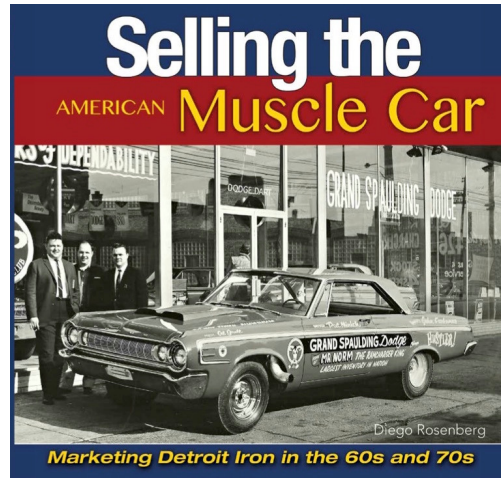


BOOK REVIEW



By Bob Palma

Selling the American Muscle Car: Marketing Detroit Iron in the 60s and 70s

By Diego Rosenberg

Selling the American Muscle Car: Marketing Detroit Iron in the 60s and 70s by Diego Rosenberg, is as good a book as it is unique. To the best of my knowledge, no one has attempted to assemble a book of this nature. That's too bad, because the combination of manufacturer and dealer co-operation to sell these cars to the Baby Boomer and Beyond youth market deserved a well-annotated book like this.

Diego Rosenberg has successfully stepped up to the plate. Quite frankly, I don't see how anyone could have done a better, a more comprehensive, job. He hits all the right notes in this lavishly-illustrated tome.

Have you seen the movie *Rain Man*? Most of us have, and we are amazed at the detail memory of one of the two main characters, Raymond Babbitt, masterfully played by actor Dustin Hoffman. Diego's mind is not unlike that of the character Raymond Babbitt, and that is intended to be complimentary. We should all have such good memories that we are thrown out of Las Vegas for gaming the gamers!

My first encounter with author Diego Rosenberg was audio, not visual, in that he is The Official Announcer at The Pure Stock Muscle Car Drag Race. Diego would announce a certain car at the line and then add commentary such as, "This is one of sixteen 1970 Oldsmobile 4-4-2 hardtops painted in this unique combination of Nugget Gold with a black vinyl roof and tan bench seat interior." (That's a fictitious example).

I remember being skeptical about the statistics he was citing, thinking, "How could anyone know all that?" Well, as I came to know Diego over the years, I learned that, by George [not Krem, by the way, the other mythical George we've all never met], Diego **does** know all that stuff because he has studied Production Records and Archives and entered that data in a mind with the capabilities of Raymond's in *Rain Man*. Incredible, to say the least. Suffice to say that Diego Rosenberg is "the man" to tackle writing a book of this nature, and he has done a fine job.

A proper review for *Jet Thrust News* would be of the Studebaker section, which is nothing short of excellent. Diego didn't presume to know everything about Studebakers as he approached writing the book, but he knew from The Pure Stock Muscle Car Drag Race that including Studebakers would be mandatory. So, as a result, he enlisted the efforts of Andy Beckman at *The Studebaker National Museum*, George Krem, and Yours Truly. George and I supplied the information and Andy supplied many of the photos. But we did not write the chapter for him; Diego wrote it and we carefully proofed it. It worked out well; the Studebaker material is accurate.

So many muscle car books ignore Studebaker altogether, but not this one. The book has 189 pages of text; 6 of which are devoted exclusively to Studebaker's high-performance cars. That might not seem like a lot, but it is more than 3% of the book's contents. Studebaker never had 3% of the entire United States automobile market during the muscle car era, an era that continued for ten years after Studebaker's demise, much less 3% of the *high-performance* market. Consider, for example: Pontiac built more 1966 GTOs in one month than Studebaker built Avantis and Avanti-engined Larks and Hawks in 1963 and 1964 *combined*...yet the entirety of Pontiac's efforts from 1956-1975 got 21 pages in Diego's book. For two years of Studebaker's admittedly-modest production to get 6 pages against 21 for Pontiac testifies to Diego's inclusiveness.