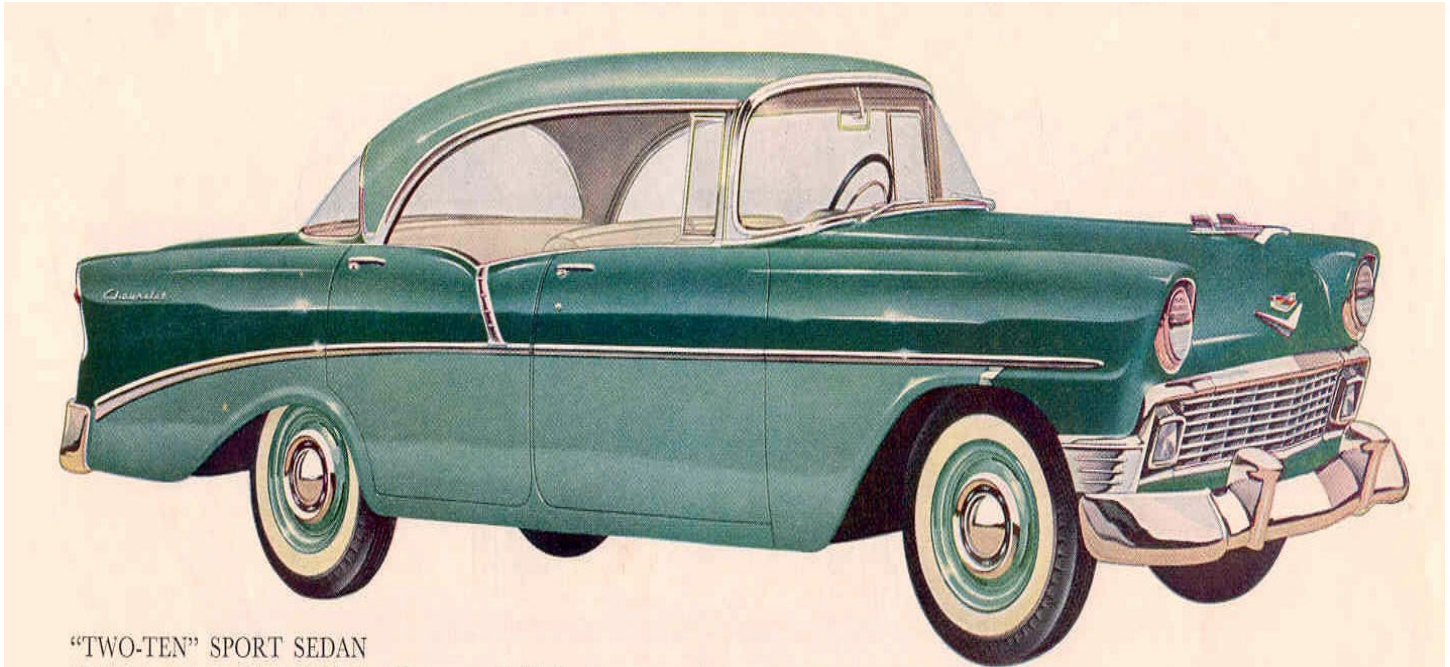


# SPACE AGE STAR

OCTOBER 2015



**CELEBRATING 1956 CHEVROLETS, HERSHEY IS HERE AGAIN, MONZA MIRAGE AND KEN MICHAELS' 1965 PICKUP FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE**



# **REGION NEWS**

## **BY RUSSELL HEIM**

Greetings to everyone. I hope you've enjoyed the summer and early fall weather and that you took some rides in your "Space Age" Chevrolets.

Hershey starts next week, and our region will have the same spaces as last year. We're in the Red Field North (Red Field Section B if you look at the map in the official meet program), row RNI spaces 82-86. We're near light-pole 12 and the TP Tools tent.

We'll have our region meeting at two in the afternoon on Thursday, October 8. We met the same time last year. If this time is inconvenient, please feel free to stop by anytime during the meet. We won't be at our spaces on Saturday because we'll be at the car show.

I don't have much of an agenda for this year's meeting. Our region is doing well; membership is holding steady around 50 members. I'd like to discuss whether we should try to take the region to a higher level, with banners, t-shirts and more aggressive recruitment. Doing this would require a treasury and dues. I prefer to avoid a treasury and dues, but we should discuss this at our meeting as I'd like to get the members input. We can also discuss whether we want to promote the region at the Annual AACA meeting in Philadelphia in February.

Members who are busy on Thursday or who aren't attending Hershey should feel free to send their input on these topics to the region email.

I'm requesting that members attending Hershey please take digital pictures of 1955-90 Chevrolets that you encounter at Hershey. I'll bring my camera too, but I have trouble getting around, so any help is appreciated. I'd like to run a Hershey photo-feature in a future

newsletter, and the more photos we have, the better the feature will be.

That's all for now. As always, please send in photos and stories about your cars, your restorations, your memorabilia collections and technical tips you'd like to share.

Stay well, and I hope to see you at Hershey.

## **CLASSIFIED AD**

### **THE OWL WORKS AT NIGHT**

**Repair and maintenance work for Vintage Chevrolets and other antique cars:**

If any of you need anything done, whether it be regular maintenance or a project that you can't seem to get to please give me a call. I can be reached at 631-880-8489.

Thank you, Ken Michaels





# **1956 CHEVROLET - THE SECOND TIME'S A CHARM**

**BY RUSSELL HEIM**



*The new "Two-Ten" 2-Door Sedan with Body by Fisher, one of 20 frisky new Chevrolet models.*

**“Here already?”**

*...that new Chevy of yours must really move!”*

Chevrolet had a record-setting sales year in 1955 with all-new styling and their spectacular new V8 engine. It would be difficult for them to top 1955, but the 1956 Chevrolets were proof that they made a great effort.

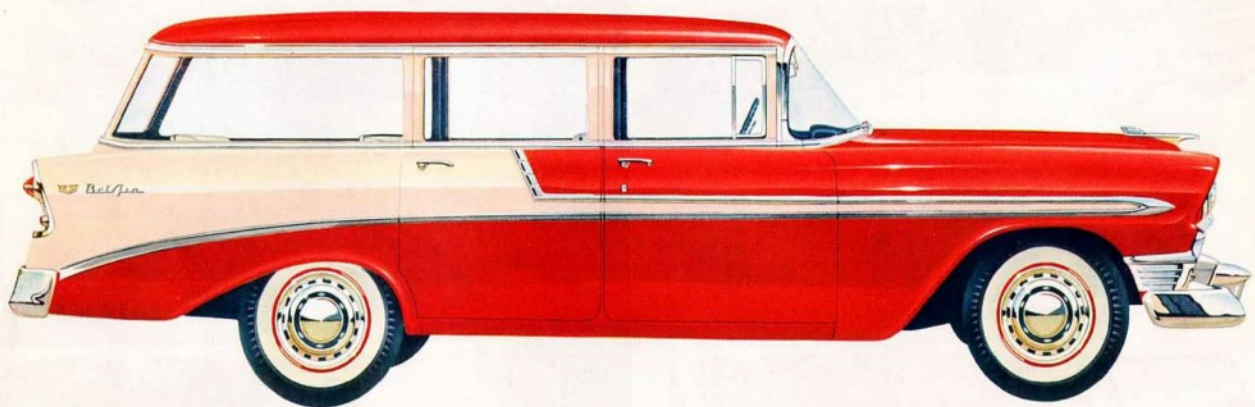
For 1956 Chevrolet refined the styling and increased the performance. The styling updates, especially the full-width grille, gave the 1956 Chevrolets a “baby Cadillac” look. The grille also made the cars look lower and wider. The new full-length side trim gave a longer appearance. Chevrolet introduced four-door hardtops to their line-up this year – this was big

news. They called this body style a "Sport Sedan". This new body style was very popular. Chevrolet sold 103,682 Bel Air and 20,021 210 Sport Sedans in 1956.

Chevrolet's promotional material touted the choice of 19 models in 3 series as the "widest, most exciting choice of Chevrolets ever! Chevrolet reaches new highs in styling and performance with the 1956 models." The ad copy also claimed, "Chevrolet models in all three series feature a bold new grille treatment, hooded headlamps, distinguishing fender cutouts and newly designed taillamps with gasoline filler concealed by the hinged left-side lamp. Here's fine car quality with distinctive and youthful good looks at a low price! Fresh new interior and exterior colors add the final styling touch to mark the 1956 Chevrolet as the most glamorous ever." Customers had a choice of 10 solid colors and 14 two-tone combinations to display the glamour.

Passenger car length increased 1.9 inches over 1955 and station wagon length increase 3.7 inches in 1956. Wagons now measured 200.8 inches while passenger cars measured 197.5 inches. Chevrolet's wheelbase remained at 115 inches. The series line-up continued from 1955, low-line model 150, mid-range 210, and top-line Bel Air.

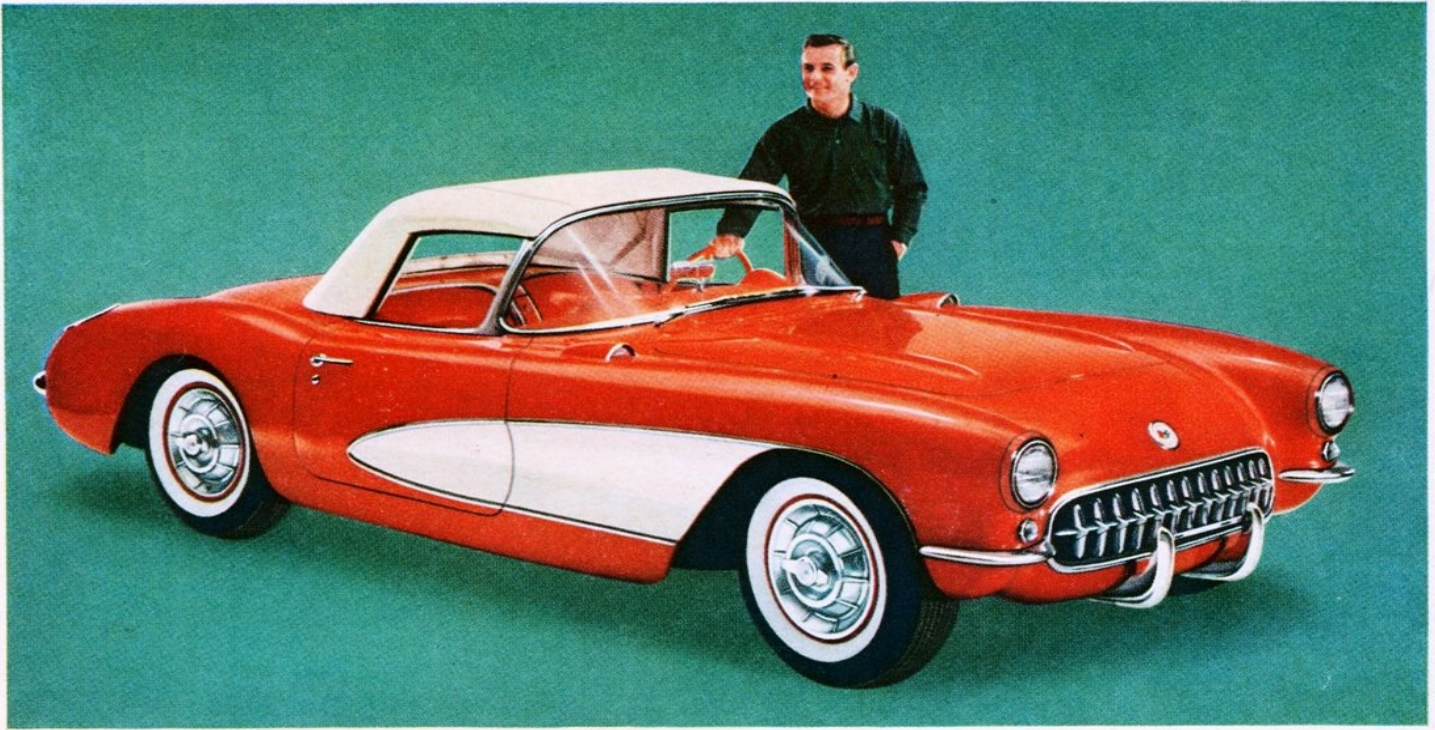
The vaunted V8 engine displacement remained at 265 cubic inches. The standard engine generated 162 horsepower at 4400 rpm with synchro-mesh transmission and 170 horsepower at 4400 rpm with Powerglide. Compression ratio was 8:1 for the standard engine. An optional 205 horsepower single four-barrel carburetor version of the engine was very popular; 256,091 customers ordered this engine. Customers could also opt for a dual four barrel, dual exhaust 225 horsepower version of the 265. The six-cylinder engine retained its 235 cubic inch displacement, but received a compression ratio boost to 8:1 and its horsepower increased to 140 at 4200 rpm.



THE BEL AIR BEAUVILLE  
4-DOOR 9-PASSENGER STATION WAGON

Your choice of SIX high-capacity Chevrolet station wagons for 1956! Two 9-passenger and four 6-passenger models—all brilliantly styled to stand out in any company, anywhere. Interiors are *functionally* handsome. Bel Air interiors are a rich combination of fine, charcoal pattern cloth and sturdy, ivory vinyl. In the "Two-Tens" and "One-Fifties," seats, sidewalls, and roof lining are styled in tough, washable vinyls. Load surfaces are covered with long-wearing ribbed linoleum.





## CHEVROLET UNLEASHES THE NEW CORVETTE

Despite rumors of its demise during 1955, Corvette survived into the 1956 model year. Chevrolet completely restyled the car and made many comfort and convenience improvements. Roll-up windows replaced the previous side curtains and an optional removable hardtop greatly reduced drivers' and passengers' exposure to the elements. Chevrolet sold 3,647 Corvettes in 1956.

Corvette received a performance boost as well. The six-cylinder engine was no longer available in 1956. The base V8 boasted a 9.25:1 compression ratio and generated 210 horsepower at 5200 rpm with a single four barrel carburetor. High-performance minded drivers could order the dual four barrel engine that developed 225 horsepower at 5200 rpm. Standard transmission was a close ratio 3-speed synchro-mesh. Powerglide was available as an option.



The new Corvette is “a true sports car – not a scaled down convertible – and has a completely restyled body and even more maneuverability than the first Corvette introduced in 1953.” New this year was a “weatherproof manually operated fabric top or a lightweight removable plastic hardtop as standard equipment.” A power assisted fabric top was an option. Buyers could opt to

purchase the hardtop in addition to the fabric top.

Despite an industry-wide decline of 27% from 1955’s record sales, Chevrolet still led all makes in 1956 sales. Model year production was 1,574,740, 247,000 more than Ford and good enough to claim 26% of the domestic car market in 1956.



### 1956 Popular options

Powerglide \$189

Power steering \$92

Power brakes \$38

### 1956 Dimensions

Wheelbase 115”

Length 200.8” wagons, 197.5” sedans coupes and convertibles

Tires standard 6.70x15 4-ply

Optional 7.10x15 4-ply

Station wagon 6.70x15 six-ply

# The *hot* one's even hotter! '56 Chevrolet

It's the new 1956 Chevrolet—with bold new Motorama styling...frisky new models...more of the dynamite action that's zoomed its way into America's heart!

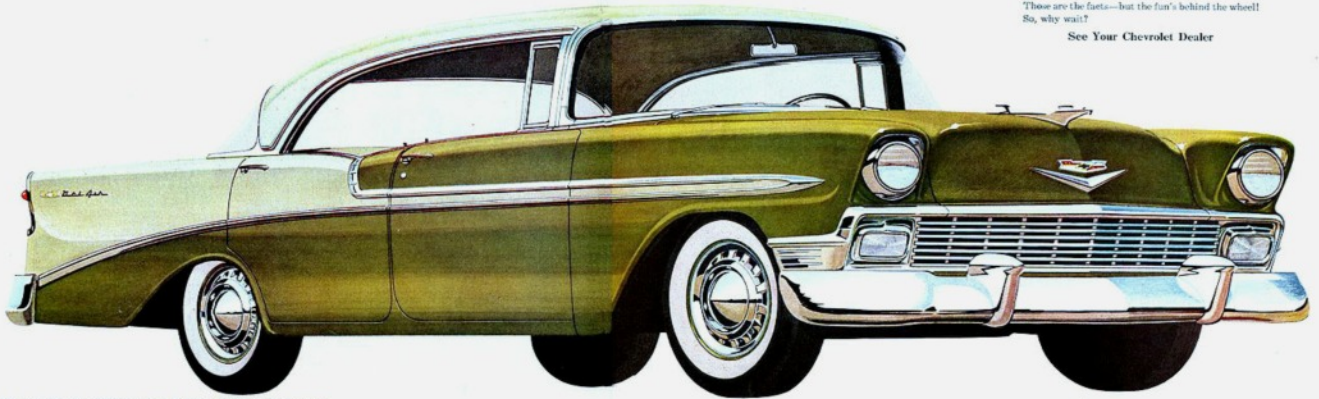
They're here—and even hotter! That's the word on the new '56 Chevrolets.

They offer new higher horsepower—ranging up to a top of 265! This is the car, you know, that smashed the Pike Peak record! That's *proof* of the kind of performance that puts more safety and fun in your driving.

And look at that saucy new Motorama styling—the lower, longer hood, the bold new front-end and sweeping chrome. See the new flared fender openings and high-fashion taillights. (The left-side taillight hides the gas cap!)

Those are the facts—but the fun's behind the wheel! So, why wait?

See Your Chevrolet Dealer



THE BEL AIR SPORT SEDAN—one of two new 4-door hardtops

The new 9-passenger Del Air Beauville



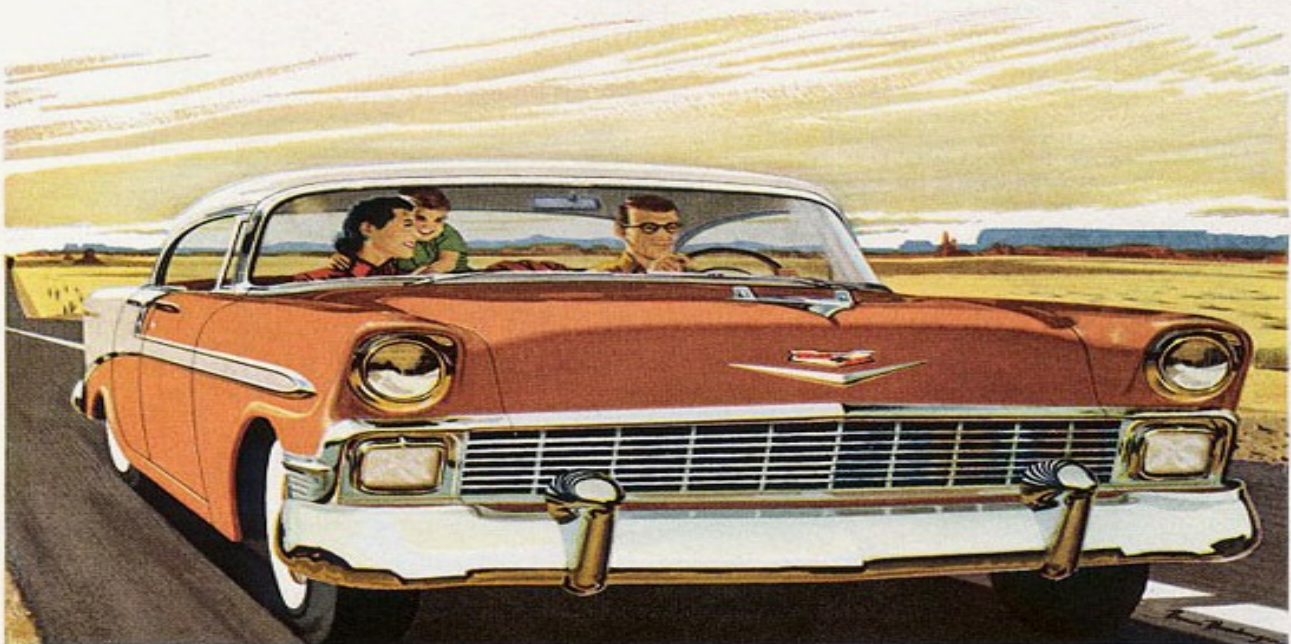
The new "Two-Ten" 2-door Sedan



The new Del Air Convertible



## Loves to go...and looks it! The '56 Chevrolet



The Bel Air Sport Sedan is one of two new Chevrolet 4-door hardtops. All 19 new models feature Body by Fisher.

It's got frisky new power...V8 or 6...  
to make the going sweeter and the passing safer. It's  
agile...quick...solid and sure on the road!



# CHEVROLET—CENTRAL OFFICE

DIVISION OF GENERAL MOTORS CORPORATION  
DETROIT 2, MICHIGAN

## TECHNICAL SERVICE BULLETIN

Technical Service Department



SUBJECT: RADIO ANTENNA TRIMMER ADJUSTMENT  
1962 PASSENGER CARS

BULLETIN NO. DR #507

SECTION XV

TO: ALL CHEVROLET DEALERS

DATE November 22, 1961

The quality of Chevrolet radio reception is dependent on the adjustment of the radio antenna trimmer after the antenna is installed at the dealership.

The procedure is as follows:

1. Place vehicle out-of-doors away from possible interference from metal structural members.
2. Extend antenna to full height.
3. Turn radio "on", select the weakest station obtainable between 800-1000 kilocycles with control set at maximum volume.
4. With a small screw driver, adjust antenna trimmer located under right hand knob for maximum volume of that particular station as shown in Figure 1.

NOTE: This adjustment may be made in less than 30 seconds with no warm up necessary for transistor sets. Tube sets may be adjusted within a few seconds after the set is warmed up sufficiently to play.

In the event a radio installed in a 1962 Passenger Car equipped with a rear antenna shows no peaking as a result of adjusting the trimmer screw, the possibility exists of low capacity rear antenna lead. To correct for this condition, it is necessary to replace the rear antenna lead.

Dealership personnel should insure that the trimmer is being adjusted after the antenna has been installed. If this has not been the practice on 1962 units to date, then a procedure should be set up at the dealership to adjust the trimmer on early Production units when they return for check-up.

Flat rate time for radio antenna installation includes trimmer adjustment.



# **WAS IT A MIRAGE?**

**BY RUSSELL HEIM**



Designed to cash in on the success of Chevrolet Monza race cars in the IMSA (International Motor Sports Association) Camel GT Challenge Series during 1976, the 1977 Monza Mirage was available so briefly that most enthusiasts remain unaware it ever existed. Few, if any Chevrolet fans have ever seen one.

Monzas ran well in the Challenge Series, scoring wins at Road Atlanta and Laguna Seca. Monza Mirage promotional material described the car as a street version of these race cars that was “bound to turn heads wherever it goes.”

Chevrolet introduced the Monza for the 1975 model year. It was based on the Vega and shared the Vega’s 97-inch wheelbase and base four-cylinder engine. The Monza came in Town Coupe and 2+2 hatchback body styles. Its styling and appointments were sportier and fancier than the Vega. Unlike the Vega, the Monza’s option list included a choice of two V8 engines, the new for 1975 262 cubic inch job or the long-running 350 cubic inch V8. The 262 only lasted through 1976, and the 350 was replaced by the new 305 cubic inch V8 in 1976.



# STOCK, DISPLAY, PROMOTE MONZA MIRAGE TO SPARK SHOWROOM TRAFFIC



## Here's what turns the standard Monza 2+2 into a MONZA MIRAGE

- Front air dam
- Rear spoiler
- Front fender flares
- Rear fender flares
- Special striping
- Monza Mirage identification

## Recommended Chevrolet options

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| D35—Sport mirrors       | N31—Sport steering wheel                  |
| F41—Sport suspension    | QKZ—BR70-13/C white lettered radial tires |
| LG3—5.0-litre V8 engine | U14—Special instrumentation               |

# MICHIGAN AUTOMOTIVE TECHNIQUES CORP.

All illustrations and specifications in this literature are based on the latest product information available at the time of publication approval. The right is reserved to make changes at any time without notice in prices, colors, materials, equipment, specifications and models and to discontinue production. Michigan Automotive Techniques Corp., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49508.

Litho in U.S.A.



By Chevrolet standards, the Monza was a moderate sales success; they sold 136,183 Monzas in 1975 and 80,905 in 1976. The introduction of the Monza Mirage appearance package for 1977 followed the “Win on Sunday, sell on Monday” sales formula. In the Monza Mirage’s introductory brochure, Chevrolet dealers were urged to: “Stock, display, promote Monza Mirage to spark showroom traffic.” The brochure claimed, “Monza Mirage is bound to have tremendous appeal to youth and just about everyone who is looking for something special in a practical car.”

Michigan Automotive Techniques Corporation (MATC) of Grand Rapids, Michigan produced and installed the components for the Mirage appearance package. Monza Mirage customers ordered their car through their local Chevy dealer. Once an order was placed, the Monza 2+2 (the Mirage was unavailable on the Town Coupe) was shipped from the General Motors’ St. Therese, Quebec assembly plant to MATC’s assembly plant for component installation, and then returned to the General Motors delivery system for shipment to the dealer.

MATC turned a standard Monza 2+2 into a Monza Mirage by adding:

- Front air dam
- Rear spoiler
- Front and rear fender flares
- Red and blue stripes along the edges of the hood, roof, rear of the hatchback and along the lower body sides
- Monza Mirage identification decals

All components, except for the front air dam, were installed at MATC’s assembly plant. The front air dam was shipped loose for dealer installation to prevent possible shipping damage. Installation instructions were included for dealer use.

The fender flares, front air dam and rear spoilers were made of reaction injected molded polyurethane. The Monza Mirage package was only available on Antique White cars. The ordering instructions stated that all Monza 2+2 interiors were available. MATC recommended, but didn’t require the following options to maximize the visual appearance and ride characteristics of the Mirage:

- Sport Mirrors
- BR70-13/c white lettered radial tires
- Special instrumentation package
- Sport steering wheel
- Sport suspension
- 2-barrel 305 cubic inch V8

They listed the following Chevrolet options as incompatible with the Mirage and stated that they must not be ordered:

- Body side moldings
- Door edge guards
- Wheel opening moldings
- Spyder equipment package
- Spyder appearance package

MATC matched the standard General Motors 12 month/12,000 mile warranty covering defects on workmanship and materials. Painted components were only guaranteed for 90 days or 4000 miles. Warranty claims were to be made directly to MATC. They stated that they maintained an ample supply of service and replacement parts.





The appearance package was based on the Monza GT race car (shown above) driven by Al Holbert in the 1976 IMSA races.



It's debatable whether the Mirage had an effect on 1977 Monza sales. Total Monza production dropped to 73,348 units, but 1977 was the first year the 2+2 outsold the Town Coupe. 2+2 sales rose to 39,215 in 1977 from 34,170 in 1976.

The price of the Monza Mirage package was quoted as "under \$700" in the December 1976 issue of *Motor Trend*. This was expensive compared to the Spyder equipment package (\$274) and appearance package (\$199).

Supposedly 4097 Monza Mirages were built. Some sources state that MATC produced 4097 and that dealers installed an additional unknown number of Mirage packages. Other sources state 4097 as the total between MATC and dealer installations.

The January 1977 issue of *Road Test* magazine called the Mirage "the best-looking American car to come down the pike in a long, long time." They said they created a traffic jam wherever they went with their test car. The article didn't go into details on the car's performance.

Merchandising materials prepared by MATC indicated plans to make additional colors available as of May 2, 1977 and to continue the Mirage for 1978. This wasn't to be as Chevrolet discontinued the package, making it a one-year-only option and leaving people to ask, "Did I really see that, or was it a Mirage?"

Pictured below is region member John Mahoney's 1977 Monza Mirage.







During John's search for a Monza Mirage, he placed a "car wanted" ad and received the above photos in reply. The car had been parked in this garage for many years and was a true barn find.





John agreed to purchase the car, and the above photos show the Monza Mirage prior to pick up by the shipper. This was the first time the car saw real sunlight since 1983.





Monza Mirage at John's home after a thorough cleaning and addition of the rare 10 slot, four lug 13-inch wheels.

## **CAR OF THE MONTH - BY KEN MICHAELS**

This month's car of the month is a truck. As in most cases the story is as interesting if not more so than the vehicle it self.

Our story begins in the summer of 2004. It had been six years since I owned an old Chevy. I had sold my 1963 SS Impala to pay for my oldest daughter's college. I didn't feel completely Chevy-less as the middle daughter had a 1971 Chevelle.

I was getting the bug to get back into the hobby. During that summer, I looked at several trucks, most of which were junk. There were too many to mention in this article but a few were, shall we say, amusing. One, a 1951 3100 rot free low mileage western truck was for sale locally. The seller forgot to mention that this truck was completely dis-assembled. Not for me. Next was a 1959 Apache with so much rot that I could actually lift the body off the frame. I almost went for it anyway until I noticed the tired 350 was welded to the frame. The owner had told me it was the original engine. Then I saw 1964 C10 short bed step side. Again in pieces but this guy was meticulous. The cab and frame were back together and the rebuilt 283 ran well. The trouble was it was converted to a Powerglide with a late steering column. I did not want a custom truck. Next, I almost jumped ship for a 1965 Ford F100 long bed, solid body original paint slightly vandalized from sitting outside but other than that, a very nice truck. The trouble? This owner had every mental disorder there was. ADHD, paranoia, schizophrenic, obsessive compulsive, you name it, he had it. I could not even talk to him.

One day in *Newsday*, an ad read, "1965 Chevy C10 long bed, 283 4 speed, clean dry western truck being driven to NY as you read this ad." I called a left a message. About an hour later, "Ricky" called me back. He said he was

coming across New England and was hoping to catch the last New London to Port Jeff Ferry. I tried to arrange to meet him in Port Jeff. He told me he was in this truck for four days and had to get home to rest. He gave me his address in Hampton Bays, and the next day I stole the Chevelle and drove out there. The truck was mechanically perfect, the body was an eight out of ten, almost zero rot with original paint. I made the deal, and Ricky drove the truck to my house the next day. As I said the truck was mechanically perfect, with only minor rot in the lower front fenders and a dent in the cab corner where it meets the door. The bed was nearly perfect and all the wood was original. I learned later that the engine had been swapped for a period correct 283 from a car. I added a better looking rear bumper and had the truck painted the original color. I reupholstered the seat myself. I use this truck. I made an 1100 mile trip towing a trailer from Long Island to Rochester to Baltimore. I have been to Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and upstate many times. I never had a problem.

Plans for the future: Chopped, channeled, lowered, airbags... just kidding. The plan is to keep the truck. When I die, it goes to my daughter Nicki and her husband Scott (as long as they keep the Chevelle also). What puzzles me is this: between Chevy and GMC, over two million of these trucks were built between 1963 and 1966. It's not rare. It is not highly optioned. It is not quick or easy to drive or park. So what in the name of Louis makes it so special? Maybe it just reminds us of a time when cars were made in America by union craftsmen who were dedicated to producing the finest quality vehicles in the world.





Post Script:

About the seller: "Ricky" told me he bought this truck to bring his damaged Harley back to New York. He said it was cheaper to buy a truck and drive it back with the bike than to have the bike shipped. Nice story, until I read in *Newsday* a week later: "1971 Ford F100 clean dry western truck being driven to ....."

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The Space Age Star is the official publication of the Space Age Chevrolet Region of the Antique Automobile Club of America. This is a non-geographic region dedicated to the enjoyment, restoration and history of 1955 and later AACA eligible Chevrolet cars and trucks. We publish the newsletter six times each year.

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