1974 AMC JAVELIN AMX
No-Mile Muscle

Good second-generation Javelins tend to command $12,000 to $17,000 in the marketplace, which is what makes the $41k sale of our featured ’74 so shocking

VIN: A4C798N155301

by Tom Glatch

This is a rare find: a 1974 AMC that has only 406 original miles driven by its single documented owner. Painted in Big Bad Blue with a white vinyl top, it is a great color scheme in relation to its white interior.

The AMC was not all show; it came packed with a 360-ci V8 engine that pumped out 245 horsepower. It is meshed with an automatic transmission. Power brakes and steering make for safe and smooth operation. Factory options include bucket seats, seat belts with shoulder harness, and a center console.

ACC Analysis *This car, Lot 5047, sold for $41,250, including buyer’s premium, at Auction America’s Fall Auburn Auction in Auburn, IN, on September 5, 2015.*

You read that right. $41,250 for a 1974 AMC.

I’ve lived in southeastern Wisconsin my whole life, and the Kenosha-built AMCs are part of our DNA (just like the Green Bay Packers), but that’s a shocking number, not only for an AMC from 1974, but for pretty much any factory-built American car from 1974.

Let’s face it, 1974 was hardly the zenith of American performance. It was the last year for the Dodge Challenger and Plymouth Barracuda, as well as the Javelin. The original Mustang was already gone, the Cougar had become a Thunderbird clone, and inside GM, serious discussions had the Camaro almost on the chopping block.

Speed costs money, and by 1974, there was little speed left. In general, these cars are now worth little money in the collector market. Only Pontiac’s Firebird was a serious 4-passenger performance car by mid-decade, especially the ’74 Super Duty, and that car has the market value today to prove it.

That’s not to say the 1974 Javelin AMX was a bad car, but like its Big Three competitors, it had lost most of its former glory.

AMC’s pony

Introduced as a 1968 model, the Javelin was AMC’s answer to the Mustang. It received excellent reviews and sold above expectations. While the Javelin, and its unique sibling, the 2-seat AMX, couldn’t compete with America’s supercars — the Boss, Z/28, Hemi, and the like — it could surprise many other performance cars.

On the race track, the Javelin and AMX showed their true potential. Craig Breedlove set records at Bonneville, Ronnie Kaplan’s team finished third in the ’68 Trans Am series, and Shirley Shahan, the “Drag-On-Lady,” set a number of NHRA records in her ’69 AMX SS. In 1970, AMC scored a huge coup: they hired Roger Penske and Mark Donohue to run their racing program, just as the other factories were getting out of racing. That dream team finished second in the Trans Am series in 1970, then won the championship in 1971. Roy Woods bought Penske’s equipment and scored Trans Am championships in 1972 and 1976.

To homologate the rear spoiler used on the Trans Am racers, and to celebrate the hiring of the legend-

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ary Penske team, AMC sold 2,501 "Mark Donohue Edition" Javelins in 1970. Those Javelins are the most valuable of the bunch, and the rare (100 built) "Trans Am" cars in the red/white/blue paint scheme of the actual Trans Am racers can touch $50,000 when sold.

For 1971, Javelins received a sheet-metal refresh by chief stylist Dick Teague, which included flared fenders that were probably influenced by the Trans Am racers' need to cover wide racing tires. The two-seater AMX was gone, but performance versions of the second-generation Javelin were now called "AMX."

The '71 AMX got a fine-mesh grille, cowl-induction hood, and a lip spoiler above the rear window, all influenced by input from Penske's brilliant driver/engineer Mark Donohue. With the 330-hp, 401-ci "Go Package," the AMX was a fine performance car. It was also the end of an era, and the 1972 to 1974 Javelins and AMXs, while nice cars, rapidly lost any semblance of performance, though a special "Pierre Cardin" edition in 1972 brought the fashion touch to the Javelin, with a wild multicolor interior.

A big sale

Today, good second-generation Javelins tend to command $12,000 to $17,000 in the marketplace, which is what makes the sale of our featured '74 so shocking. Some people might like the paint scheme of this car, but as for me, the Code P2 "Maxi Blue" paint and white vinyl top and interior remind me of a polyester suit John Travolta might have worn in "Saturday Night Fever."

"Maxi Blue" revived "Big Bad Blue," one of the psychedelic colors AMC offered from 1969 to 1971, so this Javelin AMX is like Woodstock meets Disco, and it's not for everyone. The emissions-strangled 360 engine and other options are hardly earth-shattering, too. So all this '74 Javelin has going for it is ultra-low mileage.

I would call this sale, then, a complete and total anomaly — but the story gets even more bizarre.

When it comes to valuing a no-miles car, you'll often hear analysts say things like, "Think it's expensive? Find another," referencing the fact that the car in question is totally unique and worth whatever someone is willing to pay because it's the only one. Well, while researching this Javelin, I did find another. Same Maxi Blue paint, same white top and interior, same engine and options. And the mileage? Just 1,344. That car sold in 2009 for $35,510 (ACC# 120050). We even commented at the time, "This was undoubtedly one of one in a very unusual and striking color combination."

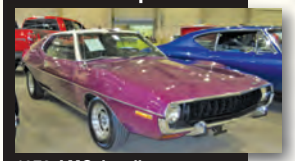
Well, I guess that car wasn't all that unique after all. There are at least two almost-new Maxi Blue '74 AMX Javelins on the planet, and we've now got two data points telling us what they're worth. But all things considered, I'd still call this one well sold.

(Introductory description courtesy of Auctions America.)

Detailing

Years produced: 1974
Number produced: 4,980
Original list price: $3,299
Current ACC Valuation: $12,000–$17,000
Tune-up/major service: $150
Distributor cap: $19.97
VIN location: Plate on the driver's side instrument panel behind windshield
Engine # location: Metal tag on front of valve cover
Club: American Motors Owners Association
More: www.amonational.com
Alternatives: 1974 Plymouth 'Cuda, 1974 Dodge Challenger, 1974 Chevrolet Camaro
ACC Investment Grade: C

Comps



1972 AMC Javelin
Lot 224, VIN: A2C797H221879
Condition: 3-
Sold at $11,340
Dan Kruse Classics, San Antonio, TX, 3/28/2015
ACC# 264564

1973 AMC Javelin AMX
Lot T273, VIN: A3C798P299402
Condition: 3
Sold at $15,900
Mecum Auctions, Dallas, TX, 9/8/2012
ACC# 213497

1974 AMC Javelin AMX
Lot 178, VIN: A4C798N302662
Condition: 1-
Sold at $35,510
Tom Mack, Charlotte, NC, 4/3/2009
ACC# 120050