

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1968 Chevrolet Caprice Restoration Guide

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Factory-Correct Restoration Reference

1968 Chevrolet Caprice Restoration Guide

Model Years 1968

Model	Chevrolet Caprice
Body / frame	119-in wheelbase; body stretched about 2 in overall
Engines	307 (200 hp) base; 327; 396 (325 hp); 427 L36 (390 hp); 427 L72 (425 hp)
Transmissions	Manuals rare; Powerglide; Turbo Hydra-Matic
Signature option	Concealed headlamps: 14,929 built
Identity	Hidden headlamps, bumper taillights, Astro Ventilation

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 1968 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

Three changes define the 1968 Caprice, and all three are traps for the unwary restorer. First, the face: a new grille offered the year's signature option — concealed headlamps, Caprice-only, ordered on 14,929 cars (about 12 per cent of production). Sources split on its price — \$79 in marque research, about \$82 in Hagerty's history — and this guide prints both rather than choosing silently. Second, the tail: the taillights moved into a huge single-beam rear bumper, handsome and ruinously expensive to repair after even a light shunt. Third, the cabin: coupes gained Astro Ventilation, with dash vents and deleted vent windows.

Mechanically the base engine changed — the new 307 (200 hp) replaced the 283 — federally mandated side-marker lamps appeared, the instrument panel returned to a horizontal sweep speedometer with a revised three-spoke wheel, and the L72 427 (425 hp) returned to the top of the sheet. The car also grew about two inches in length. A 1968 restoration is therefore a detail restoration: lamps, bumper, ventilation and panel, all year-specific.

3. Year-change register

Read this register before ordering anything. It is the difference between a 1968 car and a car that merely looks like one from across the street.

Item	1967	This year (1968)
Base engine	283, 195 hp	307, 200 hp
Headlamps	Exposed, fixed grille	Concealed headlamps optional (Caprice-only); 14,929 built
Taillights	Rear panel lamps	Set into the rear bumper beam
Ventilation (coupes)	Vent windows	Astro Ventilation: dash vents, vent windows deleted
Instrument panel	1967 pattern	Horizontal sweep speedometer returns; three-spoke wheel; gauge-cluster packaging revised
Top engine	427, 385 hp	427 L72, 425 hp (returns)
Overall length	1967 figure	About 2 in longer



4. Specification table — 1968

Item	Specification
Wheelbase	119 in
Base engine	307 cu in V8, 200 hp (gross)
Options	327 V8s; 396, 325 hp; 427 L36, 390 hp; 427 L72, 425 hp
Concealed lamps	Optional, Caprice-only; 14,929 built; \$79–\$82 (sources conflict)
Production note	Concealed-lamp cars ≈ 12% of Caprice production

5. Numbers, tags and identity

- Concealed-lamp originality is hardware evidence: doors, actuators and the correct grille. The option's paperwork trail plus the hardware together make the case; either alone is half of one.
- Side-marker lamps are federal equipment from 1968 — a claimed 1968 car without them has had panel work or worse.
- The 307 is identified by its codes like any other engine; do not let a seller's '327' story override the suffix.

6. Engines and transmissions

- **307 V8.** 200 hp — new base engine, more displacement than the 283 it replaced at the same job.
- **327 V8s.** The familiar middle of the sheet; verify tune by suffix.
- **396 / 427 big-blocks.** 325 hp; L36 390 hp; L72 425 hp — the L72 returns for 1968 and remains a documentation-first purchase.
- Transmissions as before; big-block automatics are Turbo Hydra-Matic cars in practice.

7. Paint, trim and finishes

Restore the face as a system: grille, lamp doors and mechanism are one assembly with one correct appearance, open or closed. The bumper-integral taillights make rear chrome a major budget line this year. Coupes must keep their vent-window-free doors — a vent window on a 1968 coupe is a 1967 door, however well it fits.

8. Rust and inspection map

The bumper beam that carries the taillights corrodes from behind and is this year's signature rust bill. Inspect it from inside the trunk before pricing any rear-end work.

- Frame rails at the body mounts and rear kick-up — the perimeter frame rots from inside; probe, do not just look.
- Trunk floor and drop-offs, rear quarter panels low behind the wheels, and the valance behind the rear bumper.
- Floor pans at the front seat mounts and under the rear seat; lift the carpets on any car being valued.
- Lower front fenders and the cowl sides behind them; formal-roof cars add the C-pillar and rear-window channel.
- Wagon tailgate and spare-tyre well on Estate cars; the well is a water trap by design.
- Bumper-integral taillight housings (1968–69): the beam that carries the lamps corrodes from behind and is expensive to replace well.