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Chrysler 300C SRT8

A recipe for automotive performance

There is no such thing as a boring year in the automotive industry. Take this year, with all the challenges and opportunities facing everyone. On one hand, we have the extremely competitive market where OEMs are clawing out sales through incentives and out-of-the-box thinking on sales strategies. On the other hand, we see automakers making strides with innovative, exciting, and passionate designs. Cars like the **Chrysler 300** are selling themselves. We have collectively proven once again that it is all about product, product, product—and, of course, the all-important product.

Nowhere is this fact regarding product more true than in the performance vehicle and performance parts marketplace. A movie about baseball became known for the catch phrase, "If you build it, they will come." In the performance-vehicle industry, particularly over the last couple of years, the sentiment is more like, "If you build it, and it has some bragging rights, they will blow your doors down coming after it!" And what a hoot that is for those of us who build those kind of vehicles. "Great vehicles at a great value" has proven to be a very successful strategy, and we are finding even more success taking it to the next level—best performance for the best value. Is this a trend? Absolutely! Those who do it well will win. Those who just "pretend" won't do so well.

What does that mean for the future? Where is this performance vehicle and performance parts thing going? At

Chrysler Group's Street and Racing Technology (SRT), we have a pretty good feel for it.

A few key trends should be considered a sure thing in the automotive landscape of the future: horsepower, performance parts, and total vehicle performance.

Any performance customer worth his salt would never say when there is enough horsepower. Even if customers can't use all the horsepower they have, they will still brag about it. That attitude is what will keep them coming after performance parts from in-house organizations like **Mopar**, as well as aftermarket suppliers. And these kinds of performance-oriented groups just get better and better at understanding the enthusiast market. They are delivering the parts and components to allow their customers to take their cars to the next, most outrageous level. After all, isn't that what the automotive business is all about—giving customers what they want?

Of course, we know consumers also want efficiency with their horsepower. The challenge for manufacturers (OEM and aftermarket) in the future will be to deliver more horsepower at lower cost to the consumer.

For example, the Chrysler Group's 5.7-L Hemi engine produces 340 hp (254 kW), yet with our Multi-Displacement System (MDS) cylinder-deactivation technology, it can achieve up to 20% better fuel efficiency. Bottom line: Customers get the power and capability of the Hemi V8 that they desire with the fuel economy of



a less-powerful engine.

In terms of absolute horsepower, however, OEMs may be moving toward a limit where it just is not practical to offer more. No one is sure where that limit is—the point where manufacturers say, “We will not offer more than X-number of horsepower in anything we produce”—or when we will see that limit, but it is likely to be some years away. The absolute top power level will be defined by things like the engineering/physical limits for seamlessly applying high horsepower and torque in a very safe and credible way. Smoky burnouts look really cool, but as real performance enthusiasts know, hooking the power up is the thing.

But, it is not the only thing.

There is another key trend that we will see continuing in the future: total vehicle performance. In the high-performance arena, the future will be about more than just putting in a big engine to deliver bragging rights. Specifically, at SRT, it is addressing five critical areas: exterior attributes that tell the world it is a performance vehicle and reinforce the brand image; interiors that are well thought out and functional for the performance enthusiast; braking that delivers excellent stopping distances time after time with no excuses; ride and handling that does not beat you up on the daily commute and has enough range to deliver credible performance on a track (with a little fun thrown in); and, of course, standout powertrains. High-performance powertrains must provide the seamless application of

raw power and deliver it to the ground in such a way that your blood almost literally boils with passion. Every kid who grew up dreaming of cars lives for that day when they own one (or two or three) of these high-performance dream machines.

At the Chrysler Group, this total integration of performance dynamics is called “synthesis.” It is much more than zero-to-60. It is the art of the last 2%. Synthesizing components, subsystems, and systems into a vehicle whose overall functional performance is greater than the sum of its parts—the last 2%—is truly an art. You know you have nailed it when the car feels like an extension of your senses. The brakes, steering, suspension, ride, handling, sounds, touches, *etc.*, all feel just right. This is automotive engineering and total vehicle performance at the highest standard of excellence.

Perhaps if there will be any one trend in the future that will override all the others, it is that we will create high-performance cars that offer no excuses and offer true performance functionality. They are not just pretty, or outrageous, with no functionality. They will be executed with the highest levels of credibility, integrity, and good old passion.

Now that is a trend we can all fully embrace! **aei**



SRT-developed 6.1-L Hemi V8



Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT8 performance seats



Dodge Charger SRT8 20-in forged aluminum wheels and high-performance Goodyear tires