

1926 DODGE SEDAN WITH CHARCOAL BURNER

MODEL: "126" Cost US\$800 new
ENGINE: Petrol / Kero 4 cyl/35HP
TRANS -3 speed

Founded as the Dodge Brothers Company machine shop by brothers Horace Elgin Dodge and John Francis Dodge in the early 1900s, Dodge was originally a supplier of parts and assemblies for Detroit-based automakers and began building complete automobiles under the "Dodge Brothers" brand in 1914, predating the founding of Chrysler Corporation. Both the Dodge brothers died from the Spanish Flu in 1920, and the company was sold by their families to Dillon, Read & Co. in 1925 before being sold to Chrysler in 1928.

A substitute for petrol during the 1920s and 1930s, gas producers burning charcoal became more efficient in making carbon monoxide gas that could be used to propel motor vehicles. They came to the fore during World War II because the supply of petrol was severely restricted. Across Australia, over 50,000 motor vehicles, including trucks, buses, cars, tractors and even small trains, used producer gas as a substitute for petrol. The Charcoal Burner in 1938 cost £45- £70, Charcoal cost 16d / 50 lb bag and petrol was 10s & 6p per Litre. At this time the Average Weekly Wage was \$10/week and the Charcoal Burner gave an 80% saving in fuel cost.

In 1941, Cabinet decided the ministerial car fleet be operated with gas producers. Many problems were raised including the availability of good quality charcoal in some areas, high maintenance costs on some units, vehicles being too old or too costly to convert, their unsuitability for short runs and the risk of fire, particularly in rural areas. The gas producer was usually placed on the tray or back of the cab for trucks, on the museums 1926 Dodge it is mounted on the running board

Tractors were (and some still exist) run on producer gas / carbon monoxide. Producer gas was used for pumping water in the irrigation areas - a fascinating topic in its own right. In 1939, a Bentley fitted with a gas producer raced at Mt Panorama. At about the same time, a road race for cars powered solely by carbon monoxide gas was conducted in the Perth suburb of Applecross.

Est 1981

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