



THE AUSTRALIAN



# RAMBLER REUNION

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AMC RAMBLER CLUB OF AUSTRALIA INC.

February 2019



1970 HORNET  
OWNER: SIMON  
MACINTYRE-CATHLES

1971 HORNET  
OWNER: GEOFF FOWLER



Publicity photo for AMI Rambler Hornet interior



Note the deep padded seat trim used on AMI Hornets

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# RAMBLER REUNION

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AMC RAMBLER CLUB OF  
AUSTRALIA, INC.

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### Our club exchanges newsletters and/or information with the following:

Alamo AMC, San Antonio, Texas  
[www.alamoamc.com](http://www.alamoamc.com)

AMC Club of Houston [www.AMCofHouston.com](http://www.AMCofHouston.com)

AMC Rambler Club, North Grosvenordale, Connecticut <http://www.AMCRC.com>

AMO <http://www.amonational.com>

### AMC RELATED WEB SITES

Javelin & AMX: [www.javelinamx.com](http://www.javelinamx.com)

AMO National: [www.amonational.com](http://www.amonational.com)

The Coupe Coop: [www.matadorcoupe.com](http://www.matadorcoupe.com)

AMC Rambler Club: [www.AMCRC.com](http://www.AMCRC.com)

Australian Javelins <http://www.australianjavelins.com>

### AMC RELATED CHAT ROOMS

AMC Forum - Aussie section:  
[http://theamcforum.com/forum/general-amc-chat-australian-edition\\_forum34.html](http://theamcforum.com/forum/general-amc-chat-australian-edition_forum34.html)

## Editor's Notes: February 2019

Thank you to Darryl A. Salisbury and Wayne Williams, who contributed items of interest for inclusion in our February 2019 newsletter. They are some nicely written articles which we feel certain will be of interest to our members.

While technical articles are of general interest, the personal stories stand out. For those of you who would like to see your own Rambler featured in our newsletter, then all you need do is to write some details together with a few photos and forward it via email. We will then put the article together into a format suitable for publication.

As the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1970 AMC / Rambler Hornet approaches, we were asked to compile detailed information, especially on our locally assembled right hand drive Hornets. In this issue of our newsletter we have included many pages featuring the Rambler Hornet.

On the last page of the newsletter we show some upcoming events. During March there are three consecutive events: Chryslers by the Bay at Geelong on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> March, Chryslers on the Murray at Wodonga on 15<sup>th</sup> through 17<sup>th</sup> March, and the American Motoring at Berwick on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March. It will be a busy three weeks for those who are able to attend these events.

We certainly hope that you enjoy reading through this issue of our newsletter and look forward to catching up with members, in person, by phone, and via email during 2019.

Best regards to our members and their families throughout Australia and overseas.

*Colin Main*

## AMC Rambler Club of Australia: Update, Report, & Review

In our mid-year report back in 2018 we asked for feedback on a number of topics, as a guide to the future of our club. Thank you to those who took the time to respond.

### Website Update

Thank you to Brad Busque at the AMC Rambler Club in the United States who recently updated our web site. The site now includes recent shows, members' cars, photos, a sample newsletter, a membership form, plus a link to AMC Rambler Club in the United States. The link to our Website is <http://australian.amcrc.com/>

### Membership Renewals

For many years we have mailed out membership renewal notices. The information that you provide on these notices keeps us up to date with any changes to address, phone, email, and AMC Rambler vehicle details. During recent years, more members are renewing via direct payment to our club account with Westpac Bank. It would be helpful when making direct payments to include your name or member number as a reference, as we sometimes have difficulty in recognising payments without a reference note. Based on response from members we will look to have a common renewal date, likely to commence in 2020.

### Social Media

Some members are familiar with social media sites and use it with family and friends as a way of keeping in contact, sharing photos, etc. You may have noticed that there are social media sites for car clubs which are open to the public or closed for members only. A closed group has some advantages. We need feedback from members on this subject, as we plan to review how our club communicates with members via social media.

### Rambler Hornet Register

Wayne Williams has been compiling a register of Rambler Hornet vehicles. The information shown on his lists are of a general nature, not showing your name or address details. Photo information of compliance plates, door plates, serial numbers, paint decals, registration labels, as well as information from original owner's manuals is the key to getting a better understanding of the Rambler Hornets remaining. If you would like to help out with information on your Rambler Hornet, please contact Wayne Williams at [thevalman@hotmail.com](mailto:thevalman@hotmail.com)

### Archive of Australian Rambler Documents

We have stored at home many pages of Australian Motor Industries (AMI) documents. There are service bulletins, internal memorandums, price lists, dealer updates, production schedules, production notes, warranty claims, etc. Over the years we have used many of these items in our newsletters, plus helped other clubs and registers with information for a particular model series, such as Hornet, Javelin, etc. These documents have been sent to the State Library of Victoria. They will sort them into categories, and then decide what is appropriate to convert to electronic (PDF) format. It's likely that some of these pages will then be made available via their website online database.

### Strength in Numbers

During the past twelve months there has been some ongoing discussion about how best we can help our own club members, plus members of other local clubs with a common interest in AMC Rambler vehicles. It's true that there is strength in numbers, but more to the point we need to have open and frank discussion as we move forward. Based on response from members, Rambler Car Club of Australia will join with AMC Rambler Club of Australia. Initially we should see an increase in our overall membership. There is some work to be done, but it will take place during 2019. When club officers are appointed, we will report the revised list in our newsletter.

### Local Meetings in Melbourne

Over 50 percent of our members reside in Victoria, many within the Melbourne metropolitan area. Listed below are details for our monthly meetings, February thru May 2019. For those who are able to attend, we think you will enjoy the discussion, exchange of information, and ideas to help one another. The location is Deepdene Hall, located behind the tennis courts at 118 Whitehorse Road, Deepdene, Vic 3103. Melway Map 46 Ref A8. Meetings commence at 8:00 pm on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> February, Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March, Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April, and Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May. The meetings will conclude at around 9.30 pm, followed by light refreshment. An email reminder will be sent out to local members prior to the meetings.

### Association of Motoring Clubs

We have been a member of the Association of Motoring Clubs since the 1980s. The AOMC continues to support their member clubs wherever possible, including the Victorian Club Permit (Historic Registration), plus organising events for motoring enthusiasts throughout the calendar year. Their quarterly newsletter has some interesting feature articles which, with their permission, we distribute to our own members throughout Australia. Thanks also to Kevin and Barb Sadler who have been attending the AOMC quarterly meetings on behalf of our members.

## Chryslers at Caribbean Gardens: October 2018

Twenty AMC Ramblers attended the annual Chryslers at Caribbean Gardens display in late October 2018. This year the weather was kind with a nice sunny day. Amongst our display were five Hornets and three Matador X coupes. We had a real nice time getting to know some new Rambler owners and having a close look at the three hundred or so Chrysler family cars on display throughout the day. Shown below are some of the AMC Ramblers on display.



1964 Ambassador sedan



1964 Classic sedan



1964 Classic hardtop



1965 Classic hardtop



1968 Javelin



1969 AMX



1970 AMX



1970 Javelin



1971 Javelin



1970 Hornet sedan



1971 Hornet sedan



1971 Hornet sedan



1972 Hornet sedan



1974 Hornet sedan



1973 Matador Hearse



1974 Matador X coupe



1974 Matador X coupe



1974 Matador X coupe

## Hot Rods at Castlemaine: November 2018

In late November 2018 we were invited by Rod and Carol Hadfield to view their large collection of Hot Rods at Chewton, near Castlemaine. On display were over twenty cars, which has taken over sixty years to collect, modify, and build.

Hard to pick out any particular car as being the top selection, but the Warman Roadster with the Rolls Royce 27 litre V-12 engine was certainly spectacular to look at. So far, it's taken over five years to construct, with some work still needed to complete.

Both Rod and Carol Hadfield were generous with their time. Rod spent quite a while answering questions on various aspects of the many Hot Rods that he's constructed over the past sixty years.

We had sixteen members attending, though some chose to drive modern cars. For many it was a 300 kilometre round trip. Of the six Ramblers, the 1963 Ambassador owned by Peter and Jan Bortolotto looked great with its original paint and trim. Hard to find these early '60s Ramblers in such nice condition.

Those who were able to attend had a great time. We may look at visiting this location again in the next year or so, as it takes more than just a few hours to appreciate the fine collection of vehicles on display.

		
Warman Roadster	V-12 Rolls Royce 27 Liter Engine	Fiat Fire Chief Hot Rod
		
Over 20 Hot Rods on display	Rear end view of Hot Rods	Side view of Hot Rods
		
1963 Ambassador sedan	1964 Ambassador sedan	1964 Classic hardtop
		
1967 Marlin	1974 Hornet sedan	1974 Matador sedan

## The AMC / Rambler Hornet

The Hornet was the replacement for the Rambler American, which sold quite well in Australia. The 1967 Rambler American was the final series assembled here, so there was a gap of 2+ years before the Hornet was introduced to the Australian market.

Our Australian assembled Rambler Hornets received a number of parts sourced from local suppliers, which kept a level of Australian content. These parts include brake master cylinder, alternator, regulator, starter motor, battery, tyres, heater, radio, carpet, upholstery...and the list goes on.

Typical of the early 1970s, interior plastic items used were flimsy and did not stand up well over the years. Twisted dashboards are commonplace on Hornets, and quite expensive to either repair or reproduce.

Australian assembled Hornets received the 232 and 258 cubic-inch six cylinder engines, coupled to a Borg Warner automatic transmission with a floor console shifter. In the USA, commencing in 1972, the Torqueflite automatic transmission replaced the Borg Warner unit; however in Australia, AMI continued to use the Borg Warner unit in the Rambler Hornet, only changing to the Torqueflite unit for the final series Hornets, the H59 series assembled in 1975.

I have only personally seen one AMI assembled Hornet with an AMC 304 cubic inch V-8 engine. There were some Hornet V-8 conversions done by Ben Ludlow in Perth, and of course there were many Hornets converted to V-8s, by using local Ford, Chev, Holden, and Chrysler components.

As some exterior components interchange between the 1970 to 1973 Hornets, its commonplace to see the grille and tail-lights changed, perhaps by a previous owner who either preferred the look of the later grille and tail-lights, or had difficulty in locating the factory correct components. In any case it's a personal choice.

Thank you to those who have provided information, which combined with recognised sources, hopefully makes for interesting reading over the following twenty or so pages on the AMC Rambler Hornet.

### Origins of the Hornet name

The Hornet name plate goes back to the mid-1950s. The name originated from the merger of the Hudson Motor Company and the Nash-Kelvinator Corporation in 1954. Hudson introduced the first Hudson Hornet in 1951. The automaker formed a stock car racing team centred on the car, and the "Fabulous Hudson Hornet" soon became famous for its wins and stock-car title sweeps between 1951 and 1954. American Motors, the resulting corporation formed by the merger of Nash Motors and Hudson, continued to produce Nash-based Hornets, which were sold under the Hudson marque from 1955 to 1957. The automaker retained rights to the name while it was dormant from 1958 to 1969. The rights to the "Hornet" nameplate then passed to Chrysler with that company's acquisition of AMC in 1987.

### History



The Hornet's styling was based on the AMC Cavalier and Vixen show cars. The Hornet, as well as the Ford Maverick, was considered a response by the domestic automakers to battle with the imports. In 1965, American Motors built a concept car named the AMC Cavalier. It was one of three prototypes created by AMC to demonstrate the future direction of their model line. In 1966, the Cavalier went on the auto show circuit tour. It was joined by three other cars that were collectively known as "Project IV." The other cars in the group were the AMX prototype, the Vixen, and the AMX II.



The design of the four-door Cavalier was courtesy of Richard A. Teague. It was given interchangeable body panels (for example, the fenders were identical at the front and rear and could be interchanged). The fenders, bumpers, doors, hood, and deck lid were also interchangeable. The use of interchangeable materials was an effort to reduce the cost of production.

Development of the new model took AMC three years, a million man-hours, and US \$40 million. The Hornet was an all-new design sharing no major body components, but utilizing some of the Rambler American's chassis and drive train. An all-new front suspension with anti-brake dive was developed for AMC's large-sized "senior" 1970 models, and instead of developing lighter components for the new compact-size platform, the same parts were incorporated into the Hornet.

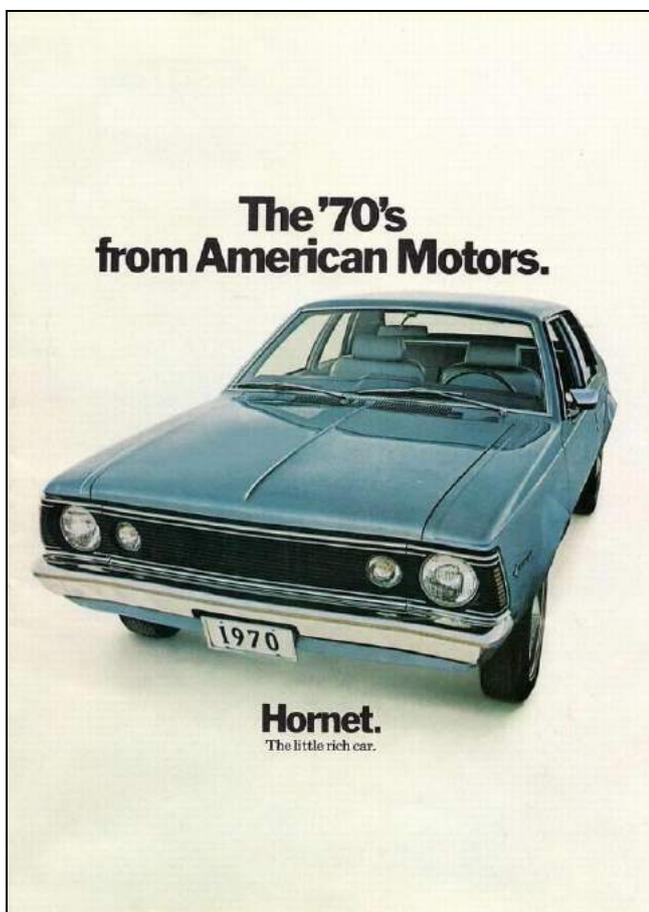
## The AMC / Rambler Hornet

Introduced in 1969 for the 1970 model year, the Hornet was the first car in a line of new models that AMC would introduce over the following three years, and it set the tone for what designer VP Richard A. Teague and chief executive officer Roy D. Chapin, Jr., had in mind for the company for the 1970s. The Hornet marked the return of AMC to its original role as a “niche” marketer specializing in small cars. It also became one of AMC’s best sellers.

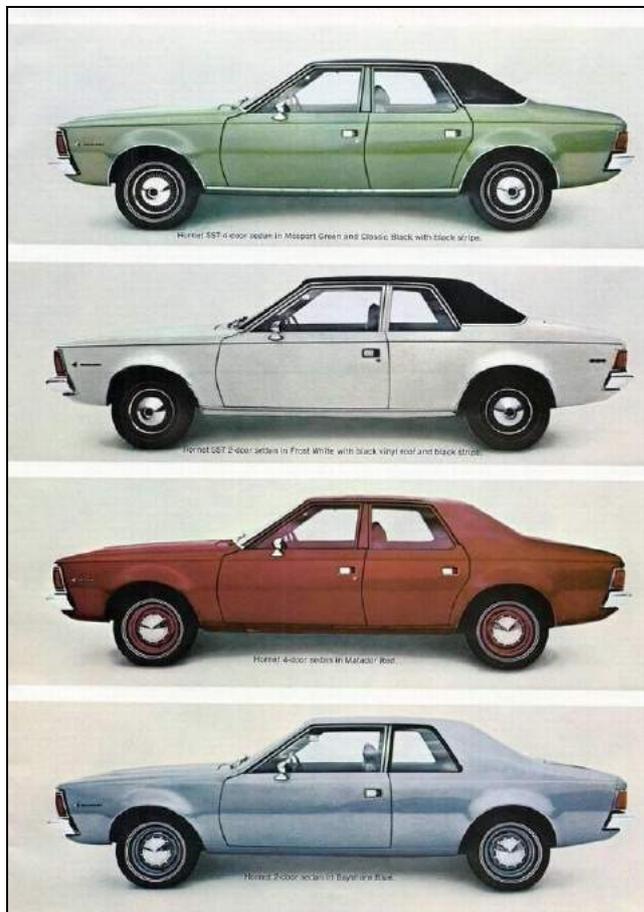
With its manufacturer’s suggested retail price of US \$1,994 for the base model, the Hornet was an economical small family car. However, it took design cues from the popular Ford Mustang and Chevrolet Camaro, and the company’s own Javelin. The Hornet’s 108-inch (2,743-mm) wheelbase platform (two inches longer than its predecessor, the Rambler American) evolved into a number of other models (including the four-wheel-drive Eagle) and was produced through the 1988 model year. The Hornet was initially available in a choice of two thrifty straight-six engines or a 304 cu. in. (5.0 litre) V8.

The Hornet was offered as a two-door and a four-door notchback sedan in its introductory year. The hardtop (no “B” pillar) coupe body style was not continued from the 1969 Rambler American. A four door station wagon variant named the “Sportabout” was added to the 1971 line up. Also, for 1971, the SC/360 was added. This was a 360 cu. in. (5.9 litre) V8 powered compact muscle car that was available only as a two-door sedan. For 1973, a semi-fastback hatch back with fold down rear seats was added to the line up.

AMC used the Hornet as the basis for its AMC Gremlin, which consisted of the front half of the two-door Hornet’s body and a truncated rear section with a window hatchback. Some of the following pictures are from brochures from the US. These will have features that didn’t appear or perhaps were different slightly to our AMI built cars.



1970. Black grille with painted upper and lower bars, clear indicator lenses. There’s also the six or twelve segment grille to note. See later text.



Four models available: 4 door sedan and 2 door sedan with SST trim, and the same in ‘basic’ model. Optional 304 V8 on SST.

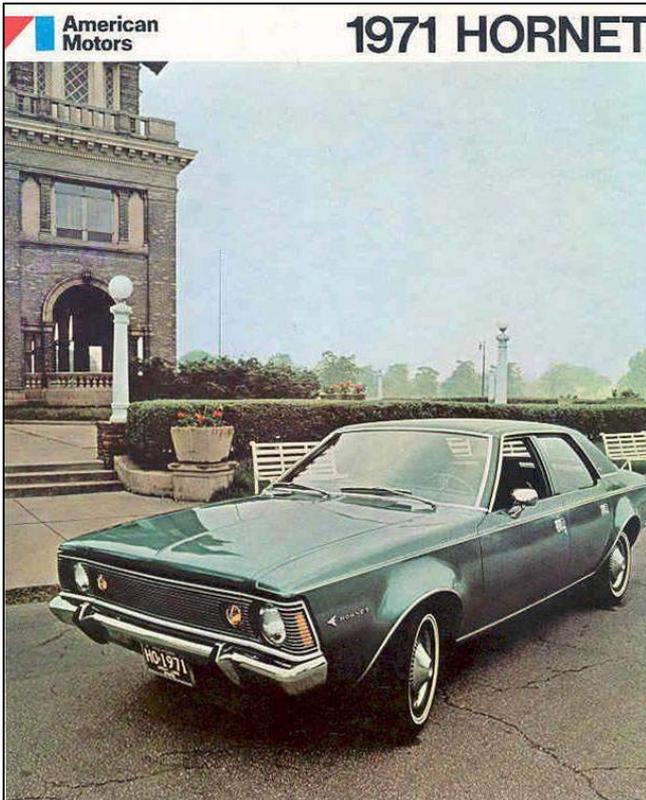
There’s also the old question of what does “SST” stand for? This has never been satisfactorily explained. Maybe Stainless Steel Trim, Super Sonic Transport, Special Safety Trim, or more commonly known in the USA as Super Sport Touring. And the road tests from the day didn’t help in answering either, shown at right.

*Super Sonic Transport or Special Safety Trim: take your pick. SST badge goes with top-of-the-line luxury model in US.*

WHEELS, June, 1971 69

# The AMC / Rambler Hornet

1971



**Introducing a sensible alternative to the money-squeezing, insurance-strangling muscle cars of America. The Hornet SC/360.**

The Hornet SC/360 lists for only \$2,663. Which is surprising when you consider what the September issue of Motor Trend had to say about it: The SC/360 is just a plain gas to drive. It has lightning quick performance... It handles like a dream, especially on the Trans-Am road course at Michigan International Speedway where we had an opportunity to test it. A 360 CID V-8 engine with 245 horsepower is standard. So is a 3-on-the-floor, all synchromesh transmission. A heavy-duty clutch. D70 x 14 Polyglas™ tires. 14 x 6 mag style wheels. Space saver spare. Rally stripe. And individual reclining seats. To make it even gutsier, the SC/360 also comes with a long list of options. Among which you'll find a 4-barrel 360 V-8 that develops 265 horsepower. An all synchro-4-on-the-floor with Hurst shifter. Ram air induction with hood scoop. 3.54 or 3.91 rear axle with Twin-Grip. Dual exhausts. White letter tires. Heavy-duty suspension. And a big tach. But even with the added cost of these options, the SC/360 ends up with a lower list price than most of its bigger, muscle-bound competitors. And because of its standard 12.5:1 weight-to-power ratio, insurance on the SC/360 ends up lower, too. As a leading car magazine has said, "The day of the heavy 400-cube, 400-horsepower supercar may be just about over." Manufacturer's suggested retail price. Federal taxes included. State and local taxes, if any, destination charges excluded.

**If you had to compete with GM, Ford and Chrysler what would you do? American Motors**

From what we see here, the '71 has each bar on the grille painted silver, which extends around to the headlamp doors & side indicators. And the indicator lenses are orange with the three chrome spokes.

One of the most desirable factory Hornets is the 1971 SC/360. American Motors originally planned to build as many as 10,000 of the cars, but high insurance premiums halted the SC/360 after a single year's production of just 667 examples.



Seven models available this year:

- 4 door Sportabout
- 4 door Sportabout D/L
- 2 door base sedan
- 4 door base sedan
- 2 door SST sedan
- 4 door SST sedan
- 2 door sedan SC/360

First year offered, the Hornet Sportabout station wagon. It was a good seller in the USA.



Here's the back end of an SC/360. This was the only one where the centre panel was red; on the SSTs it was plain aluminium. The taillight lenses are the same for all 1970 and 1971 models but with one change. The early 1970s had the centre strip in chrome. Then later in the year it changed to a painted strip, which was then continued on for all of 1971. The trunk mounted luggage rack was an option for this year.

# The AMC / Rambler Hornet

1972



There doesn't appear to be much frontal difference between this and the 1971 model, but the grilles are now plastic and the head lamp surrounds have different part numbers. The grille indicator lens is the same amber item from 1971.

The new style taillight lens for 1972. According to the parts book, this one appeared for 1972 only, and is distinguished by the seven white painted ribs on the side.

All models were named "SST" for this year

4 door Sportabout D/L wagon

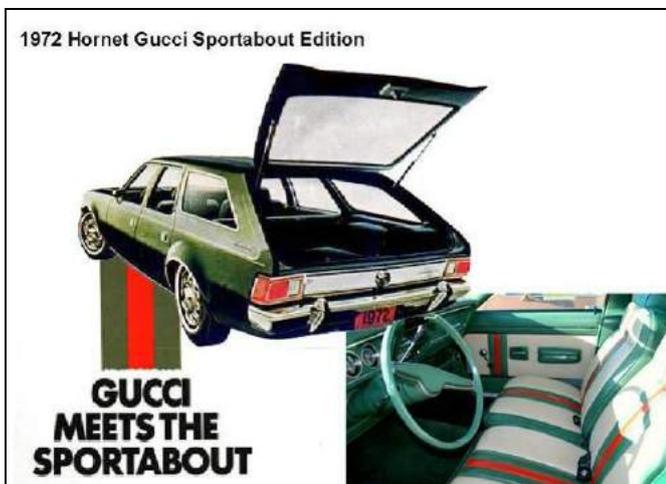
2 door SST sedan

4 door SST sedan

An 'X' package comprising sports steering wheel, body stripes, and wide wheels & tyres could be added. The Sportabout could be had with the "Gucci" package, which was just special upholstery, door panels, logo emblems, and a choice of four exterior colours.

A special "Rallye" model on the two doors had a body stripe a bit like the SC/360, disc brakes, bucket seats, handling package, and 3 speed manual transmission.

A vinyl roof could be had on any of them.



AMC also produced a one-off Sportabout for Gucci's personal use. The car was powered by a 304 V8 engine and had a three-speed automatic transmission. The interior featured leather door panels, cargo area, as well as the front and rear centre arm rests. The doors and custom-designed bucket seats received red and green striped inserts. The instrument panel was given a centrally located, pull-out writing desk, graced with a scribbler and a sterling silver bamboo pen. A map light at the end of a flexible arm extended from the right side of the desk; the left carried a vanity mirror, also on a flex stem. The back of the front seats popped open. The one on the passenger's side served as a snack table or provided a flat surface for playing games. The compartment behind the driver concealed a miniature liquor cabinet, complete with four sterling silver tumblers and two decanters - all decorated with red and green enamel stripes.

## The AMC / Rambler Hornet

### 1972 Continued

Parts numbers from the parts books for 1970, 1971, and 1972 are interesting to compare. You'd have to have each part in front of you to pick up the particular change or difference, but there was enough of a change between the years for AMC to assign different numbers. But I'll bet some fit different years without problems.

#### Side marker lens

For 1970 - one number

For 1971 and 1972 - different from 1970 but the same number for both these years

#### Indicator lens (in grille)

1970 is clear, and for the 1971 & 1972 "export" models they were the same part number

1971 and 1972 are amber

Headlamp surrounds and grilles - Different for all three years, 1970 - 1972

### 1973



Big changes for this year, including the introduction of the hatchback model. The energy absorbing (5 mph) bumpers were on this model, along with a new grille, front guards and bonnet (along with that very hard to get circular emblem).

Four models for this year: 2 door sedan, 4 door sedan, 4 door Sportabout wagon and the 2 door hatchback. There is no 'base' or 'SST' designation. The Levi's interior became available.

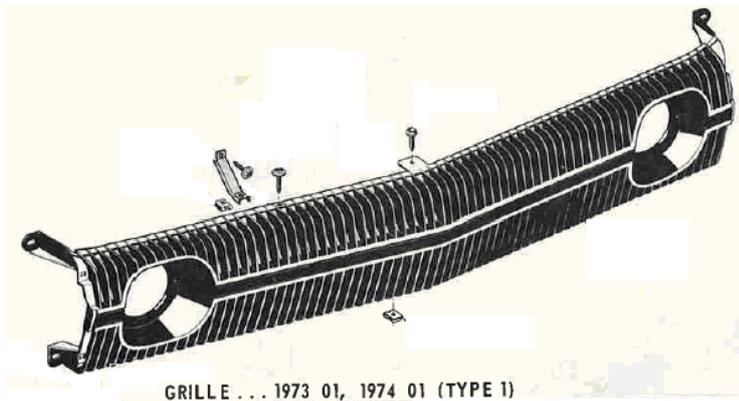


The new grille is quite distinctive, and was used for a very short time for the 1974 model.

New style of taillight for this year, with the painted ribs gone. As all lenses interchange between years, it is not uncommon to find later lenses on earlier cars.

# The AMC / Rambler Hornet

## 1973 Continued



The '73/'74 grille shown had some variations, but not according to the parts book. See the grille left. Only two horizontal silver lines & the rest of the grill black. Then see the 1974 version. All vertical bars are silver tipped. And the yellow hatch at the centre of the previous page has the centre strip painted red.

Photo from the 2016 AMO Meet, at Rockford, Illinois, USA. The grille centre stripe is painted red. This car has the optional Levi's interior with Pewter Silver metallic paint.

Possibly the grille centre strip painted red is part of an optional body stripe package kit.

Note the '73s had the "HORNET" badge on the bonnet.

The overall length of the Hornet increased 6 inches. For this year, the SST designation was dropped from the Hornet line, and all were simply called Hornets. The newly introduced two-door hatchback incorporated a fold-down rear seat for increased cargo volume from 9.5 to 30.5 cubic feet. An optional hinged floor made a hidden storage space that housed a temporary use "space-saver" spare tire, created a flat load area totalling 23 cu. ft.

The new hatchback was available with a Levi's bucket seat interior trim option that was actually made of spun nylon fabric, rather than real cotton denim, to comply with flammability standards as well as offering greater wear and stain resistance. The interior included copper Levi's rivets, traditional contrasting stitching, and the Levi's tab on both the front seat backs, as well as unique door panels with Levi's trim with removable map pockets and "Levi's" decals on the front fenders.

An optional dealer accessory was available to convert the open hatchback area into a tent camper with mosquito net windows.



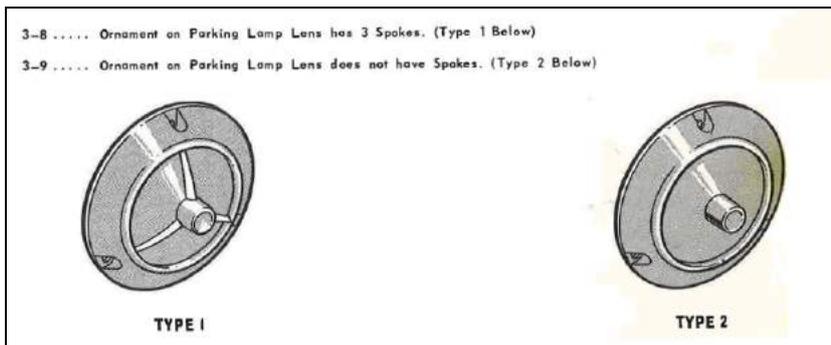
# The AMC / Rambler Hornet

1974

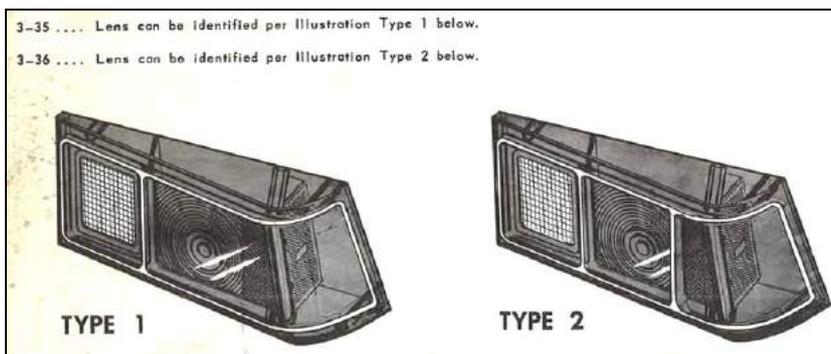


Only slight changes for this year, including new side trim running from front to back, halfway up the doors. Painted vertical bars on the grille, and big fat rubber bumper guards front and back added.

The '74 lost the "HORNET" badge on the front of the bonnet, which became a self-adhesive one next to the fender indicator. This one has the Type 1 spoked indicator lenses.



Two types of indicator lens were used for this year, but are interchangeable through all years.



Two types of tail lights were used for this year. Type 1 is the 1973 style continued and Type 2 must be the running change style for later 74 and 75 models.



I believe the 1973 and 1974 grilles are the same, except for paint. The red hatchback used in the James Bond film was a 1974 model, and you can see a slight grille difference here. Note every vertical bar is painted (correct for 1974) but the centre strip has four horizontal painted lines, compared with two for 1973, and none for this year, according to the brochure. I haven't been able to find any other picture of a Hornet with a grille with four horizontal lines. The parts book makes no mention of this variation.

# The AMC / Rambler Hornet

## 1974 Continued



Rear view of a 1974 sedan. This has the Type 1 tail lights, and the new-for-this-year strip across the rear panel just below boot lid level. This one has the AMC logo and the Hornet badge together on the right hand side. Note the petrol filler cap is behind the numberplate above the bumper now.



The Sportabout wagon. Note this has the AMC logo on the left and the Hornet badge on the right-hand side. The petrol filler cap is behind the numberplate above the bumper.



Self-adhesive front fender name plate.



The hard to get bonnet (hood) emblem.

## 1975



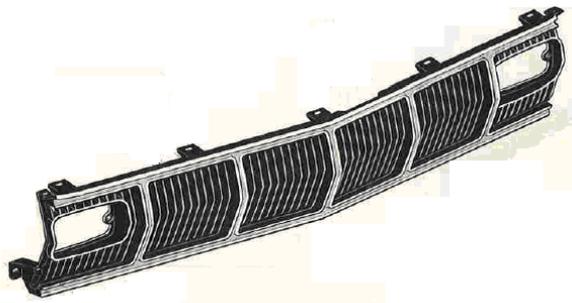
Brand new six segment grille for this year (although the parts book shows this as being fitted in 1974 as a Type 2 grille, below), with rectangular indicator lamps. Maybe this was at the end of 1974 when the new 1975 models were coming out.



Again, only four models for this year: 2 door sedan, 4 door sedan, 4 door Sportabout wagon, and the 2 door hatchback. The Pacer was released this year, so AMC would have been concentrating on that.

# The AMC Rambler Hornet

## 1975 Continued



GRILLE . . . 1974 01 (TYPE 2)

1974 - 1975 grille.



Rear is pretty much the same as 1974, with the 1974 Type 2 tail light lenses. Badges remain the same.

Six-cylinder Hornets could be ordered with a new British supplied Laycock de Normanville “J-type” overdrive. Optional on cars with a manual three-speed transmission, the unit was controlled by a pushbutton at the end of the turn signal stalk. The overdrive unit engaged automatically at speeds above 35 m.p.h. and dropped out at 32 m.p.h. It also included an accelerator pedal kick-down switch for faster passing.

All U.S. market Hornets featured catalytic converters and now required gasoline without tetraethyl lead. “Unleaded Fuel Only” warnings were displayed on both the fuel gauge and on a decal by the fuel filler. Consumers complained loudly about the 1974 “mandatory seat belt” system, and it was replaced in 1975 with a simple reminder buzzer and light. The U.S. economy was experiencing inflation, and new car sales fell for all the automakers. The automobile industry sold 8.2 million units, a drop of more than 2.5 million units from the record pace in 1973. Sales of the Hornet also suffered.

## 1976

In its sixth year as a carryover, AMC priced the sedan and hatchback at the same identically, with the Sportabout slightly higher. That year, the Dodge Aspen and Plymouth Volare were introduced; the line included a station wagon, ending AMC's monopoly on 6-cylinder domestic compact wagons.

## 1977

The Hornet line was mostly unchanged for 1977 with improvements made to engines and transmissions for increased fuel efficiency and the effects of new nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) emission standards. All 3-speed manual transmissions were now floor shifted. A new “AMX” model also appeared.

**Introducing Hornet AMX.**  
**If you think it looks good, wait 'til you feel it perform!**

**Float like a butterfly...**  
 When you hit the road in a new Hornet AMX, you're riding in style. It's loaded with features that make you feel suspended and proud. Inside, it has specially styled performance gauges and brushed aluminum instrument panel overlay; soft-levy sport steering wheels; quartz console and soft upper-dash trim. And outside, it's got ultra-coordinated bumpers, fender flares and rear window louvers; sports wheel trim; and a Europan-style brushed aluminum roof Targa band.

**Sting like a Hornet.**  
 Hornet AMX isn't the kind of machine that gets by on good looks alone. It knows how to act, too. And so wonder! With a quick 259-2V

engine and 4-speed floor mounted transmission (or optional high-performance V8 with automatic).

Sturdy DR 260s tires, front sway bar and front air dams, I'll get where you're going as easy as you please.

**BPP II. Maybe the best feature of all**  
 As with all 1977 AMC cars, the protection of AMC's exclusive BUYER PROTECTION PLAN™ II — including the only full 7-year/24,000-mile warranty on engine and drive train — is standard with Hornet AMX. So you'll not only drive with pride, but confidence, too.

**There's more to an AMC!**

The AMX was introduced to appeal to young, performance-oriented car buyers. The AMX was available only as a hatchback with the six or the V8 engine (automatic only) featuring a floor shifted four-speed manual or automatic transmission. Standard was an upgraded black or tan interior with a floor console, “rally” instrumentation with tachometer, and “soft-feel” sports steering wheel. The special “Hornet AMX” was only available in four exterior colours that included matching painted bumpers with a wraparound rubber guard strip, body side rubber guard strip, and contrasting AMX model identification body side decals ahead of the rear wheels. The exterior included a front spoiler integrated into the front lower fender extensions, rear lower fender flares, sport-styled road wheels, brushed aluminium “Targa top” band over the B-pillars and roof, black left and right outside mirrors, and louvers for the rear hatch window. Options included bright aluminium road wheels and large Hornet-graphic decals on the hood and on the deck lid. This model marked the return of a famous name that evoked AMC's original AMX two-seat sports car.

In the autumn of 1977, the Hornet was re-engineered and restyled to become the 1978 Concord, and helped establish the “luxury compact” market segment. With its upgraded design, components, and more standard features, the new Concord was moved upscale from the economy-focused Hornet. Changes to the AMC's “junior” platform made the new Concord more comfortable and desirable to buyers seeking an image of luxury, as well as greater value.

## Australian Rambler Hornet: Build Numbers and Compliance Plates

Let's start with build numbers. This is where some controversy comes in. There are figures on the internet stating numbers built (source #2 column below), but these may be cars registered in that year, not built in that year. We have a good authority in Wayne Williams, who has been compiling a register of all the Hornets left or accounted for in Australia along with their chassis code numbers. Wayne has been compiling this list (column source #1) for several years, so this is "reality," i.e. what's really out there, the real build codes, not figures from somewhere on the internet. One list, source #2, says there were 118 Hornets built in 1974, yet none were really assembled.

Aust Model	Chassis Code	AMI Build Dates	AMC Tag Code	Build Numbers (source #1)	Build Numbers (source #2)	Actual USA Model
1970	H09-001 to H09-873	July 1970 to June 1971	GK-xxxxx	873	407	Same
1971	H19-001 to H19-286	July 1971 to December 1971	AK-xxxxx	286	597	Same
1972	H29-287 to H29-519	March 1972 to August 1972	AK-xxxxx	232	355	Same as 1971
1973	H39-001 to H39-237	April 1973 to December 1973	AK-xxxxx	237	212	1972
1974	Chassis Code H49 allocated by AMI for Hornets, but none was assembled			0	118	1972
1975	H59-001 to H59-155	March 1975 to June 1975	A4C	155	136	1974
<b>Totals</b>				<b>1783</b>	<b>1825</b>	

What is being said from the above table is that if you bought an AMI Hornet in 1972, you got the 1971 USA equivalent. If you bought one after July 1973, you got the 1972 USA model. If you bought one in 1974, you still got a 1972 USA model. And if you bought one in 1975, you got the 1974 USA model.

Each Hornet built by AMI received a compliance plate stating the Australian Design Rules that the car complied with. It also had a build number stamped on it. They look like this:



*This is a July 1970 car that doesn't show ADRs at all. H09-203. This must be a late July car as the first one was 001 in the same month, and this is 203, so based on numbers it seems they were assembling them at ten a day, based on twenty normal production days per month. It's possible that AMI actually commenced assembly of the H09 Hornets in April 1970, but the earliest compliance plates that I've seen are stamped July 1970. Note how much shorter the plate is compared to the one on the right.*



*From a June 1971 car. This is close to the end of the first series AMI assembled Hornets, number H09-864. Now it complies with eight ADRs. Note it says "RAMBLER HORNET SEDAN"*

*ADR-2 = Side door latches, ADR-3 = Seats and anchorages, ADR-4 = Seat belts, ADR-5A = Anchorages for seat belts, ADR-7 = Hydraulic brake hoses, ADR-10A = Steering columns, ADR-15 = Windscreen demisting, ADR-20 = Safety rims*

## Australian Rambler Hornet: Compliance Plates and Australian Design Rules



*Here's a November 1970 car, H09-554  
with just four ADRs*



*This is from a November 1971 car, H19-202.  
It's still a Rambler, but now complies with nine ADRs*



*This is from car H39-086, May 1973. Look at the  
number of ADRs it now complies with - 22 of them! It  
is now an "A.M.C. HORNET SEDAN."*

*Let's say H39-001 was built on 1<sup>st</sup> April 73, and this  
086 was built the end of May, that is eight weeks at  
most. So, working on a five-day week, that's 40 days  
to build 86 cars, so that's about two per day.*

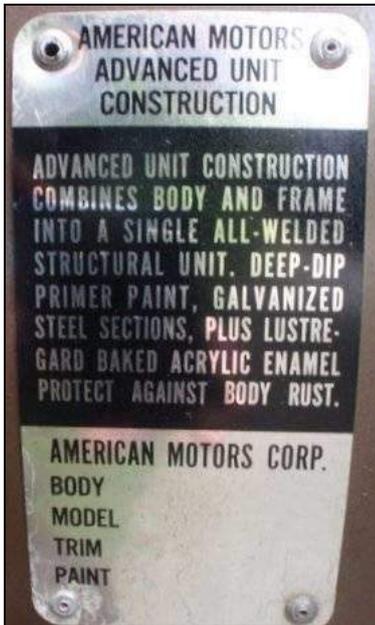
In 1973 they had to comply with Australian Design Rules (ADR):

- ADR-1 = Reversing lamps (Is this when the Hella indicators were added to make the clear part of the tail light reversing only?)
- ADR-2 = Side door latches and hinges (I thought they were all the same?)
- ADR-3 = Seats and seat anchorages (ADR-4, 5A, 7, and 20 on previous page)
- ADR-6 = Direction indicators (The Hella lenses, amber colour?)
- ADR-8 = Safety glazing
- ADR-9 = Standard controls for automatic transmissions (PRND21) and neutral safety switches
- ADR-10 = Steering columns
- ADR-11 = Internal sun visors, including vanity mirrors
- ADR-12 = Glare minimisation from surfaces in the driver's view
- ADR-14 = Rear vision mirrors
- ADR-15 = Windscreen demisting
- ADR-16 = Windscreen wiper coverage (made it mandatory to have the right-hand sweep, not the left-hand).
- ADR-18 = Instrumentation/speedometers
- ADR-21 = Instrument panel design to reduce injury to occupants on impact
- ADR-22 = Head restraints
- ADR-24 = Tyre and rim selection
- ADR-25 = Anti-theft lock and steering locks
- ADR-26 = Engine emissions (leaded/un-leaded engines)

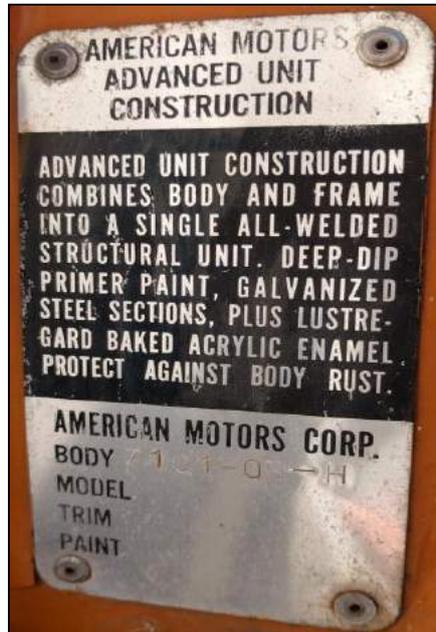
I think the Hornet already complied with most of these when it came out in 1970, as they seem to use the same parts right through all years. Example - ADR-21. The instrument panel probably needed the padded dash to comply with this ADR, but AMI would have said, "We've been using this one since 1970," checked it complied, stamped the plate, and kept going.

ADR-16 would have taken a bit more work, what with the wiper arm posts reversed. AMI reworked the cowl panel for the right-hand drive windscreen wiper sweep. AMI also did the same rework on the cowl panel for the Rambler Matador sedan and wagon at its assembly plant in Port Melbourne.

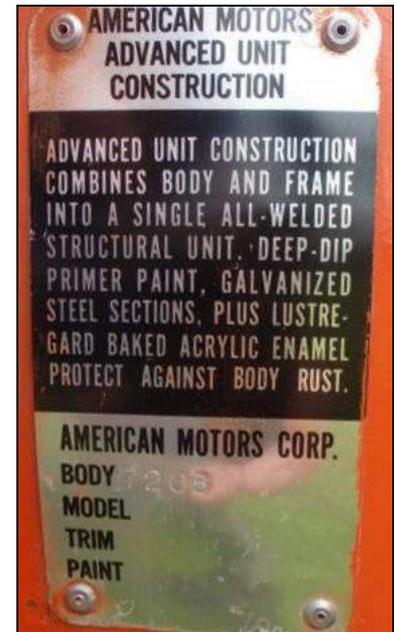
## Australian Rambler Hornet: Door Identification Plates



An H09 Hornet 1970 door plate, unstamped. Many Hornets and Rebels had no stamping on the 1970 plate.



H19 and H29 Hornets 1971-72 door plates are stamped 7101-05-H as per the AMI service bulletin below.



An H39 Hornet 1973 door plate stamped 7205. No other markings for model, trim, or paint.

If you have a TSM (Technical Service Manual) for your car you will find a section at the beginning helping you to identify the vehicle. For example, a car with the above right tag will decode "72" (being 1972) "0" means Hornet series and "5" means it's a four door sedan. Some USA cars may have an additional digit, for example 7205-7 where the extra 7 means it's an SST model (trim level).

### RAMBLER SERVICE BULLETIN

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VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION

To identify A.M.I. built vehicles the American Motors Corporation Body plate fitted to the Left Hand Front Door is stamped as follows:-

7101-05H  
7110-15M  
7118-W

Interpreted as:-

7101-05H	=	Hornet	01 Series
7110-15M	=	Matador Sedan	10 "
7118-W	=	Matador Wagon	10 "

REF. No. 5/71

DATE December, 1971.

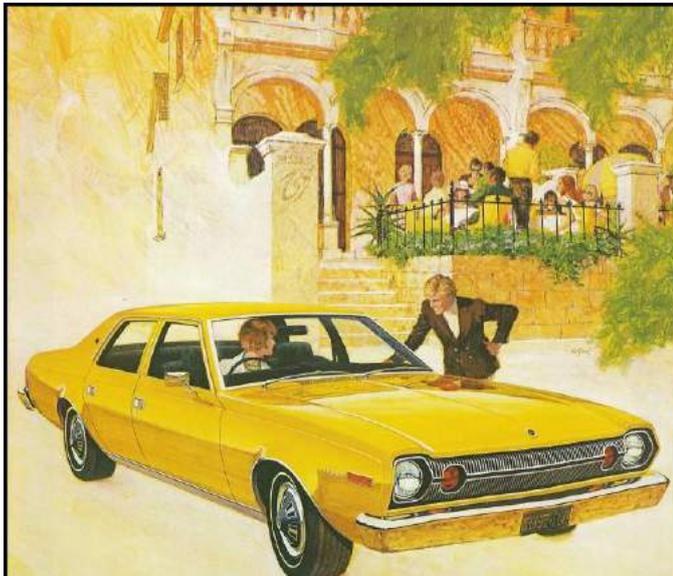
Australian door plates for the 1971 and 1972 Hornet H19 and H29 are stamped 7101-05H, in keeping with the AMI bulletin dated December 1971, shown at the left. The Hornet H19 ran July thru December 1971 and the Hornet H29 ran March thru August 1972.

Matador Sedans are stamped 7110-15M, and Matador Wagons are stamped 7118-W. This style of stamping was only used during the AMI production run for 1971 and 1972 models. In other years AMI generally retained the regular stampings as seen on USA door plates.

AMI Model	AMI Chassis Code	AMI Production Run	AMI Body Sequence
1970	H09-001 to H-09-873	July 1970 to June 1971	1970 - starts at 001
1971	H19-001 to <b>H19-286</b>	July 1971 to December 1971	1971 - starts at 001
1972	<b>H29-287</b> to H29-519	March 1972 to August 1972	1972 - starts at 287
1973	H39-001 to H39-237	April 1973 to December 1973	1973 - starts at 001
1974	H49 allocated by AMI	None assembled by AMI	
1975	H59-001 to H59-155	March 1975 to June 1975	1975 - starts at 001



# Australian Rambler Hornet: Sales Brochures



## RAMBLER HORNET

An honest and powerful expression of your values

In this complicated world, we're pleased to state that there's still a car that brings you sheer delight and solid luxury, yet does away with the fella's the enthusiast driver considers unnecessary.

It's called Hornet, Rambler Hornet.

As the name infers, it's a machine with sting right throughout its power range. At your command, exciting acceleration and exhilarating performance, with sports tension handling, radial ply tyres and big disc brakes to keep it all in line.

Hornet is very much at ease in city driving, and highway cruising becomes an unusual pleasure. And it's nice to know that you get it all with top cylinder economy.

Hornet is a personal car that satisfies your individuality, excites you with a feel that could well be custom built, surrounds you with the special kind of luxury demanded by this superior class of travelling. Hornet features include: Form-fitting bucket seats in 'Chemograin' upholstery, colour co-ordinated carpets, radial ply tyres,

hot line rear window demister, a push button radio with rear speaker, and a sporty console-mounted 1-bar gear shift that lets you whip Hornet through his paces and really when the urge arises.

Rambler Hornet, gutsy yet economical, 256" six cylinder engine, Torque Command automatic transmission, disc brakes with 'roll over' dual system, side impact intrusion bars fitted to both front and back doors, plus a host of other engineering, safety and driver-confort refinements.

And the beauty of it all is Hornet's lithe, sleek, lined-guard body. Not only is this car an honest and powerful expression of your values—you'll quickly find Hornet draws envious glances wherever and whenever you care to make an appearance.



# RAMBLER HORNET

**SPECIFICATIONS: 4 DOOR SEDAN**

**ENGINE**  
4.2 litre (4029 cc) 6 cylinder 1 barrel carburetor  
Powerplant 110 (SAE, NET) at 13,000 r.p.m.  
Torque 136 ft. lbs. at 2,000 r.p.m. (SAE NET)  
Bore 55 mm  
Stroke 99 mm  
Compression Ratio 8.0:1  
Rated HP 93.75

**TRANSMISSION**  
Floor-shift, Torque Command automatic transmission.  
Reverse 2.20:1  
Drive 1.0:1  
2nd Gear 1.45:1  
1st Gear 2.45:1

**REAR AXLE RATIO**  
3.15:1

**TYRES**  
165 x 14 Radial Ply

**STEERING**  
Recirculating ball

**SUSPENSION**  
Front Independent coil with twin ball joint.  
Rear semi-elliptical leaf springs.

**BRAKES**  
Power-assisted 11" (279.4 mm) ventilated front disc with 10" (254 mm) self-adjusting rear brakes.  
Dual safety tandem master cylinder.

**ELECTRICAL**  
12 volt 60 amp hour battery.  
12 volt 45 amp alternator.

**DIMENSIONS**  
Wheelbase 108" (2743 mm)  
Overall length 187" (4753 mm)  
Width 71" (1803 mm)  
Height 52.58" (1335.53 mm)  
Track—Front 55.47" (1408.58 mm)  
Rear 57" (1447.8 mm)  
Trunk Capacity 11.2 cu. ft. (317.0 ltr)  
Fuel Tank Capacity 13.5 Imp. gal. (51 litres)  
Tare Weight 26 cwt. (1300 kg)  
Power Weight 59 units.  
Ramp Clearance 27" (687.8 mm)  
Turning Circle 35" (890.6 cm)

**SAFETY FEATURES**  
Apart from Hornet's list of Australian Safety Design Rules equipment, which includes front levelled rear, lap and sash type seat belts, rear lap and sash seat belt in the outboard positions and lap belt in centre, energy absorbing steering column, hood restraint, windscreen wipers, safety pins, reversing lights, safety door latches and hinges, there's a host of other safety features designed for maximum driver and passenger protection.

Anti-shock absorber jacking, durable urethane body construction, side impact intrusion bars to both front and rear doors, new axial mountings to prevent forward movement during sudden stops, advanced pollution emission controls, ventilated disc brakes for minimum brake fade, safety strapped arm rests, padded heels, exterior-view mirror, variable intensity green night lighting for instruments, hot line, electric rear window demister, wiper rear flasher lamp, rear view flag. Front and rear mirror systems to USA standard.

**STANDARD EQUIPMENT**  
Includes:  
Floor-shift with lock to centre of instrument panel.  
Woolfleyer heater and demister with three speed fan.  
Speedometer, fuel and temperature gauges.  
Clock.  
Radio with rear speaker.  
Front seat belts, inertia reel, lap and sash type, rear seats, lap and sash type in the outboard positions, lap belt in centre.  
Cigar lighter.  
Night and day interior rear view mirror.  
Exterior RHIS driving mirror.  
Variable speed windscreen wipers.  
Power-operated windscreen wipers.  
Electroplated body priming.  
Wiper quiet sound proofing.  
Reversing lights.  
Flush contoured exterior door handles.  
High strength door hinges and locks.  
Safety padded fascia.  
Full width carpeted interior and trunk.  
Hooded rear window.  
Rear mud flaps.  
Parrot hilly under tabs.

Australian Motor Industries reserves the right to discontinue or change specifications, models or prices without incurring obligations. All measurements are in metric. RHT—In compliance with USA Regulations.

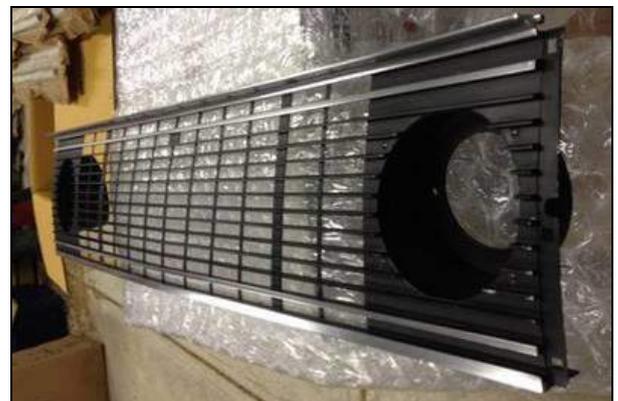
**AUSTRALIAN MOTOR INDUSTRIES LIMITED**  
Head Office: P.O. Box 105, Berlin Street, Port Melbourne, Vic. 3207.



*This is an AMI brochure, with an artist's impression of a 1974 Hornet, (it doesn't have the Hornet badge on the bonnet; it's on the guard, no rubber front bumper stops, maybe the artist left them off as not required in Australia). However, this model, with this grille, was assembled in Australia as a 1974 H59 model in 1975.*

Speaking of door stamped plates, in a previous newsletter we reproduced AMI's model classification for 1970, issued in July of 1970. This was the month AMI first stamped and fitted compliance plates to the Rambler Hornet series. For this year, it's only 7005, with prefix "GK," which ties in with what we know.

A few pages back we mentioned six and twelve segment grilles. These are metal grilles which appear the same in all respects except one has five vertical bars holding the horizontal bars together (below left) and the other has eleven vertical bars. The six version may be early 1970 and the twelve a bit later. And there's a plastic version of the grille that was fitted to 1972 USA Hornets, assembled by AMI as H39 Hornets, April thru December 1973.



AMI kept the Borg-Warner 35 auto-trans in the Hornet for Australian content, only changing to the Torqueflite 904 for the final series Hornet, the 1974 USA series, assembled by AMI in 1975 as the H59 series

## Australian Rambler Hornet: Rear Nameplates and Badging

It can be confusing trying to identify the year of an Australian Hornet from the rear, but there are some clues. AMI changed the location of the SST badge in September 1970; then there's the aluminium panel, the added Hella brand lamps (of which there are a couple of variations as well), and that any year taillight lens can be interchanged with any other year.



This picture is from the June 1971 *Wheels* magazine Hornet road test. It has the '70/'71 lenses, aluminium panel, **HORNET**, **SST**, and insect emblem all on the right. This is probably a July or August 1970 build as AMI moved the SST badge to the left, commencing in September 1970.

This looks to be a 1970 H09 Hornet; however no aluminium panel, but the panel painted black, not body colour, and it has 1973 model amber indicator lenses. Possibly a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> owner's attempt to personalise the Hornet to his or her own taste.



Documented 1970 build car; has all the correct items exactly matching the *Wheels* road test car.

Another 1970. AMI moved the SST badge to the left, as shown here, commencing in September 1970.



Judging by the aluminium panel and badge layout it's a 1970, but the taillights are '73/'74. Owner has painted bumpers on this particular Hornet.

This is a documented December 1971 build car, yet has all the hallmarks of a 1973 build: 73 taillights, Hella brand lamps, top and bottom chrome strips, painted panel, but SST badge is not the script version.



This is a genuine known 1973-year build. No aluminium panel, but panel painted body colour; SST badge is now script, and we have 1973 model amber indicator lenses.

This car and the one at left are four build numbers apart, so these are likely excellent examples of AMI's builds in 1973. Note the seven white painted ribs on taillight lens.

## Australian Rambler Hornet: Front View

I think there were also running changes that the production line did not pay attention to. As the cars were being built, orders would be placed on the US for parts. As they ran out, a new crate of, say, taillight lenses would be opened and fitted to the cars. The production line workers were just doing a job. So, you could have slightly different grilles, headlamp surrounds, taillights, etc., as the old ones were used up and the new parts came in. As long as there was design rule compliance, they wouldn't have known. I think this is why we see variances on cars that are known to have never been altered, yet are different in some respects. Say you smashed a taillight lens on your 1970 Hornet in 1980. You ring up AMI. They say sorry, only got the 1974 style. So, you purchase a pair and fit them. Years later, you sell the car as original, forgetting the replacement. Current owner says, "Person I bought it off was the original owner, so it must be correct."



December 1971 – Grille has silver centre line



Owner blacked out grille & headlamp surrounds



Another blacked out grille, but with clear spoke indicators



Grille with silver centre line, the same as above left, but orange indicators not clear ones

## AMC Hornets on Television and in the Movies



*Star Trek: The Voyage Home*



*In Kojak*



*The Gumball Rally*



*Starsky & Hutch*



*The Man with the Golden Gun*



*CHiPs*



*Top Gear*



*Viper*



*Baywatch*

# Australian Rambler Hornet: Service Bulletins and Advertising

 *Byr*

ANNAND & THOMPSON PTY. LTD.

AWS/JR 30th September, 1970.

CIRCULAR TO ALL RAMBLER AGENTS 4/70

Dear Sir,

Re: Rambler Hornet.

It has been noted that in some instances, the model on the Hornet has been omitted from the identification plate on the left hand door.

Will you please arrange to have the model '70/05' stamped on this plate on vehicles sold or stocked, to assist us in future requests for parts.

Yours faithfully,  
ANNAND & THOMPSON PTY. LTD.

*A. W. Smith*  
A. W. Smith,  
Assistant Manager,  
PARTS DIVISION.

**Rambler**

Sole distributors for Queensland and Northern Rivers N.S.W. 132 Breakfast Creek Road, Newstead, Brisbane. P.O. Box 46, Newstead, Brisbane, Queensland. 4006. Telephone 5 0161. Telegrams Automotive Brisbane. Cable Address Annthom.



ANNAND & THOMPSON PTY. LTD.

17th September: 1970.

TO ALL RAMBLER AGENTS:

CIRCULAR LETTER NO. 6/70

Dear Sir,

RE: 1970 RAMBLER REBEL WAGON & HORNET CARS CAMPAIGN.

All 1970 Rambler Rebel Wagon and Hornet cars up to the undermentioned body numbers operating in your area must be campaigned as the retainer ring for the front suspension control arm assembly illustrated in Figure 2, Page 12-2, 1970, Technical Service Manual has been assembled with the retainer ring to the front instead of to the rear of the assembly. To rectify this, the upper control arm is to be changed from side to side.

Vehicles affected: Hornet up to body number 001-336, Rebel Saloon up to body number 001-080, and Rebel Ranch Wagon up to body number 001-012, with the exception of Hornet body numbers 230, 246, 288, 290, and 332, and Ranch Wagon body number 009, which have already been rectified and therefore do not require attention.

So that confusion will not occur and one vehicle being modified twice, we would ask that a white paint dot be placed on the front upper control arm rubber bush of both sides.

Repair Instructions:

- (1) Remove road wheel
- (2) Remove coil spring assembly
- (3) Remove upper control arm complete with ball joint by releasing the upper control arm inner pivot bolts and nuts and ball joint stud nut.
- (4) Transfer assembly to opposite side of the car and reassemble.
- (5) Torque inner pivot bolt and nuts to 55' lbs and the ball joint stud to 40' lbs.

NOTE: Do not attempt to change the retainer ring as it is a one time usage part.

**Rambler** ....2

Sole distributors for Queensland and Northern Rivers N.S.W. 132 Breakfast Creek Road, Newstead, Brisbane. P.O. Box 46, Newstead, Brisbane, Queensland. 4006. Telephone 5 0161. Telegrams Automotive Brisbane. Cable Address Annthom.

The two circulars shown above are from AMI's largest Queensland Dealer, Annand & Thompson. The circular at left asked Rambler Agents to stamp door plates on 1970 H09 Rambler Hornets as some were omitted, and the second circular at right noted that upper suspension arms need to be changed left to right.

**Only Rambler would dare make a tough car this beautiful**



**GIANT 280 mm power disc brakes up front - in a dual safety system. To stop fast.**



**Full instrumentation in elegantly padded dash tells you just what's happening beneath the bonnet. Borg Warner automatic transmission saves you through to top speed with a thrilling surge. And smoothly. It's the most reliable unit money can buy.**



**High-backed seats with built-in comfort, extra seating. And they recline all the way.**



**Twin-barrel carb provides power to top 150-horse engine. All the thrust you want is there.**

**The Hornet SST is superbly engineered for comfort and safety right down to the smallest features. Body, for instance, is of all-steel unit-frame construction. Ashtrays run on ball bearings! The Hornet SST is compact enough to make city driving a breeze. Yet big enough to seat five - with plenty of elbow room. It brings you a new dimension in luxury motoring.**

**Sold and serviced country-wide by 500 Toyota dealers. Rambler cars are built and marketed in South Africa by Toyota S.A. Ltd., wholly owned and controlled by South Africans.**

**Hornet SST - The Emv Machine**

 Car Mkt 1970

Right hand drive Rambler Hornets were also assembled in South Africa by Toyota S.A., Ltd. You will notice similarities to our own Australian assembled Rambler Hornets.

The early South African Rambler Hornets had column shifters, with wide bucket seats.

Mechanical specifications were much the same as our Australian Hornets, with the 232 cubic inch engine, Borg Warner automatic transmission, and Bendix front disc brakes.

From the photo at left it shows that they were fitted with nice exterior mirrors, likely same as the USA.

AMI Chief Engineer, Roy Bridges, travelled to South Africa to see what could be utilized for assembly of the Rambler Hornet in Australia. This proved to be an excellent decision and gave AMI a head start when it came to assembly in early 1970, especially for right hand drive components such as dashboard assembly and steering set-up.

Also, there was a family tie, Toyota S.A. in South Africa and AMI Toyota in Australia...

# TO BUILD A HORNET

With A.M.I.'s Hornet only a couple of weeks away, we take a behind-the-scenes look into the groundwork that preceded its introduction.

IT IS probably safe to say that if Ford hadn't introduced the Australian Fairlane in 1967, we wouldn't have seen the American Motors Hornet out here as soon as we are about to.

The Fairlane was almost completely responsible for the demise of GMH's Chevs and Pontiacs, for the drastic drop in big-brother Galaxie sales and for the Rambler Rebel's sudden fall from favor as the only alternative to the really big American ckd imports.

As A.M.I. had been previously raking in tidy profits from Rambler sales it became increasingly obvious that something would need to be done and the answer came in late 1969 with the release of the compact Hornet.

The Hornet is being flogged in the U.S. along the lines that being small isn't necessarily being cheap or spartan in finish and it is this aspect that will be emphasised when the car goes on sale in Australia sometime within the next few weeks.

Although described as a small car the Hornet is actually comparable in size to our Holdens, Falcons and Valiants, with a wheelbase of 108 inches (identical to the Valiant) and an overall length of 179 inches, which, mainly because of the chopped-off boot, is about five inches shorter than the popular locals.

It will be marketed at a price that will bring it into direct competition against the Fairlane 500, but A.M.I. doesn't expect sales figures to challenge those of the Ford product and will be happy to initially sell about 140 units per month, on a 45 p.c. local content plan.

Equipment will be sufficient to justify a price tag higher than usually expected with a 108 inch wheelbase sedan and in fact some of the Australian car's features are not even available in the States.

The man responsible for bringing the Hornet into our country is Roy Bridges, chief engineer at A.M.I.

Roy was given a rough outline of what features the car would need to offer to justify an asking price of around \$4000 and despatched to the U.S. with the admonition "Bring it in, regardless of cost."

But this wasn't quite as simple as it sounded.

For a car that had been subject to about one million man hours and U.S. \$40 million during its three year gestation period, a few points relating to versatility of manufacture seemed to have been completely overlooked.

For Bridges, the first major obstacle to be overcome was the fact that the car was not specified for right hand drive by American Motors despite potential markets in a number of rhd countries such as South Africa and Australia. With encouraging U.S. sales successes during the first few months that the Hornet was available, it was evidently decided that the home demand should be catered for prior to looking seriously — if belatedly — into export possibilities.

This meant that South Africa had to virtually go its own way in developing a right hand drive conversion, but the ultimate rub-off to A.M.I. out here was obvious. Bridges, after hectic dashes between the U.S. and South Africa, finally came up

with a right hand conversion plan which would work equitably for the three companies concerned.

With this, and the appropriate instrument cluster coming from South Africa, the next problem was how to bring specifications up to Australian requirements.

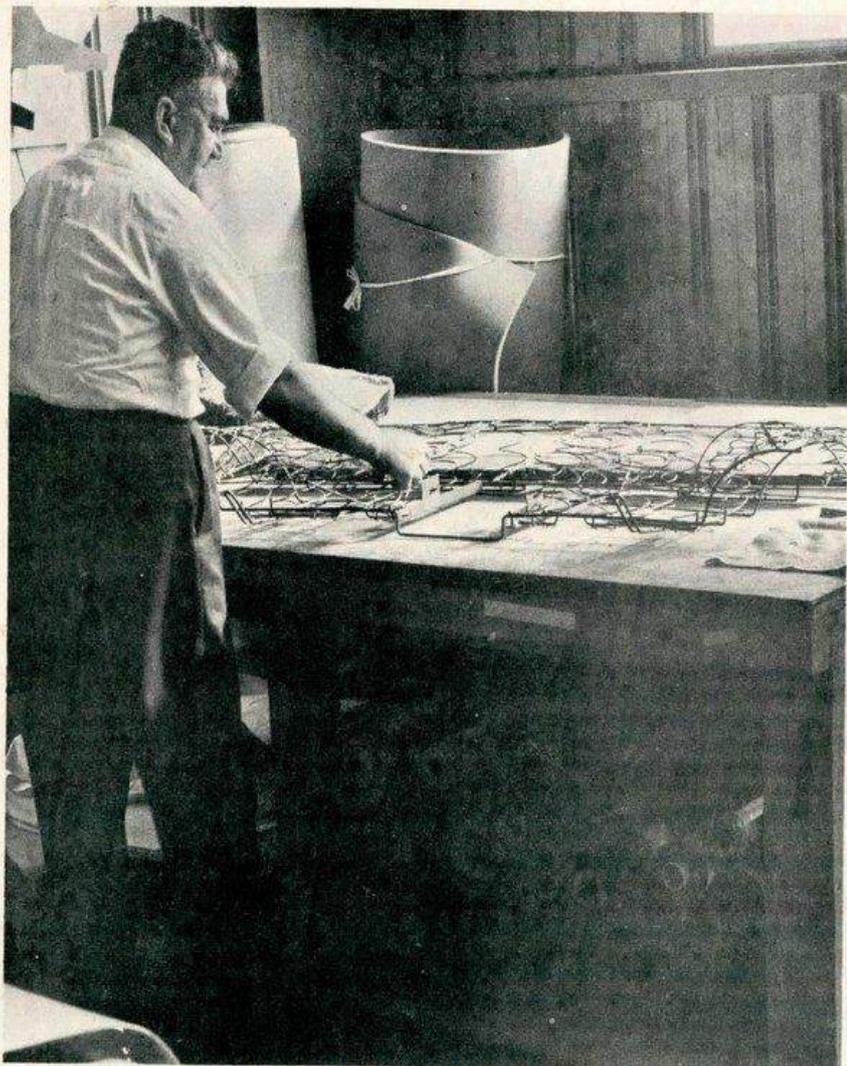
A.M.I. had outlined how it wanted the car equipped, but non-availability of items such as disc front brakes and floor shift automatic transmission created problems not easily solvable by dipping into the American optional equipment bin.

This did not deter Bridges, however, who discovered that the floor selector could be adapted from American Motors' top-of-the-line Ambassador and that an identical front suspension assembly to the current AMX and Javelin models allowed fitment of the big 11 inch discs which are available on these cars.

To help keep local content up to the required 45 p.c., these were hooked up to a PBR power booster.

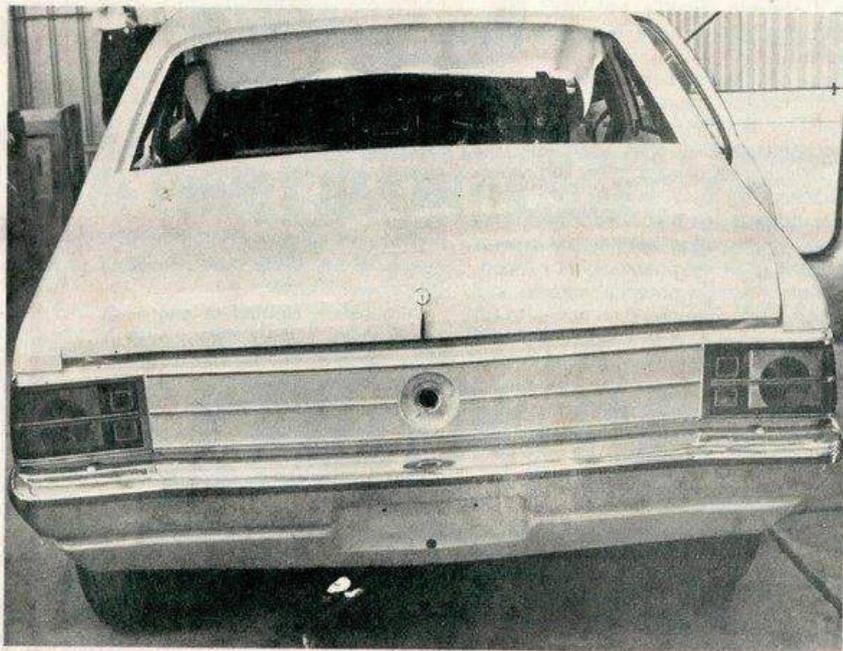
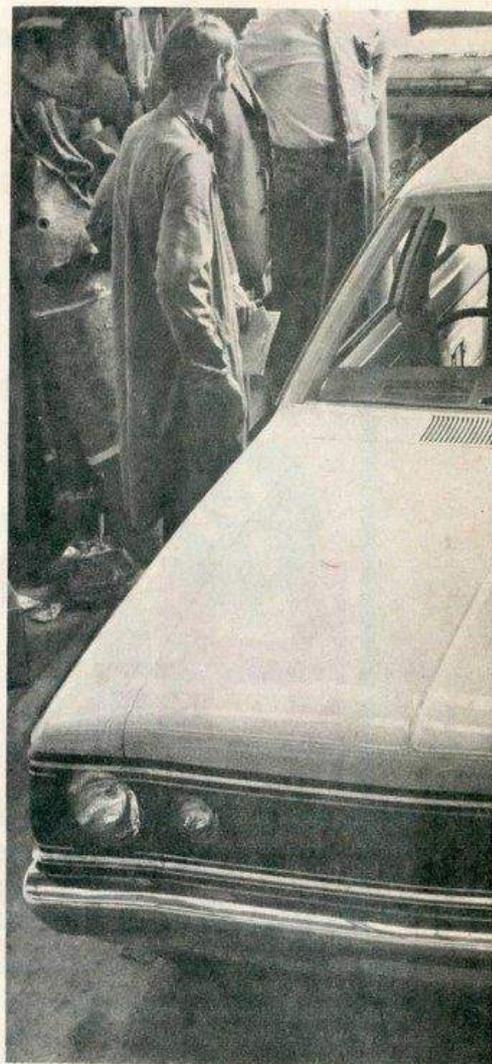
Although a number of engine options are available in the States, it was, for obvious reasons, not feasible to offer more than one powerplant on the Australian car. Yet at the same time this powerplant would need sufficient verve to compete with the big five litre V8s it would be selling against. Bridges chose the 232 cubic inch ohv six which is the middle range option on the American Hornet and develops

more 



*Above: Seats are wholly Australian developed. Various designs were tried before final heavily pleated units were decided on. In picture steel frame is being prepared for final trimming.*

*Below: Almost-completed Hornet shows neat rear styling — not unlike current Holden. Short overhang means considerably less boot space than in local cars of similar size.*



## TO BUILD A HORNET

155 bhp — a little down on power/weight ratio when compared to our local V8s, but still claimed to give over-100 mph performance when teamed with the three speed Borg Warner automatic which will be standard on the Australian car.

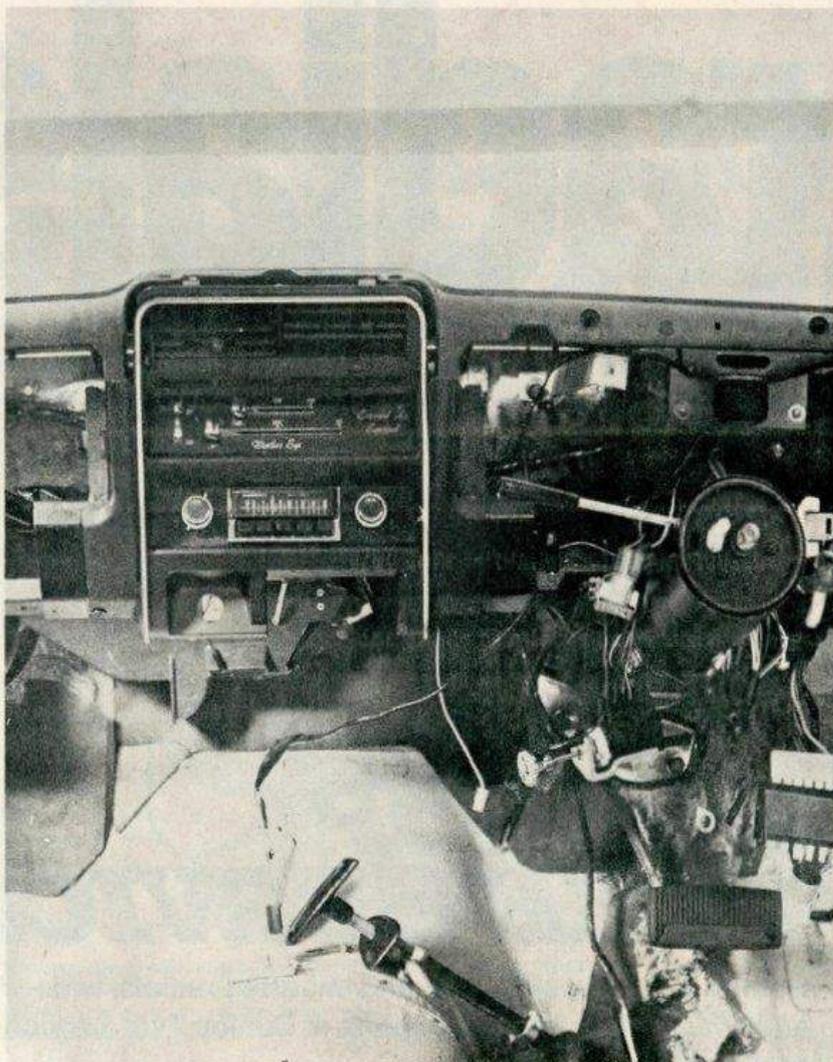
Heavy duty suspension and wide six inch wheels running 7.35 x 14 tyres should be more than capable of handling the Hornet's performance.

One of the most interesting aspects of the Hornets we will see out here will be the wholly Australian designed and manufactured seats.

With considerable experience in this



**Above: Hornet's styling is neat. Pronounced flares on wheel arches and heavily curved sides are distinguishing features. Wipers have retained left hand drive setup.**



**Above: Dash panel will look neater than is customary with U.S. designed cars. Central area contains heater controls, specially designed Kriesler radio and fresh air outlets.**

field, A.M.I. is well qualified to produce seating which is up to world standards.

In the Hornet, experience and design has been borrowed from Triumph and Toyota to produce seats which have the look and feel that befits a \$4000 car. Many cushion and trim variations were tried before the final design came into being. The front buckets are heavily pleated and shaped to provide good location, are high-backed to provide a measure of whiplash protection and incorporate a reclining mechanism. The rear seat has a divided backrest and a fold-down central armrest.

Originally the car was to have the ultra high-back seats which are now fitted to most U.S. cars, but resistance from A.M.I. sales department which had doubts about the Australian public accepting these, led to the development of the current units.

The push button radio which will come as standard in the Hornet was specially designed by Kriesler to blend with the instrument panel and the fresh air heat-

er/demister is also of Australian manufacture.

Unfortunately, the bugbear of expensive tooling has seen the windscreen wipers retaining their left hand driver setup.

Floor pedals have been rearranged to a low easier operation than on the U.S. version of the Hornet, but one area where the Stateside car comes out in front is the inclusion of a transmission lock which automatically comes into operation when the ignition key is removed. In dropping the transmission selector to the floor for the Australian car this had been disconnected.

The unitary body construction is unique among A.M. cars and incorporates advanced safety features which allow it to meet all current U.S. requirements. The only major difference between the Stateside and Australian cars is in the forward bulkhead area. Although most of the right hand drive equipment is courtesy of South Africa, the collapsible steering column, which is not required in that country, comes direct from the U.S.

In the boot area, A.M.I. has been fiddling around trying to make the most of its 11½ cubic feet by locating the spare in various positions.

Finally it was decided to attach it to the rear bulkhead where access could be gained without too much disruption when the boot is packed.

The fuel tank locates below the boot floor and is fed through a central filler at the rear.

At present A.M.I. is working feverishly towards bringing the Hornet to the point where it is a production line reality and is hoping to announce national availability, as we said earlier, some time within the next few weeks.

We think the efforts of Roy Bridges and his engineering staff will pay off handsomely for A.M.I. during the next twelve months and it is not hard to see the initial production rate of 150 cars per month being substantially increased during that time.

# Hornets bring U.S. flair to Australia

RAMBLER HORNETS are a peculiarly American design despite an obvious relation in size and, indeed performance to the Australian medium car.

They drive less like the Australian product and more like a slightly shrunk-up full sized American car.

In latest form, they have trim changes, and an engine transplant 4.2 litre six cylinder to give them more heart.

The Hornet's strongest appeal comes from its external styling. It is an adaptation of the long nose short tall look of the 1960's to a four-door sedan.

In the American fashion, the styling is clean and uncluttered. American makers have always had a strong conservative element inspired, in part, by the necessity for gaining sales in Europe.

Rambler cars are assembled in Belgium to get them a strong foothold in the Common Market countries and support from the vigorous component makers located nearby.

Smart and subdued — the flaring of the mudguards over the fat tyres is sufficient to give the car a muscular look — the Hornet has sold quite well here.

The car is assembled at Australian Motor Industries Port Melbourne plant.

The wheels and tyres fitted here are larger than those supplied overseas and the car benefits greatly from these.

Upholstery is also altered, for the better, with horizontal gaps in their adding to permit air to circulate

late behind the passengers for greater comfort.

The changes make the Hornet a car which offers an American approach to the Australian sized car, an approach which has found many buyers.

Mechanically, the Hornet is very straight forward. It has a good motor in the nose driving the back wheels through a three-speed automatic transmission. Suspension is conventional with wishbones and coil springs in front and leaf springs and a live axle at the back.

There's room for five but the boot space is a little restricted by the chopped tail styling. The passenger compartment and the boot are both carpeted.

Legroom in the front is ample and the seat backs recline to give a good range of driving positions. Thigh support is good but side support not so good.

The closer mounting of the steering wheel to the driving seat bespeaks the car's American birth as does the dashboard layout. A departure, however, is the pair of cool air vents in the centre of the dashboard.

There is a heater/demister and fan unit and a radio.

Finish of the dashboard — a fully imported part — isn't quite up to the car's \$4349 class. But the car drives quietly and with little effort.



Closer mounting of the steering wheel to the driving seat and the dashboard layout confirm the Hornet's American birth.

The motor now gives 155 bhp and a much improved 240 ft. lbs. of torque which provide the Hornet with quite urgent acceleration from rest or for overtaking using the second gear kick-down.

Taken to its upper speed limits, the motor can be heard but in normal driving is almost silent.

Using the manual floor selector the Hornet sprinted to 40 mph in first and 60 mph in second taking only 18.5 seconds for the standing quarter mile.

Left to its own devices, the transmission changes smoothly, early and quietly.

The fuel consumption was 20 mpg.

Taken around hilly country, the big ER70 radial ply tyres gave the car good

roadholding and their wet-grip characteristics kept the grip high in wet weather.

The Hornet has power-assisted disc brakes in front and drums at the rear. They did their job with little pedal effort.

The steering is rather low-geared with 6¼ turns from lock to lock requiring several reefs for a normal suburban corner. Parking in a tight spot requires only moderate effort but some fast elbow work.

At cruising speed, the Hornet is quiet and has a rather more secure feel through the firmer suspension specified for the Australian market.

**SUMMING UP:** Sleek styling and the latest Hornet's extra urge should help it retain its market niche.

## ROAD TEST DATA

**HORNET ENGINE:** Six cylinder, capacity 4229 cc, develops 155 bhp at 3800 rpm, 240 ft. lb. torque at 1800 rpm, compression 8:1.

**TRANSMISSION:** Three speed, floor shift automatic.

**SUSPENSION:** Independent front by coil springs, wishbones and stabiliser bar, live rear axle on leaf springs.

**BRAKES:** Disc front, drums rear, power assisted.

**LENGTH:** 14 ft. 11½ in.; width 5 ft. 10 in.; height 4 ft. 4½ in.; weight 2830 lb.; tyre size ER70 x 14 radial ply type.

**MAXIMUM SPEED:** 101 mph, intermediate 66 mph, low 40 mph.

**ACCELERATION:** 0-30 mph 3.7 s.; 0-40, 5.7 s.; 0-50, 8.3 s.; 0-60, 11.2 s.; 0-70, 15.7 s. Standing quarter mile 18.5 s.

**FUEL CONSUMPTION:** 20 mpg. Tank capacity 13¼ gallons.

**PRICE:** \$4349 inc. tax.

Test car from Australian Motor Industries, Bertie St., Port Melbourne.

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## Classified Section: Cars and Parts for Sale and Wanted

Looking for a new home. Listing for a friend. This beautifully restored AMI 1963 Rambler Ambassador is being offered for sale for the first time in over 20 years. This car was pulled down and had every nut and bolt restored on it over a 10-year period and was completed in 2012 by Allan Smith of QLD. The 327 V8 auto just purrs along as it cruises with traffic and along the open road. Since its completion, it hasn't yet covered 2000 miles, so everything is still like new. The trim is US content with the inserts in the seats at the request of the owner and it is finished in a beautiful Arctic white. The car is currently on club registration (not transferable) but I will have a road worthy sale for anyone in QLD. This is a turn-key and enjoyable car. This car was not restored by me but I do know the history. I will assist in any way. \$26,000 ono. Contact Garry Murphy in Brisbane, QLD. Phone 0407-209-160 for any inquires. Thank you. Recent photos of the 1963 Ambassador are shown below.



New Rambler full width smoke coloured front floor mat. Will suit Rebel/Matador with column shift \$140. Used Rambler tissue dispenser in good condition. Suit mid-1960s \$75. Contact Zac Suter in Cremorne, NSW. Phone 0410-490-050.



Moran Motor Glass P/L in Brisbane has templates to manufacture windscreens to suit Ramblers. Prices start at \$350 ex Brisbane. Windscreens are clear with top tint band. Contact Peter Moran. Phone (07) 3390-8855.

Part #W593. 1960-61 Ambassador	Part #W624. 1963-66 Classic and Ambassador
Part #W645. 1964-66 Classic Hardtop and Convertible	Part # W646. 1964-69 American
Part #W684. 1967-74 Rebel and Matador	Part #W829. 1974 Matador X
Part #W747. 1970-74 Hornet	Part #W708. 1968-74 Javelin and AMX



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Water pump repairs for Rambler 6 cylinder and V8s, 1960 to 1980. Send me your old water pump and I can overhaul it and return it to you in just a few days. All work guaranteed. Please phone for a quote. JDM Industries P/L. Eltham. VIC. Phone (03) 9438-5291 or Fax (03) 9438-1587



Set of 4 AMC Rally steel wheels, 14 x 6 inch. Sand blasted. Need to be painted and detailed. No centre caps or wheel nuts. \$300. Contact Michael Carver in Melbourne, VIC. Phone 0425-720-229



New flex plate to suit 343 V-8. New cylinder head to suit 343 V-8, assembled with valves, springs, etc. New rear windscreen glass to suit 1963-64 Classic and Ambassador sedan. Rear glass to suit 1964-67 American. Rambler workshop manuals covering most years in very good condition. Many new and used body emblems. Contact Colin Main in Westmeadows, VIC. Phone 0434-703-733 or Email [amorphan@optusnet.com.au](mailto:amorphan@optusnet.com.au)



Rambler Rebel parts. Many good used parts, mechanical, body, and interior to suit 1967-70 Rebel. Contact Peter Werry in Narre Warren, VIC. Phone (03) 9705-1004.



Wanted. Left front door in good condition to suit 1975 Rambler Hornet. Contact John Springer in Southport, QLD. Phone 0452-580-072 or email [johndspringer55@gmail.com](mailto:johndspringer55@gmail.com)

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