

February 2022

Alabama LIVING

Dixie Electric
Cooperative

Vintage ride

Alabama couple's mission to promote
and preserve classic muscle cars



Vintage

Alabama couple's mission to promote and preserve



RPMA MOTOR OILS

ride

erve classic muscle cars

CHRYSLER CORPORATION **MOPAR**



This Paint Chip Cuda was replicated exactly like the Hot Rod Magazine of October 1969 introducing the brand new restyled 1970 Cuda, displaying all the available colors.

Story and photos by Scott Baker

Tim Wellborn has been making grand entrances wherever he goes for many years.

In the early 1980s, the Lineville High School building shook and classroom windows rattled every afternoon as he arrived in his 1970 Dodge Charger to pick up his sweetheart, Pam, as classes let out for the day.

Together almost 40 years now, Tim and Pam Wellborn are still making their presence known, and often in that same vintage muscle car that Tim drove when they dated. That Charger R/T was not only a special ride for the young couple, but also represented the beginning of Tim's hobby of restoring old muscle cars, dabbling in occasional restorations and establishing their own muscle car museum in Alexander City.

The turning point into a true commitment occurred with a serendipitous event in the late '90s on a sidewalk in New York City when he happened to meet Bob Lutz, who at the time was president and vice chairman of Chrysler. That chance encounter – over a similar wristwatch, of all things – led to a spontaneous lunch. There, Tim and Bob hatched a plan to display the Wellborns' Dodge K&K car at several major car events throughout Europe. The car was made famous in the 1970 Grand National and the land speed record-breaking events at the Bonneville Salt Flats.

Chrysler provided an original 426 engine for the car. With Tim and Pam serving as emissaries at the events, the car was overwhelmingly popular. This beginning of their muscle car-collecting careers may have been fortuitous, but the Wellborns' rise in the car world was no accident.

Tim's encyclopedic muscle car knowledge and Pam's infectious personality make them a formidable car-collecting team. As perennial favorites at the Mecum Auction, the world's largest collector car auction, they are sought out for their muscle car knowledge and entertaining style.

Likewise, the Wellborn name attached or associated with a particular car automatically affirms the quality and increases the value of the car. Tim and Pam also share their expertise and knowledge as longtime board members of the International Motorsports Hall of Fame at Talladega. While their muscle car-collecting and promotion have made them a household name in the car-collecting

world, their home base is in Alexander City, Alabama, home of their Wellborn Musclegar Museum. Tucked away in a vintage car dealership, the museum is a testament to their commitment and mission to preserving and promoting these high-performance vehicles.

On display, Tim proudly says, is "a rotating collection of more than 85 fully restored and perfectly running muscle cars from model years 1968 to 1971." That collection includes "Aero-Cars designed for NASCAR, Ford Boss Mustangs, GTOs, LS6 Chevelles, W30 Oldsmobiles, Buick GSX, and MOPARS which showcase all of the major manufacturers of muscle machines of that era."

The museum's curator, Alton Freeman, is eager to share interesting stories about the provenance of the cars or in-depth, technical factoids about engines, interiors, and subtle year-to-year chassis modifications. Having been with the museum for several years, he's also quick to entertain with anecdotes and heartfelt stories about the Wellborns' connection to the cars.

The cars alone are enough to warrant a visit; however, the stroll back in time with the added benefit of the curator's stories make it a truly memorable experience. For more information, visit wellbornmusclegarmuseum.com.

Clockwise, from top: 1970 Plymouth Superbird, one of 1,920 built so they could be raced on NASCAR speedways. Its pointed nose and wing allowed the car to surpass the 200 mph mark; visitors check under the hood outside the museum; a 1971 NASCAR Petty Plymouth Road Runner purchased directly from Richard Petty; the Wellborns outside their home with Tim's father's 1971 Hemi Charger.



Wellborn Musclegar Museum

256-329-8474
124 Broad Street
Alexander City, AL, 35010
wellbornmusclegarmuseum.com

Saturday - OPEN 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Sunday and Monday - CLOSED
Tues. - Fri. - Open by appointment only

Admission:

Adults - \$11
Children 7-17 - \$7
Children 6 and under - Free

Private Tours by appointment; \$50 for 1 to 5 people, regular rates apply for each additional person. Large group (10 or more) inquiries welcome; contact the museum for discounted group admission rates. Email wellbornmusclegarmuseum@gmail.com or call 256-329-8474.

