

# SPACE AGE STAR

**JUNE 2017**



**The Dimbath's 1963 Chevy II Story, Space Age Chevrolets at Charlotte, NPD Tour Photos, Kenny Stowe's 1962 409 at Ocala, 1965 Caprice Custom Sedan**



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## EDITOR'S NOTES

AACA President Tom Cox recently sent a letter to Region and Chapter Presidents which is important to share with our region members. The letter states that AACA has requested that the museum in Hershey, Pennsylvania discontinue the use of "Antique Automobile Club of America" and "AACA" in its name. A copy of a letter from the Club's attorneys to the museum was enclosed. The letter gives the museum six months to comply. President Cox explains, "The use of our name by an automotive related entity which wishes to operate 100% independently of the club, confuses the public, and members as well as donors and visitors. We cannot allow such confusion to continue. It undermines the missions and identity of your club which has stood for 82 years."

On to the fun stuff. I think you'll enjoy Paul and Denise Dimbath's 1963 Chevy II story. Many thanks to Paul and Denise for submitting their story and their photos of the Southeastern Spring Meet. Thanks also to Kenny Stowe for his 1962 Impala photo and description. John Mahoney continues his fine contributions with photos from his visit to the National Parts Depot collection.

Members' contributions are what keeps the newsletter fun and interesting. I like writing the historical articles, but members' photos and stories bring necessary variety to the newsletter.

Please keep sending your contributions. This is an on-line only newsletter, we have no concerns about postage. We can make the newsletter as long as we want and include lots of great Space Age Chevrolet photos.

Don't forget that you can advertise items for sale and services offered for free in this newsletter. As long as your ad is AACA related, I'll be happy to include it.

Also, let your Chevrolet owning friends and family know about our region. Please remind them that there's no cost to join; the only requirement is that they're an active AACA member.

Are there any requests for future newsletter articles? I usually have a few ideas in mind, but I'd like to hear what our members would like to read about.

Any member attending the Grand National Meet, please take digital photos of the 1955 and later Chevrolet vehicles on display. Try to include the owners' names with your submissions. If you've entered a car in this meet, please write an article about the Grand National experience.

Congratulations to region member John Mahoney on having his 1977 Monza Mirage featured in the current issue of *Antique Automobile*. See the October 2015 *Space Age Star* for more information on the Monza Mirage.

As always, I hope this newsletter finds everyone in good health. Enjoy your Chevrolets and stay safe on the road.

Russell Heim



# ***It's Just a Driver.....***

## ***By Paul Dimbath***



For several years I had been on the lookout for a 1963 Nova SS. The connection goes back to September of 1962, when I was a junior in high school in Miami, Florida. My dad had been looking for a new car, and on some occasions took me along, but never seemed too concerned about my preference of what the family truckster should be. My dad was extremely conservative in all matters, and the likelihood of getting anything really cool was out of the realm of consideration. Then one evening, he calls me from a Chevrolet dealer and said he's going to order a Chevy II. He did let it be known this would be a Super Sport model with stick shift. My God, had he lost his mind? A Super Sport?! This was not at all like him. Later that evening when he and mother returned home he

mentioned he also sprang for the wire wheel hub caps. WIRE WHEEL HUB CAPS! That's insane for my dad to go out on a limb like that!

About six weeks later, on a Friday afternoon, I got home from school, and dad said that night he was going to pick up the new car. It was finally delivered. WOW! I remember driving to Anthony Abraham Chevrolet on the corner of "The Trail" (SW 8<sup>th</sup> St) and Lejunne Road (42<sup>nd</sup> Ave). My duty was to go park our trade-in car (a 1957 Bel Air four door hardtop, with TURBOGLIDE) in a spot it did not have to be put in reverse. Seems the last two weeks reverse did not always want to function. I remember the first time I looked inside the new car: NO CONSOLE or floor shift!! If you ordered an

automatic, it was on the floor. If you ordered a stick, it was on the column. Nuts! At least it had the bucket seats.

For about two years I used that car; a lot on Friday night (date night), to court my girlfriend. We have now been married for 52 years so it must have been a great move. I loved that car as much as my 1955 Chevy 210. After I left for college, my dad eventually traded it in on another car. What a letdown!

I was at a VCCA meet in Charlotte, NC in approximately 2003. I noticed a 1963 Nova SS automatic in attendance. It was painted silver/blue (my dad's was Azure Aqua) with a white top. Not a bad car, but it had few things which I would address if it was mine. But not bad overall. I spoke to the owner and chatted about looking for a '63 Nova SS. Approximately two years later, he called me and said he was going to sell it. We agreed on a price, and the car ended up in my garage. My wife knew how I was never happy unless I tore a car completely apart, restored everything, and put it back together. I assured her it would be my "driver" and would not be entered in any competition. Sounds good.

I did a few minor things to the car and kept my promise. I have three daughters, two married with families in Florida, and Denise, determined to never get married and have kids, in Atlanta. All was well until I got a call from my Denise in Atlanta.

"Dad, you know I'm never going to get married. Sooo, since you don't have to pay for my wedding, I want the Nova." Fast calculating on my part indicated that was a bargain on her part. I said, "It's yours." I sent the Nova to Atlanta and into her care. She kept the car in a mini warehouse right behind her townhouse. She

joined AACA and VCCA. When there was a meet close, she would take the car.

About three years later, I received another phone call from her. "Dad, I'm not a very good mother. I don't take Beebe out enough (she named the Nova Beebe) so I'm sending her back to you. I said OK, and the Nova was brought back to my garage. When I got the car back, it looked the same as when it left. But I noticed more things, and they bothered me more. I removed the Super Sport side trim and sent it off for restoration. All the SS medallions were deteriorating badly, so I purchased new ones. Then there was the issue of some rust bubbling the paint at the rear of both rear wheel openings. Also, rust bubbling paint below the trunk lid; and those little dents which before did not bother me, well, they bothered me now. The door jambs and sills were getting really worn. The sill plate trim pieces needed to be replaced.



What started out to just repair some rust and only a few panels repainted expanded to a complete repaint, with new patch panels, and a massive reworking of the panel below the trunk lid. I then installed all the restored moldings, all new medallions, new rubber for the windshield and rear glass, new door sill trim plates, and installing the wire wheel hub caps I purchased prior to the time I bought the car. They were

NOS, in the box, and had never been on a car.

With all that completed, the car looked nice..... but there were still things that bothered me.

I know it was “just my driver, and would not be shown”, but wouldn’t it be interesting to see how it might do? It would not hurt anything, right? So I entered it in an AACA meet, and it only got a 2<sup>nd</sup> Junior. A couple years later I entered another AACA meet in Naples, Florida. Same results. Not use to 2<sup>nd</sup>. I knew I was getting killed on my radial tires (after all it is a driver) and the less than stellar engine and chassis. Sooo, I made the commitment. My “driver” got everything removed from the engine compartment and in front of the core support. I had an extra set of SS rims (four lugs 14”). I stripped the rims, repainted, installed a set (5) bias ply tires, balanced, and installed them on the car. I refreshed and restored everything under the hood. I installed new shocks (it’s a driver so I had to address that aspect, right?), freshened up the chassis, and installed all new decals under the hood.

John Mahoney came down from his man cave in Ocala and spent a few days working with me getting things put back where they belong. That was so much fun. He was a help in so many ways especially in suggesting which adhesive to use on the new under hood insulation.

Finally the time came to make the trip to Charlotte. Checked the weather to ensure I wore the right stuff. YIKES!! Storms, wind, hail, cold weather were coming through on Wednesday and Thursday, and very cold and high winds on Friday. Then the decision when to make the twelve hour trip. I left 3 A.M. on Thursday and arrived at 3 P.M. Fortunately, the rain was not much of an issue, and the wind was not as big an issue as I was anticipated.

Friday the weather lived up to its billing with cold temperatures and very gusty winds. I was going to do some last minutes touch ups on the Nova, but I was too cold in the brisk wind. So I mainly checked out some vendors.

My daughter, Denise, goes to almost every show in which I have entered the car; especially, if it’s Beebe. If Beebe is entered, Denise does it all: fills out the forms and sends the money. She always shows up and cleans the car and stays with it while the judging takes place. What I did not mention was, I get an envelope in the mail from her periodically. I open it up and find a check that notes it as “Beebe child support”. She pays the entry fees for the car and hotel expense. She does all the final touch ups and makes sure there are cold drinks and chairs.

We went to the awards ceremony at 4 P.M. After spending \$1,400 on the change from radial to bias ply tires, and investing a ton of money on the engine and chassis touch up, I was curious to see what our “driver” would get. We were entered in class 27E which is a popular class, so I knew there was an excellent chance the competition would be tough. Then finally the announcement for Class 27E, 1<sup>st</sup> Junior, 1963 Nova SS, Denise Dimbath! We made it!

We went out and celebrated with a great dinner. This was Denise’s first 1<sup>st</sup> Junior award. I can say with the certainty of past experience, a 1st Junior is just as exciting as a Grand National Senior.

Since we have a 1<sup>st</sup> Junior, it couldn’t hurt to see (just to see) if we could get a Senior with our driver. Could it? My wife is still waiting for me to restore and install the factory A/C. She can’t understand why all my effort has gone into so many unimportant things, and the A/C has not been touched. I know what is next on the agenda for the “driver”.





# **SOUTHEASTERN SPRING MEET - CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA**

**PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY PAUL DIMBATH**



1959 El Camino shown by Melissa Quay in class 36K. This first year El Camino earned a Second Junior award. See the AACA web site, [aaca.org](http://aaca.org), for a complete list of meet entrants and awards earned.





1967 Chevelle Super Sport Convertible shown by Glenn Randall in class 36B. This beauty earned a Repeat Preservation award.



Jerry Dennis displayed this 1962 Impala Super Sport coupe. Jerry's car earned a Senior award in class 36B.





Another class 36B Senior award winner, Michael Waters' 1969 Camaro Z28 Coupe.



Tom Sudderth showed this 1957 Bel Air Sport Coupe. The Bel Air earned a Second Junior in class 33.





Class 36B was popular with Space Age Chevrolets. Here's Robert Street's 1962 Impala Super Sport coupe. This coupe earned a Repeat Preservation award. Robert's car also appeared in the April 2017 *Space Age Star* feature on the 2017 Winter Meet.



Warren Wubker's 1958 Impala Convertible won a Senior award in class 33.





1965 Chevy II Super Sport coupe shown by Gregory McMillan. Gregory's Nova won a Repeat Preservation award in class 27F.





## **KENNY STOWE'S 1962 IMPALA AT THE WINTER MEET IN OCALA**

Kenny writes:

Russ, My 62 Impala SS 409 with original factory interior. Won a National Preservation Award at that show.

Keep up the good work you do!

When I asked if I could use this picture in the newsletter, Kenny replied: Would be honored!

Black / Black interior

Grand National Senior Winner , 409/409, Dual Quads, Positraction, 4 speed - Thanks Kenny!



# **NATIONAL PARTS DEPOT CAR COLLECTION TOUR - BY JOHN MAHONEY**



Here are some photos of the Chevrolets in the NPD collection. Jim and Rick Schmidt were big sponsors of the 2017 AACA Winter Meet in Ocala, Florida. Although the collection was opened for the meet, I was not able to attend that tour as I was wrapping up the restoration of my 1960 Impala that night. Paul Dimbath, President of the Orange County Region AACA, invited me to attend a region tour of the collection on March 24, so here are a few photos

There are over 200 cars in the collection, not a lot of Chevrolets, but all of the cars were real nice. Also please note the photo of all of the AACA Junior and Senior trophies earned by the Schmidts.





1956 Bel Air Convertible



1960 Impala Convertible





1961 Impala Sport Coupe



1961 Impala Sport Sedan





This 1963 Impala Super Sport coupe is the actual 50 millionth Chevrolet that New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller drove off the line at the Tarrytown, New York assembly plant.



1964 Impala Super Sport coupe



# **1965 CAPRICE CUSTOM SEDAN - FIRST OF A LONG LINE**

**BY RUSSELL HEIM**



Caprice, one of Chevrolet's longest lasting nameplates, was introduced as an option package in mid-model-year 1965. The Regular Production Option (RPO) for this package was Z18. The words "elegant" and "luxury" are prominent in the special introductory "Caprice Custom Sedan" brochure. It's clear that Chevrolet was attempting to capture a piece of the luxury car market.

"Caprice Custom Sedan...luxurious surroundings meant for driving enjoyment" is the brochure's opening statement. This was "the finest option group you can order for the fashionable Impala Sport Sedan." They emphasized the "contour-padded seats". Caprice Custom Sedan seats had extra foam cushioning, rich fabric, and expanded vinyl. The seat cushions and backrests were "elegantly stitched and deeply molded." The back seat featured a folding center armrest.

Other interior upgrades over Impala included "special" vinyl headlining and "beautifully appointed" door and instrument panels. Deep-twist carpeting covered the floor and the bottom of the door panels. Interior courtesy lights were activated by switches at all four doors. The package tray was made of an "open-weave" fabric, making it possible to mount hidden radio speakers under the tray. Three interior colors were available: light fawn, medium blue, and black.

A fleur-de-lis emblem replaced the Impala emblem in the steering wheel center. A fleur-de-lis emblem also appeared on the glove compartment door. The accelerator and brake pedals were framed with bright metal. Shift and directional levers received brightwork knobs instead of black plastic ones.

“From an outside viewpoint as well, Chevrolet has made it obvious that the Caprice Custom Sedan is different, one of a kind.” Cars equipped with this option received special fleur-de-lis shields on the roof quarters. Caprice emblems replaced the Impala emblems on the front, sides and rear. A color-keyed body stripe was applied to the body sides. A black rear cove molding, similar to the Impala Super Sport molding, replaced the silver molding found on standard Impalas.

Buyers chose from 15 solid and 6 two-tone Magic-Mirror finishes. Vinyl tops were an option and were available in fawn, blue or black. Full wheel covers were standard. Caprice Custom Sedans used the Impala Super Sport spinner covers. A Chevrolet Bow-Tie emblem replaced the “SS” emblem in the wheel cover center.

The brochure stated that Caprice Custom Sedan improved on Chevrolet’s famous Jet-Smooth ride. “Extra-thick body mounts and special insulation are strategically placed to dampen vibration.”

The 195 horsepower Turbo-Fire 283 cubic-inch V8 was the standard engine offered for the Caprice Custom Sedan option package. Three-speed Synchro-Mesh was the base transmission offering. Overdrive, four-speed Synchro-Mesh and Powerglide were extra cost optional transmissions for 283 equipped cars.

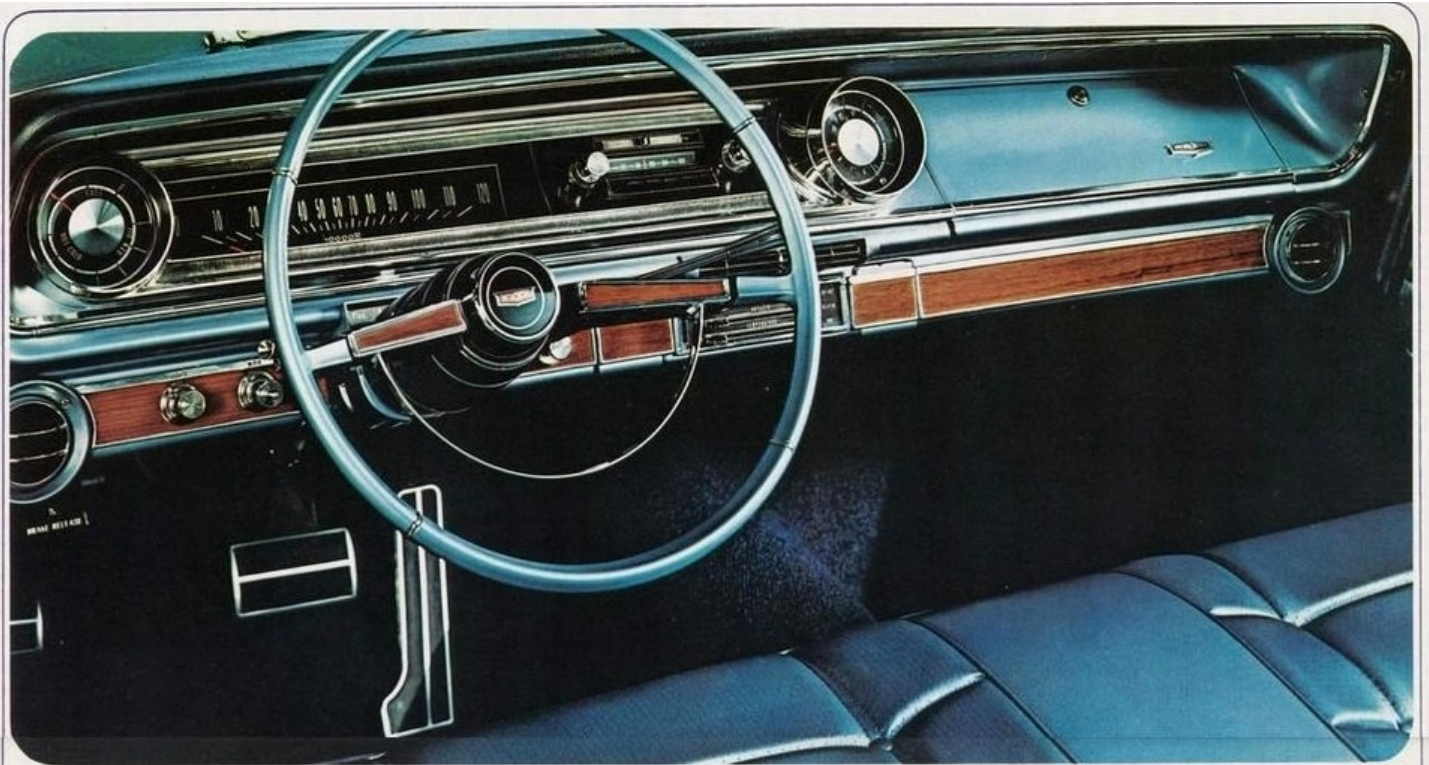
Three optional engines were available, a 250 horsepower Turbo-Fire 327 V8, and two versions of the new Turbo-Jet 396 V8. This newly introduced big-block engine came with either 325 or 425 horsepower. The 327 came standard with three-speed Synchro-Mesh. A fully synchronized three-speed, four-speed or Powerglide were optional for the 327. 325 horsepower 396 Turbo-Jet buyers chose from the fully synchronized three-speed, four-speed, Powerglide and newly introduced Turbo Hydra-Matic transmissions. 425 horsepower cars only had the fully synchronized three-speed and four speed transmissions available.

Optional equipment included power steering, power brakes, power windows, six-way power seat, deluxe AM/FM pushbutton radio with FM stereo, Comfortilt steering wheel, Four-Season

## 1965 CAPRICE CUSTOM SEDAN POWER TEAMS

STANDARD ENGINE	3-Speed Synchro-Mesh (standard)	Overdrive (optional at extra cost)	3-Speed Fully Synch. (optional at extra cost)	4-Speed (optional at extra cost)	Powerglide (optional at extra cost)	Turbo Hydra-Matic (optional at extra cost)
195-hp Turbo-Fire 283 V8	●	●		●	●	
EXTRA-COST OPTIONAL ENGINES						
250-hp Turbo-Fire 327 V8	●		●	●	●	
325-hp Turbo-Jet 396 V8			●	●	●	●
425-hp Turbo-Jet 396 V8			●	●		





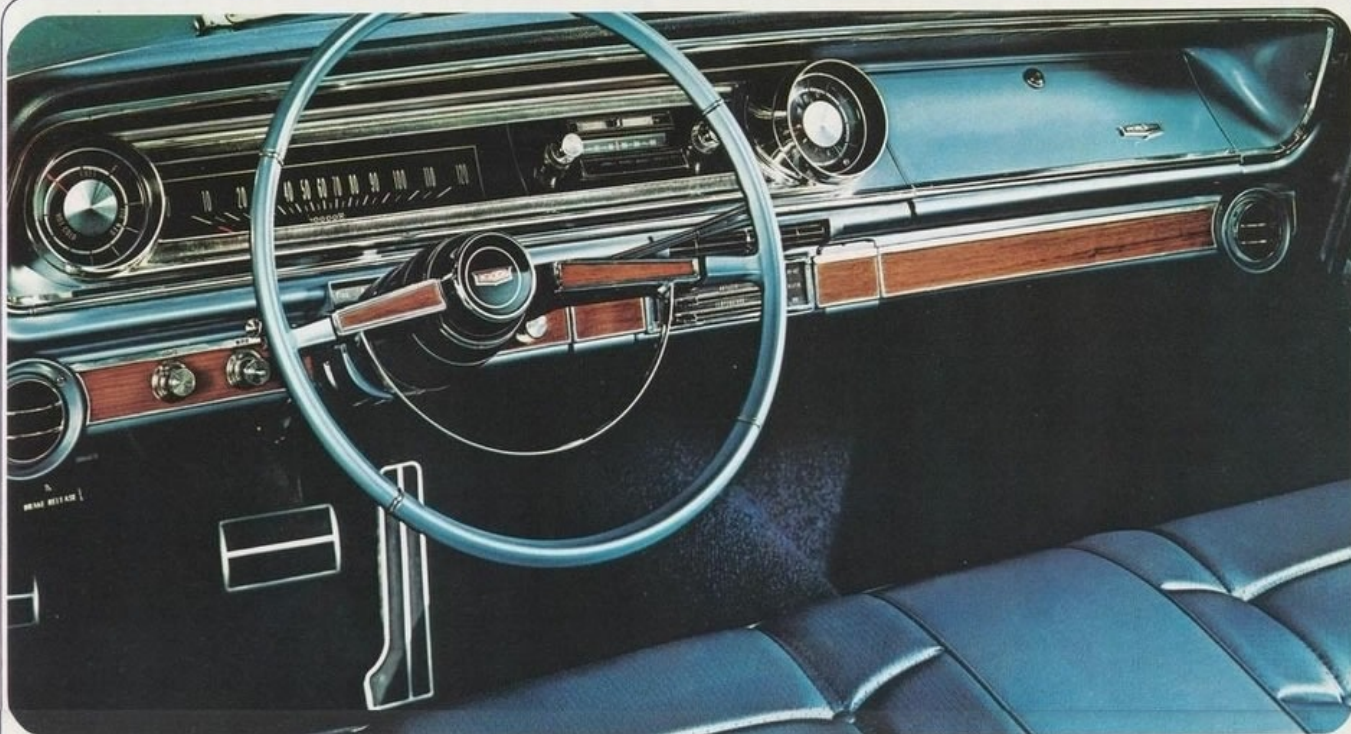
ELEGANT TOUCHES AND LUXURIOUSLY  
QUIET RIDE SET THE CAPRICE CUSTOM  
SEDAN APART FROM ALL OTHERS

air conditioning, Positraction rear axle, Soft-ray tinted glass, tri-volume horn and whitewall tires. Special nylon tires, newly-designed for silent, smoother going under all conditions, were available exclusively for Caprice Custom Sedans.

According to *75 Years of Chevrolet*, the Caprice Custom Sedan Option cost \$200. If you ordered an optional engine and some of the optional equipment listed above, the price of your new Chevrolet rose past \$4000. This was Oldsmobile Ninety-Eight and Starfire price territory.

I couldn't find production numbers for the 1965 Caprice Custom Sedan. All the reference material I checked included Caprices with Impala Sport Sedan production. The option may have been popular as Caprice became a full Chevrolet series for the 1966 model year. 1966 Caprice included a Sport Coupe and station wagon along with the Sport Sedan. Caprice replaced Impala as the most luxurious full-size Chevrolet. The nameplate lasted until 1996. That story might be a future newsletter article.





## ELEGANT TOUCHES AND LUXURIOUSLY QUIET RIDE SET THE CAPRICE CUSTOM SEDAN APART FROM ALL OTHERS

**Instrument Panel.** Where you'll spend most of your time—behind the wheel—there are further elegant touches in this Impala Sport Sedan option that make your driving a distinct pleasure. The dual-spoke steering wheel has a Caprice hub emblem and horn ring inserts with the appearance of hand-rubbed walnut. Shift lever and directional signal lever have bright-work knobs. The glove compartment sports a Caprice emblem. Accelerator, brake, clutch and parking brake pedals are framed with bright metal. Other Chevrolet luxury appointments include bright molding and facing with a walnut look on the instrument panel, locking glove box with light, cigarette lighter, electric clock, and parking brake warning light. A padded instrument panel is also available.

**Quiet, Luxurious Ride.** All that's elegant in the Caprice Custom Sedan is transported smoothly and quietly, thanks to qualities added to Chevrolet's already famous ride. There's Chevrolet's Full Coil suspension front and rear. Extra-thick body mounts and special insulation are strategically placed to dampen vibration. Wide-Stance tread, Ball-Race steering and new linkage make handling sure-footed, steady.

**Options and Custom Features in addition to the Caprice option group.** (Available at extra cost.) Quite likely you'll want to include other personal touches on Caprice Custom Sedan to suit your individual motoring taste. In addition to the vinyl roof covering, padded instrument panel and two-tone finish, you can specify power steering, power brakes, power windows, 6-way power seat, deluxe AM/FM pushbutton radio with FM

stereo, Comfortilt steering wheel, Four-Season air conditioning, Posi-traction rear axle, Soft-Ray tinted glass, Tri-Volume horn, whitewall tires, and a host of other items. *New, Quiet-Riding Tires.* Special nylon tires, newly-designed for silent, smoother going under all conditions, are available exclusively for Caprice Custom Sedans. For more complete information on all Chevrolet options and custom features, check the Chevrolet catalog, as well as your Chevrolet dealer for model application and availability with other equipment.

### 1965 CAPRICE CUSTOM SEDAN POWER TEAMS

STANDARD ENGINE	3-Speed Synchro-Mesh (standard)	Overdrive (optional at extra cost)	3-Speed Fully Synch. (optional at extra cost)	4-Speed (optional at extra cost)	Powerglide (optional at extra cost)	Turbo Hydra-Matic (optional at extra cost)
195-hp Turbo-Fire 283 V8	•	•		•	•	
EXTRA-COST OPTIONAL ENGINES						
250-hp Turbo-Fire 327 V8	•		•	•	•	
325-hp Turbo-Jet 396 V8			•	•	•	•
425-hp Turbo-Jet 396 V8			•	•		



Caprice Custom Sedan in Mist Blue.

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