

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1966 Buick Wildcat Restoration Guide

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Nothing here is rewritten or summarised — it is the product itself,
so you can judge the depth before you spend a dollar.

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RESTORATIONESSENTIALS

Factory-Correct Restoration Reference

1966 Buick Wildcat Restoration Guide

Model Years 1966

Model	Buick Wildcat — full-size performance series
Body / frame	126-in wheelbase
Engines	401 Nailhead (325 hp); 425 (340 hp); GS/Super Wildcat 425 (to 360 hp)
Transmission	Super Turbine 400 automatic; manual rare
Production	68,584; Wildcat GS: 1,244 (242 convertibles)
Identity	The one-year Wildcat Gran Sport year

Every specification in this guide was checked against factory literature, marque references, period road tests, and documented survivor vehicles. Where sources disagree or the record is silent, this guide says so rather than guessing.

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1. What this guide is — and is not

This is a single-year guide. It covers model year 1966 only. Where a neighbouring year differs, the difference is stated as a difference — the other year's parts, ratings and trim are never silently borrowed. Shared platform engineering is shared honestly; the specification table, the year-change register and the finishes in this guide are this year's own.

2. The year in brief

Buick changed the Wildcat very little for 1966 — and then, in the middle of that quiet year, built the rarest performance Wildcat of all. The one-year-only Gran Sport Performance Group (option codes A8/Y48) put the 425 under the bonnet with heavy-duty suspension, dual exhausts, Positraction and initials-only GS badging on the rear quarters. Just 1,244 were built, 242 of them convertibles.

The dual-quad Super Wildcat story needs care this year: the regular dual-quad option left the standard line, and the 360 hp twin-carburettor set-up lived on inside the GS package — first as a dealer-installed conversion on MT-code engines, later as factory MZ-code builds. Only 22 cars are recorded with Super Wildcat decals. Everything else about 1966 is careful carryover: same Nailheads, same three series, detail trim changes only.

3. Year-change register

Read this register before ordering anything. It is the difference between a 1966 car and a car that merely looks like one from across the street.

Item	1965	This year (1966)
Gran Sport package	Not offered	One-year-only A8/Y48 Gran Sport Performance Group
Dual-quad availability	Super Wildcat option on the standard line	Inside the GS package only (dealer MT conversions, then factory MZ)
GS production	—	1,244 total; 242 convertibles; 22 Super Wildcat cars
Standard engine	401 Nailhead, 325 hp	401 Nailhead, 325 hp (unchanged)
Styling	1965 design	Detail trim revisions only — the quiet year

4. Specification table — 1966

Item	Specification
Wheelbase	126 in
Standard engine	401 cu in Nailhead V8, 325 hp (gross)
Optional engines	425 Nailhead, 340 hp; GS 425 to 360 hp (dual-quad)
Transmission	Super Turbine 400 automatic (manual rare)
GS package content	425 engine, dual exhaust, heavy-duty suspension, Positraction, GS quarter badges
Production	68,584 total; 1,244 GS



5. Numbers, tags and identity

- A claimed 1966 GS must be proven, not badged: the package was an option on the Wildcat, so the paperwork trail (build records, original window documentation, engine code) is the car. MT-code engines mark the early dealer-converted dual-quad cars; MZ marks factory dual-quad builds.
- Series and body style still come off the Fisher body plate first — GS hardware on the wrong body is a tribute, however well built.
- GS quarter-panel badging follows the post-1965 initials-only Gran Sport format shared with the intermediate GS cars.

6. Engines and transmissions

- **401 Nailhead (standard).** 325 hp — the volume engine and the correct base for a standard 1966 car.
- **425 Nailhead.** 340 hp single four-barrel; standard engine inside the GS package.
- **Super Wildcat 425.** 360 hp dual-quad, available within the GS package at extra cost; the rarest engine story in the Wildcat line.
- Rate every claim against the engine code stamped on the block. Decals are cheap; codes are evidence.

7. Paint, trim and finishes

Styling changes from 1965 are detail-level, which makes wrong-year trim easy to miss and easy to fit by mistake. Work from the body plate's paint and trim codes and from documented 1966 survivors, and treat GS badging as a claim that must match the car's paperwork, not as a finish to apply at the end of a repaint.

8. Rust and inspection map

The 1966 rust map is the 1965 map — same chassis, same traps. GS cars deserve the same cold inspection as base cars; rarity does not slow corrosion.

- Lower front fenders behind the wheel openings, and the fender 'gill' trim area on cars that carry it — trim traps moisture against the panel.
- Rocker panels, inner and outer, and the rear quarter panels ahead of and behind the rear wheels.
- Trunk floor, spare-tyre well and the trunk drop-offs at the quarter-panel seams.
- Floor pans at the seat-belt anchors and under the rear seat; check with the carpets lifted, not by tapping from below.
- Frame rails at the body mounts and the rear kick-up; full-size Buicks hide scale inside the rails long after the outside looks clean.
- Convertible top wells and header bows on open cars; a leaking well rots the trunk floor from above.

9. Restoration priorities for this year

- Authenticate before restoring: a documented GS is worth a different budget from a badged standard car, and the authentication is paperwork and codes, not opinion.
- Preserve original GS suspension and Positraction hardware — the package content is the car.
- Dealer-converted (MT) dual-quad cars: keep every piece of conversion hardware and documentation together; it is the car's provenance.
- Standard cars: the Nailhead rules from 1965 apply unchanged — verify castings and dates before the rebuild.