

PERFECTION: ULTIMATE SHELBY RESTORATION



Hemmings

MUSCLE MACHINES

THE ULTIMATE ALL-AMERICAN PERFORMANCE CAR MAGAZINE

2007 MUSCLE MACHINE OF THE YEAR!



Issue #51
December, 2007



INSIDE



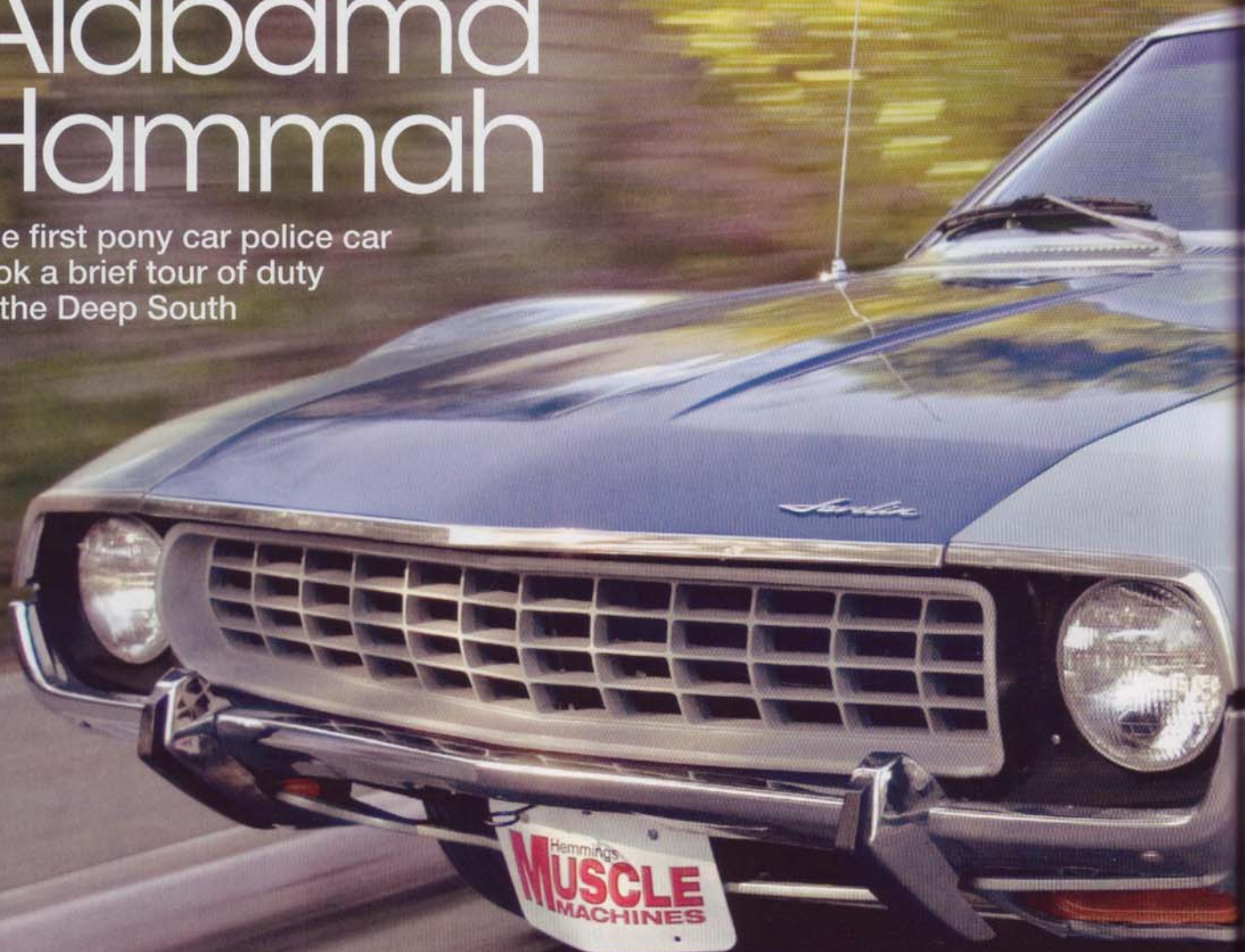
▶ **BUYER'S GUIDE:**
'94-'96 IMPALA SS

▶ **HOT PURSUIT:**
JAVELIN 401 POLICE



Alabama Hammah

The first pony car police car
took a brief tour of duty
in the Deep South



Words by Daniel Strohl
Photography by Jeff Koch

The Who on the AM radio, window down, a stretch of empty nighttime Alabama highway ahead, you goose the accelerator just a little bit more, try to outrun your headlamps. No moon tonight, no streetlamps along the highway, just inky blackness where the pavement ends.

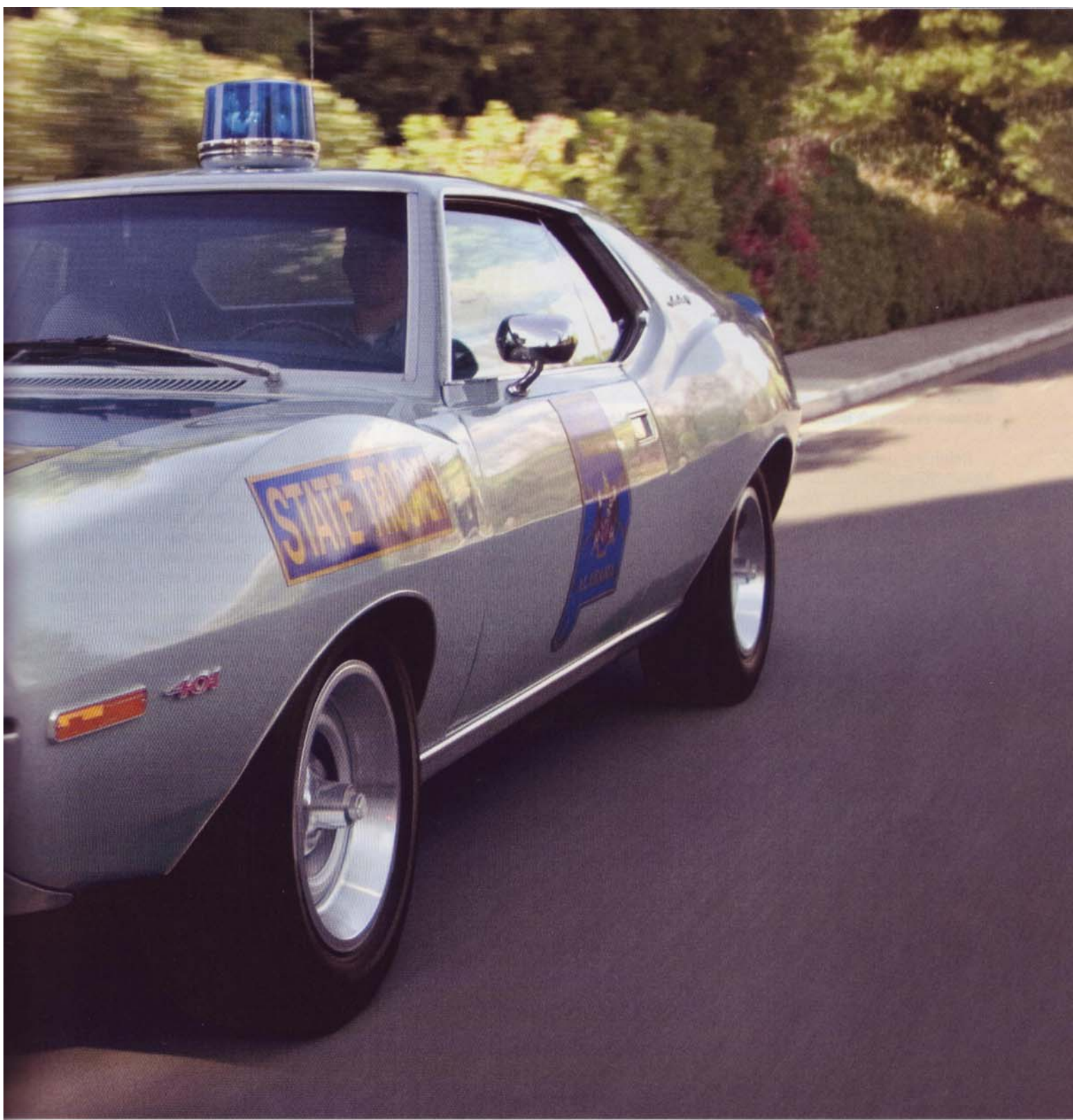
And a little bit of blue. Flashing. The blue gets stronger, brighter, and starts to fill the car as you realize you're getting pulled over again. But something doesn't seem right this time. The headlamps in the rearview mirror don't look much like the Fords you've seen the cops around here patrolling in. And the blue rotating bubble seems to be in a different location. In fact, the blue light outlining the patrol car seems to reveal something totally unexpected.

If nothing else, the Alabama Department of Public Safety

could confuse the snot out of the citizenry in its fair state in the early 1970s. After all, who would expect a state trooper to pull them over in an AMC Javelin? But for a state that needed to squeeze every dime and a car company that needed to make every possible sale, the arrangement made sense—for a little while, at least.

In the early 1970s, AMC didn't have a police package for the Javelin. In fact, no manufacturer had a police package for its pony car at the time. Sure, AMC had police packages for its Classic (later the Rebel, later still the Matador) and Ambassador lines as early as 1963, but in a field dominated by Ford, Plymouth and Chevrolet products—all of which offered big-block engines—AMC, unsurprisingly, gained little traction.

But, according to Ed Sanow and James Post, the authors



of *Police Cars: Restoring, Collecting and Showing America's Finest Sedans*, Alabama in 1971 simply couldn't afford a full fleet of the full-size Fords its state troopers were accustomed to.

"In a serious budget crunch, the State of Alabama was looking for the least expensive police car they could find," Sanow and Post wrote. "Of course, it still had to perform like a police car."

According to retired Captain Roy Smith, now the historian for the ADPS, by 1971 the Fords that the ADPS was used to were no longer affordable.

"Ford was offering a police incentive in the 1960s, so getting their full-size cars only cost about \$2,400," Smith said. "Well, they dropped their incentive about that time, so there

was a substantial increase in how much those cars cost."

Enter Reinhardt Motors, one of Montgomery's AMC dealerships, and R. Pierson "Doc" Burke, the vice president of the dealership. Burke knew that AMC had financial troubles of its own and wanted to use cars sold to police departments not only as a means of revenue, but also as another means of advertising to the public. "Any car that was tough enough for police use would be reliable enough for family use," Sanow and Post wrote.

Burke also had developed a friendship with Colonel Walter Allen, the director of the ADPS. No doubt Burke knew of the state's finances and the pressure that put on Allen, because he asked Allen to consider the Matador, Ambassador and Javelin.



All police Javelins got the 330hp (255 net) fleet-duty 401-cu.in. V-8 from the Ambassador, along with air conditioning for those hot Alabama afternoons

Reinhardt provided the ADPS with two 1971 Javelins for evaluation purposes: a Javelin SST with a 210hp two-barrel 304-cu.in. V-8 and a Javelin AMX with a 330hp 401-cu.in. V-8, complete with a vinyl roof and T-stripe. Both came from Reinhardt showroom stock; the ADPS added only a blue Dietz roof lamp and a minimum of state trooper decals. According to Sanow and Post, troopers found the SST nimble and spacious enough, but demanded the power of the 401, AMC's largest engine.

"This Javelin AMX was the most abused police car in the history of Alabama," Sanow and Post wrote. "It was so different from any police car anyone had ever seen, that the Javelin was really put to the test during the trooper reviews. When they were done with the Javelin AMX, it was on its second engine. [It] was eventually donated to the ADPS by Reinhardt Motors."

The donation paid off, though: The ADPS decided in mid-1971 to place an order for the least expensive possible Javelin that still had the requisite grunt. Burke and his boys at Reinhardt worked with AMC and the ADPS to develop a unique product. They started with a base Javelin, fitted with the fleet-service 330hp four-barrel dual-exhaust 401 used in the police-package Ambassadors and the cast-iron Borg-Warner three-speed automatic transmission.

While AMC's Go-Package included many of the optional items the ADPS wanted, it also included some they didn't. For example, the Go-Package's deep 3.91:1 gears wouldn't accommodate high-speed pursuits, so AMC substituted 2.87:1 gears. Likely due to cost considerations, the ADPS dropped the Go-Package's cowl-induction fiberglass hood and Twin-Grip limited-slip rear axle. But they kept the Go-Package's Rally instruments

(including the 140 mph speedometer, non-certified), power front disc brakes, heavy-duty suspension, three-core radiator and Goodyear E60-15 Polyglas GT tires on 15-inch Machine wheels. Power

steering also made it into the ADPS Javelins, as well as air conditioning—necessary in the Alabama summers.

The ADPS at first balked at the cost of the trunk-mounted spoiler, but soon realized they needed it for a high-profile location to mount the state trooper decal. Where AMC would normally have placed an "AMX" badge on the spoiler, they instead mounted a "401" badge.

According to Sanow and Post, the ADPS used two different roof-mounted Dietz beacon lights, the Model 7-11 and the Model 2-11, as well as a Sireno electro-mechanical siren, known also as a "growler" siren. "Police in other states had solid-state electronic sirens with wail, yelp and hi-lo synthesized sounds since the early 1960s," Sanow and Post wrote. "The Javelins were among the last Alabama cars to use this vintage siren technology. Troopers who drove the Javelin recall that the siren was not very effective. At 100 mph, the siren in full wail cannot be heard over the sound of the engine!"

A GE Progress police radio mounted in front of the floor shifter, along with a simple box for the light and siren controls, constituted the only add-on for the Javelin's interior.

Of the 71 Javelins ordered in 1971, AMC sent out 61 painted Quick Silver Metallic and the rest—used mostly by the investigative division of the ADPS—painted Baja Bronze, Burnish Brown, Limelight Green, Meadow Green or Midnight Blue.

Crunching the numbers, each Javelin could have cost the ADPS as much as \$3,900, but under the fleet deal, AMC charged the ADPS only \$3,047.34 per Javelin.

The ADPS continued the program into 1972, this time ordering 62 Javelins, 167 401-powered Ambassadors and four 304-powered Matadors. (Smith's figures show that the ADPS ordered 123 Javelins in 1971, then 49 in 1972; both



Subtle differences marked the 1971 and 1972 police Javelins: The former came in all-silver on the base Javelin model with Machine wheels, while the latter came in blue-over-silver on the Javelin SST with eight-slot wheels





Add-ons for patrol duty were minimal: just the old-style growler siren, the single roof-mounted Dietz lamp, a control box and a GE Progress police radio

sets of figures total 133 cars over both years.) Because AMC discontinued the base Javelin for the 1972 model year, the company built the 1972 ADPS Javelins off of the Javelin SST, but little else changed. The color scheme switched to blue over silver, the 401 now came rated at 255 net horsepower, eight-slot 15-inch steel wheels replaced the Machine wheels, a Chrysler TorqueFlite transmission replaced the Borg-Warner and the price increased to \$3,169.80 per Javelin.

"We used them for everything, whatever a trooper would use a car for," Smith said. "We used to joke that if you take one out, we'd have to give you a rope to strap all the drunks down to the trunklid—sometimes it was hard to get people in handcuffs into that back seat."

As opposed to today's patrol cars, the ADPS didn't outfit the Javelins with cages.

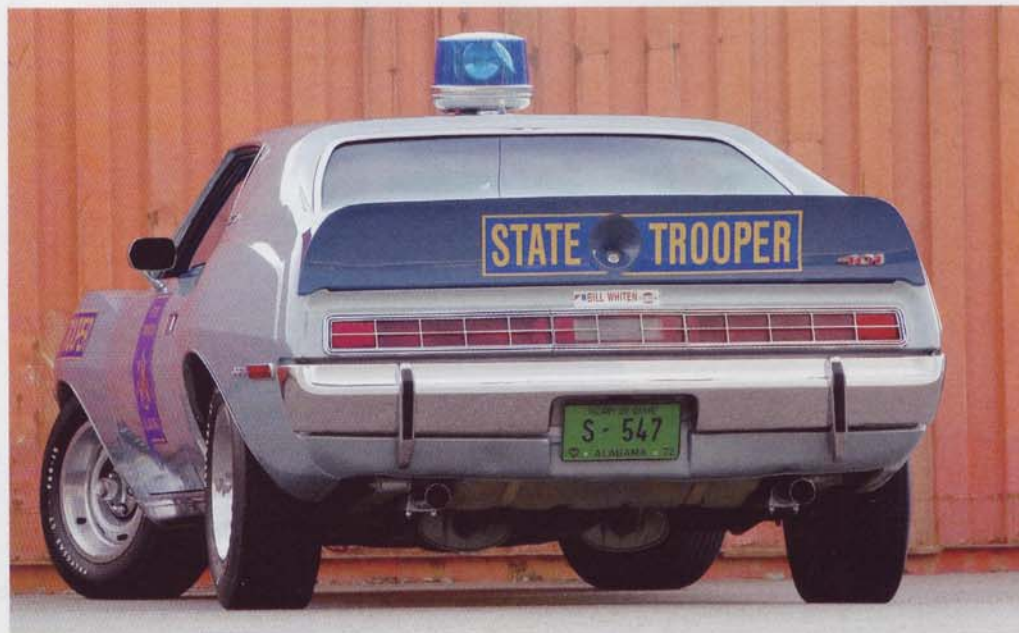
In pursuit situations, the Javelins excelled. According to Sanow and Post, the Javelins out-accelerated the full-size Dodges and Fords most commonly used as police cars at the time, clocking a 14.8-second quarter-mile at 95 mph—with 2.87:1 gears, mind you—and topping out at about 130 mph.

In the real world, the 401-powered Javelin's performance meant no scofflaws ever outran an ADPS Javelin. Sanow and Post wrote that only one car ever came close—a 1970 Pontiac GTO Judge with a 366hp 400-cu.in. V-8 engine. "Capt. Doug Nelson recalls chasing the Judge all over the countryside. The Judge couldn't pull away. The Javelin couldn't close the gap. It went on like that for 15 minutes, all at speeds over 100 mph." The pursuit ended in spectacular "Wildest Police Chases" fashion, with the Judge crashing into a ditch.

Regardless, some troopers took a shine to the Javelins while others preferred their four-door sedans. "Some of the younger guys really liked the Javelins because



The ADPS didn't start using cages until 1973, but they wouldn't have made sense here anyway



To mount the rear state trooper decal, AMC supplied AMX's spoiler, but with 401 badge to the right

Owner's View

High-schooler Matt McLaughlin has an incredible drive to work for what he wants. "I worked for many summers to be able to buy a DeLorean, which was my dream vehicle. I restored it and ended up selling it when John DeLorean passed away in March 2005," McLaughlin says. "I then got the opportunity to buy the Javelin, which I really wanted, in September 2005.



"I was drawn to the car by its uniqueness. I was intrigued that it was the first police pony car, before the Mustangs and Camaros. The fact that they were 401s was very neat as well. I had to have it because I was looking for the perfect combination of police car and muscle car. The Mopars of the '70s are unusual, but nothing comes close in looks to the Javelins. The 401 really makes this car move due to the fact that it doesn't weigh much.

"It's fun going to car shows where all the other guys have spent a ton of money on a body-off trailer queen, but the Javelin gets more attention overall." — *Daniel Strohl*

they were really fast and it's a sports car," Smith said. "But some of the older guys didn't like it so much because it was the devil to get in and out of."

The troopers found a number of other flaws with the Javelins during the three to four years that they remained in the ADPS fleet. According to Sanow and Post, under wide-open throttle conditions, the engine would quickly starve itself of oil and seize the main and rod bearings. A fleet mechanic and a mechanic from Reinhardt discovered that by sticking pipe cleaners in the pushrods, they could slow the flow

of oil and keep enough oil in the 401's bottom end.

Fleet mechanics often replaced the wide E60-15 Polyglas GT tires—which had the tendency to hydroplane on wet surfaces—with narrower Goodyear F70-15 and later FR70-15 tires. They also tended to prefer the later eight-slot wheels because the earlier Machine wheels had a pressed-on trim ring that often caused the wheels to rust.

But the Javelin's handling—its light rearend on gravel roads and light front end at top speed—brought the Javelin

Club Scene

American Motors Owners Association

1615 Purvis Avenue
Janesville, Wisconsin 53548
608-752-8247
www.amonational.com
Dues: \$35/year • Membership: 2,000

National American Motors Drivers and Racers Association

P.O. Box 987
Twin Lakes, Wisconsin 53181-0987
262-843-4326
www.amcdragracing.com
Dues: \$30/year • Membership: 1,691

PROS

- + Traffic parts ahead of you on the road
- + 401 grunt
- + Sporty body style

CONS

- Fleet means few flashy bits
- Don't get to row your own gears
- E-series tires: Watch for wet surfaces

program to an end, Sanow and Post wrote. "The shorter wheelbase and lower profile tires, compared to the patrol sedans, made the Javelin almost too responsive," they wrote. "Over time, the Javelin got a reputation of being easy to wreck. In the final analysis, Alabama troopers wanted a full-size car with better crash survivability."

Allegedly, only 16 of the ADPS Javelins remain, two still in the possession of the ADPS. Apparently unable to find an actual one, Ed Sanow cloned one from a 1972 Javelin SST, making a few minor deviations from the police specifications and ending up with the car seen on these pages, before he sold it in August 2005 to Matt McLaughlin of Clayton, California.

Pony cars have since become more common as cop cars. AMC even gained some fame for its Matador cop cars later in the 1970s. But never again would the two combine and flash blue lights in your rearview mirror.

For that, at least, the heavy-right-footed among us can breathe a sigh of relief. 🚔



ADPS mechanics preferred the later eight-slot wheels and F-series tires because earlier wheels had a tendency to rust and E-series tires hydroplaned

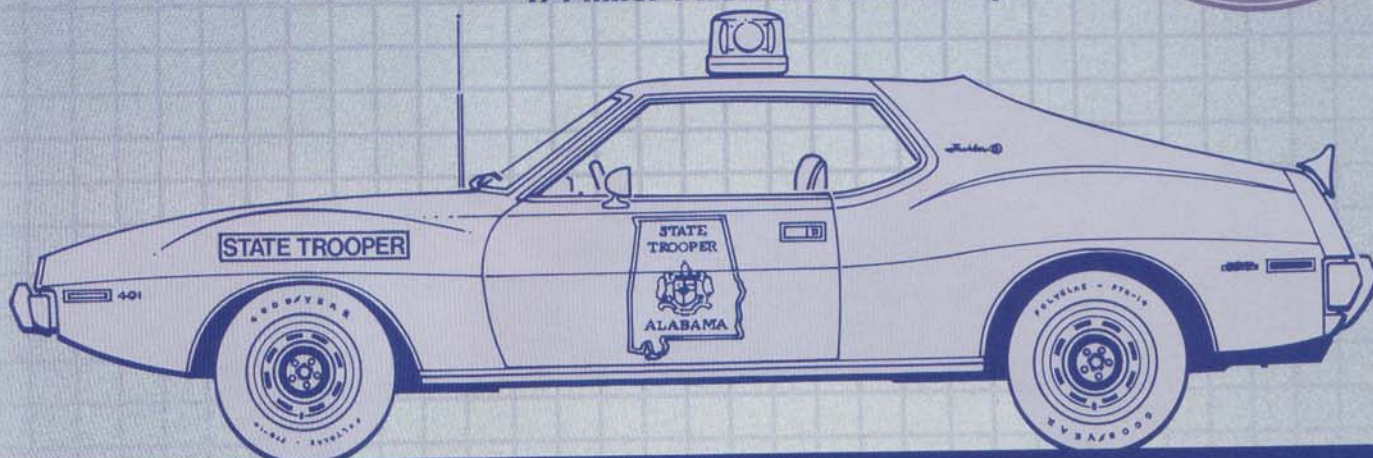
1972 AMC Javelin AMX Police

255

HORSEPOWER @ 4,600 RPM

345-lbs.ft. torque @ 3,300 rpm

1/4 mile: 14.8 seconds @ 95 mph



SPECIFICATIONS

Price

Base price \$3,047.34

Engine

Type OHV V-8, iron block and cylinder heads
 Displacement 401 cubic inches
 Bore x Stroke 4.165 x 3.68 inches
 Compression ratio 8.5:1
 Horsepower @ rpm 255 @ 4,600 (net)
 Torque @ rpm 345-lbs.ft. @ 3,300
 Valvetrain Hydraulic valve lifters
 Main bearings 5
 Fuel system Single Motorcraft 4300 500cfm four-barrel carburetor, mechanical pump

Lubrication system Pressure, gear-type pump
 Electrical system 12-volt
 Exhaust system Dual exhaust

Transmission

Type Torque-Command A727 with 11.75-inch torque converter
 Ratios
 1st 2.45:1
 2nd 1.45:1
 3rd 1.00:1
 Reverse 2.21:1

Differential

Type AMC Model 20 with Twin-Grip limited-slip differential
 Ratio 3.73:1 (2.87:1 stock)

Steering

Type Saginaw recirculating ball with power assist
 Ratio Variable: between 19.4:1 and 15.5:1
 Turns, lock-to-lock 3.3
 Turning circle 38.3 feet

Brakes

Type Hydraulic, power assist
 Front 10.9-inch disc
 Rear 10-inch drum

Chassis & Body

Construction Unitized steel body
 Body style Two-door hardtop
 Layout Front engine, rear-wheel drive

Suspension

Front Independent, unequal length control arms; coil springs; tubular shocks; strut rods and anti-roll bar
 Rear Semi-elliptic leaf springs; tubular shocks

Wheels & Tires

Wheels Rally stamped steel
 Front 15 x 7 inches
 Rear 15 x 7 inches
 Tires Goodyear Polyglas GT
 Front F60-15
 Rear F60-15

Weights & Measures

Wheelbase 110 inches
 Overall length 192 inches
 Overall width 75 inches
 Overall height 51 inches
 Front track 59.7 inches
 Rear track 60 inches
 Shipping weight 3,149 pounds

Capacities

Crankcase 5 quarts
 Cooling system 13 quarts
 Fuel tank 16 gallons
 Transmission 2.5 quarts (pan)

Calculated Data

Bhp per c.i.d. 0.64
 Weight per bhp 12.35 pounds
 Weight per c.i.d. 7.85 pounds

Production

AMC produced 29,054 Javelins in 1971 and 26,184 Javelins in 1972. The state of Alabama purchased 133 Javelins in 1971 and 1972.

Performance

Acceleration:
 1/4 mile ET 14.8 seconds @ 95 mph
 Top speed 140 mph