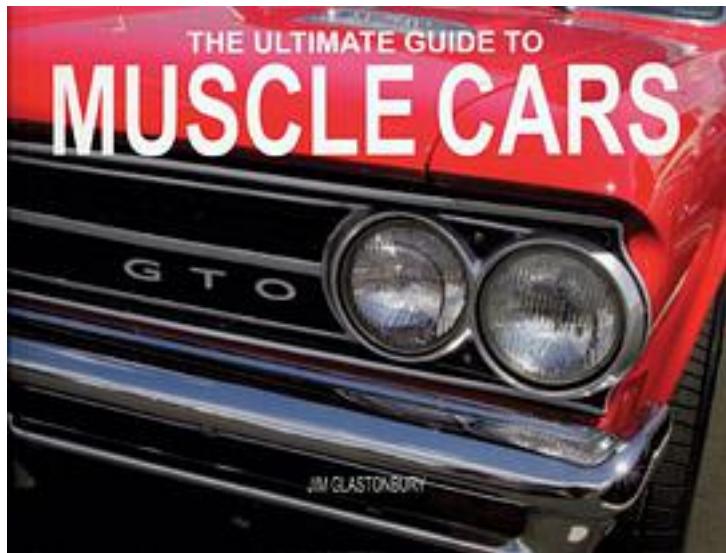


# Muscle Cars



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Known primarily as the "big engine/small car" vehicles, muscle cars have spanned several generations to become a symbol of power and pride. Muscle cars are a quintessentially North American phenomenon, owing their outrageous existence to a very simple formula. Take a mid-sized American sedan, nothing too complicated, upmarket or fancy, then add the biggest, raunchiest V8 that it is possible to squeeze under the hood, and there it is! Pontiac was first, with the legendary GTO, then Ford invented a new class of car with the pony car, the Mustang, then every other American manufacturer got in on the act, producing the legendary Hemi, Camaro, Firebird and Trans-Am, among many others. This book covers them all, as well as all the excitement of Trans-Am/NASCAR racing. Muscle cars are loud, proud and in your face, with no other pretensions than to be just that. They may be simple, even crude, but for roaring, pumping, tire-smoking standing starts, they are the business. To the youth culture of America, raised on drag racing, red-light street racing and hot-rodding, they are irresistible. The late 1960s was the heyday of the muscle car, before soaring

accident rates and insurance premiums, tougher safety and emissions legislation, and finally an oil crisis, made excessive horsepower seem irresponsible. For a while, muscle cars faded from the scene, but in the 1980s they were beginning to creep back into favor, building to a full-blooded revival in the 1990s. They may be a little more efficient today, certainly more high-tech, but muscle cars are definitely back with a vengeance!

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