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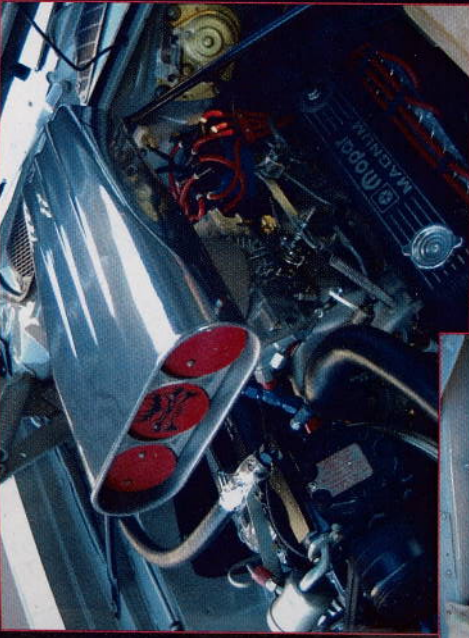
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satisfy Herr Griesser. While it was hands down the most unusual vehicle sitting in the parking lot at the time

Mercedes think tank, he wanted more. The 360 came out and was given the full boogie German engineering treatment. What you're looking at now is a 403" stroker motor with H-beam rods, forged Diamond pistons, a 10.5:1 compression ratio, a high volume oil pump, Clevis bearings, a Milodon windage tray, ARP rod and main bolts, a true roller timing chain with tensioner, reworked heads with 1.635 exhaust valves, a custom ground

## HERB McCANDLESS'S OLD SCHOOL IMPERIALISM



Herb McCandless is more often associated with killer drag machines from the golden years of Dodge and Plymouth's domination on the nation's drag strips. Whether he was turning a wrench or slamming a Mopar through the gears, Herb was behind the wheel of a 1962

(and still is) feared by Ford and GM guys alike. Hailing from Burlington, North Carolina, Herb's been making Mopars go fast in a straight line for the better part of the last forty years. So, it was with some surprise when we encountered the legendary racer and engine builder on the Power Tour behind the wheel of a 1962

Competition Cams hydraulic stick, an FBO ignition system, a custom reworked aluminum intake, and a Holley Avenger carb.

The motor has been in this guise since the winter of 2004, and while Frank's never had it on a dyno, it makes some serious power. We've seen this one in action and it flat out moves! He also installed a new Gear Vendors overdrive unit, which makes the Plymouth perfectly at ease either with stoplight shootouts or long distance highway trips.

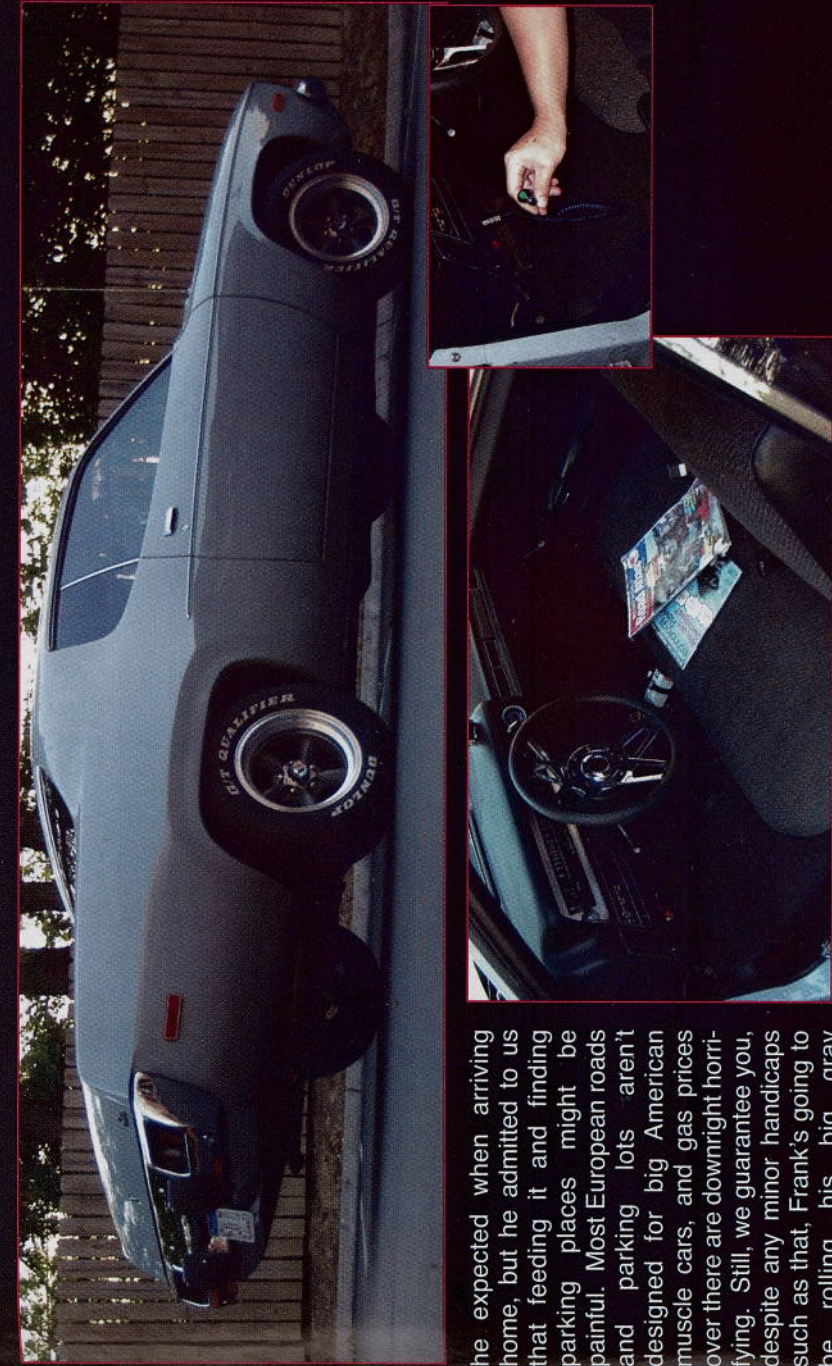
As radical as Frank's Plymouth seemingly is, no kidding, this is a daily driver. Since the spring of 2003, the car has rolled up over 35,000 miles. Frank ran the entire Power Tour with the Plymouth, seldom letting the needle dip below three digits when traffic flow would allow, and the car made the whole trek without a hint of trouble. Perhaps more impressive, Frank also drove the gray Satellite out to the Las Vegas show in 2005 (from Alabama mind

you), crossed the deserts and all, won his class (beating a number of trailered cars), then drove it all the way home without incident. Frank doesn't own a trailer, he's never put the car on a trailer, and it's never broken down on a single one of its numerous long road trips. We told you, this one is over-engineered!

Our story has a bit of an unusual ending. Shortly after the Power Tour, Frank was transferred back home to Germany after his years in Alabama. He wasn't about to leave his Plymouth behind though, so the big gray beast is now running wild and free on the autobahn and scaring the hell out of untold numbers of BMW owners. As scary as it would be over here to see this evil snout moving up on you in your rearview mirror here, can you imagine what the average innocent little German family is going to think seeing this thing blow past? When we last spoke with Frank, he was actually looking forward to the surprised faces

was there and the body was solid as a tank. After some quickie maintenance, Herb actually drove the car home all the way from Cali to North Carolina, and that was after the luxury yacht had been sitting up for quite some time.

Wanting to make this one his fun cruiser, Herb and the boys tore into the car immediately and did just about everything in his shop in Burlington. The original 413 was pulled in favor of a very stout 440. The 440 currently under the hood features iron 452 casting heads with hardened valve seats, stainless steel valves, a mild cam, the whole thing's been balanced and blueprinted, there's an electronic ignition system, and while it rumbles with notable authority, it idles



he expected when arriving home, but he admitted to us that feeding it and finding parking places might be painful. Most European roads and parking lots aren't designed for big American muscle cars, and gas prices over there are downright horrifying. Still, we guarantee you, despite any minor handicaps such as that, Frank's going to be rolling his big gray Tuscaloosa moosa all over Europe. ✱

as well as a new Accura. Since this one didn't come with air, Herb installed a Vintage Auto Air system to keep things cool. The original push button TorqueFlite transmission was gone through and reinstalled, performing just as well today as it did back in 1962. The remainder of the big C-body's mechanical systems was rebuilt to "as new" condition.

Creature comforts on Herb's four door ride abound. Interestingly, some of the more complicated systems on the car haven't been touched and they still work flawlessly. The innovative "Auto Pilot" system works perfectly and all Herb did was remove it, clean it, and reinstall it! The electric windows still worked, but Herb installed some later model high torque power window motors so the windows raise and lower much more quickly these days - even the vent windows are power operated in this big rascal.

Restoring the interi-

or to its former glory became one of the more challenging and expensive undertakings. Anyone who's ever had the privilege of sliding behind the wheel of a '62 Imperial can testify that sitting behind that rectangular wheel, you feel like you're about to pilot Sputnik or something like that. The '61 and '62 Imperials are famous for their radical luminescent instrument panels. Due to the expansive windshields, these panels often do not fare well with the passing of time. Thankfully, the guys at J.C. Auto Restorations in the Pacific Northwest reconditioned the instrument cluster and sent it back to Herb looking fantastic and fully functional again.

The Imperial was finished up eighteen months ago. Since that time, Herb's been literally driving the wheels off this thing. As of this writing, Herb had put around 25,000 miles on the odometer, all without incident. Restoring a muscle car Mopar is kid stuff compared

to restoring a '62 Imperial. Thus, when you see one of these on the road rest assured you're in the presence of somebody who has gone above and beyond the call of duty.

We watched Herb all along the way on the Power Tour, and the big 440 powered Imperial did an outstanding job of keeping up with the scores of street machines (it was capable of

spanking most of them in fact) and it wasn't uncommon to see this thing zoom past with the a/c obviously blowing the hair around inside the cockpit. There were a lot of cool rides on the Power Tour, but few participants rode as comfortably as Herb McCandless and his crew.

Way to go Herb, we can't wait to see what you come up with next. ✱



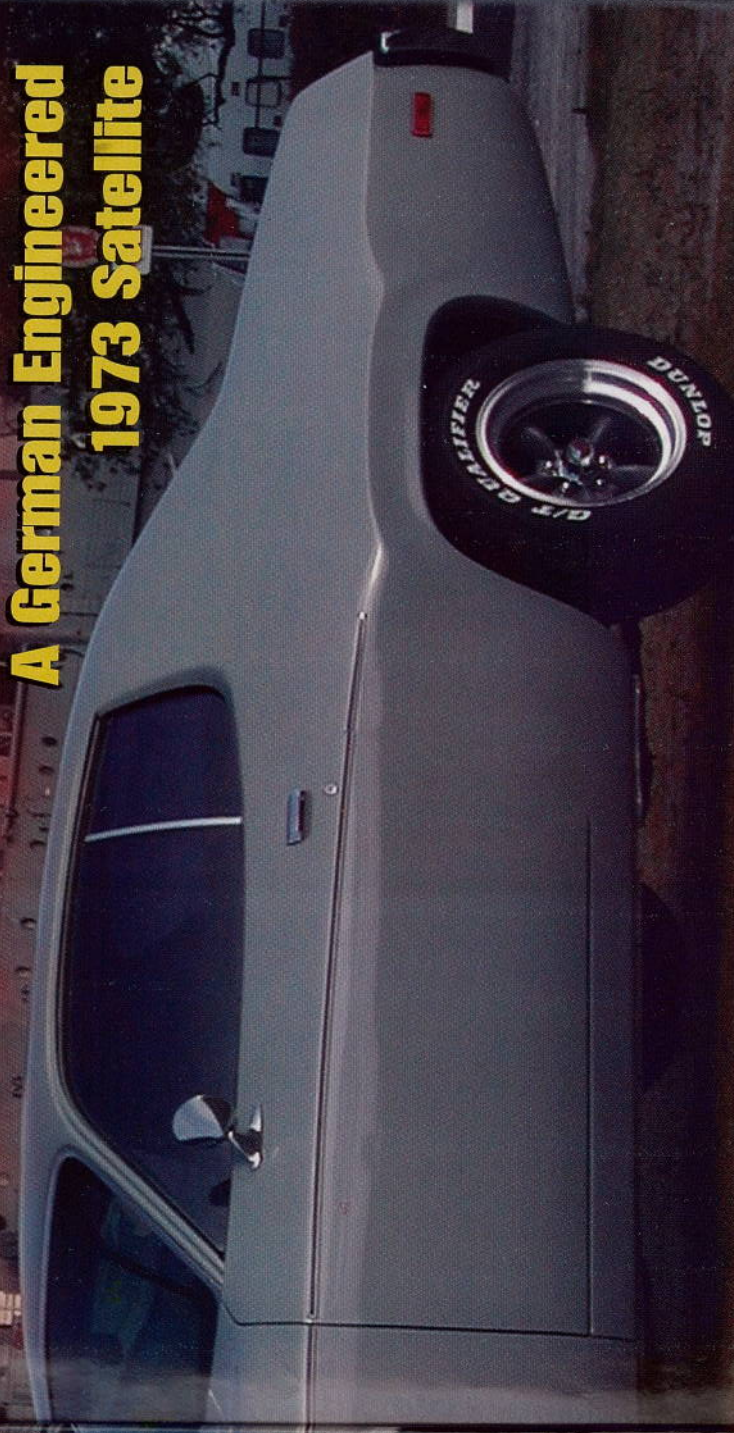
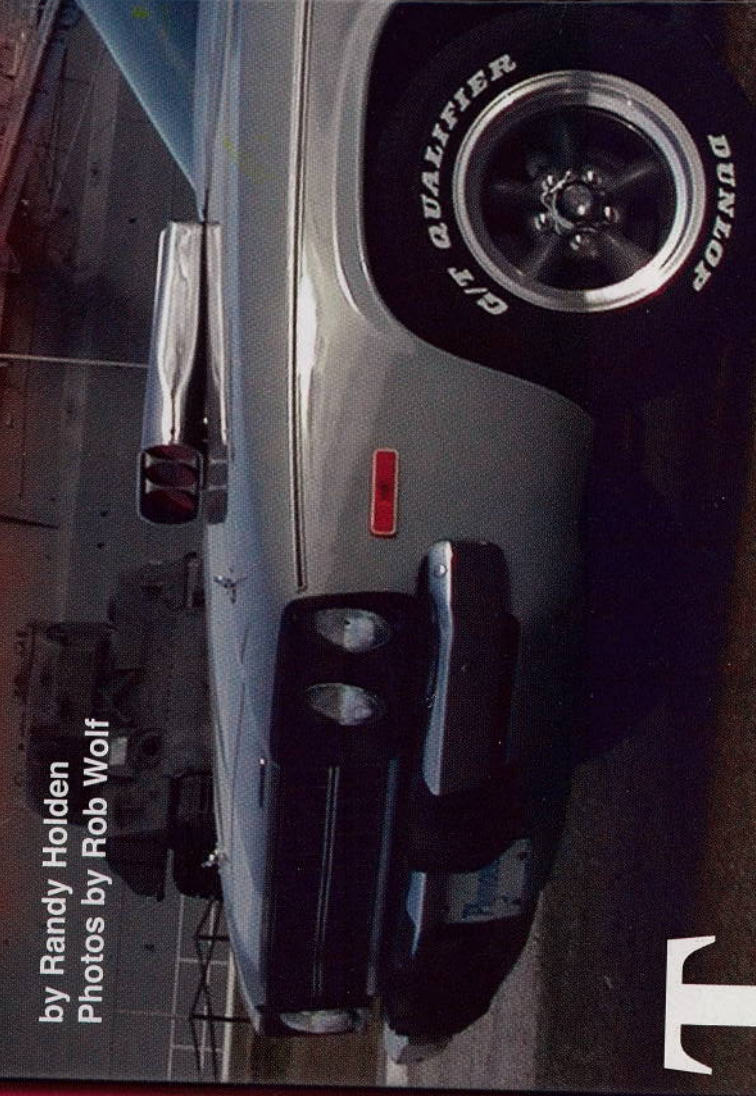
What else would you expect from Herb McCandless? His Imperial is a wolf in mink clothing! Outside and in, the car's pure 1962 luxury. Under the hood, this one's strictly business with a 440 pushing out something in the neighborhood of 400 horses. Of course, since this is a daily driver luxury machine, the Vintage Auto Air system keeps Herb cool while he's moving along the interstate.



# DIFFERENT ROUTES TO A POWER TOUR RIDE!

# SEMPANZERSCHIFF

by Randy Holden  
Photos by Rob Wolf



**A German Engineered  
1973 Satellite**

There are a lot of different approaches to how someone builds a Hot Rod Power Tour car. If there's one thing we learned from the Power Tour, it's that the imagination of good old American automotive enthusiasts is alive and well. Of course, another thing we learned is that one need not be American to have a helluva' imagination as far as hot Mopars are concerned. We'd like to introduce you to Frank Griesser, a Mercedes-Benz engineer from southeast Germany who's been in the 'States for the last nine years, working at their huge Alabama assembly plant.

Frank arrived here with no particular interest in American cars, let alone Mopars, but then came the

fateful afternoon in Tuscaloosa, Alabama when he saw a plain vanilla '73 Satellite sitting beside the road for sale. Needing a putt around car, he liked the looks of the big chunky Plymouth, the price was right, so he bought the stone stock 318 car with no intention of doing anything but driving it back and forth to work. Yes, he had an executive Mercedes, but believe-it-or-don't, the boy wanted something different to drive. After all, he works to design sheet metal for the things all day long, the last thing he wanted to see after hours was another Benz in the driveway.

After a couple of years, Frank decided it was time to spruce up his basic B-body. This proves that the snowball effect so common

to Mopar enthusiasts is truly international in its scope. Frank had planned nothing more than a simple engine rebuild, maybe a few interior and comfort upgrades, and a few minor modifications to make the Satellite safer and easier to drive. As you can see, those basic plans went straight out the window as one part made every part around it look shabby. By the early summer of 2002, Frank found himself in the midst of a complete ground-up rebuild. We'd never dare call this a restoration, this is a Plymouth that was first and foremost built to drive. Since it was built by a Mercedes-Benz engineer, as you might expect, this may be the most precisely assembled and overbuilt '73 Satellite the planet's ever seen.

Initially, Frank was

content to install a 360 Magnum Mopar Performance crate motor in the Plymouth. With the power rating turned up, he concentrated on the car's other areas. The original 8-1/4" rear was pitched in favor of an 8-3/4" unit with 3.55 Sure Grip gears. Ahead of that is a 727 TorqueFlite blueprinted and built to Hemi specs with an 11" Street Hemi converter and a B&M flex plate. A Hurst shifter with line lock controls the hydraulics. Naturally, this precise shifting wonder has a transmission cooler to keep the red fluid at a reasonable temperature.

Frank kept the factory air conditioning, but converted it over to an R134A system. He installed a tach, oil pressure gauge,

and a fuel ratio gauge, all worked into the original instrument cluster. The sill plates are custom made, the package tray is custom made, the glove box liner was custom fabricated and enlarged, and a new trunk fire wall was constructed.

The most incredible thing about the Plymouth's cockpit goes back to Frank's penchant for over engineering things. Wanting his thirty-year-old Mopar to act and sound like a modern car, he installed a custom-made noise reduction system which would be more at home on a Mercedes. Under the rugs you'll find aluminum backed rubberized Bitumen. More of that resides throughout the cockpit, with 3M Thinsulate noise dampening material packed in behind

the door trim panels and inside the quarters on either side of the rear seat. This thing is astoundingly quiet inside.

With such a comfortable driver, the suspension had to be up to par as well. There are now front and rear sway bars, polyurethane bushings nose to tail, heavier torsion bars, a Firm Feel Stage III steering box and front disc brakes were added. This baby may be a two-ton Plymouth, but it handles like



a late model sports sedan and has a whole lot more personality. As Frank's taste for American hot rods developed, he liked the looks of basic primer gray vehicles and thought of leaving the Plymouth in a flat painted gray to replicate that look, but finally decided to apply a November Gray PPG base coat/clear coat overall paint scheme.

As you would expect by now, that initial make over didn't completely

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