

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1970 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

1970 Buick Wildcat Restoration Guide

Model Years 1970

Model	Buick Wildcat Custom — the final Wildcat
Body / frame	124-in wheelbase
Engine	455 V8, 370 hp / 510 lb-ft — Buick's largest V8
Transmission	Turbo Hydra-Matic 400 automatic
Production	23,645 (see note in text)
Identity	Custom trim only; the 455 arrives; Centurion follows for 1971

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 1970 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

The Wildcat went out at maximum displacement. For 1970 Buick replaced the 430 with the 455 — a bored development of the same big-valve design and the largest V8 the division ever built — rated 370 hp with 510 lb-ft of torque at a 10.0:1 compression ratio. At the same moment the range narrowed: the Wildcat was offered only in Custom trim, in hardtop coupe, hardtop sedan and convertible form.

Production fell to 23,645 — two secondary sources print 23,619 and 23,615; the tabulated marque figure used here is 23,645, and the small conflict is recorded rather than smoothed over. The nameplate was replaced by the Centurion for 1971, which makes the 1970 car both the final and the most powerful Wildcat — the restoration brief writes itself: Custom specification, 455 hardware, no substitutions.

3. Year-change register

Read this register before ordering anything. It is the difference between a 1970 car and a car that merely looks like one from across the street.

Item	1969	This year (1970)
Series offered	Base and Custom	Custom only
Engine	430, 360 hp / 475 lb-ft	455, 370 hp / 510 lb-ft — largest Buick V8
Compression	10.25:1 (430)	10.0:1 (455)
Fascia	1969 face	Updated front and rear fascia for 1970
Production	67,453 (1969)	23,645 — final year
Successor	—	Buick Centurion (1971)

4. Specification table — 1970

Item	Specification
Wheelbase	124 in
Engine	455 cu in V8, 370 hp @ 4,600 rpm, 510 lb-ft @ 2,800 rpm (gross)
Compression	10.0:1
Transmission	Turbo Hydra-Matic 400 automatic
Series	Wildcat Custom only: hardtop coupe, hardtop sedan, convertible
Production	23,645 (variants 23,615 / 23,619 in two secondary sources)



5. Numbers, tags and identity

- There is no base-series 1970 Wildcat: any car presented as one is a misread plate or a LeSabre in costume. Series verification is the first job.
- The 455 is identified by its stampings and casting numbers; it shares architecture with the 430 but not parts identity — order by code, not by appearance.
- Final-year production was low; document everything on the car before disassembly, because 1970-only trim has the thinnest donor pool of the span.

6. Engines and transmissions

- **455 V8.** 370 hp, 510 lb-ft, four-barrel, hydraulic lifters, five main bearings. The torque peak arrives at 2,800 rpm — this is a low-speed thrust engine, and gearing and converter choices should respect that.
- Turbo Hydra-Matic 400 automatic throughout.
- The 455's rebuild path (bearings, oiling, cooling) is well documented by the Buick performance specialists; a big car with 510 lb-ft also deserves honest attention to the rear axle and Positraction unit.

7. Paint, trim and finishes

Custom-only production simplifies the trim brief and raises its standard: every 1970 Wildcat left Flint as a Custom, so interiors and brightwork restore to the Custom specification on the body plate. The updated 1970 fascia distinguishes the car from 1969 at a glance — keep model-year faces on model-year cars.

8. Rust and inspection map

The rust map is the 1969 map — same shell family — with final-year urgency: panels and trim unique to 1970 have the fewest donors, so save every salvageable original piece.

- 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

- Restore to Custom specification throughout; there is no cheaper correct answer this year.
- 455 verification by codes and dates before the rebuild — the engine is the car's headline.
- Cooling and axle health deserve budget priority behind 510 lb-ft in a two-ton car.
- Record the production-figure conflict in the car's file; honest documentation is part of a final-year car's value.