

1971 Plymouth 340 Duster



In 1970, Plymouth unveiled the new Duster model, which was based on the 1969 Plymouth Duster I concept car. The Duster was all Valiant from the cowl forward, but the rest of the car was completely different. It used a semi-fastback roof and a special rear valance with twin horizontal taillights. For 1970 only, a small Valiant badge went on the front fenders just above the Duster badge.

The 1970 Duster was available in two models — the standard Duster and the performance-image Duster 340. Engine options were 198 cu in (3.2 L) and 225 cu in (3.7 L) versions of Chrysler's Slant Six and 318 cu in (5.2 L) and 340 cu in (5.6 L) LA-series V8s.

At midyear, a Gold Duster trim package was added. The Twister, a new trim level between the Duster and the Duster 340, debuted for 1971. Basically a Duster with more standard features, the Twister featured Rally wheels, racing mirrors, side and lower deck stripes, and a flat black hood with hood scoops, bucket seats, and a unique grille all as standard equipment. The biggest engine available was the 318, and the appearance package was topped off by a little cartoon tornado with eyes logo on the back panel near the taillights. The Duster 340 (but not the base Duster or Twister) also received a new "sharktooth" grille.

The Duster was a success for Plymouth, so much so that in 1971 Dodge requested and received their own version called the Demon. In response, Plymouth was given a version of the Dodge Dart Swinger 2-door hardtop named the Plymouth Scamp.

For 1971, only small changes were made to the Duster. The "Valiant" fender badges and "Plymouth" grille logotype were deleted. A new trim package was released, called the Duster Twister. The Twister package presented the aggressive appearance of the Duster 340, but came only with insurance-friendly Slant Six 6 or 318 V-8 power. The Twister's appearance package included special side stripes that mimicked the Duster 340 Wedge stripes, a matte-black hood and the 340's special shark-tooth grille. A nonfunctional dual hood scoop and rear spoiler appearance package was available, as were high-back bucket seats and dual exhaust.

The Duster was not changed significantly for 1972. New surface-mount sidemarker lights replaced the previous flush-mount items, the taillamps became larger, one-piece units. The 340 V8's power rating was reduced from 275 bhp (205 kW) to 245 hp (183 kW) due in part to a reduction in compression ratio from 10.2:1 to 8.5:1 as well as changing the intake valves from 2.02 in (51 mm) to 1.88 in (48 mm), though all horsepower rating numbers, even on unchanged engines, decreased for 1972 due to a new rating protocol.



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