

# Lyons on Wheels

by Dan Lyons • *Special to The Daily Gazette*

## 2023 Dodge Challenger R/T Scat Pack Swinger

MSRP: \$66,815 (as tested)



Throughout 2023, Dodge has been releasing a series of special edition Challengers and Chargers. The two models will cease production in their current form at the end of the year. A total of seven, “Last Call” limited editions were issued to commemorate their passing. All packaged high performance with retro styling cues, honoring their automotive ancestors from the classic muscle car era (late 60’s - early 70’s). Included among the last call cars is the Challenger R/T Scat Pack Swinger, which I test drove recently.

Automotive graybeards like me recall that the Swinger name was originally found on Scat Pack Dodge Dart models in 1969. The 2023 Challenger Scat Pack Swinger is the third of the seven, Last

Call limited edition series, and only 1,000 will be built. Color choices are three: F8 Green (a traditional, classy Mopar color), Sublime (a classic, in your face, muscle car hue), and the splendidly named, White Knuckle. All Swingers are built as Widebody cars. The package specifies wider wheels and tires beneath flared fenders, a modified suspension with adaptive dampers, and beefier, six-piston Brembo brakes. Visual cues for these Last Call cars include model-specific badging and wheels, a painted, Shaker hood intake, and throwback, Swinger cursive graphics, on the rear flanks. The retro theme continues inside the cabin, with Mod grain (faux wood) interior bezels, green stitching and special badging.

Under the Shaker hood lies a proven, modern muscle car motor: Dodge’s 392 c.i.d. SRT Hemi V-8. This is the 6.4L version of the Hemi, and in R/T Scat Pack trim, it’s rated at 485 horsepower and 475 lb.-ft. of torque. I was happily surprised to see that my test car was equipped with a six speed manual transmission. Automatics are all but ubiquitous in autos today. But, for those willing to do so, shifting for yourself can add to your driving involvement/enjoyment in performance cars. Stick-wary drivers should note that the Challenger has a hill-holder feature, eliminating rollback worries.



Photos courtesy of Dan Lyons/LyonsOnWheels.com

The 2023 Scat Pack Challenger Swinger is decidedly fast (under 5 seconds from 0-60), with a throaty voice that provides an enjoyable soundtrack, regardless of speed. Fuel economy is predictably weak (EPA says 14/23/17), a sin more easily forgiven in part-time fun cars like this, than it would be in a daily driver. In terms of handling, Challenger is a big car, but light on its feet for its size. It rides comfortably.

In the early 70’s, tightening emission standards, gas supply instability and stricter insurance requirements conspired to bring down the curtain on the classic muscle car era. Roughly 50 years later, the handwriting’s on the wall for all gas powered automobiles. Ditto and more so for huge engine, high performance muscle cars, so history repeats. The cars that ate the most fossil fuels will again be among the first to disappear. The end of the second, golden age of muscle cars seems inevitable.

There will be a third act to this play, I’m sure. All-electric and gas/electric hybrid powered cars already exist that are capable of stellar performance. Challenger’s third (and for the moment, last) generation (2008-2023) was far longer than its first (1970-1974). And, judging from their recent concept cars, Dodge may well be among the leading actors in the next phase of this production, clearing the path for a Challenger 4.0. But, when and if this happens, the products won’t have the same look, sound or feel that these cars do. So, in that sense it might be a last call. Not for high performance, but for the elemental vibe of big, gas powered muscle cars.



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