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This Month's Meeting: March 5, 2010
Reminder the new start time is 7:15 pm

Colorado Mopar
1671 Tamarac St.
Denver, CO 80220



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Colorado Mopar Newsletter

Next Month's Meeting Is
April 2, 2010

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Letter From the President

Hello to all:

I hope that everyone has been enjoying this white stuff without too much cabin fever. According to Punxsutawney Phil we are supposed to have 6 more weeks of winter. While I like the winter as much as the next person I personally hope that he is wrong so that we can start enjoying nice weather to start up the cars and get them ready for another season of cruises and car shows.

Please do not forget that as a slight change to our monthly meetings we are trying now to have the meeting at 7:15 p.m. to help accommodate those that have further to drive. If possible please remember to try and check your cupboards to see if you can bring any canned or non perishable goods to leave for the food bank.

Don't forget to set your calendar date for April 3rd, 2010 for the first Golden Car Cruise. Of course still remember that this is also weather permitting as we all know how much it can and usually does snow during April. We hope to see everyone there.

Craig K. Bazil

2010 Colorado Mopar Club President

Event Calendar

March 26-28	Mopars at the Strip www.moparsatthestrip.com
April 10	WPC and Plymouth Club Cruise to Greeley Freight Station Museum Time 9 am Meet: 5591 72nd Ave. Commerce City, CO See Kent for more info
May 2,	Great Machine Car Show 10 am – 3 pm 44th and Indiana (Arapahoe Park) Arvada, CO 80002
May 23	Mopar at Thunder Mountain
June 23-36	Mopar Mile High Nationals

Editor's Note: As I was looking for this month's article I was thinking what hasn't been discussed before. Well in my search for a fun and informational article. I thought what about Mopars we don't see at the shows or on the road very often. So in the next few months I will be releasing articles on Mopars we don't see very often. I hope you enjoy the articles.

Little Know Mopars – Chrysler Cordoba

In the early 1960s, when other up market brands were expanding into smaller cars with such models as the Mercury Comet and Buick Skylark, Chrysler very publicly declared that there would "never" be a smaller Chrysler. Historians of the marque noted later that "never" on the Chrysler timeline had equaled not quite fifteen years.

The Cordoba name was used in 1970 on a special version of a Chrysler Newport two-door hardtop. This full-size model was a "limited edition luxury car, designed to introduce you to Chrysler" and consisted of an exclusive "Cordoba Gold" paint with matching wheels, wheel covers, and side molding with vinyl inserts. Chrysler described this model's textured antique gold all-vinyl interior, matching vinyl roof cover, and the hood ornament with an Aztec eagle as "quiet Spanish motif". Included in the US\$4,241.65 price was the 383 cu in (6.3 L) 290 bhp (220 kW) two-barrel carburetor V8 engine, automatic transmission, power steering, H78x15 fiberglass-belted whitewall tires, and a "golden tone" AM radio.

The smaller Cordoba was introduced in 1975, as a contender in the personal luxury market that was powered by smaller, more economical engines than other Chryslers, and riding on a 115-inch (2,921 mm) wheelbase, 9 inches (229 mm) less than the traditional models at the time. This single body style coupe was one of Chrysler's few genuine hits of the 1970s. At a time when the automaker was teetering on bankruptcy, demand for Cordobas actually exceeded supply for its first couple of years, with production of over 150,000 units for the inaugural 1975 models, and the most built in 1977, with 183,000 units. Half of Chrysler division production during this period (and occasionally more) was composed of Cordobas, and they helped to revive the division. All Cordobas were built in Windsor, Ontario.

Although Córdoba is the name of a city in Spain, the car's emblem was actually a stylized version of the Argentine Cordoba coin. Either way, the implication was Hispanic, and this theme was carried out with somewhat baroque trim inside and by using movie star Ricardo Montalban as the car's advertising spokesman. Notable was his eloquent praise of its "soft Corinthian leather" interior and his Americanized stress on the second syllable of the car's name.

First Generation (1975 – 1979)



The Cordoba was introduced by Chrysler for the 1975 model year as an upscale personal luxury car. At the time, this market segment was large and growing, with the Chevrolet Monte Carlo and Pontiac Grand Prix selling over 300,000 units each annually. The car carried the Chrysler name, then still associated exclusively with large luxury models like the Imperial. It was, however, priced to compete with rivals such as the Monte Carlo, Ford Elite, and Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme. The Cordoba was originally intended to be a Plymouth (the names Mirada, Premier, and Grand Era were associated with the project), but losses from the newly introduced full-size C-body models in 1974 (at the onset of the energy crisis) encouraged Chrysler executives to seek higher profits by marketing the model as a Chrysler, a name with a more upscale appeal. The car was an unforeseen success, with over 150,000 examples sold in 1975, a sales year that was otherwise dismal for the company. For 1976 sales increased slightly to 165,000. The mildly tweaked 1977 version also sold well, with just under 140,000 cars sold. The success of this strategy is well illustrated by the fact that it's similar and somewhat cheaper corporate cousin, the Dodge Charger SE, only sold about a quarter as well during the same model years.

The original design endured with only very small changes for three years before a variety of factors contributed to a decline in sales. For 1978, there was a modest restyling with the then de rigueur rectangular headlights in a stacked configuration that had the unfortunate effect of making the Cordoba look much like the 1976 to 1977 Monte Carlo from the front. A Chrysler designer, Jeffrey Godshall, wrote in his article on the Cordoba in *Collectible Automobile* magazine that this restyling was viewed as "somewhat tacky" and eliminated much of the visual appeal that the 1975 to 1977 Cordobas had been known for. The restyle also made the car appear heavier than its 1975-77 predecessor.

At the same time, Chrysler's financial position and quality reputation was in steady decline, and rising gas prices and tightening fuel economy standards made the Cordoba's nearly 4,000 lb (1,814 kg) weight with 360 cu in (5.9 L) or 400 cu in (6.6 L) V8 engines obsolete. In its final year, 1979, however, high performance made a return as the original Cordoba provided the platform for a one-year-only revival of the Chrysler 300 name.

Second Generation (1980-1983)



The Cordoba was downsized for the 1980 model year. The new smaller model used the J-platform, which dated back to the 1976 Plymouth Volare and was twinned up with the newly-named but very similar Dodge Mirada. Chrysler also revived the Imperial for 1981 as a third variant of the J-platform. The Cordoba and Mirada now had a standard six-cylinder engine (the famous 225 Slant Six), which, while very reliable, did not seem to be suitable power for these slightly upmarket coupes. The much-detuned 318 cu in (5.2 L) V8 was an option (standard on the Imperial), along with the 360 cu in (5.9 L) V8 that was available only in 1980, its final year in Chrysler's cars.

The 1980 and 1981 LS model featured an aerodynamic nosecone with "crosshair" grille. Other features of this model were vinyl top delete and monotone coloring.

The second-generation Cordoba's styling did not attract the praise of the original, and sales were off substantially. It is true that downsizing was tough on personal luxury models generally; both the Chevrolet Monte Carlo in 1978 and the 1980 Ford Thunderbird shrank in size and sales simultaneously. However, those models eventually recovered as their makers moved to correct their cars' flaws, while the smaller Cordoba never did. Chrysler was increasingly concentrating on its compact, front wheel drive models with modern four and six-cylinder engines, and management stopped producing the Cordoba in 1983. Total sales of the second generation cars was just under 100,000 units



NASCAR

Both the first generation and second generation Cordobas made appearances in NASCAR. Ed Negre campaigned one occasionally in 1979-80 seasons, and Buddy Arrington ran a second generation car in the 1982-84 seasons, alternating with Dodge Miradas and Chrysler Imperials. The Cordoba was no more aerodynamic than the other Mopars and never finished higher than 15th in any race entered.

Collectibility

Chrysler's Cordoba has a fairly loyal owner base, and some models are considered collectible. Good examples include early production 1975s, particularly with the optional four-barrel carburetor. However, the second generation Cordoba has attracted little interest in the collector market. Regarding the 300 version, "the '79 could become a minor collectible in the distant future, but LS prospects seem slim to non-existent at this time."

Want Ads

Items will be listed for 2 issues of the newsletter and then will be dropped unless you call or email the editor to request an additional run of 2 more issues.

6 Pack original manifold and carburetor (no linkage) \$1,000 (neg)

Lee Shurtleff 303-284-1752

2 - 440 Short Blocks Brand new still in case. \$400 each (neg).

Lee Shurtleff 303-284-1752

If you have anything for sale or are looking for parts or services send requests to
newsletter@coloradompar.org