

Chrysler killed a cheap, dependable, reliable car

"You know, Dad, what we have here is a generic car" was my son's comment when I drove up in a white Dodge Omni, purchased at the basic base level, which meant it not only was plain white and had no trim but that even the bumpers were solid, undecorated bars of aluminum, which I thought kind of glowed in the setting sunlight.

There is no sign yet of speculators rushing to buy up the remaining Omnis and Plymouth Horizons, despite the announcement that Omnis owners are going out of production after Chrysler spent some dozen years churning them out of three plants.

Granted, this is no Ferrari GTO we are talking about. From the day they were introduced, Omnis exuded a kind of loaf-of-bread appearance that somehow managed to blend into traffic like one more leaf hitting the ground in the fall.

IN FACT, Chrysler was a little desperate in 1974 when it shoved the first Omnis out the door in the heat



auto talk
Dan McCosh

of the energy crisis. With much of its engineering cribbed from Volkswagen, it was the first modern front-wheel-drive car introduced by a domestic manufacturer, albeit with a VW engine and transmission.

It also was one of the first cars with a body welded by robots, and it set some records for efficient manufacturing. Another quirk was Chrysler's shortage of paint priming facilities, which led to making the car from galvanized steel — such a long-lasting material that most Omnis built are still on the road today.

CHRYSLER ALWAYS seemed a little embarrassed by the Omni,

which seemed to be made from spare parts from three countries. Even Chairman Lee, who takes credit for the invention of the radio, treated the car like an orphaned puppy that wouldn't go away.

Rarely even advertised, the Omni sold reasonably well even after it got a short-lived bad rap from Consumers' Report magazine. After looking at the ad schedules, the auto magazines never even mentioned its existence.

Not that a car that became standard issue for meter maids, gas company bill collectors and airport rental fleets was ever going to make Car of the Year, anyway. Chrysler

claimed to be making about \$55 per car, unless you ordered a radio.

I ordered my first Omni without one and found that I could leave it unlocked in the worst parts of the city where it seemed to have a kind of repellent quality for car thieves. There were no cute Omni stories, as there were cute Volkswagen stories.

MAINLY, the Omni was cheap. It was the cheapest four-door on the market for most of its life, cheaper than the Japanese, cheaper than Ford, a lot cheaper than any German car.

My insurance payment, not cheap, was actually higher than the monthly car note. Ultimately, I ended up buying two of them, back-to-back, with the second purchased after the drivetrain of the first dropped to the pavement at a Dodge dealership as I pulled into the lot.

Mainly, Omnis were reliable and inexpensive to repair. In some 300,000 miles with the two cars, most of the problems were wear parts such as brakes and stocks —

one clutch was donated to a daughter's driver training — a record marred mainly by the VW engine's catastrophic failure at 130,000 miles.

IN FACT, I sometimes think the real strength of the Omni was that it was always the car everybody said

ought to be built — high-mileage, long-lasting, roomy, reliable — but that nobody really wanted.

Buying one was like wearing hand-me-down clothes, a rolling statement that you were in transition, hopefully, and would get a real car when things started to look up.

Now that it's gone, I miss it.

Small business encourages procrastination

By Mary DiPaolo, special writer

Wouldn't it be wonderful if all of us did what we were supposed to do when we were supposed to?

The fact is that everyone puts off a certain number of problems, decisions or actions until "tomorrow."

This is especially true for small business owners, who are bogged down by the daily demands of running a successful business. But there is a difference between deliberately postponing a task for time management purposes and procrastinating.

Eliminating procrastination begins by examining some of the major causes that lead to it. By doing so, you will then be in a position to pursue solutions.

MANY GROWING businesses create an environment that breeds procrastination. After all, growth is an uncomfortable process.

If you find yourself handling only what you are comfortable doing while setting aside the new or more complicated responsibilities for a later date, you are procrastinating.

Instead of allowing yourself to become overburdened, try to complete at least one challenging responsibility each week. This will help you become accustomed to the uneasy sensation you have when you face a more complex task.

And once the assignment has been completed, you will begin to feel comfortable and more confident tackling other challenges as they arise.

SOME PEOPLE put off indefinitely making decisions or solving problems in hope that they will either disappear or resolve themselves.

If you have ever held off on confronting or firing an incompetent employee to see if they would im-

prove or quit, you have used procrastination as a tool to avoid successful problem solving. In this type of situation, it is important to arrive quick-

ly and logically at a decision before the problems get out of control.

First, identify the problem accurately and in writing if you need to.



REAL ESTATE TAX APPEALS

Are you paying more than your fair share of taxes?




There are 4 proven approaches to appeal high assessments and WIN! To prepare your appeal we collect required evidence, file all necessary paperwork on time with the appropriate agencies and appear at all hearings on our clients behalf.

For more information call
Property Tax Reduction
Consultants of Michigan
2655 E. Southgate Road
Southfield, MI 48034

Pat Hazen
356-2227
Duke University

We work on a contingency basis.

A team of leasing professionals offering you the "Ballas Benefits"

At Ballas Leasing, we believe that leasing should be a pleasant experience. That's why we offer these "Ballas Benefits":

- #1 Personal Attention
- #4 Leasing
- #2 Flexibility
- #5 Free Loaner
- #3 Buying Right
- #6 Effective Used Car Marketing

Get the full "Ballas Benefit" story.
Call TODAY **471-6875**

George Ballas Leasing
The Leasing Company That Cares

George Ballas Leasing, Inc.
Suite 109, 26105 Orchard Lake Road
Farmington Hills, Michigan 48334

Detroit • Grand Rapids • Kansas City • Milwaukee • Toledo • Washington, D.C.

"Barstools & Counterstools" over 25 styles in stock

From \$45.

Stools of all sizes and styles of Oak, Metal, Rattan and Maple. Stools that swivel, with or without back, plush cushions or hemp seat, some that tuck right under your counter and some that even fold.



casual concepts

828 North Main, Downtown Rochester, 652-1080, Open Sundays 12-4

The Tigers are undefeated this season.

Order your 1990 Season Tickets Today.

The real season is on-deck. And you can enjoy it all with 1990 Tiger season tickets. The Tigers are ready to re-earn their stripes in the American League East. We've added some new cats to put more teeth in the lineup. And our cage vets are hungrier than ever.

Remember, the best seat in the house is at the stadium. And the best time to get the best seats is now, when discounts are being offered on all season ticket plans. The Tigers may not go undefeated, but you can't lose with Tigers' season tickets.

Professional Games — Referee and umpires will be made up of experienced game officials and umpires, and the game will be officiated by the American League.

For more information regarding Tiger season tickets, call **313-962-4000**

PLAN A	Full Season Box Lower and Upper Deck — All 81 Home Games	\$760.00
PLAN B	Combination Box Lower and Upper Deck — 67 Dates — Opening Day, 12 Sundays, 53 Nights, 1 Holiday	\$670.00
PLAN C	Full Season Reserved Lower Deck — All 81 Home Games	\$625.00
PLAN D	Combination Reserved Lower and Upper Deck — 67 Dates — Opening Day, 12 Sundays, 53 Nights, 1 Holiday	\$540.00