

UNDER construction



VITAMIN C SUPERBIRD

Mike Wolterman had the good fortune to find and purchase an ultra low mileage '70 Superbird long before they became six-figure investment pieces. Back in 1980, while helping his brother-in-law, he was guided to a garage where a Vitamin C Orange Superbird had been sitting since the spring of 1975. The original owner bought this car when he was only fifteen-years-old and took delivery from Kincaid-Wilson

Chrysler/Plymouth in Kentucky on September 9, 1970. He began driving the Bird in February, 1971.

By May of '71, the car nearly met its fatal end. The youthful driver lost control on a wet road and skidded into a tree. The insurance company nearly totaled out the practically new car, but instead, a nearly-new '70 Road Runner was found at a local junkyard and the cars were spliced together to rebuild the Superbird. Primarily, the passenger's side

quarter panel was completely replaced in a rather sloppy manner, orange paint went on again, and the boy continued to drive his 440 powered wing sparingly. Then came an intake manifold change in 1975 that put the car on the bench long-term. The intake and carb were swapped, but the fuel line went astray in the process. Gas was leaking into the valley pan, and as the young man struggled to adjust the carb and get the Plymouth purring again, the gasoline built up until it blew with a mighty flash and the ensuing fire wreaked havoc in the engine bay. The fire ruined the wiring, the carb, the distributor, and a number of other components, but it effectively placed the car out of action. It remained parked until 1980 when Mike found it and persuaded the original owner to sell. When Mike obtained the title, there were only 16,159 original miles on the odometer.

During 1980-1981, Mike per-

formed his initial restoration on the dormant Superbird, rebuilding the engine and doing a number of odds and ends. By the end of 1981, the Superbird was back on the road again. The car was a decent and certainly presentable piece, but as the years progressed, the sloppy bodywork from 1971 started to cause problems, and by 2006, the replaced quarter panel was exhibiting a lot of rust problems and there were other areas of the car which simply looked tired. So, during the summer of '06, the Bird was pulled completely apart, and the funky quarter

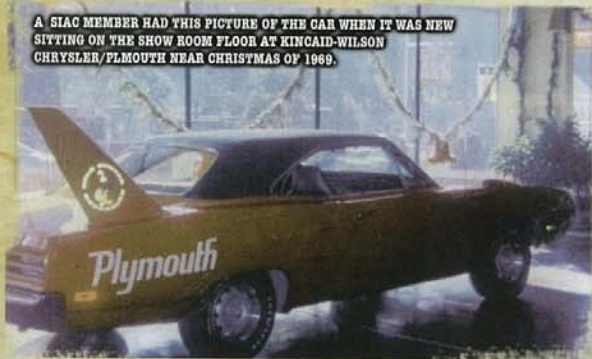


panel was removed. Once the paint came off, Mike discovered the rocket scientists back in '71 had actually brazed this quarter onto the car instead of welding it!

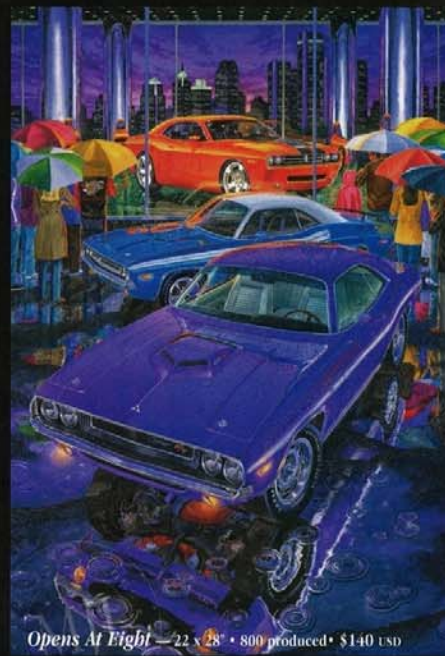
One thing led to three, and before long, the low mileage winged car was in full-on restoration mode. After two-and-a-half-years of work, the Superbird is nearing completion finally and before 2008's over, it should look better than it did when new.

Interestingly, at a SIAC club event, a member told Mike he had a photo of his car sitting on the showroom floor at Kincaid-Wilson Chrysler/Plymouth near Christmas of 1969. This is doubly interesting because Mike worked at the dealership in the late 1970s himself, and that vintage photo of the dealership brought back a lot of memories. Both the guy and the car spent a lot of time in that showroom! ☺

A SIAC MEMBER HAD THIS PICTURE OF THE CAR WHEN IT WAS NEW SITTING ON THE SHOW ROOM FLOOR AT KINCAID-WILSON CHRYSLER/PLYMOUTH NEAR CHRISTMAS OF 1969.



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Watercolor paintings by artist Michael Irvine

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