



Another  
garage  
goldmine  
unearthed

# HEMICUDA IN HIDING

It took 10 years to finally get permission to do the story, but it's worth it.

I was just finishing off an appraisal on a Porsche. We were in an alley in northwest Calgary.

The lady across the way was taking out the trash, and asked what we were doing.

"I have an old car in my garage" she said. "It only has 31,000 miles."

Naturally, we asked what it was.

"It's a Hemicuda" she replied.

We asked if we could see it, and she told us how it was all covered up, and stuff was piled around it.

With great amusement, I had to admire her spirit. This blue-eyed girl was going to B.S. three heavy-duty car guys.

"There's a knock in the engine" she continued. "It's been sitting there since 1979."

We got intimidatingly insistent, so she finally consented to let us have a peek. I had just locked my camera in the back of the van.

Skeptical, scrambling up the steps from the laneway to her garage, we chuckled how this ought to be good.

The garage was as packed as my own. Off to one side, under a car cover, sat some kind of old car.

As she uncovered the



Fred  
Nelson  
CLASSIC AFFAIR

rear fender, the black stripe said "Hemi."

Yeah, well, anyone can put a stripe on a fender. Let's see the front.

When she uncovered the hood, there was the N96 scoop sticking through.

On the side were the correct

badges saying "Hemicuda."

About this time, her husband Colin came home. I asked him about the engine and a bunch of other questions. He had special-ordered it new.

It occurred to me as we left that we were used to hearing these kinds of stories in the bar, but no one really believes a word of them.

That was exactly the case, even though we kept insisting we had actually seen it. Sigh.

A couple months later, I was in the same district when I saw the same blue-eyed girl

drive by in her minivan.

I flipped a U-turn and followed her home.

She remembered me, so I asked if I could take a picture, at least. She (Shirley, Colin's wife) was good enough to uncover the car again so I could snap a half-dozen shots.

When I mentioned the story at the Northern Mopars Car Club meeting, some had heard about the car from years before.

In 1969, Colin was driving a 383 Barracuda, but his friends were driving Hemi GTX's and Hemi Coronets.

The peer pressure was enormous, so when the new Cuda was announced with the Hemi, he went down to Fleming Motors in his hometown of Lethbridge and ordered one with the "E74 426 Hemi w/2x4-BBL carbs."

While checking off the boxes for the desired options, Colin almost checked "convertible." (The difference in value today would have been

seven figures.)

Knowing he would be out of town for Christmas, the dealer was given permission to display Colin's Cuda in the showroom if it arrived during his absence. He also dropped off his drag slicks.

When Colin pulled back into town New Year's Day, his new car was the only thing in the showroom. With the slicks mounted, it looked extremely tough. In those days, drag racing was the thing to do. NAS-CAR hadn't really caught on.

As a member of the Lebarons Car Club, Colin worked the tower of the drag strip they ran at the old air strip in Granum.

His Lemon Twist Yellow Cuda could handle the other street machines, although there was a Chevelle LS-6 that gave him trouble.

The stock 4.10 gears were upgraded to 4.88 and Colin fabricated his own set of big-tube headers. Electronic ignition was also added, but all the original parts were retained.



The Hemicuda was well-disguised as a pile of boxes.

This was a smart move.

When the transmission broke, it was repaired under warranty. Unsatisfied, Colin pulled the tranny out and redid it himself. No more problems.

When the knock developed one day at the shopping centre, the car was towed home and put in one corner of the garage.

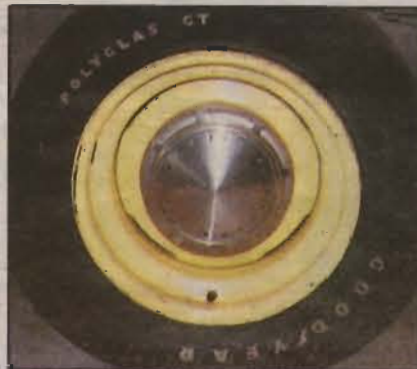
Colin told himself he'd fix it

when he got around to it, but so far ... Hey, how can it be 29 years already?

Maybe after retirement.

photos by Nelson Racing

Fred Nelson is an accredited local appraiser who owns and operates Nelson Racing. Reach him at 242-3856.



The rare ET Mags, far left, had offset holes so they would fit a number of different makes. Meanwhile, the Lemon Twist Yellow Hemicuda boasts the original tires, immediate left, and dog-dish hubcaps. The interior, right, needs a little TLC.

