

Top Ten ^{OF} 2012

Once more we delve into our annual Top 10 lists. When we started doing these, it began as a debate about the cool stuff we'd seen in the previous year. We never expected our readers to take the lists so seriously, but they've become much talked about and we never fail to get a lot of feedback on our picks. So, let's begin this year's controversy with our top ten picks for 2012.

We start our lists of lists with the Top Ten Most Significant Cars of the Year. If you're not familiar with how these vehicles are selected, here's a rough outline of what it takes to make the list. To make the cut, a car doesn't have to be an OEM restoration, or even rare and expensive. To make our top ten list, all a vehicle has to do is impart that Mopars are the coolest cars around and capture our attention and imagination. If it's an influential machine, one that made everyone sit up and take note, that's what we're looking for.

Our biggest problem, as always, is narrowing the field down to only ten vehicles. We could easily print a top thirty-five list. But, when all the whining and bickering's done, we manage to trim the number down to ten.



1. ALLEN JOHNSON'S PRO STOCK AVENGER

Not since the days of the Wayne County Speed Shop and Darrell Alderman has a Mopar product won the national Pro Stock championship, but Allen Johnson put an end to that drought in 2012. Johnson's Pro Stock Avenger became the first Mopar to win the title in Pro Stock since 1997, so that makes his slippery little ride significant, to say the least.



2. 2013 VIPER COUPE PROTOTYPE

Dodge rolled out the long-awaited reincarnation of the Viper in 2012, and while it's technically scheduled to appear as a 2013 model, it made big waves last year. The restyled and upgraded coupe, like its predecessors, will be the ultimate American sports cars when they debut this year and we can't wait to see them on the road.



3. JOHN RIZEK'S 1969 PRE-PRODUCTION CHARGER DAYTONA

John Rizek brought every winged car fanatic to their feet when he brought the famed "Dale Reeker Daytona" out of hibernation. Long attributed as being the personal car of Chrysler exec Dale Reeker, the seldom-seen Daytona turned out to be a whole lot more upon investigation, and quickly turned into being the famed "Playboy Magazine" Daytona as well. Paperwork verifies this was the first street Charger Daytona built and the very last one shipped out!



4. MIKE RICKETTS' 1976 DON CARLTON PRO STOCK ASPEN

Mike Ricketts' struck historic race car gold when he purchased this historic '76 Aspen Pro Stocker, then discovered that it was the last race car built by the legendary Don Carlton of "Motown Missile" fame. Restored back to retro circa 1977 colors, the car is a true time capsule of what Pro Stock looked like in the late seventies.

5. STEVE DARNELL'S '28 DODGE TURBO DIESEL RAT ROD SEDAN

Steve Darnell designed and built perhaps the most unique Dodge street rod in history when he created his diesel '28 Dodge sedan. While he finished the car a couple years back, 2012 marked the car's debut at major Mopar events, and this one rewrote the books on how wild a hot rod can be!



6. STEVE NITTI'S 1972 SLANT SIX DUSTER

Steve Nitti makes this list for taking a basic Slant Six Duster he bought new back in January of '72, then rebuilding it from the ground up and creating what may very well be the most radical Slant Six engine ever constructed. The largely aluminum 225 now knocks down 525 horsepower and propels the mild-looking Duster to ten second quarters!



7. WALTER P. CHRYSLER'S CUSTOM 1937 IMPERIAL TOWN CAR

After being absolutely lost since the late 1950's, the incredible one-off aluminum LeBaron Imperial Town Car that Walter P. Chrysler had custom built for his wife was found literally sitting in the basement of The Vanderbilt Museum. Collector Howard Kroplick purchased the car and is preserving it with minimal restorations, and it made its first show outings in early 2012, much to the surprise of everyone.



8. RAY EVERNHAM'S STREET/NASCAR RETRO 1965 BELVEDERE

Legendary NASCAR race car builder, team owner, and crew chief Ray Evernham entered a new phase of his career by designing and building this incredible '64 Plymouth Belvedere. The car is basically built on a modern NASCAR chassis, but adapted skillfully, so it can live on the streets and be used regularly. Best of all, this amazing machine will be sold for charity at the 2013 Barrett-Jackson sale.



9. GLEN CHIAPPETTI'S '71 PRO TOURING HEMI DUSTER

Glen Chiappetti proved to the Mopar world that it doesn't take a half million bucks or a state-of-the-art specialty shop to have an elite Mopar show car and long distance cruise vehicle. Built on a tight budget with most work done locally, Glen's Duster is just as sharp a big dollar Chip Foote custom and proved beyond debate that anything's possible with patience and elbow grease.



10. ROBIN BATES' 1965 DODGE D100 PICKUP

Robin Bates took a former beater Department of Agriculture workhorse pickup and turned it into one of the slickest haulers we've seen in years. His platinum pickup, powered by a Road Runner 383, was done to the utmost show standards, while retaining the bonus of being a driver as well. By far, this was our favorite pickup of the show season.



We are bombarded with press releases about restoration parts throughout the year. Add to this the huge number of new parts we see introduced at the numerous car shows we attend, and we're faced with an ever growing number of repro parts for the Mopar market. That's a great thing for our hobby, but it makes picking only ten new parts for our Top Ten Repro Parts list a chore.

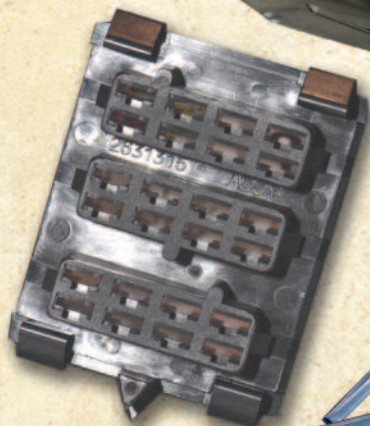
The main consideration for making our Top Ten Repro Parts list are simple. The part needed to fill a void in the parts market, it has to be high quality, and it has to appeal to a broad array of enthusiasts. As with all our lists, it was quite difficult to narrow the field down to ten items, but here are our picks for this year.

TOP TEN REPRO PARTS

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1. KEN HOPPERDIETZEL'S E-BODY CONVERTIBLE QUARTERS

E-body convertible fanatic Ken Hopperdietzel teamed up with Auto Metal Direct to take their new full E-body quarter panels and transform them into assembly-line-style 1970 and 1971 Challenger and Barracuda convertible full quarter panels. This is a major breakthrough for ragtop E-body owners. For more info, contact Ken Hopperdietzel, 715-432-5080.

2. EVANS WIRING REPRO BULKHEAD 1966 TO 1974 WIRING CONNECTOR

Bill and Rose Evans are absolute electrical geniuses, and always have been. Last year, they introduced this amazingly universal bulkhead wiring connector, which is basically the block where all the under hood wiring connects to your car's dash and fuse box. These were used on a host of Mopars from 1966 all the way to 1974, so check with them to see if this is the right box for your car. For more info, contact Evans' Wiring, at 814-864-2622.

3. STEPHENS PERFORMANCE E-BODY WINDSHIELD MOULDING KITS

Stephens Performance made life better for every E-body owner in the world by releasing these brand-new stainless steel windshield moulding trim kits that fit every Challenger and Barracuda built between 1970 and 1974. This multi-piece kit includes every shiny piece of hardware surrounding the windshield, so this is literally one-stop shopping. For more info, contact Stephens Performance, 1-888-466-7276.

4. VAN'S AUTO'S B-BODY TIC-TOC-TACH RALLYE DASH TACHOMETER

One of the more iconic items Chrysler ever developed was the combo clock/tachometer used in their Rallye Dash cars from 1968 through 1974. Van's Auto now offers a completely new unit that's a direct bolt-in replacement for all 1968 through 1970 B-bodies, thus ending a lot of hours looking for, then rebuilding, a scarce original piece. For more info, contact Van's Auto, 920-324-2481.

5. ECS AUTOMOTIVE E-BODY EXHAUST SYSTEMS

ECs Automotive Concepts has long been known for being extremely detail oriented, but they went above-and-beyond last year by reproducing these true OEM quality exact duplicate E-body exhaust systems. Correct down to every code, part number, and logo stamping, these pipes and mufflers have reset the bar for E-body restorations. For more info, contact ECS Automotive Concepts, 855-532-7846.

6. TONY'S PARTS 1970 B-BODY DASH TRIM

Tony D'Agostino continues to develop new parts almost monthly, and in 2012, he came out with a complete side-to-side set of plastic components for the 1970 B-bodies that came with the Rallye instrument cluster. This literally lets you replace everything at one time and have an entirely like-new dash staring back at you. For more info, contact Tony's Parts, 302-398-0821.

7. LEGENDARY INTERIORS B-BODY DASH PADS

Legendary Auto Interiors released these brand-new 1969 and 1970 B-body dash pads, which fill a huge gap in the repro parts market. Since these fit everything from Chargers to Road Runners, they cover a lot of ground. For info, contact Legendary Auto Interiors, 1-800-363-8804.



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8. KRAMER AUTOMOTIVE SPECIALTIES ONE-PIECE B-BODY FLOOR PANS

Jim Kramer scored major points with their incredible (and huge) one-piece 1962 through 1965 interior floor pan, just like the factory used when they were assembling these cars new. The pans come with all the correct holes for plugs, seat belt brackets, and everything else the original examples had when these cars rolled off the line. For more info, contact Kramer Automotive Specialties, 724-285-5566.



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9. REPRODUCTION E-BODY CONVERTIBLE REAR DOOR PANELS

This is perhaps the most universally needed part in the world for Challenger and Barracuda convertibles. Made by Metro Parts of Georgia, these precision molded plastic panels are direct copies of nonexistent originals and are available from several vendors, but since MCB gave us the heads-up on these, we gave them the nod in return. For more info, call MCB Mopar Metal Restoration at 862-200-7533.



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10. RICK'S PARTS SUPERBIRD AND DAYTONA SCISSOR JACK ASSEMBLIES

Winged car fanatic Rick Fairless took it upon himself to reproduce these painfully accurate duplicates of the ultra-rare Charger Daytona and Plymouth Superbird scissor jack assemblies. Used only with those two cars, the new jacks are made in the correct red color for Daytonas and black for Superbirds, and he also has all the correct hold-down pieces and the folding crank handle!



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This is the most difficult of our lists to compile. There are so many specialty parts built for Mopars these days it's amazing. Years ago, we wouldn't have thought this situation very likely, but our cars are hot and manufacturers realize there's a substantial market here. Wheels, performance parts, fat tires; you name it, there's more on the table now than there's ever been. Our top ten picks are pieces that are more specifically aimed at the Mopar market, but believe us, we could easily add another ten or twenty parts. If you're building a custom Mopar, your job has never been easier.

TOP TEN AFTERMARKET PARTS

1. THE R/T GARAGE'S REV-N-NATOR ELECTRONIC REV LIMITER BOX

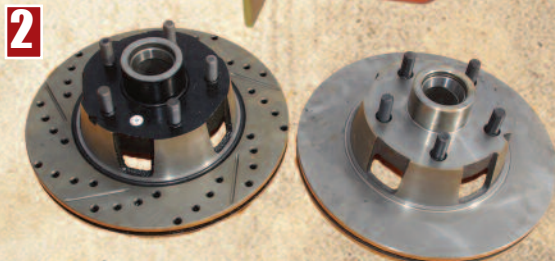
Troy Martinson over at The R/T Garage invented a truly revolutionary new electronic ignition box that replaces stock Chrysler ignition boxes and doubles as a programmable rev limiter. This bolt-on module is probably the best engine safety breakthrough we've seen in ages, and every serious street/strip Mopar needs one of these things. For more info, call The R/T Garage, 612-327-6722.



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2. THE RAM MAN A-BODY 11" DISC BRAKE ROTORS

Wayne Brown at The Ram Man came out with these universally needed 11" disc brake rotors that fit all those thousands of Dusters, Darts, and every other A-body Mopar out there. Available slotted and drilled or plain old smooth surfaces, they have 1/2" studs and will provide unheard of stopping power for smaller Dodges and Plymouths. For more info, contact The Ram Man, 817-429-0105.



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3. IMAGINE INJECTION'S BIG BLOCK NOSTALGIC STACK-TYPE EFI

Bob Ream at Imagine Injection has dedicated his life to reinventing the way the world thinks about fuel injection, and their incredible new 1960's-style stack-type electronic fuel injection units for big block Mopars are nothing short of amazing. This is functional automotive art at its finest! For more info, contact Imagine Injection, 602-377-4093.

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4. ACCURATE EXHAUST FLOW THROUGH E-BODY MUFFLERS

Accurate Exhaust pulled off an incredible piece of shuck-and-jive handiwork in 2012 with these reproduction-looking cylindrical 1970 through 1974 E-body mufflers. While these are stock-looking, they have a rumbling low-restriction flow-through design that will really change the way your Challenger or Barracuda sounds and breathes! For more info, contact Accurate Exhaust Products, 541-672-2661.

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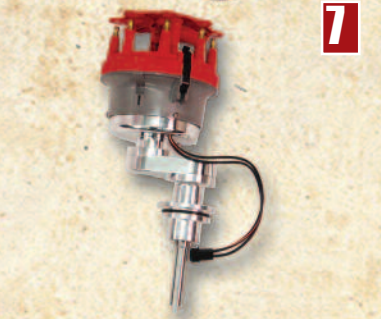
5. STARFIGHTER MOTORSPORTS ALUMINUM SMALL BLOCK HEADS

Starfighter Motorsports out in California came through with a major breakthrough for small block owners with these high-flow aluminum heads designed to fit on stock blocks with stock intake manifolds and stock exhaust manifolds. These are literally direct replacements for the factory iron heads and are dyno proven to produce over 400 horses on 360 motors with only minor modifications. For more info, contact Starfighter Motorsports, 909-657-8382.

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6. SCHUMACHER CREATIVE SERVICES SMALL BLOCK TRI-Y HEADERS

Schumacher Creative came out with perhaps the most innovative and handy pair of small block headers ever created last year. Their new Tri-Y small block headers are a true "tri-y" design for incredible flow characteristics and they're designed to work with almost every Dodge and Plymouth you can think of. These gorgeous tubes really changed the way small block Mopars breathe. For more info, contact Schumacher Creative Services, 206-364-7151.

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7. INDY CYLINDER HEAD OFFSET SMALL BLOCK BLOWER DISTRIBUTOR

Indy Cylinder Heads is known for being some of the biggest innovators in the performance world, but they came out with something in 2012 that is heaven sent for small block owners - offset distributors for supercharged motors. Heretofore, putting a distributor on a blown 340 or 360 required a lot of engineering, but these drop-in units have made this downright easy and changed the game forever. For info, contact Indy Cylinder Heads, 317-862-3724.

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8. YEAR ONE CAST ALUMINUM 17" RALLYE WHEELS

Year One has taken the iconic Dodge and Plymouth Rallye wheel and brought it into the new millennium. Last year they released these state-of-the-art aluminum 17x8" and 17x9" Rallye-style wheels with the standard Chrysler 4.5" bolt pattern. If you want to change your old Mopar's personality, you'll be amazed at what a difference these silver rollers make. For more info, contact Year One, Inc, 1-800-932-7663.

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9. PST FAST RATIO PITMAN ARMS

PST came out with these state-of-the-art Pitman and idler arm combination kits that are similar to what was used on AAR 'Cudas and T/A Challengers, but these are seriously engineered to make your old Mopar turn faster than you ever imagined. Most old Mopars have a steering ratio of 16:1, but by installing this kit, you drop that down to 12:1 instantly! That makes for extremely quick steering response and handling that you've never dreamed possible. For more info, contact PST, 1-800-247-2288.

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10. AMERICAN POWERTRAIN SYSTEMS BIG BLOCK BELL HOUSINGS

American Powertrain introduced this virtually bulletproof CNC machined titanium laden aluminum alloy bell housings in 2012, resulting in some of the toughest units ever made. These are designed to work with all B, RB, and 426 Hemi engines, so this is a superb way to shield serious performance clutches. For more info, contact American Powertrain Systems, 931-646-4836.

