

RAMBLER



RANCH

A Quest to Preserve AMC/Nash/Rambler History

By Bob McClurg

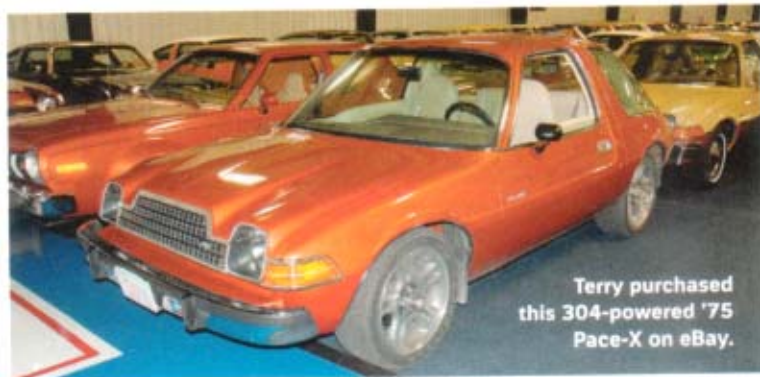
Scattered throughout this expansive hobby are "specialists" as diverse as the muscle car movement itself. You've got Hemi collectors, 409-427 Z-11 Chevrolet lovers, Dodge Daytona and Plymouth Superbird devotees, Oldsmobile 4-4-2/W-Machine enthusiasts, "Swiss Cheese" Pontiac Catalina and Tempest A/FX collectors, 427 Ford "Cammer nuts" and more in a seemingly endless list. If you like a high-performance Detroit nameplate manufactured during the mid-'50s to early '70s, chances are good that there is a group of hobbyist/collectors out there that speaks your language!

That also goes for AMC. In spite of the fact that these cars weren't actually built in the Motor City they too have a (very) strong following. In that regard, nobody, and I mean *nobody* in AMC/Rambler/Nash collector-car circles does the marque better justice than Terry Gale. With five buildings packed to the rafters with the cars and products built by the Kenosha manufacturer from 1918 to 1988, Gale's "Rambler Ranch" in Elizabeth, Colorado, is AMC nirvana!

If he had such a thing as a "mission statement,"



This '67 AMC Marlin was part of a four-car package deal from Parker, Colorado. The Marlin is equipped with a 280hp, 343-inch V-8 engine and Borg-Warner three-speed automatic. Only 2,545 Marlins were built that year.



Terry purchased this 304-powered '75 Pace-X on eBay.



This Pacer Racer was driven in the 1990-1996 Silver State Classic events by Rambler Ranch Chief Mechanic Roger Scott. The Clifford Engineering, Weber-carbureted 3.8L AMC inline six achieved 135 mph on the top end.



Saved from the crusher, and the cornerstone of Terry's expansive collection, is his father's beloved '57 Nash Ambassador four-door sedan.



This '72 Matador hardtop coupe was purchased from the original owner in California. The 69,635-mile Matador is powered by 401 engine. It's a real street sleeper!

Terry's would simply be to have a representative from every year of Nash, Rambler and American Motors Corporation production from beginning to end. At present, Terry has a complete car catalog from 1947 to 1988, with a smattering of '20s and '30s cars thrown in the mix.

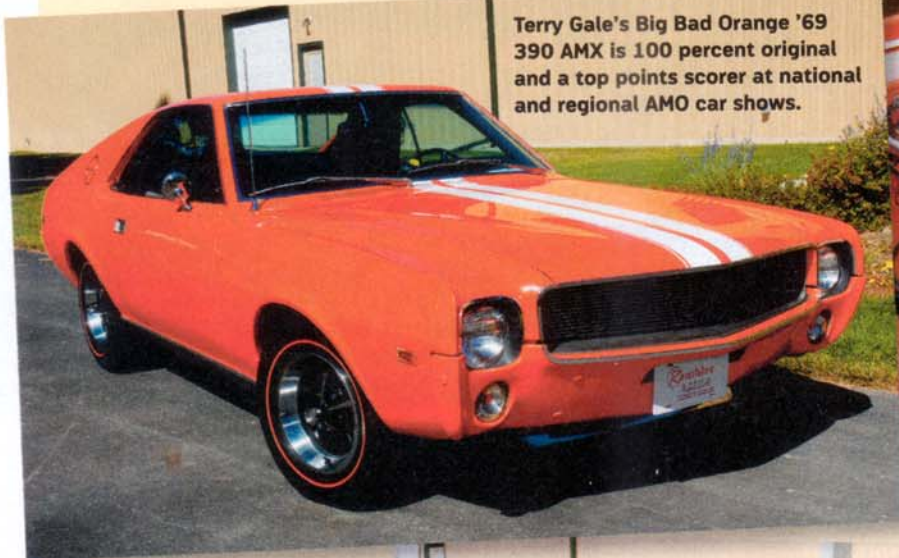
"My initial goal was to preserve a little piece of family history," Terry explained. "My father had a friend who owned a Nash dealership in Price, Utah. In 1969, he sold dad a '54 Nash Ambassador four-door sedan for the paltry sum of \$50. Dad drove the Nash for a couple of years until the oil pump gave out, and then he parked it out in the field behind our house, where it sat in the weeds for 18 years. I remember as a child, I used to go out there and pretend that I was driving. After my father passed, my brother was going to have the car hauled away and crushed. He asked me if I wanted it, and I said 'yes!'"

That was the start of a collection that grew quickly. As of this writing, he owns more than 600 Nash, Rambler and AMC vehicles, 200 of which have already been restored.

"The old cars are so different. They're so much more fun to drive," he said. "Initially, I would see a car on the street, or abandoned in a vacant lot, and I would buy it. Then my friends and family began telling me where cars were. In no time at all, I had cars stored all over the place and was running out of room to park them."

About 17 years ago, Terry found 165 acres of forest land on the outskirts of the sleepy little mountainside town of Elizabeth. "I built the first building to hold the 30 cars I had at the time," he said. It now exclusively houses Terry's Nash collection, which includes a Nash-Healey (number 34 out 104 built) and the one-of-one Pininfarina-bodied Nash Ambassador.

AMXS IN THE HOUSE



Terry Gale's Big Bad Orange '69 390 AMX is 100 percent original and a top points scorer at national and regional AMO car shows.



Powering this little screamer is a 10:1-compression 390 V-8 backed up with a Borg-Warner three-speed automatic and 2.87:1 gears.

While Terry Gale is quick to admit that his overall focus is AMC, Rambler and Nash passenger cars, he does have a few high-performance AMC products in his expansive collection. Take, for example, his Big Bad Orange '69 390 AMX. Purchased five years ago from its second owner (and AMX Club National founder Larry Mitchell) for the princely sum of \$25,000, it is one of 283 Big Bad Orange '69 AMXs built.

"This is an 18,920-mile car," Terry told us. "Of the 8,293 AMXs built in '69, 2,183 were built with the 315hp High Performance V-8 engine, Borg-Warner three-speed automatic and 2.87:1 gears." The car features factory air, tinted glass, Charcoal leather upholstery, tilt steering and AM/FM stereo. Other than a few paint touchups, the car is 100 percent original and has won a total of five national AMC shows and three regional events scoring 95-plus points—practically unheard of for unrestored muscle cars.

Another low-mileage AMX in Terry's collection is his Golden Lime Metallic '70, which shows 63,955 miles on the odometer. It's powered by the original Ram Air "Go-Pack" 390ci/340hp V-8 backed by a Hurst-assisted Borg-Warner four-speed. However, unlike Terry's '69 AMX, the powerplant on his '70 model has



Terry's Golden Lime Metallic '70 AMX was assembled at American Motors' Brampton, Ontario facility and is powered by a 390 V-8 with "Go-Pack" Ram-Air induction.

However, unlike the 390 in the '69, the engine in his '70 has been modified with an Edelbrock R4B70 cast-aluminum intake and 650-cfm Holley four-barrel carburetor.

been upgraded with an Edelbrock R4B70 cast-aluminum four-barrel intake and 650-cfm Holley four-barrel carburetor.

"This AMX features the optional 'Machine Wheels,' AM/FM stereo and black leather seats," Terry said. "The car is 100 percent original right down to its Goodyear Wingfoot radial tires."





Terry poses with one other than Shirley "Drag-on Lady" Shahan while attending the 2007 AMO/Rambler Ranch International Meet.



This is Terry's '51 Nash-Healey, the result of a collaboration between Donald Healey and Charles Nash. Terry's mother found the car, the 34th of 104 built, in Utah.

It didn't take long for word to spread in the hobby about the rather unique AMC collection. "In 1996, the Nash Metropolitan Club contacted me and asked to come out, tour the facility and hold their annual picnic. They've been coming out ever since," said Terry.

In the past decade, expansion has run neck-and-neck with acquisition. Terry built an 18,000-square-foot "AMC Building," which includes the "Rambler Café," where club meetings, special events and parties are held. Future plans call for an AMC-Jeep-Eagle building—he owns the world's largest collection of AMC-Jeep-Eagle cars—as well as an in-house restoration shop. At present, Terry employs a staff of two, with Roger Scott acting as chief mechanic, while the actual body, paint and upholstery work are done offsite.

"We run a full schedule of club events, which begin in the spring and end in the fall," Terry said. "In July 2007 we hosted the American Motors Owners (AMO) International Meet here. We had 600 cars and AMO conventioners from all across the U.S. and six foreign countries. Shirley "Drag-on Lady" Shahan was the featured guest. So far this year, we have 38 groups booked!"

While it's true that Gale's initial intent was of a more personal nature, it's now become his goal to perpetuate and preserve the history of Nash, Rambler and American Motors, a history which by and large seems to have been forgotten by mainstream America.

"I want people to remember this company as it played an important role in the overall development and history of American transportation," Terry said. "People are stunned by what they find here. There's no place like this anywhere in the world."

Clubs interested in booking a tour of Rambler Ranch can contact Terry Gale at Rambler Ranch, P.O. Box 1487, Elizabeth, CO 80107, 303/646-9063. *MCR*



This is just a brief sampling of the 400-plus un-restored cars on hand at the Rambler Ranch. So many cars, so little time!