

1973 AMC Hornet

'Dump Truck Hornet'

Owned by Ian Ashton

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The Story

My dad purchased this car about in 2006 after seeing it at the Woodward Dream Cruise being driven by longtime friend and car designer/builder Jack Pennington. Jack had built the Hornet to be a daily driver, after growing tired of not being able to drive and enjoy his AMX show car. My dad proceeded to take the car to multiple local and national events, including 8 Hot Rod Power Tour long-hauls, The Mopar Nationals and The Woodward Dream Cruise, to name a few. After a decade of enjoyment, he started to lose interest in the car and parked it, taking it out only a few times a year.

Around this time my kids were getting old enough to enjoy car shows, so I asked if I could bring the car to my home in Northern Michigan, about 250 miles north of the car's longtime home just outside of Detroit, to give them the true "muscle car" experience, and that is exactly what I did. We went to several events with the car, each time sending pictures and videos to "Poppa Bob". When it came time to return the car to dad's garage in Detroit, much to my surprise he gave it to me, with the only requirements being #1. Drive the hell out of it, and #2. The grandkids get to do the same, when they are old enough.

After a premature end to our 2019 season as a result of a broken transmission I made the decision to do a full mechanical rebuild of the driveline, with the goal being a return to Hot Rod Power Tour with my dad in 2020. Unfortunately, the pandemic stalled that plan, as we were unable to source parts and when the 2020 Tour was cancelled, we pushed our goal to 2021. Well, supply chain woes struck again, and the car was yet again not ready, but we still went, taking my 2017 Mercedes-Benz C43 AMG with 2 vintage Schwinn bicycles strapped on the roof!

Finally, the car was ready for the 2022 Hot Rod Power Tour; I picked it up a week before with a brand new engine and transmission, and dad and I put the break-in miles on the car during our 12 hour drive to the first venue. Everything was flawless, and the car was invited to be featured at an auxiliary event put on by Edelbrock called Hot Rods on Beale Street; it was a dream come true, until the next day...

...while pulling out of a gas station, the driver of a commercial dump truck *forgot* that he waved us in front of him, and proceeded to hit the driver's side front of the car, doing substantial damage to the front end of the car and breaking the windshield. After some soul searching and a few hours hammering and pulling at an amazing local body shop, we had the car back on the road and decided to finish the tour. Deflated and dejected on our way to Nashville Super Speedway I stopped and grabbed a package of black Sharpies, and scribbled on the fender: "Dump Truck: 1, Hornet: 0" and tossed the sharpies on the ground next to the car and so began the story of the "Dump Truck Hornet" – along the rest of the trip we collected signatures from anyone that wanted to sign it.

The car is now undergoing a complete chassis and suspension rebuild to give it dramatic improvement in ride and handling, as well as a much more modern look.



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The Car

Appearance 1973 AMC Hornet hatchback, custom fabricated hood with 1969 AMX scoop, Drake billet hood pins, recessed bumpers, shaved bumper bolts and trim, Oracle LED projector headlights, Oracle LED taillights, OEM AMC Hornet AMX rear window louvers



Performance 1969 AMC 390, bored .040 over, Keith Black pistons, forged rods, ARP studs, Holley Sniper EFI/Distributor/Electronic Ignition/Coil, Edelbrock aluminum heads, Edelbrock aluminum intake, Doug's headers, American Performance aluminum cooling system



Handling ControlFreak independent front suspension with power rack & pinion steering, ControlFreak 4link rear suspension, ControlFreak sub-frame connectors, Viking coil-overs, Wilwood 12" 6 piston front & 4 piston rear disc brakes, Wilwood master cylinder



Comfort ProCar Rally 1000 Seats, Grant "Tuff" steering wheel, Factory Hornet AMX interior with carbon fiber style accents, Air Conditioning, Pioneer stereo



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The Owners

Ian Ashton: I'm a car guy! As long as I can remember, my life has revolved around cars. As a kid, my dad owned an all automotive hobby shop based in Metro-Detroit called AutoKnow; nearly every weekend we'd be at different shows and events promoting his business and checking out cars, with me often displaying model cars and low-rider bicycles that I'd built.

I have a very eclectic taste in cars, as evidenced by my current fleet, which includes the 1973 AMC Hornet resto-mod featured here, a 1988 Honda CRX (full cage, D16Y8, WedSport wheels, PIC coilovers), a 2017 Mercedes-Benz C43 AMG that is wrapped matte gray, lowered with H&R VTF and BMS tuned, a 2021 Wrangler Unlimited, and a 2018 Cadillac Escalade (tow vehicle, it matches the AMG and CRX.) And no, I'm not actually a doctor.

My dad, **Bob Ashton**, is the Managing Partner for the Muscle Car and Corvette Nationals; the worlds largest indoor high-end muscle car show (www.MCACN.com), as well as an automotive author and widely considered an authority in all things Muscle Car.

Rob (9) and Kate (6) Ashton are the true brains of the operation here, and the motivation that brought the Hornet to Traverse City back in 2018. They affectionately call it the "yellow car" and it is their first pick to drive every time.





The Goal

FUN. Have as much fun putting as many miles on the car as possible. While the car does need to be repainted, that is not a priority for this year. Because the engine, transmission, suspension, brakes, and interior are all new and incredibly nice, I figure that having a 'junk yard' feel to the paint will add some character, and plus I won't be nearly as nervous to stretch her legs on the drag strip, autocross course, and street!

Media

The car was featured in 2 page color article of the October 2011 issue of **Hot Rod Magazine**, written by Mike Finnegan. Our goal is to earn a 'redemption' feature in 2023, but nothing slated yet.



Tentative 2023 Schedule



Car is available for additional events after June 2023

Memberships

