

The Mod Squad

Tricked-out rides, concepts and classics power Wild Wheels@Work

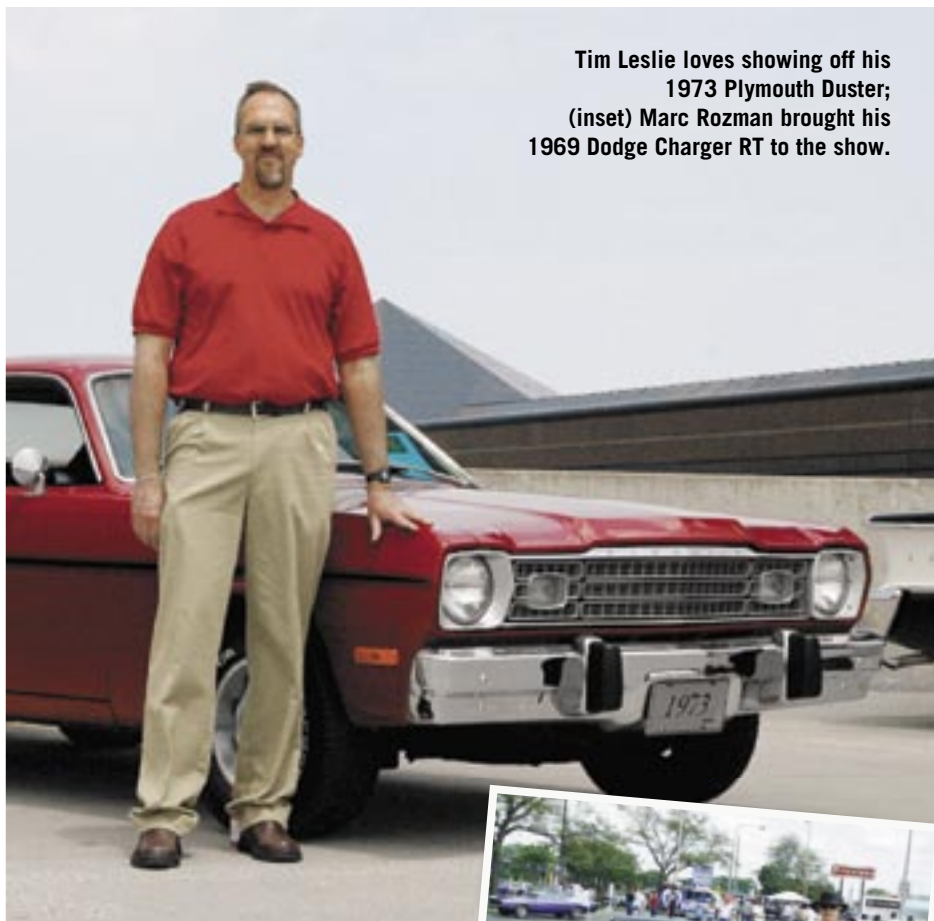
When the first hood popped open at the premiere Wild Wheels@Work back in 2000, Marc Rozman was there. And he hasn't missed a chance since then to be part of the appreciative audience of thousands checking out the prized vehicles that co-workers love to show off at this Chrysler Group-sponsored employee car show.

But this year Rozman, a dynamometer operator and UAW Local 412 member at the DaimlerChrysler Technology Center, brought his own 1969 Dodge Charger RT. "Some guys go for the stock look, and some guys go for the resto-mod. I went back to a stock appearance," says Rozman, who concedes there's a little extra under the hood. "Engine-wise I've got a bored out, and I have an after-market cam shaft for a little more torque."

Like Rozman, Tim Leslie, a transmission designer at DCTC and UAW Local 412 member, brought his favorite ride, a 1973 Plymouth Duster. It was the fourth appearance for Leslie's Duster at Wild Wheels@Work, but the first time he had shown off its new 340 engine — Leslie's last customization job for a while. "I'm done," he says. "If I do anything more to that car, my wife's going to kill me."

But like many attendees, Leslie looks forward to checking out the other cars just as much as showing off his own. "There's always a red Cuda with a red interior that I love," he says. "I think it's a '71." Rozman preferred Bruce Thomas' 1970 Hemi Cuda convertible. "That's a gorgeous car," says Rozman, a 30-year DaimlerChrysler veteran. "Anything with a Hemi works for me."

New models and concept cars also drew a crowd. A Dodge Rampage, Jeep Hurricane and Dodge Challenger were on hand, causing the jaws of many



Tim Leslie loves showing off his 1973 Plymouth Duster; (inset) Marc Rozman brought his 1969 Dodge Charger RT to the show.

enthusiasts to drop. And in the spirit of Wild Wheels@Work, a day when thousands of Chrysler Group employees take time to admire hundreds of special employee-owned vehicles, Chief Operating Officer Eric Ridenour brought along his 1970 Plymouth Super Bee.

For Rozman, the show is a winner. "It's good people and good conversation," he says. "People walk over and say, 'I used to have one of these things and I wish I had it back.' That's the way the typical conversation goes. It's all about the employees being able to showcase their pride and joy, and how that mixes in with their jobs."



This year, Wild Wheels@Work coincided with the Walter P. Chrysler Museum's first Cruise Night of the year, allowing the party to continue after dark. It was a great way to wind down a perfect day for auto enthusiasts. "I'd like to do that every day," says Rozman, who also has a suggestion for next year's event. "Keep it going. I'll be there." ■