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'POWER'FUL WAGON

This Dodge muscleman continues to amaze.



Edition 13 of a special CV series by

APOLLO TYRES




The pick-up revolution is starting only now thanks to some ingenious moves from the Tatas and the Mahindras. There is some news in the air that Ford pickups may also debut in India. There is still some way to go. In the meantime, it is worth understanding how one particular legend evolved in the pickup Mecca that is the US.

The Dodge Power Wagon was a four wheel drive pickup truck produced from 1945 through 1969. This early version was based on a military truck and is a predecessor to the many four-wheel drive pickups in use today.

The civilian Power Wagon was introduced in 1946. It was based on the 3/4-ton Army truck's chassis with a civilian cab and a purpose designed 8-foot cargo box. It had a 126 in (3200 mm) wheelbase chassis and featured 230 cubic-inch flat head six engine, a two-speed transfer case, a 4-speed transmission with a power take off opening which would send power to the front and back of the truck for operating auxiliary equipment and a large 9.00/16-8 ply tires on 16X6.50 inch 5-stud wheels. In 1951, the 230 was replaced with the 251 cubic-inch flat head six. The nominal one-ton rated Power Wagon's gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) was 8,700 pounds. Its maximum payload was 3,000 pounds.

The Power Wagon was sold through the 1968 model year. A number of engineering and styling improvements were made over the years, but the basic package remained surprisingly constant throughout its life. Chrysler discontinued the sale of the Power Wagon in the United States after the 1968 model year because its almost 30 year old cab would not comply with new federal light-duty truck safety regulations, but they continued to be built for



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Never wary of progress, never skeptical about success,
Never scared of challenges, never tired of trying,
Every step of the way we travel with our customers,
On the "unstoppable" journey to success.

export through the 1978 model year.

The first light-duty Power Wagons came out in 1957 with the introduction of the W100 and W200 pickups (beginning in 1957 1/2-ton 2WDs were D100s and 4WDs were W100s). These trucks featured conventional cabs and front sheet metal and the cargo boxes used on the 2WD models. Their 4WD mechanical components — axles, transfer cases and transmissions — were sourced from outside manufacturers. Chrysler Corporation owned the New Process Gear Company, the manufacturer of all the transfer cases used in the industry and many of the light-duty truck transmissions.

A one-ton W300 Power Wagon was released in 1958. For the

next ten years the Power Wagon lineup consisted of the 'military-type' W300M, and the W100, W200, and W300 'civilian-type' Power Wagons. Standard models included pickups and chassis cabs only. Through 1966, W100 Power Wagon Town Panels and Town Wagons were also standard models. In 1966 a W200 Crew Cab pickup was added to the line.

The two-ton W500 Power Wagon (only a chassis cab was built) was introduced in 1956 as the C3-HW, and lasted through the 1971 model year. This was replaced in 1972 with the W600 (also cab and chassis only), which was produced until 1977, when all Dodge medium-duty models were discontinued. To compensate for the loss of the medium-duty W600 a new W400 chassis cab was introduced in 1977.

The Power Wagon nameplate was discontinued in 1981 with the introduction of the Dodge Ram, with the four-wheel-drive models being sold under the 'Power Ram' nameplate through 1993.

Cut to the present

For 2005, Dodge resurrected the Power Wagon name on a version of the Dodge Ram. It is a special off-road version of the Ram 2500 with a 5.7L Hemi V8 as the only engine option. Specialties of the model include: electronically controlled locking front and rear differentials, an electronically disconnecting sway bar, an integrated 12,000 pound Warn winch, clearance lights, black fender flares, exclusive 17" wheels, Power Wagon badging (doors & tailgate), larger 33" BF Goodrich All Terrain T/A tires, and an overall increase in ride height with 40mm Bilstein Monotube Gas Charged Shocks putting it at an intimidating 50.6" stance.