

# HOT HOT HOT!

Heavy early interest  
spurs presales effort

## CHALLENGER



To meet overwhelming demand from enthusiasts, Dodge took the unprecedented step of taking early orders for the 2008 Dodge Challenger SRT8, months before production. Orders began on Monday, December 3, and more than 4,300 vehicles were ordered by customers the first day. By Wednesday, they had over 6,000, and Dodge released the first photos of the Challenger SRT8, to generate even more interest. (Compare the standard concept model on page 11.) Dodge says they have muscle car fans squealing like teenage girls at a Hannah Montana concert. Whether that statement means anything to their target market or not, the car is definitely hot. Orders kept coming in—long before enthusiasts had even seen the car. The production Dodge Challenger SRT8 makes its debut at the 100th Chicago Auto Show opening February 8 (with media preview on February 6, so expect a lot more information soon).

Whether people have seen the Challenger SRT8 or not, they are able to hear about it. The car is powered by a 6.1-liter HEMI V-8. Each features a numbered dash plaque. It's available in black, silver or HEMI orange, with dual "carbon-fiber" hood stripes that harken back to the original Challenger of some 35 years ago.

When pricing was announced on November 29, website traffic at [www.dodge.com](http://www.dodge.com) went up 23 percent, which was a big influence in the company's decision to go for early sales commitments. The manufacturer's suggested retail price is \$37,995, including the \$675 destination fee. Not bad for an SRT, delivering high performance, upgraded ride and handling, stronger braking and a race-inspired interior. Pricing on the rest of the Challenger lineup will be announced at a later date.

The all-American 2008 Dodge Challenger SRT8 will be built at the Chrysler Canada Assembly Plant in Brampton, Ontario, on the same

assembly line as the Dodge Charger, Charger SRT8, Magnum, Magnum SRT8, Chrysler 300 and Chrysler 300 SRT8.

SRT performance vehicles are engineered by Chrysler's in-house performance organization: Street and Racing Technology. They currently include the Dodge Viper SRT10, Dodge Caliber SRT4, Dodge Magnum SRT8, Dodge Charger SRT8, Chrysler 300C SRT8, Jeep® Grand Cherokee SRT8, and now, the Dodge Challenger SRT8.

The 21st century American muscle car wars resumed with the sound of one hand clapping a couple of years ago, as

the current retro-inspired Mustang hit the market first (and has sold like hotcakes). This spring, when deliveries begin for the Challenger SRT8, the battle gets more serious. Add the impending return of the Camaro, and three iconic original pony car coupes will again be on America's streets, shiny and new. With the originals costing anywhere from \$50,000 to \$450,000 and climbing—and 40 years old, and too valuable for most to consider driving—this will bring a lot of fun and excitement back to the real world. Things should get interesting, indeed. ■

