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The opening pages of

1970 Chevrolet Caprice Restoration Guide

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Factory-Correct Restoration Reference

1970 Chevrolet Caprice Restoration Guide

Model Years 1970

Model	Chevrolet Caprice — final year of the 1965-generation body
Body / frame	119-in wheelbase
Engines	350 (250/300 hp); 400 (265 hp); 454 LS5 (390 hp)
Transmissions	TH350 (small-block); TH400 (big-block); manuals rare
Top engine	454 LS5, 390 hp — the ultimate Caprice engine of the span
Identity	Fender caps over the lamps; no hidden-lamp option; the big-block grows to 454

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 1970 Caprice is the last variation of the body that began in 1965, and it announces itself plainly: the fenders are capped over the headlamps, the front bumper returns to a simple beam, and the concealed-lamp option — the signature of 1968–69 — is gone. Underneath, the big-block story grows: the 427 gives way to the 454, fitted in the Caprice as the LS5 at 390 hp, while a new 400 two-barrel (265 hp) fills the middle of the sheet above the 350s.

Everything about 1970 is end-of-line: for 1971 Chevrolet would field a vastly larger all-new car. The restorer's brief is therefore preservation of a final specification — capped fenders, simple bumper, 400 and 454 hardware where fitted — without borrowing the hidden lamps or loop bumper that make earlier years glamorous. A correct 1970 car is deliberately plainer at the front than a 1969, and that plainness is its authenticity.

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)
Headlamp treatment	Concealed lamps offered	Fenders capped over exposed lamps; concealed option deleted
Front bumper	Loop bumper	Simple front bumper returns
Big-block	427 (390/425 hp)	454 LS5, 390 hp
400 engine	Not offered	New: 400 2-bbl, 265 hp
Standard fare	327 standard (1969)	350 family leads the sheet (250/300 hp)
Body future	Current shell	Final year — all-new, larger car for 1971

4. Specification table — 1970

Item	Specification
Wheelbase	119 in
Engines	350, 250 hp (2V) / 300 hp (4V); 400, 265 hp (2V); 454 LS5, 390 hp
Transmissions	TH350 (small-block); TH400 (big-block)
Axles	10-bolt (small-block); 12-bolt (big-block); Positraction optional
Brakes	11-in drums standard; front discs optional (from 1967)

5. Numbers, tags and identity

- No concealed lamps were offered for 1970: a 1970 Caprice wearing them has been back-dated with 1968–69 hardware, however handsome the result.



- The 400 in a 1970 Chevrolet is the small-block-based 400 (402 in big-block marketing elsewhere) — verify by suffix and casting, and respect its steam-hole requirements when heads are swapped or machined.
- LS5 identity is a suffix-code question like every Chevrolet big-block before it; the 454's first year draws premium claims and deserves the usual evidence standard.

6. Engines and transmissions

- **350 V8.** 250 hp (2V) and 300 hp (4V) — the working top of the volume range.
- **400 V8.** 265 hp two-barrel — torque-aimed, one year only in this body, and the engine most often misidentified at swap meets.
- **454 LS5.** 390 hp — the largest and strongest engine fitted to this generation of Caprice, and the correct ceiling for a 1970 performance build.
- Ratings remain SAE gross for 1970; net figures belong to 1972 and later and must not be quoted against these cars.

7. Paint, trim and finishes

The capped front fenders are the year's panel signature — preserve them; converting a 1970 face to hidden lamps destroys the very thing that makes the year identifiable. Interior and brightwork restore to the final-year specification, which is a 1969 evolution, not a copy: decode the trim from the car's own plate and tags.

8. Rust and inspection map

Final-year shells share the 1969 traps, with the addition of age: these were the last of the line and often the hardest-used. The full map applies, bumper beam included.

- 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.

9. Restoration priorities for this year

- Keep the 1970 face a 1970 face — capped fenders, simple bumper, no borrowed glamour.
- Identify the 400 correctly before any machine work (steam holes are not optional knowledge).
- LS5 cars: suffix-code authentication before valuation, closing the span's big-block story with the same rule it opened with.
- Source final-year trim early; 1971's all-new car ended the donor stream for this shell.