



The Dashboard

A Publication of Central Oklahoma Classic Chevy Club

August 2014

A message from the President...

We had a good turnout for the elections of new club officers. I would like to thank all those that participated in club activities and supported me the last few years as your club president. Joe McIninch was elected the new club president and I will be his assistant. Please give Joe a warm welcome and any assistance along the way.

Robert Bogardus

Upcoming Events:

ALWAYS...FIRST STOP and check out our new club web site at WWW.55-57chevys.com
ALL the pictures from club shows are now being archived on our web site

Also check out the Route 66 web site for more local show info.

<http://www.route66cruisersok.org/carshow.htm>

Also for a complete listing on local and nationwide shows refer to the OK Hot Rod Association calendar.

<http://www.ohra.us/>

Happy Birthday wishes go out to:

If your birthday was missed, or your e-mail and contact info has changed, please let Rustyne Harris or Russell Burke know and we will get her done and update the master member info file.

Some interesting reading from the wonderful world wide web.....

The Chevrolet Bel Air nameplate came to represent the middle-line breadwinner among Chevy's full-size models, but as this article demonstrates, it didn't begin that way.

The Chevrolet Bel Air name made its debut for 1950 on the [Chevrolet Styleline Deluxe Bel Air](#). This car was actually near the pinnacle of that year's Chevy offerings and was in fact Chevy's first hardtop car.

[Classic Cars Image Gallery](#)



The Chevrolet Bel Air began in 1950 with this sporty version of the standard Chevy. See more [pictures of classic cars](#).

In addition to covering the 1950 Bel Air, this article also looks at the [1950 Chevrolet Special and DeLuxe](#) models from which it sprang. You'll also find information on the [1954 Chevrolet Bel Air](#) as well as the lineup that generated the [1954 240 Bel Air](#): the [1954 Chevrolet 150 Special](#), [210 DeLuxe](#), and [Delray](#).

Further down you can visit articles on the Bel Air through the [1961 model year](#), by which time the nameplate had settled comfortably into its middle-ground role. The Bel Air badge had one final flourish, however, and that came with the [1958 model year](#), when the Bel Air designation was used to launch a classic new Chevy nameplate, the [Impala](#).

For coverage of the 1958 Chevrolet Bel Air Impala, and for the 1962 through 1975 Bel Airs, check out our article on the [Chevrolet Impala](#).



The Chevrolet Bel Air, like this [1959](#) sedan, came to symbolize big-Chevy value.

The **Chevrolet Bel Air** was a [full-size](#) automobile that was produced by the [Chevrolet](#) division of [General Motors](#) for the 1950–1981 [model years](#). Initially only the two door Hardtops in the Chevrolet model range were designated with the Bel Air name from 1950 to 1952, as distinct from the Styleline and Fleetline models for the remainder of the range. With the 1953 model year the Bel Air name was changed from a designation for a unique body shape to a premium level of trim applied across a number of body styles. The Bel Air continued with various other trim level designations until US production ceased in 1975, production continued in [Canada](#) for its home market only through the 1981 model year.

Second generation (1955–1957)[[edit](#)]

Second generation



1957 Chevrolet Bel Air Hardtop Coupe

Overview

Production 1954–1957

[Model years](#) 1955–1957

Assembly [Caracas, Venezuela](#)^[6]
[Oshawa, Ontario, Canada](#)
[Arlington, Texas](#)
[South Gate, California, \(South Gate Assembly\)](#)

Body and chassis

[Class](#) [Full-size](#)

2-door [hardtop](#)
4-door [hardtop](#) (1956–57)

[Body style](#) 4-door [sedan](#)
2-door [convertible](#)
2-door [Station wagon](#)

	4-door Station wagon
Layout	FR layout
Platform	GM A Body
Related	Chevrolet 210 Chevrolet 150 Chevrolet Nomad
Powertrain	
Engine	215.5 cu in (3.5 L) I6 235.5 cu in (3.9 L) Blue Flame I6 265 cu in (4.3 L) V8 283 cu in (4.6 L) V8 (1957)
Transmission	3-speed manual ^[7] 2-speed Powerglide auto. 3-speed Turboglide auto.
Dimensions	
Wheelbase	115" ^[8]
Length	195.6"

For 1955, Chevrolet's [full-size](#) model received all new styling and power. It was called the "Hot One" in GM's advertising campaign. Chevrolet's styling was crisp, clean and incorporated a Ferrari-inspired grille. Bel Airs came with features found on cars in the lower models ranges plus interior carpet, chrome headliner bands on hardtops, chrome spears on front fenders, stainless steel window moldings,^[1] and full wheel covers. Models were further distinguished by the Bel Air name script in gold lettering later in the year.^[8] For 1955 Chevrolets gained a [V8 engine](#) option and the option of a 2 speed automatic transmission [powerglide](#) or a three speed manual transmission with optional overdrive. The new [265 cu in \(4,340 cc\) V8](#) featured a modern, [overhead valve](#) high compression, short [stroke](#) design that was so good that it remained in production in various displacements for many decades. The base V8 had a two-barrel [carburetor](#) and was rated at 162 hp (121 kW), and the "Power Pack" option featured a four-barrel carburetor and other upgrades yielding 180 bhp (130 kW). Later in the year, a "Super Power Pack" option added high-compression and a further 15 bhp (11 kW). "Idiot" lights replaced gauges for the generator and oil pressure.^[9]

Motor Trend magazine gave the Bel Air top marks for handling.^[9] Popular Mechanics reported acceleration for a V8 Bel Air with [Powerglide](#) as being 0-60 mph in 12.9 seconds, plus a comfortable ride, and good visibility. On the other hand, the horn ring blocked some of the speedometer, regular gasoline made the engine knock, and the first V8 engine off the line burned too much oil.^[10] Front legroom was 43.1".^[11] Brakes were 11" drums.^[11] A new option for V8-equipped 1955 models was air conditioning, with outlets on each side of the dashboard; a heavy-duty generator was included on cars equipped with this option.

The 1956 Bel Air received a face-lift with a more conventional full-width grille, pleasing those customers who didn't favor the [Ferrari](#)-inspired '55 front end. Distinctive two-tone bodyside treatments and graceful front and rear wheel openings completed the "speedline" restyling. Single housings incorporated the [taillight](#), stoplight, and backup light, and the left one held the gas filler - an idea popularized on [Cadillacs](#). Among the seven Bel Air models was a new Sport Sedan, a pillarless four-door hardtop that looked handsome with all the windows rolled down and allowed easy entry into the back seat. Production exceeded 103,000, compared to 128,000 two-door hardtops. Shapely two-door Nomad wagons topped the price chart at \$2,608, but now carried the same interior and rear-wheel sheetmetal as other Bel Airs, lacking the original's unique trim. Only 7,886 were built. The least costly Bel Air, at \$2,025, was the two-door sedan. [Seatbelts](#), shoulder harnesses, and a padded dashboard were available,^[9] and full-size cars could even get the hot [Corvette](#) 225-horsepower engine. In 1956 sales material there was an optional rain-sensing automatic top,^[12] which was first seen on the first on the 1951 LaSabre concept car. However, it is believed that it was never installed on a car.^[13] Popular Mechanics reported only 7.4% of owners in their survey ordered seat belts.

In 1957 engine displacement grew to [283 cu in \(4,640 cc\)](#) with the "Super Turbo Fire V8" option producing 283 hp (211 kW) with the help of continuous (closed loop) mechanical [fuel injection](#). These so-called "fuelie" cars are quite rare, since most Bel Airs were fitted with carburetion. The 1957 Bel Air is among the most recognizable American cars of all time; well-maintained examples, especially [Sport Coupes](#) and [Convertibles](#) are highly sought after by collectors and enthusiasts. They are roomy, with tastefully restrained, period use tail fins and chrome. A second automatic transmission, Turboglide, was optional. While the original two-speed Powerglide continued unchanged, Turboglide provided a continuously variable gear ratio which made "shifting" imperceptible. The shift quadrant on Turboglide cars followed a "P R N D Gr" pattern.^{[14][15]}

From 1955 to 1957, production of the two-door [Nomad station wagon](#) was assigned to the Bel Air series, although its body and trim were unique to that model. Prior to becoming a regular production model, the Nomad first appeared as a Corvette-based concept vehicle in 1954. Chevrolet has since unveiled two concept cars bearing the Nomad name, most recently in 1999. The 1955–1957 Chevrolets are commonly referred to as TriFives.

The 1955-1957s were made in right-hand drive and shipped from Oshawa, Canada, for local assembly in Australia (CKD), New Zealand (SKD), and South Africa. All three model years had a reversed version of the '55 LHD dashboard and did not get the LHD models' 1957 redesign.



1955 Chevrolet Bel Air 2-door Hardtop



1956 Chevrolet Bel Air 4-door Sedan



1957 Chevrolet Bel Air interior

NEXT CLUB MEETING
Sunday Sept 14th
Earls Rib Palace Moore 3:00



I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all.

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