

Big Bad Blue

More than a color when this 1970 Rebel Machine hits the strip

Some owners thrash their muscle cars, some don't. Some of their cars are modified, others aren't. And in some cases, the muscle car is rather rare, such as this 1970 AMC Rebel Machine owned by Unionville, Connecticut, resident Garrett Monde. In the steady flow of Chevilles, Mustangs and GTOs in the staging lanes, it's a little unusual to see an AMC and, as is often the case, little attention is paid to the orphan make—until it blows the doors off the guy in the other lane.

"My parents' house was behind a park, and the gearheads would gather in the parking lot late at night. When I was 13, I would wake up in the middle of the night to the sound of holeshots and screaming V-8s. It was music to my ears: Chevilles

were a lot of Chevys and Mustangs. I ended up buying my first Rebel Machine; it was black and pretty much a basket case. Not long after I completed the drivetrain rebuild, I was out with my future wife and she wanted me to outrun the cops after I did a massive burnout," recalled Monde.

"The body was badly rusted, though, and the engine eventually found its way into a '79 AMC Spirit, but it wasn't the same, and the Connecticut Dragway had just closed," Monde says sadly.

Life's realities tend to squeeze a few items from the immediate picture. For Monde, the Rebel was replaced with a big-block 1980 Camaro that he raced at Lebanon Valley in West Lebanon, New York, on Saturdays, and the Chevy

body and it did not show signs of rust repair. I had to renegotiate the deal because it had four drums and no posi.

"When the deal was done, I brought it home and discovered that it was in fact a real Rebel, originally Sonic Silver. I didn't do a whole lot to it other than maintenance. It had the correctly numbered intake and heads, and the service-replacement 390, bone stock; even the four-speed transmission and hydraulic cam. I started drag racing it and ran a best 13.97 e.t. at 97 mph."

By the time the 2007 season rolled into Lebanon Valley, Monde's Rebel had been pretty heavily modified, with the exception of the body and interior. A 401-cu.in. block bored .030-inch over is under the hood, with 10.2:1 compression. Bolted to the engine are 291C (casting number) heads, an Edelbrock Torker intake and a Holley 850cfm carburetor (#4778). The transmission is a Turbo Hydra-Matic 400 with a 4000 Protorque converter. Out back, a Ford 9-inch rear has been installed, containing a final drive ratio of 4.57:1. At one point, Monde even had a Doug Nash five-speed under the floorboards.

Monde spent the season competing in the Pro Class and, according to him, "My best was a 11.83 e.t. at 114 mph, although with the Nash trans bolted in, it ran 115 mph. I had a semifinal appearance, and won the final points race of the season, finishing 16th in Pro points."

Monde doesn't plan to rest on his laurels during the off season, as several changes are in the works for the 2008 season—at least that's the plan, which could get pushed to 2009. Said Monde, "I have another correctly coded engine in the works so that I can compete in the NHRA Stock Eliminator class (H/SA), depending upon engine completion. I also hope to attend a few divisional events and race at a national event at Englishtown.

"Being that I have the only Rebel Machine in that class, I will have to change the current rear to a Chrysler 8.75 to be class legal. The engine will be a 1970 390 with an AMC cast-iron intake (762C) that brought the factory rated horses from 325 to 340. Along with a .457-inch-lift hydraulic cam, Motorcraft carburetor and unported 291C heads, I need to run two or three-tenths faster than my best 11.83 to be competitive." 🍀



and Camaros with four-speeds rowing through the gears as they drove off, leaving a cloud of tire smoke," said Monde.

Now, at the age of 42, Monde is an ASE-certified shop foreman. By his own admission, he got into the automotive field "so that I could build my own hot rod stuff." With the desire for early Seventies horses running through his veins, it goes without saying that his first vehicle, a 1970 VW Beetle, was something of a disappointment. On its heels was a 1974 Jeep Cherokee with a 360. Two weeks later, Monde installed headers and dual exhaust in place of the Midas exhaust his dad had just installed.

"I wanted a muscle car to race the locals and eventually hit the drag strip, but I yearned for something different—there

eventually gave way to marriage, a house and kids. He even sold off all of his drag racing gear, including the trailer. Monde was out of racing for 10 years, though he still hit the strip with friends, until he saw a black Rebel in the staging lanes. That's when the bug for quarter-mile competition bit him once again.

Monde fondly recalls the search for another Rebel. "In April of 2003, I found this one up in Waterloo, New York, after searching high and low for something that wasn't a basket case. It was being auctioned online for a second time, and the seller claimed that it was a real Rebel. I ended up being the high bidder, and made my way up to inspect it. At the time, I wasn't even sure if the numbers matched, but there was no rust in the