

Magnum SRT8's Only Drawback Is Temptation To Speed

by Mark Maynard

I like a tight deadline, 'specially the one when the appliance repairman calls my cell phone to say he can be at my house in 15 minutes and I know I'm 20 minutes out. That's when a 425-horsepower Dodge Magnum SRT8 comes in handy. This is the big Hemi, the 6.1-liter V-8. With a couple of green lights, I've got it made. DODGE MAGNUM - What's not to like about Dodge's new Hemi-powered \$42,000 muscle wagon? CNS Photo courtesy of Dodge. Pull the trigger on this baby and things happen quickly. It's a symphony of sounds when hard on the gas. The motor hits its stride at 4,000 rpm and thunders with enthusiasm. I love the chuffle from the tailpipe as the engine grabs a breath as the five-speed AutoStick feeds upshifts. Take it easy and fuel economy can rise to the mid-16s around town, maybe up to 20 on the highway. Pop the hood to admire the Hemi and listen as the engine spins as quietly as a fuel-sipper. It's not until you walk around back to the dual pipes that you get the Mopar sound effects. The performance treatment is formidable but ridiculously controllable. The steering is tactile and boosted enough at low speeds to not struggle with the 20-inch tires. The touch is a little light when carving through turns, but easily adapted to. Hit the big Brembo brakes and the car vacuums to the pavement without nosedive. The ride is firm, even monotonous on concrete freeways, but any negatives with this car seem to fade away with the force and finesse that SRT puts into a wagon that can work, not just play. The cargo area has creative packaging for grocery-getting, and a large cargo net will secure the boards and materials from Home Depot. And what young enthusiast wouldn't love to be dropped at school in this? At \$41,625, with the optional Inferno Red paint, side air bags and side curtains and a sunroof, what's not to like about this muscle wagon? Maybe that the power underfoot just begs to be let loose, which can be a problem for those who can't resist. Copley News Service

SPECS2006 Dodge Magnum SRT8Body style: 5-passenger wagonEngine: 6.1-liter SRT Hemi V-8; pushrod-operated overhead valvesHorsepower: 425 at 6,000 rpmTorque: 420 at 4,800 rpmTransmission: 5-speed AutoStickEPA fuel economy estimates: 14 mpg city, 20 highway; 91 octane recommended**PERFORMANCE**Acceleration: 0 to 60 mph, "low 5-second range," Dodge says60-0 mph braking: Approximately 110 feetQuarter-mile: mid-13-second range0-100-0 mph: mid-16-second range**DIMENSIONS**Cargo space: 27.2 cubic feet; 71.6, rear seats foldedFront head/leg/shoulder room: 38.7/41.8/58.7 inchesRear head/leg/shoulder room: 38.1/40.2/57.6 inchesLength/wheelbase: 197.7/120 inchesCurb weight: 4,260 pounds**FEATURES**Standard equipment includes: remote keyless locking, air conditioning, tilt-telescopic steering column, leather-wrapped steering wheel, high-performance suspension, performance-tuned steering, 160-amp alternator, solar-control glass, rear window defroster and wiper-washer, cruise control, 6-speaker Boston Acoustic audio system with 6-disc CD and MP3, full-length floor console, map lights, floor mats, fog lights, power heated and folding mirrorsSafety equipment includes: Dual stage front air bags, power adjustable pedals, tire pressure monitoring display, 4-wheel ABS, traction control, electronic stability control and brake assist; optional front and rear side curtain air bags (\$390)**CHASSIS**Brakes: Brembo 4-piston calipers with aluminum housing; 14.2-inch vented rotors front, 13.8-inch vented rearSteering: Rack and pinion with hydraulic power assist; turning circle, 38.6-feetSuspension: front, independent SLA with high upper "A" arm, lateral and diagonal lower links with dual ball joint front knuckle, coil spring over gas-charged shock absorbers and revised stabilizer bar lower "A"; rear, 5-link independent with coil springs, gas-charged shock absorbers and isolated suspension cradle; revised rear stabilizer bar armTires and wheels: three-season Goodyear F1 Supercar; front, P245/45R 20-inch; rear, P255/45R 20 on polished aluminum wheels**PRICING**Base: \$37,995, including \$675 freight charge; price as tested, \$41,625Options on test car: Inferno Red crystal pearl coat paint, \$225; SRT option group II, \$2,065, includes 1-year Sirius satellite radio subscription, auto-dimming rearview mirror, navigation system, Uconnect hands-free phone connection; side air bags, \$390; power sunroof, \$950Where assembled: Ontario, Canada**PLUSES:** Impressive performance in a reasonable family muscle wagon**MINUSES:** Could be a ticket collector for the hot shoe

SPEED TRAP AWARENESS Forewarned is forearmed for summer travelers. The National Motorists Association has prepared this list of the top 10 speed-trap cities in the United States: 1. Detroit, suburbs2. Washington, D.C.3. Orlando, Fla.4. Colorado Springs, Colo.5. Houston, Texas6. Virginia Beach, Va.7.

Austin, Texas⁸. Baton Rouge, La.⁹. Nashville, Tenn.¹⁰. Fresno, Calif. Compiled from the association's SpeedTrap Exchange - www.speedtrap.org - the Web site identifies the location of speed traps, with driver comments, throughout the United States. And when all else fails, just slow down.

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