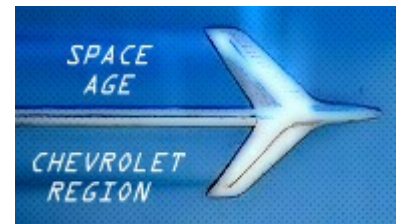


SPACE AGE STAR

OCTOBER 2018



**THIS MONTH: 1959 CHEVROLET 60TH ANNIVERSARY,
1963 CHEVROLET INNOVATIONS, GETTING READY FOR
HERSHEY**



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EDITOR'S NOTES

I hope our members in the Carolinas survived the hurricane in good shape. Please let us know how you're doing.

It's time for the Fall Meet at Hershey again. We'll hold our annual region meeting on Thursday, October 11, at two p.m. I don't have a pressing topic for this year's meeting; please feel free to bring your own ideas for discussion. As always, the meeting is very informal. If you can't attend the meeting, please stop by the region vendor spaces any time Wednesday morning through Friday afternoon.

The region spaces are in Red Field B, row RNI, spaces 82-86. RNI is the last row of this field, adjacent to Hershey Park Drive. Use light pole 12 and the TP Equipment tent for landmarks when you look for us.

One of my favorite aspects of Hershey is the socializing. It's a great time to renew old friendships and to meet people that you've only communicated with electronically. If you'd like to meet other region members during the fall meet, here's a list of their vendor spaces:

Nick Matlaga: Chocolate Field South - row CC, spaces 85-87

Laurie and Jerry Hollis: Orange Field - row OBK, spaces 30-34

Robert Giles: Chocolate Field North - row C4I, spaces 25-28

Please visit your fellow region members. It's always fun to say hello and catch up.

I no longer own a Space Age Chevrolet. I've wanted to buy a 1960's Buick for a while now, so I sold my 1965 Impala to make room. If you don't kick me out of the region for this, I'm happy to continue as region president and newsletter editor. Chevrolet history is still a huge interest for me. We still have two daily driver Chevrolets at our house.

This month we look at the 1959 Chevrolets, or as some wags called them, "Martian Ground Chariots". Love it or hate it, the 1959 styling was distinctive. Regardless of your opinion, I think you'll enjoy the article.

Thanks to Verne Frantz for his informative article on new features of the 1963 Chevrolets. Both of this month's articles show how Chevrolet continually upgraded and improved its cars to stay competitive. These types of historical articles are a big reason why we started this region and newsletter.

As always, please submit articles, historical or otherwise. It's always fun to read stories about members' cars, past and present.

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

Russell Heim

CLASSIFIED AD

FOR SALE: 1957 Chevrolet Two-Ten two-door sedan. Six cylinder, three-speed synchro-mesh. The car is located in Suffolk County, Long Island. Asking \$24,000. Contact Ken Michaels at 631-880-8489.



1959 CHEVROLET TURNS 60

BY RUSSELL HEIM



After introducing massive changes for the 1958 model year, Chevrolet was at it again for 1959. While not as extensive as the 1958 changes, the 1959 updates were significant. The 1959 sales brochure started: "Chevrolet for '59 - all new all over again. Wider in body, and functionally so - surer on the road, roomier and more comfortable to sit and relax in. Lower, but with actually more head room in some models, greater entrance room in *all* models, greater visibility area all around. Matching its comfort and convenience are magnificent mechanical

advances in steering, braking, economy and durability. Altogether a fresh and *original* car...beautiful to be sure, with Slimline design, and above all, practical its whole length through."

The biggest changes were in the size and styling of the cars. The sheet metal was all new. Wheelbase was increased 1.5 inches to 119 inches. 1959 Chevrolets were 80.8 inches wide and 210.9 inches long. These changes were the zenith of the 1950's styling mantra of longer, lower, and wider.

1959 Chevrolet was two inches longer, an inch lower, and two inches wider than 1958 models. This allowed for more elbow room inside the cars and a larger trunk.

In its *Engineering Features* book, Chevrolet described the new cars: “The 1959 Chevrolet is totally new in appearance. Dominant horizontal lines, created by the addition and relocation of front end components, accent vehicle width.”

1959 cars featured a shorter thinner roof line. Thinner door pillars and larger windows gave the cars an airy look. “No more straining to see traffic signals and signs - Chevy’s new Vista-Panoramic windshield curves smartly into the roof for upward vision,” claimed the sales brochure.

Front tread increased 1.5 inches for 1959 and rear tread 0.5 inches. 1959 cars had a lower center of gravity than 1958 models.

Front bumpers were five inches higher than 1958, and front overhang was reduced by over three inches; this created a greater approach angle, allowing motorists to enter steeply inclined driveways without scraping the front of the car. Rear overhang was extended more than three inches over 1958 models. This created a departure angle equal to 1958 – attributed to the higher rear bumper.

Chevrolet introduced Magic Mirror Acrylic Lacquer finish for the 1959 models (see the August 2014 *Space Age Star* for details on this finish). Two-tone cars were painted one color on the roof and trunk lid, with the second color applied to the rest of the car.

Interiors were also updated in 1959. Here’s the sales brochure’s description: “In Fashion-Crafted interiors, high fashion comes smartly to the fore with the freshest settings for travel

you’ve ever relaxed in. There’s a wide selection of interior color schemes in leather-soft vinyls and strikingly patterned fabrics in the year’s most exciting new hues.”

Engineering Features claimed that the biggest interior improvements were in elbow room and seating posture. Hat, shoulder, and hip room were all increased for 1959. The instrument panel was also revised.

Chevrolet changed the series designations for 1959. The low-line Delray was deleted with Biscayne becoming the lowest price series. Bel Air was demoted from top-of-the line to the mid-priced range. Impala became the top-line series with a full range of sedans, hardtops, station wagons, and a convertible.

Brookwood was the Biscayne level wagon. This model only came as a six passenger wagon and was available with either two or four doors. The Bel Air level wagons were the Kingswood and Parkwood were both four-door wagons. Parkwood was the six passenger wagon and Kingswood the nine passenger job. Nomad was the Impala wagon; it was only available as a four-door, six passenger car.

There were many mechanical, comfort, and convenience updates for 1959. The sales brochure had a brief list: “Chevrolet quality extras: single key lock system; foot lever parking brake; electric windshield wipers in all models; sliding sun visors; crank-operated window vents; key lock glove compartment and many more.”

Some other improvements:

- A floor shifted four-speed synchro-mesh transmission was now available for passenger cars.

- Brakes were 17 percent larger than 1958. Lining area increased from 157 to 183.8 square inches.
- The four-link rear suspension featured a new upper control arm and new lateral control bar.
- The third seat in nine-passenger wagons now folded down. In previous models you had to remove the third seat when you needed to carry cargo in the wagon.
- Windshield visibility area increased 53 percent for sedans and wagons. There was 61 percent more visibility in sport coupe and sedan models. Rear window visibility was increased by up to 74 percent.
- All models now featured single speed electric windshield wipers. This was necessary to provide the torque for the larger 1959 wiper blades. A two-speed wiper/washer unit was optional.
- Station wagons now featured a retractable rear window. The window had to be fully retracted before lowering the tailgate. An electric rear window was standard on Kingswood nine-passenger wagons and optional on Nomad and Parkwood wagons.
- The steering gear now used a 24-1 ratio to provide geometry consistent with the new longer wheelbase. Power steering equipped cars used a 20-1 ratio.
- Improved rayon cords in the tires offered seven percent longer tread life. The sales brochure explained: "All-new Tyrex – the super-tough tire cord that puts tires years ahead – is standard equipment on your '59 Chevrolet. Possessing remarkable stretch-strength and resiliency, Tyrex offers greater blowout protection, added safety, extra miles of wear. Tyrex cord makes tires lighter, more flexible – lets them roll *easier* for better fuel mileage, *softer* for a better ride." The brochure also claimed that wheels and tires were pre-balanced in assembly, "A first in Chevrolet's field."
- Chevrolet claimed improved durability for Level Air Suspension in 1959 along with a better ride. The front air spring rates were reduced 40 percent and the rear spring rates 15 percent. There were revised piston contours and a new bellows. New quieter check valves and new all rubber poppet valves improved the leveling valves and were more durable than the 1958 design. A resonance chamber was added at the outside air intake to silence the intake of "make-up" air. The air compressor was now mounted lower in the engine compartment. Compressor pistons were cam-turned and fitted to insure noise-free operation.
- *Engineering Features* claimed five to 10 percent fuel economy improvement for six cylinder engines due to a new camshaft and valve lifters. The 1959 six had more torque than the 1958 version. Carburetors and air cleaners were mounted lower in 1959 due to the lower hood line. They also revised the intake manifolds to accommodate this change.
- The radiator was also revised due to styling considerations. The 1959 radiator had 40 more square inches of cooling area than 1958.
- Dry type oil filters replaced oil bath filters on 1959 V-8 engines except for Ramjet equipped cars.
- Cruise control and speed minder were introduced in 1959.

- The power section of radios was transistorized for 1959. This made the radios smaller and lighter and eliminated radio warm-up period.

Some popular custom feature accessories for 1959 were: power front seat, power windows, power steering, power brakes, Turboglide or Powerglide automatic transmission, four-speed synchro-mesh transmission, air conditioning, power tailgate on station wagons, posi-traction rear end, level-air suspension, tinted glass, padded instrument panel, manual and pushbutton radios.

Corvette received some updates for 1959. The hood vents and the rear-deck trim strips were removed. Other Corvette improvements for 1959:

- Larger brakes
- Refined rear suspension
- Modified shock absorbers
- New clutch linkage.
- Radius rods added to rear suspension.
- Stowage bin added below passenger assist bar.

List prices ranged from \$2,160 for Biscayne utility two-door sedan to \$3,875 for Corvette.

1959 production by body style:

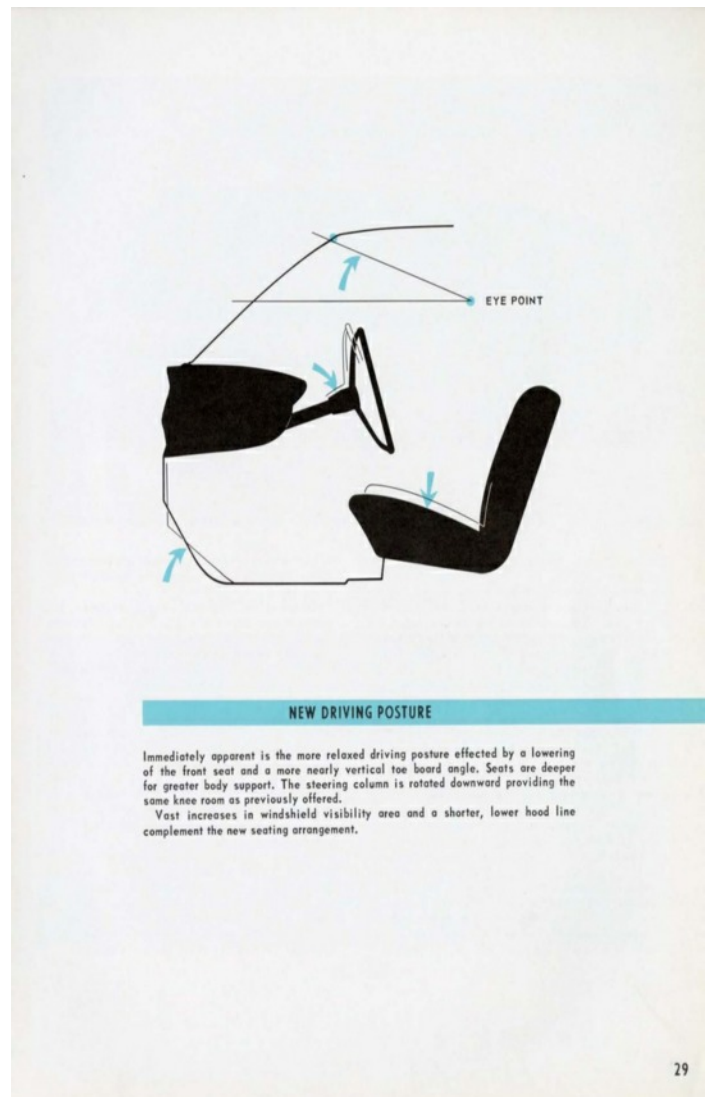
Four-door sedan – 525,461
 Two-door sedan – 281,924
 Four-door station wagon – 188,623
 Sport coupe – 164,901
 Sport sedan – 182,520
 Convertible – 72,765
 Two-door station wagon – 20,760

Production by series:

Biscayne -311,800
 Bel Air – 447,100
 Impala - 473,000
 Corvette - 9,670

Series production figures rounded to the nearest 100.

They built 647,800 six-cylinder cars and 833,200 V8 cars. Model year total production was 1,481,071 cars.



THE 1959 LINE

The annual selection of basic models is one of the most critical a volume manufacturer must make. Practical restrictions dictate that each model must be carefully chosen to satisfy a certain segment of the motoring public. Public taste is not static. This is clearly evidenced by the recent industry-wide growth of the station wagon market, and the number of models offered to meet that market.

Another such reflection of public dictates is the new Impala Series. Introduced in Sport Coupe and Convertible versions last year, the Impala concept met such favorable reaction that a complete line is now offered, including a Sport Sedan and a 4-Door Sedan.

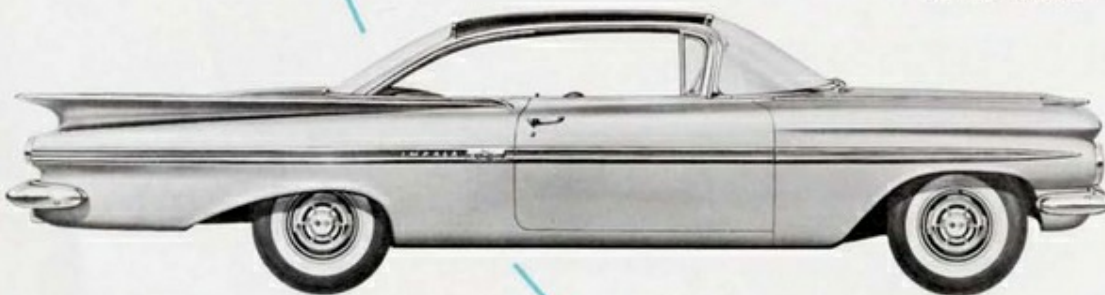
The entire line-up of fourteen basic models and a wide complement of equipment options are calculated to meet the varying preferences of a discriminating people.

- ✓ NEW IMPALA SERIES
- ✓ NEW IMPALA FOUR-DOOR AND SPORT SEDAN
- ✓ NEW SERIES DESIGNATIONS

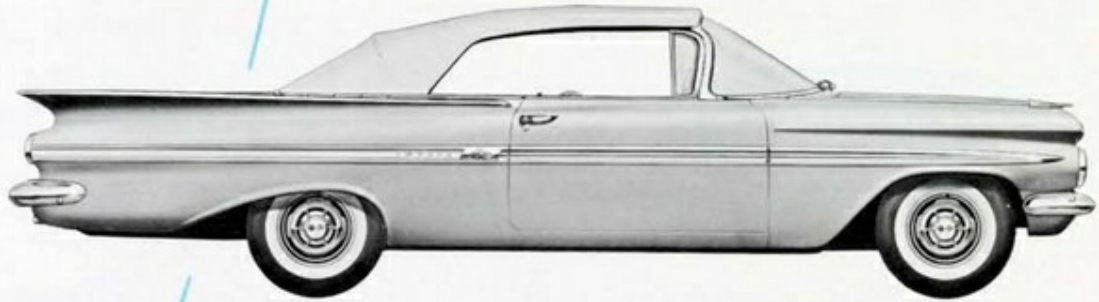
IMPALA SERIES



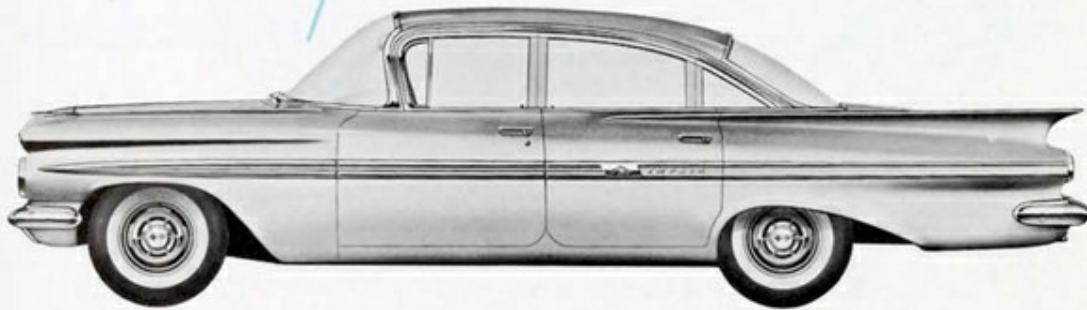
IMPALA SPORT SEDAN, 5-PASSENGER
MODEL 17-1839



IMPALA SPORT COUPE, 5-PASSENGER
MODEL 17-1837



IMPALA CONVERTIBLE, 5-PASSENGER
MODEL 17-1867



IMPALA FOUR-DOOR SEDAN, 6-PASSENGER
MODEL 17-1819

BEL AIR SERIES



BEL AIR FOUR-DOOR SEDAN, 6-PASSENGER
MODEL 15-1619

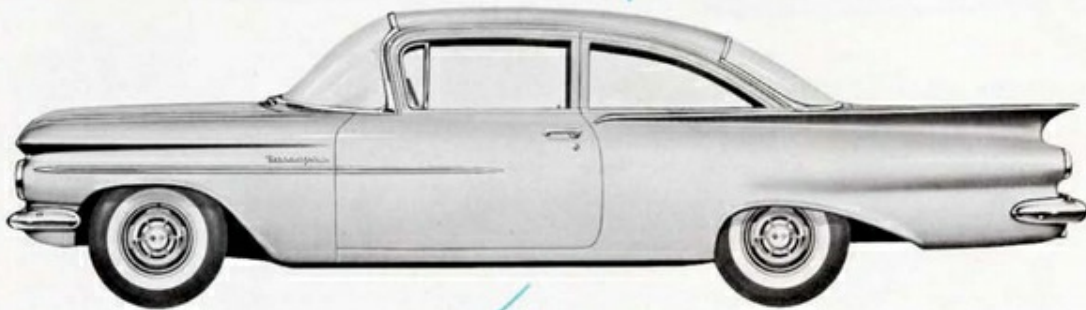


BEL AIR TWO-DOOR SEDAN, 6-PASSENGER
MODEL 15-1611

BISCAYNE SERIES



**BISCAYNE FOUR-DOOR SEDAN, 6-PASSENGER
MODEL 11-1219**



**BISCAYNE TWO-DOOR SEDAN, 6-PASSENGER
MODEL 11-1211
UTILITY SEDAN, 3-PASSENGER
MODEL 11-1221**

STATION WAGON SERIES



**TWO-DOOR, 6-PASSENGER BROOKWOOD
MODEL 11-1215**



Upper portion of the front end featured two elongated air intakes. These intakes allowed for better engine cooling and housed the parking and signal lights. Headlights were seven inches lower than in 1958 – as low as the law allowed at the time.



Chevrolet called the tail lights a “teardrop” design. Tail lights were surrounded by an aluminum bezel. Each tail light assembly contained two lamps that functioned as combination signal, tail, and stop lamps. Impala and Nomad models had thin vertical moldings between each lens. Impala and Nomad had back-up lamps at the corners of the rear valence panels.

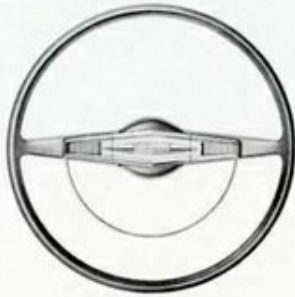
The fuel filler was hidden behind the rear license plate on sedans, hardtops, and convertibles. Station wagons had their fuel filler behind a door in the left quarter panel.



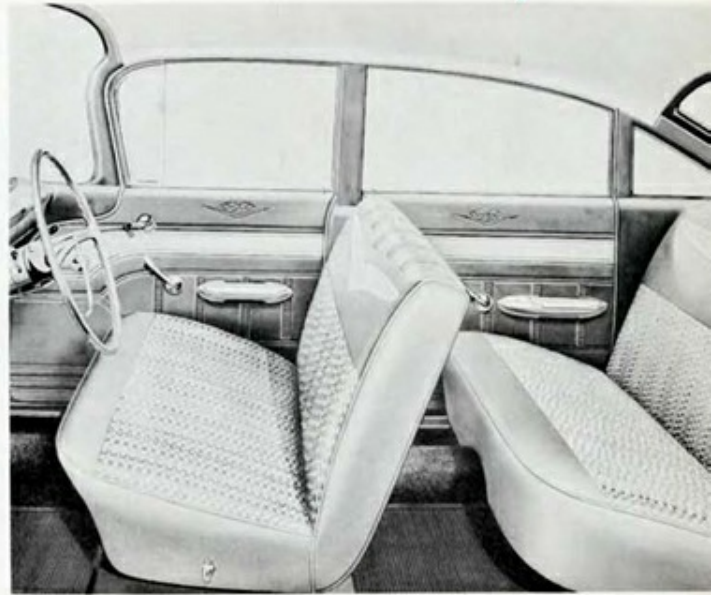
1959 VISIBILITY AREA INCREASES (PERCENT)

AREA	4-DOOR SEDAN	SPORT SEDAN	SPORT COUPE	4-DOOR STATION WAGON
Windshield	+ 53.3	+ 51.0	+ 61.0	+ 53.3
Side Windows	+ 6.7	- 16.6	+ 13.4	+ 14.4
Rear Window	+ 47.1	+ 24.0	+ 74.0	- 25.8
Overall	+ 34.0	+ 18.3	+ 50.0	+ 16.8

BEL AIR



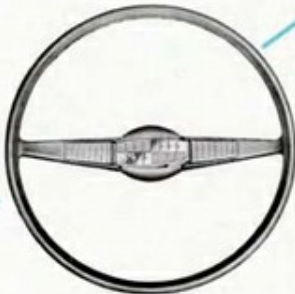
Seats and side walls of Bel Air models and Parkwood and Kingswood Station Wagons are similar in design. Pattern cloth in a geometric pattern, however, is used on the inner portion of the seat cushion and lower portion of the backrest for passenger car models, whereas the same area on Parkwood and Kingswood models is decorated by vertical striped pattern cloth with a woven plastic backing. The special backing makes possible the permanent raised surface of the



fabric and provides greater breathability. A hot-pressed design of crossed flags and a "V" decorates upper side walls.

Deep-pile carpet with vinyl-covered rubber inserts is featured. Cloth headlining is used for passenger car models, and textured vinyl headlining is featured in station wagons.

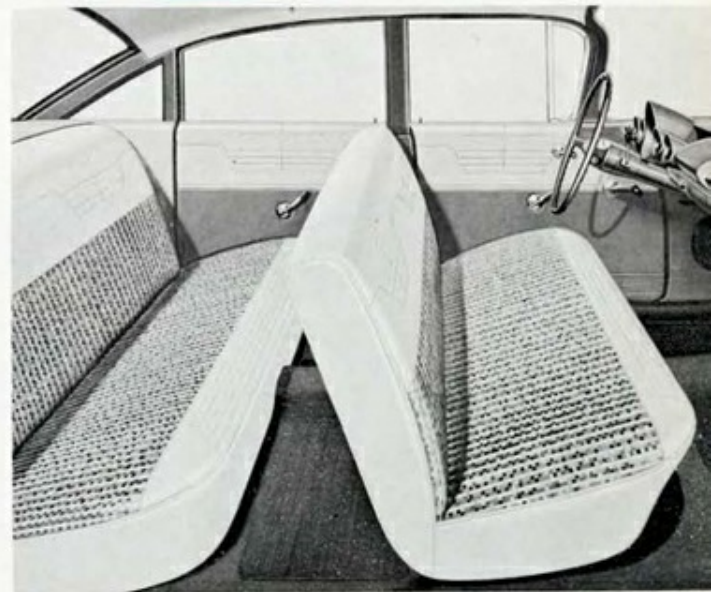
A wide bright-metal bar covers the steering wheel spokes. Integral with the bar is a half-circle horn ring.



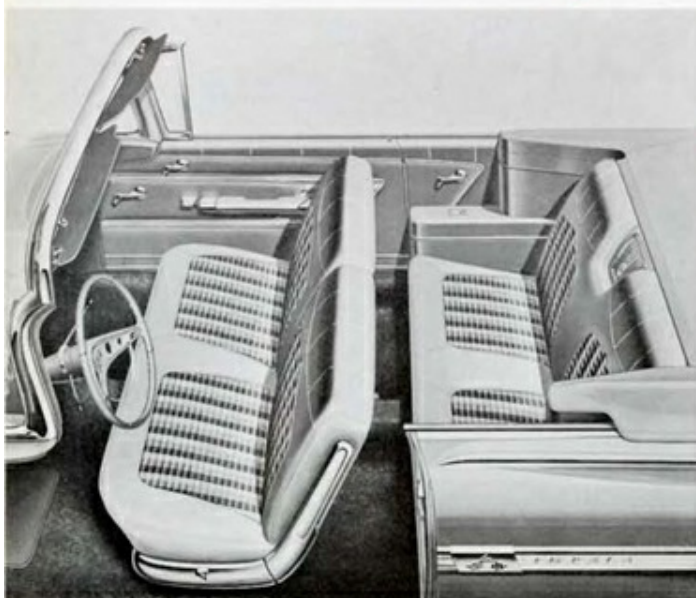
BISCAYNE

A linear design embossed on upper portions of the backrest and side wall accents the interiors of all Biscayne passenger cars and Brookwood Station Wagons. The spatter design of the pattern cloth, used on the inner portion of the seat cushion and lower section of the backrest, is repeated on black rubber floor mats. On Brookwood models, vinyl simulates the pattern cloth providing an all-vinyl interior.

A painted horn button cap with bright aluminum accents decorates the center of the steering wheel.



INTERIORS



IMPALA



Excepting the Convertible, Impala and Nomad seats are decorated with tri-colored pattern cloth and leather-grain vinyl. Vinyl, simulating the tri-colored pattern cloth, is substituted in the Convertible. Narrow, widely spaced bands of bright vinyl are electrically applied to the upper portions of the walls and seat backs.

Anodized aluminum end panels distinguish front seats of the Convertible, Sport Coupe and Sport Sedan. Also, the Sport Coupe and Sport Sedan feature bright windshield and rear window garnish moldings in addition to bright anodized aluminum roof side rails. Door release levers are styled into the armrest on all sport models. The 4-Door Sedan and Nomad Station Wagon again have the conventional door release and armrest. A rear seat speaker grille is provided for the Sport Coupe and Convertible.

New vinyl headlining with a hexagonal design decorates the Sport Coupe, Sport Sedan, and Nomad Station Wagon. Headlining cloth is used in the 4-Door Sedan. The Nomad and all Impala models, except the Convertible, feature deep-pile, color-keyed carpeting. In the Convertible, carpet-textured vinyl-covered rubber is used.

The steering wheel on all Impala and Nomad models resembles the competition type. A new half-circle horn ring, which incorporates two small horn buttons, replaces the full-circle horn ring previously used.



The rear compartment of the Kingswood Station Wagon with its rearward-facing seat is a complete departure from previous Chevrolet 9-passenger station wagon designs. The third seat, again featuring a foam plastic cushion, need no longer be removed when the entire cargo space is needed, but may be folded into the cargo floor.

Within the vehicle right side wall, the spare tire is mounted in an upright position. A switch for the electrically-controlled rear window is located at the top of the left side wall. The courtesy light also is located in the left side wall.

To facilitate entering the rear compartment, a rubber-capped step is mounted at either end of the bumper.

ENGINE AVAILABILITY

ENGINE	EQUIPMENT	COMPRESSION RATIO	GROSS HORSEPOWER	GROSS TORQUE (lb.ft.)
Hi-Thrift 235 Six-Cylinder	Single-Barrel Carburetor	8.25-to-1	135 at 4000 rpm	217 at 20-2400 rpm
Turbo-Fire 283 V-8	2-Barrel Carburetor	8.5-to-1	185 at 4600 rpm	275 at 2400 rpm
Super Turbo-Fire 283 V-8	4-Barrel Carburetor	9.5-to-1	230 at 4800 rpm	300 at 3000 rpm
Ramjet Fuel Injection V-8	Fuel Injection	9.5-to-1	250 at 5000 rpm	305 at 3800 rpm
	Fuel Injection and Special Camshaft	10.5-to-1	290 at 6200 rpm	290 at 4400 rpm
Turbo-Thrust 348 V-8	4-Barrel Carburetor	9.5-to-1	250 at 4400 rpm	355 at 2800 rpm
	4-Barrel Carburetor and Special Camshaft	11.0-to-1	300 at 5600 rpm	350 at 3600 rpm
Super Turbo-Thrust 348 V-8	Three 2-Barrel Carburetors	9.5-to-1	280 at 4800 rpm	355 at 3200 rpm
	Three 2-Barrel Carburetors and Special Camshaft	11.0-to-1	315 at 5600 rpm	356 at 3600 rpm

POWER TEAMS

ENGINE	CARBURETION	TRANSMISSION	AXLE RATIO
* Hi-Thrift 235 Six-Cylinder	1-Barrel	3-Speed Overdrive Powerglide	3.55 4.11¢ 3.36
Turbo-Fire 283 V-8	2-Barrel	3-Speed Overdrive Powerglide Turboglide	3.55 4.11¢ 3.36 3.36
Super Turbo-Fire 283 V-8	4-Barrel	3-Speed Overdrive Powerglide Turboglide	3.55 4.11¢ 3.36 3.36
* Ramjet Fuel Injection V-8	Fuel Injection	3-Speed 4-Speed Powerglide Turboglide	3.55 3.55 3.36 3.36
* Ramjet Fuel Injection V-8 (Special Camshaft)	Fuel Injection	3-Speed 4-Speed	3.55 3.55
Turbo-Thrust 348 V-8	4-Barrel	3-Speed 4-Speed Powerglide Turboglide	3.36 3.36 3.08 3.08
* Turbo-Thrust 348 V-8 (Special Camshaft)	4-Barrel	3-Speed 4-Speed Powerglide**	3.36 3.36 3.08
Super Turbo-Thrust 348 V-8	3 X 2-Barrel	3-Speed 4-Speed Powerglide Turboglide	3.36 3.36 3.08 3.08
* Super Turbo-Thrust 348 V-8 (Special Camshaft)	3 X 2-Barrel	3-Speed 4-Speed	3.36 3.36

* - Not available with air conditioning or air suspension.

** - Heavy-duty type

¢ - To be replaced by 3.70:1 ratio approximately three months after start of production.



ENGINE AVAILABILITY

ENGINE	EQUIPMENT	COMPRESSION RATIO	GROSS HORSEPOWER	GROSS TORQUE (lb. ft.)
Regular Production 283 Cubic Inch V-8	4-Barrel Carburetor	9.5-to-1	230 at 4800 rpm	300 at 3000 rpm
Optional 283 Cubic Inch V-8's	Two 4-Barrel Carburetors	9.5-to-1	245 at 5000 rpm	300 at 3800 rpm
	Two 4-Barrel Carburetors and Special Camshaft	9.5-to-1	270 at 6000 rpm	285 at 4200 rpm
	Fuel Injection	9.5-to-1	250 at 5000 rpm	305 at 3800 rpm
	Fuel Injection and Special Camshaft	10.5-to-1	290 at 6200 rpm	290 at 4400 rpm

Corvette engine availability.

CHEVROLET—CENTRAL OFFICE
DIVISION OF GENERAL MOTORS CORPORATION
DETROIT 2, MICHIGAN

TECHNICAL SERVICE BULLETIN
Service and Mechanical Department

SUBJECT: OVERLAPPING WIPER BLADES
2-SPEED WINDSHIELD WIPERS
1959 PASSENGER CARS

BULLETIN No. DR #399
SECTION I

February 3, 1959

TO: ALL CHEVROLET DEALERS

To increase the wiping area of two-speed windshield wipers used optionally on 1959 Passenger Cars, new type, longer wiper arms are now in production. The longer arms result in over-lapping of the wiper blades in the "park" position.

To prevent interference between the blades, the wiper arms should be positioned as follows:

With arms and blades removed, operate wiper motor through several cycles, then turn switch "off". This places motor in park position.

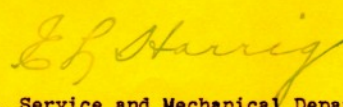
Install right hand arm and blade with rubber element of blade parallel to and about $\frac{1}{2}$ " below the edge of windshield rubber weatherstrip.

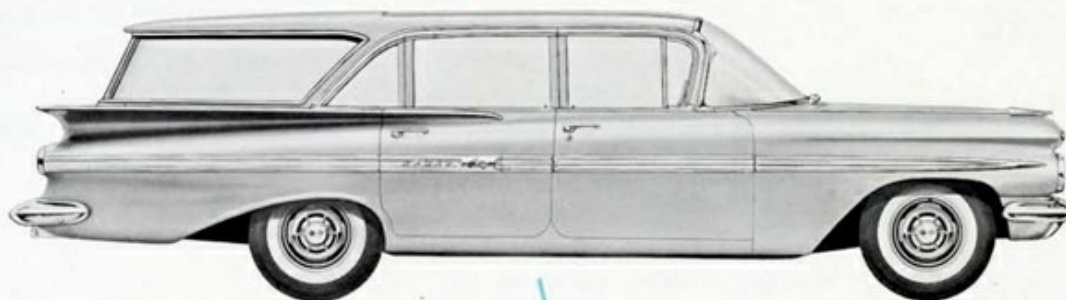
Install left hand arm assembly with blade overlapping and just above the right blade.

Lift blades into place on windshield glass and operate wipers. If blade interference is noted, position left or right arm up or down one serration as required.

The long arms are not used with the single speed windshield wiper as overloading and possible motor failure would result.

Replacement parts information will be released in the usual manner by the Parts Department.


 Manager, Service and Mechanical Department



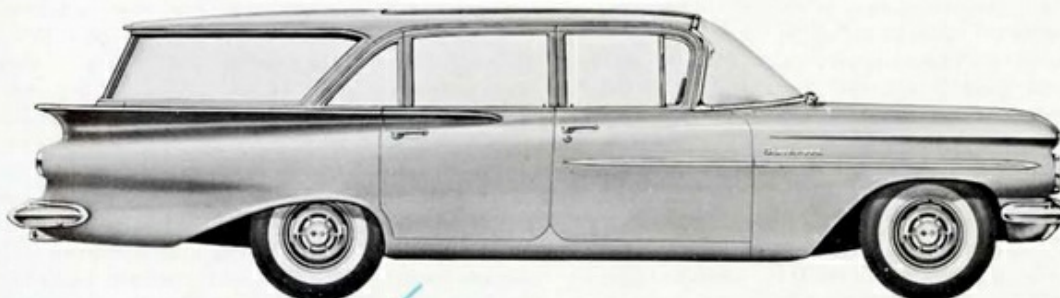
FOUR-DOOR, 6-PASSENGER NOMAD
MODEL 17-1835



FOUR-DOOR, 9-PASSENGER KINGSWOOD
MODEL 15-1645



FOUR-DOOR, 6-PASSENGER PARKWOOD
MODEL 15-1635



FOUR-DOOR, 6-PASSENGER BROOKWOOD
MODEL 11-1235

1963 – The Modern Chevrolet - By Verne Frantz

For the 1963 model year, Chevrolet truly created a modern car, adding features and options that never before appeared on their products. Never before or since were there more new features introduced in a single model year. From outward appearances, the 1963 model varied only slightly from the previous 1962 model. A closer look at the option list revealed a vinyl top covering offered in either black or white on Sport Coupe models. The covering was the same pin point vinyl as used on convertible tops, complete with the same longitudinal seams and applied with no padding. Known as RPO C08, it was installed on 10,399 units. Arriving on the option list in March of 1963 was an AM/FM radio, known as RPO U69, available in all models. It featured a tunable circuit mounted on the speaker frame (or near it depending on time of production) and an extra capacitor added in the heater blower motor wiring. For the best FM reception, an antenna height of 30 inches was recommended. Only 853 units were installed.

For driver comfort, a seven position tilt type steering wheel known as the “*Comfortilt*” was offered on all Bel Air and Impala models equipped with power steering and either a Powerglide or four speed transmission. This option, RPO N33, was installed on 17,814 units. Early printings of available options did not list the tilt wheel as it entered production in late January.

Continuing down the 1963 option list, if you wanted to add a custom touch to your new Chevy, check off the box for the RPO P05 14x5J chrome wheels. These were available on all models except station wagons which had mandatory 14x6JK wheels. Only 893 sets were ordered. These were the same steel wheels which were standard equipment, only with chrome plating. The distinguishing characteristic of them is that the area around the lug holes was not polished, as it would be on an aftermarket chrome wheel. By the way, 1963 was the first year that the 14x6JK wheel became optional on models other than station wagons. Known as RPO P12, 1,094 units left the plants with those wheels.

The last new options for 1963 were of course, the 425 hp rating of the top 409 and the ultra exclusive RPO Z11 427 engine rated at 430 hp.

But we’re not done with first time features which appeared in 1963. Standard equipment now included self adjusting brakes, amber turn signal lenses, full carpeting on Bel Air models, Positive Crankcase Ventilation systems on all engines, and an alternator on all models. Beginning at most plants in January, all firewalls were painted black rather than the body color. Another mid year introduction was a trunk light activated by a mercury switch so it turned on automatically when the trunk lid was opened.

So there you have it. Many reasons why the 1963 Chevrolet models should be remembered for earning a distinguished place in history by introducing so many features that we take for granted today.





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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