOT ROD SHOW IN AMERICA



Since the 1950s one of the most important events for fans of cars and tuning has been held in the capital of the American car industry, the city of Detroit.

Before the Second World War, young Americans had already demonstrated their great passion and their skill in transforming mass-produced cars. The phenomenon grew much bigger in the years after the war. The country's major manufacturers, most of them concentrated in Detroit, became interested in this fashion, which was opening up a new segment of the market. And so, in 1949 General Motors inaugurated Transportation Unlimited Autorama, whose name was later shortened to Motorama. To begin with it was just a show at which the firm intended to display its products to the youngest sector of the buying public. The event was a great success and continued until 1961.

In the photo, the splendid 1939 Oldsmobile that won first prize at the 2016 Detroit Autorama, the annual fair at which the most beautiful classic vehicles in the USA can be seen.



In 2016, a 1941 Ford station wagon, restored and customised by Richard Broyle, was a finalist in the Ridler Award.

From that year on, the major manufacturers turned their attention back to the more "official" motor shows, and tuning was left in the hands of small private garages. They relaunched it as Autorama, under the aegis of the Michigan Hot Rod Association (MHRA), an association that promoted drag racing, and guaranteed that races would be held in specific places and not on conventional roads, thus anticipating possible risks for public order and drivers.

THE REBIRTH OF AUTORAMA

Thanks to the creativity and professionalism of Don Ridler, a former American football player and an astute events promoter, from the second half of the 1950s the fair grew remarkably, so much so that it became necessary to change the venue in 1961. Up until his early death in 1963, Ridler played a major part in promoting the show, and so the following year the organisers dedicated the most important award to him: the Don Ridler Memorial Award.

Initially, the prestigious award was given to the best vehicle that was being presented for the first time. Over the years, the Ridler Award has taken on new significance. These days it promotes innovation, and rewards the quality and creativity of craftsmanship.

A VERY AMBITIOUS AWARD

Participation in the competition is subject to a set of rules that are quite restrictive: only vehicles that are being presented for the first time in public are allowed to enter. You only have to have done it once before – and it doesn't matter if it is the complete model or a part, the chassis, the engine or the bodywork – to be disqualified. These days, with the huge popularity of the social networks, nothing goes unnoticed: no photographs or Internet comments are allowed.

Besides that, the automobiles presented must work properly: you have to start the engine, go forwards, reverse, turn left and right, and brake. As you can see, they are minimal requirements, but the jury sets great store by the vehicles' complete functionality.

After a preliminary stage, we get to the final, in which the eight best vehicles take part. The jury examines them thoroughly once again. If a vehicle is not in perfect working order, it must be demonstrated that it could be with just a few simple adjustments or repairs. After that, the owners and makers of each one tell the judges about the peculiar aspects of their vehicles, they meet their rivals and they are informed of the criteria that will be used to choose the winner. The car judged to be the best is awarded a cheque for $10,000, a symbolic amount if you think that, on average, some of these cars have cost as much as $200,000 to $300,000. The award, however, usually comes with several advertising contracts, so the garage gets massive publicity and, consequently, its volume of business increases.



THE 2018 WINNER

You only have to take a look at the winner of the Don Ridler Memorial Award in 2018 to get an idea of the very high level achieved by the cars that compete each year in one of the most prestigious tuning competitions in the world. The vehicle awarded first prize was the 1957 Chevrolet 150 that had been tuned at Johnny's Auto Trim & Rod Shop in Alamosa (Colorado). You have to realise that working with a car like this one is extremely risky, since such a masterpiece can only be the result of a very well thought-out project.

The transformation of the bodywork is obvious. However, the lines, instead of undergoing a radical change, have been optimised to give them a 21st-century look. The roof has been lowered almost three inches and the side windows have been redesigned to give them a more aerodynamic profile. The brackets of the front bumper have been kept, but they have been modified to function as additional air intakes for the very powerful 8,349 cc engine giving 1,000 HP (and which can reach 1,800 HP if run on racing fuel). The inside of the cabin is highly reminiscent of the original one, although it has been modernised to bring this 1950s gem up to date. Lastly, the 19- and 21-inch wheel rims were made specifically for this car to simulate the original hubcaps.



The 1957 Chevrolet 150 that won the Don Ridler Memorial Award in 2018 is the result of restoration work that is as skilful and it is bold: the people responsible for it brought a look that was hugely popular with car fans in the 1950s into the third millennium.



The TCF Center, the largest fair grounds in Detroit, has played host to Autorama since 1961.

AUTORAMA TODAY

These days, this competition is not only held in Detroit, but also in many other cities in the USA such as Houston (Texas), Cincinnati (Ohio), Omaha (Nebraska), Boston (Massachusetts) and Salt Lake City (Utah), and also in two cities in Canada, Calgary and Winnipeg. Nevertheless, the grand final of each edition is held in Detroit in the last week in February.

Over time, the fair has become an international point of reference for everything to do with vehicle customisation. As you can well imagine, the hot rods are very striking. Although these cars are typical of the years following the Second World War, they still have many fans and admirers in North America. And they know very well that they will only be able to see some of the most beautiful models in the world in one place: the Detroit Autorama.

Visitors strolling around the stands at Autorama in 2016.



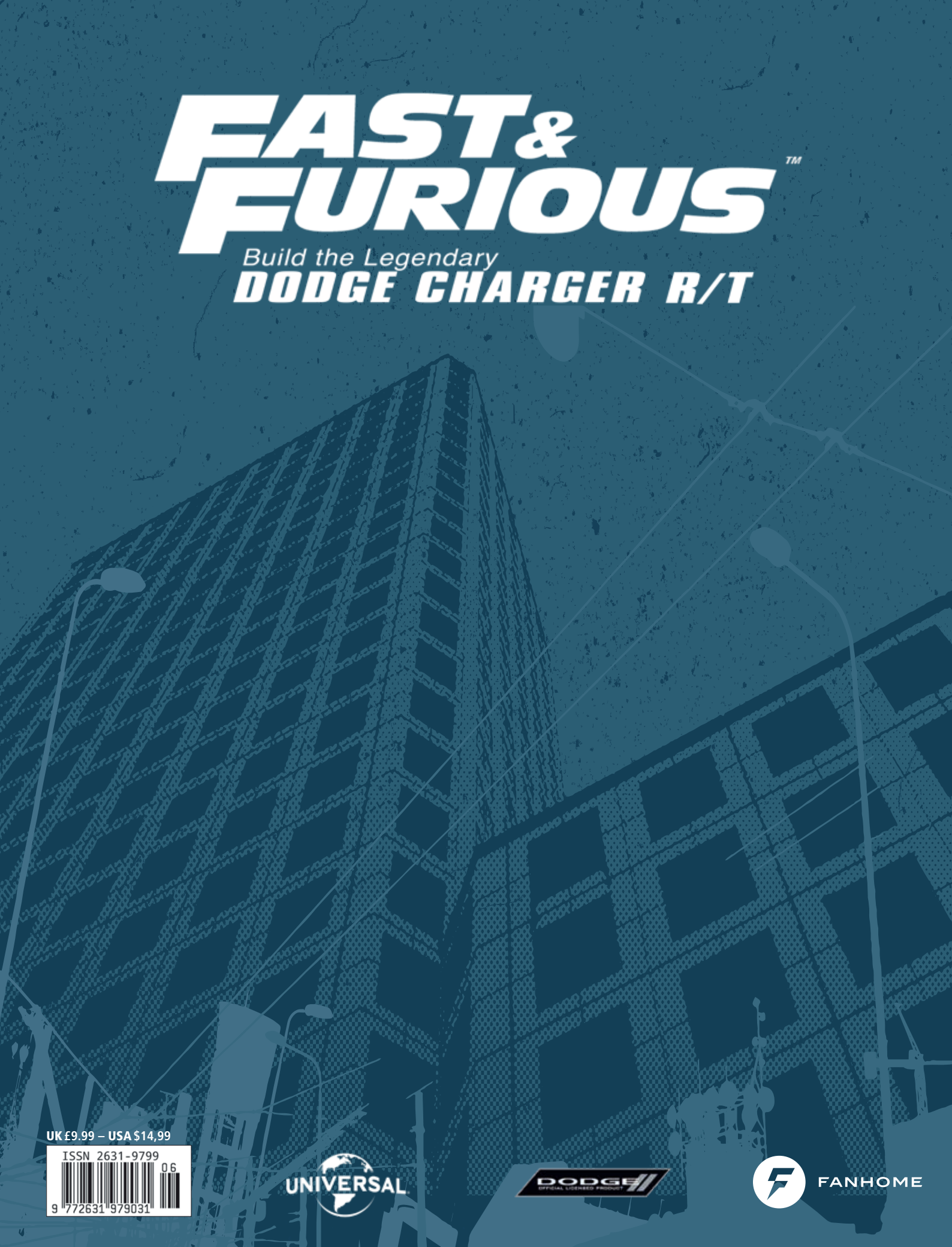
The first edition

The Autorama fair was held for the first time in 1953. Only 40 vehicles were presented at the event, organised in Detroit by the Michigan Hot Rod Association (MHRA). The association, founded for the purpose of organising races with the proper safety guarantees, very soon received requests for admission from different tuning fans' clubs. From 1954 to 1960, it was held in the Michigan State Fairgrounds Coliseum (below, in the photograph) and it attracted personalities as famous as the former American football player Don Ridler, who joined the organising committee.



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