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The opening pages of

1970 Buick Gran Sport

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Factory-Correct Restoration Reference

1970 Buick Gran Sport Restoration Guide

Model Year 1970

Model	Buick Gran Sport (GS 350, GS 455, Stage 1, GSX) 1970
Platform	GM A-body intermediate, 112-in wheelbase
Engines	350 V8 (315 hp); 455 V8 (350 hp); 455 Stage 1 (360 hp, 510 lb-ft)
Transmissions	3-speed manual; 4-speed manual; Turbo Hydra-matic (TH350/TH400)
Notable	The peak Buick muscle year: new 455, debut GSX (678 reported)

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

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Chapter 1 — The Gentleman's Muscle Car: Buick and the Gran Sport

Buick is the oldest surviving American automobile brand, founded in 1903 — and the profits from the company William C. Durant built around it became the foundation on which he assembled General Motors in 1908. Buick's engineering culture was always distinct within GM: a fixation on torque over advertised horsepower (the famous 'Wildcat 445' and 'Wildcat 465' air-cleaner decals stated torque, not displacement), and engines built heavier and torquier than their corporate cousins.

The Gran Sport began in 1965 as a performance option on the Skylark — Buick's answer to the GTO — and became a standalone series for 1967. Through the GS 400 and GS 350 years it built its reputation as the gentleman's muscle car: fast, but never crude. The Stage 1 option arrived in January 1968; the 1969 Stage 1 turned the wick up to 345 hp; and for 1970 Buick replaced the 400 with the 455 and, at midyear, launched the GSX. The 1970 GS 455 Stage 1 — 360 horsepower and 510 lb-ft of torque — is widely considered the ultimate Buick muscle car, and 1970 is the peak year this guide documents.

Chapter 2 — What Makes 1970 Different — and a Word About This Guide's Title

About the '40th Anniversary' name. This guide is sold under a title that includes the words '40th Anniversary Edition.' In the interest of the honesty this series is built on: no Buick factory literature or production record consulted for this guide documents a '40th Anniversary Edition' Gran Sport for 1970. Buick's documented 1970 Gran Sport line is the GS 350, the GS 455, the Stage 1, and the GSX — and those are the cars this guide covers, completely. If a seller presents a 1970 Buick as a factory anniversary model, ask for the factory paper. We could not find any.



- New engine: the 455 replaces the 400 (bore 4.312 in x stroke 3.90 in), rated 350 hp in base form with 510 lb-ft-class torque; the Stage 1 version made 360 hp and 510 lb-ft.
- The GSX debuts at midyear: an appearance-and-handling package (front and rear spoilers, stripes, hood tachometer, Rally Ride suspension) over the GS 455 or Stage 1, in Saturn Yellow or Apollo White.
- 1970 was the last high-compression year before GM's low-lead detune: the Stage 1 ran 10.5:1.
- Axle strategy was specific and is an authentication tool: 3.42 gears for the base 455 and for Stage 1 cars with air conditioning; 3.64 for a Stage 1 without A/C.
- The new A-body styling is one generation only (1970-1972, with 1970 its own trim year) — GS-specific trim and first-year 455 components are 1970 identification points.

Chapter 3 — VIN and Cowl-Tag Decoding

1970 Buick VINs are thirteen characters. The series code is the birth certificate of a real Gran Sport: in the 1965-1971 Buick VIN, '34' identifies the GS 350 and '46' the GS 455. A documented 1970 GS 455 reads, for example, 446370 — Buick (4), GS 455 series (46), hardtop coupe (37), 1970 (0) — followed by the assembly-plant letter and a production sequence starting at 100001. A GSX carries the same 44637/44667 VIN as a GS 455: the GSX was an option package, not a separate series. Any 'GSX' with a Skylark (44-series-but-not-GS) identity story needs build-sheet documentation.

VIN element	Meaning	1970 GS values
Digit 1	Division	4 = Buick
Digits 2-3	Series	34 = GS 350; 46 = GS 455
Digits 4-5	Body style	37 = hardtop coupe; 67 = convertible
Digit 6	Model year	0 = 1970
Digit 7	Assembly plant	Plant letter — verify against marque references
Digits 8-13	Production sequence	Starts at 100001

The Fisher Body cowl tag records paint, trim, and build date. For a GSX, the checks are famous: paint code 10 (Apollo White) or Q — shown as QQ on the tag (Saturn Yellow); trim code 188 (black interior) standard; and a build date within the GSX's midyear-onward window. Rivets, tag font, and firewall paint around the tag are authentication points — reproduction tags exist. On 1968-and-later cars the engine block and transmission carry a partial VIN stamping that must match the car, alongside the two-letter engine production code (Chapter 15).

Chapter 4 — Engine Lineup: 350, 455, and the Stage 1

Engine	Code(s)	Bore x stroke	Comp.	Output	Notes
350 V8 (GS 350, 4-bbl)	SO (2V) / SB, SP (4V)	3.80 x 3.85	—	315 hp / 410 lb-ft	Undersquare, torque-first small-block; TH350 automatic or manual
455 V8 (GS 455)	SF / SR	4.312 x 3.90	10.0:1	350 hp / 510 lb-ft	New for 1970; the standard GS 455 engine and the base engine under the GSX
455 Stage 1	SS	4.312 x 3.90	10.5:1	360 hp @ 4,600 / 510 lb-ft @ 2,800	Larger valves, hotter cam, recalibrated Rochester 4-bbl

The Stage 1 was Buick's factory answer to the horsepower wars: bigger valves, a more aggressive camshaft, and carburetor calibration over the base 455, deliberately underrated at 360 hp. Its 510 lb-ft at 2,800 rpm remains one