

Special Edition Pilfers Hearts

Challenger Shakedown One of Seven ‘Last Call’ Models

By Derek Price
CARGAZING.COM

Special-edition cars have long been designed to extract money from enthusiastic buyers by adding vinyl decals, cheap badges and other gimmicks to pump up sales.

At least, that’s how skeptics see them.

Dodge is taking special editions to a new level this year with a whopping seven “Last Call” models that celebrate the end of the road for their current-generation Challenger and Charger muscle cars.

The first of them is called, apparently without irony, the Shakedown.

I’m looking forward to driving the other six — the Swindle, the Ponzi, the Extortion, the Fraud, the Racket and the Coercion — because as much as I really want to dislike the Shakedown, I’m struggling not to fall in love with it.

Despite its unfortunate name, this car embodies everything great about the internal-combustion engine. It rumbles, shakes, snorts, growls and thunders its way into people’s hearts, much like I imagine steam locomotives did until the early 20th century.

I grew up long after those steam trains had been replaced by diesel, but I still loved making chugga-chugga choo-choo noises as a little boy.



The Challenger Shakedown is one of seven unique “Last Call” models Dodge is releasing for its muscle cars in 2023.

If American children soon live in a world where silent electric cars are the norm, I bet they’ll still dream of vroom-vroom-squeal cars exactly like this one.

Every Challenger carries a sense of gasoline-powered romanticism. Its throwback, 1960s-inspired shape and emphasis on all-American muscle, from the base 303-horsepower V6 to the 807-horse Hellcat engine in the SRT Super Stock, make it one of the most visceral cars

you can buy in 2023.

That’s how Dodge can offer the Shady Profiteering edition with exclusive Blackmail Me paint, and people not only line up to buy it, but pay extra for the optional Graft Package. It’s that fun.

The Challenger Shakedown comes with performance and visual changes that amp up its emotional and nostalgic appeal. A long list of unique features — from the Shaker hood and air intake, to dramatic

stripes and red “392” badges that boast about its cylinders’ girth — make it look a lot like the sinister Shakedown concept car Dodge created in 2016.

A thousand Shakedown cars are planned for production in 2023, half of which will be the standard-width model with gray paint. The other 500 copies will be the Widebody version that comes exclusively in black.

My tester, a Widebody with that menacing black

paint, is absolutely thrilling to drive. Its 485-horsepower engine delivers the wicked sound and speed that make the HEMI V8 legendary, and its handling is surprisingly sharp for such a heavy car. It drives like an angry rhinoceros and weighs about the same at 4,303 pounds.

The Challenger Shakedown I tested rang up at \$67,490, including options.

If you need to rationalize it, that works out to \$15.69

WHAT WAS TESTED?

What was tested? 2023 Dodge Challenger Shakedown.

Length: 197.5 in.
Width: 78.3 in.
Height: 57.7 in.
Engine: 6.4-liter V8 (485 hp, 475 lbs.-ft.)
Transmission: Eight-speed automatic
Fuel economy: 15 city, 24 highway

RATINGS

Style: 9
Performance: 9
Price: 6
Handling: 8
Ride: 7
Comfort: 6
Quality: 7
Overall: 7

Why buy it?

A menacing red-on-black color scheme and special badges make the Challenger Shakedown a fitting celebration for the end of an iconic generation of muscle car.

per pound, which is less than the cost of a ribeye steak these days. It’s basically like buying groceries.

It also costs less than even the cheapest Challenger Hellcat, which means there’s another thing you can call the Shakedown. It’s a steal.

CARGAZING



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Special badges, red seat belts and coordinated red stitching give the Shakedown a menacing look inside.

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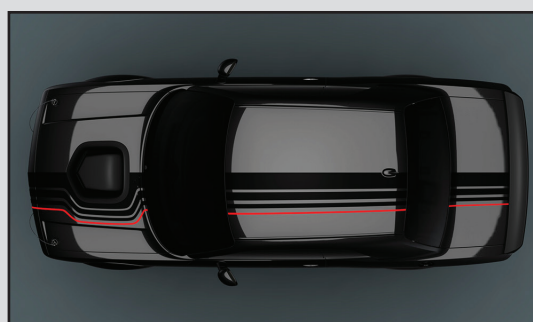
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A CLOSER LOOK



AT A GLANCE

FACTS, FIGURES AND RATINGS

What was tested? 2023 Dodge Challenger Shakedown. Options: Shakedown Special Edition).

Options: Plus Package, Carbon/Suede Interior Package, Shaker Package, Harmon Kardon Audio Group with Subwoofer, Uconnect 4C NAV. Price as tested: \$67,490

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