





voltmeter and vacuum gauge are mong the available factory options seen on this immaculate 1979 Palomino.



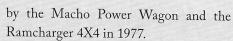
Clear plastic covers protect the correct factory seat fabric. Bledsoe bought all of the fabric he could find from SMS Auto Fabrics and has enough left to cover two more Palomino seats. He believes his stock is all that is left of its kind.



In the 1970s, any real trucker had a Citizens Band radio. (Remember Smokey and the Bandit?) Dodge made it easier to achieve this goal by offering an optional factory AM/FM Stereo with a built-in CB radio.



This factory hand throttle is a rare option that was present on Bledsoe's truck when he hauled it home from the salvage yard.



Dodge coined the term "Adult Toys" in 1977 to give its specialty package program a name. The most famous Adult Toy of all arrived in 1978 in the form of the Little Red Express, or "Lil Red Truck" as it was also known. (See the September/October 2019 issue of *Vintage Truck*.) Realizing that truck buyers were very often ordering options (mirrors, radios, bumpers, tilt wheels, and air conditioning, to name a few) in similar groups, Dodge began bundling the popular extra-cost equipment at a discounted price. The company called these options groups "Prospector" packages.

This option grouping has caused some confusion among truck collectors who think the option groups are trim levels or specialty packages, which they are not. The Prospector option groups for 1979 were introduced at the same time as the Palomino appearance package, causing further confusion. It was entirely possible to order a non-Palomino with a Prospector option group, but if a buyer ordered a truck with the Palomino upgrade, a Prospector 1 option group was mandatory. (There were four Prospector levels offered.)

Palominos were not really considered to be under the Adult Toys umbrella. Their premium wheel covers and required whitewall tires placed them in less of a "sport" category and more in the arena of an upscale, dressed-up pickup. With the Palomino appearance package and its mandatory Adventurer trim level, Dodge offered a lower-cost alternative to a typical Adventurer SE of the time.

Dodge's light-duty line was riding a high in the late 1970s. The covers of the 1978 product brochures proudly proclaimed that Dodge was the "Fastest Growing Truck Company in America," with a 237 percent increase in sales from 1966 to 1976. This momentum ground to a halt in the spring of 1979 when another oil crisis hit the United States. Despite

