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The opening pages of

1966 Chevrolet Chevelle Restoration Guide

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1966 Chevrolet Chevelle

Factory-Correct Restoration Guide

Single model year — 1966 only

Wheelbase	115 inches — all models
Base engine	194-cid Turbo-Thrift six, 120 hp
SS396 series	396 Turbo-Jet in 325, 360, and 375 hp
Production	471,052 (incl. 23,688 Canadian); 72,272 SS396

Researched from factory-pattern references and marque sources. Unverifiable figures are omitted, not guessed.

$29.95

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About This Guide

This guide covers **one model year only**. Every specification, code table, and production figure inside was checked against year-specific references — factory literature patterns, the Chevelle marque references at ChevelleStuff and ChevelleWorld, and period road-test and historical coverage. Where a figure could not be verified for this exact year, it was left out rather than guessed. That is a deliberate choice: a wrong number in a restoration guide costs far more than a blank space.

How to use this book: start with the VIN and Fisher trim tag sections and decode your car before buying parts. Use the engine, transmission, and axle sections to verify what the car was born with versus what is in it now. Use the paint, trim, and production sections when judging correctness and rarity. Work the restoration sequence in order — skipping ahead is how projects stall.

A note on safety: this is a technical reference, not a shop manual. Procedures involving fuel, brakes, steering, suspension springs, and electrical work can injure you if done wrong. If you are unsure, have the work done or checked by a qualified mechanic, and keep a fire extinguisher rated for fuel fires within reach whenever fuel system work is underway.

What this guide covers: Chevrolet history · Chevelle model history · what is unique to 1966 · VIN decoding · Fisher trim tag · engines · transmissions · rear axle · suspension, steering, brakes & wheels · paint codes · trim & production · casting numbers & date codes · torque specifications · rust diagnosis · restoration sequence.

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Chevrolet: A Brief History

The Chevrolet Motor Company was founded on November 3, 1911, by Swiss-born racing driver and engineer Louis Chevrolet and William C. Durant, the ousted founder of General Motors. Durant had lost control of GM in a bankers' coup and set out to build a new empire; Chevrolet gave the venture engineering credibility and a famous name. The first car, the 1912 Classic Six, was a large, well-built touring car — but Durant quickly steered the company toward affordable volume cars that could challenge Ford.

Louis Chevrolet himself left the company in 1915 after clashing with Durant over the direction of the product line — Durant wanted inexpensive cars for everyone, and the market proved him right. By 1918 Chevrolet was profitable enough for Durant to use it as the vehicle to regain control of General Motors, and Chevrolet became a division of GM that year. It has been GM's volume and value leader ever since.

Three engineering milestones matter to anyone restoring a 1960s Chevrolet. The first is the small-block V8 of 1955: a compact, light, 265-cubic-inch overhead-valve V8 engineered under Ed Cole that became the most-produced V8 family in history. Its architecture — 4.4-inch bore centers, in-block camshaft, interchangeable parts across decades — is why a 1960s Chevrolet is still practical to restore today. The second is the Mark IV big-block, introduced for 1965, which gave Chevrolet a modern large-displacement performance engine in the 396. The third is Chevrolet's manufacturing scale: high-volume assembly plants at Atlanta, Baltimore, Kansas City, Fremont, Framingham, and elsewhere, each with small but important differences in trim-tag formatting, paint processes, and accessory coding that restorers must respect.

Chevrolet's business in the 1960s was built on a simple idea: offer a car for every purse, and let buyers climb a ladder of trim and options. The Chevelle, introduced for 1964, was the middle rung — larger and more substantial than the Chevy II, smaller and livelier than the full-size line. That positioning is exactly what makes authenticity work demanding: with so many series, body styles, and options sharing one platform, the difference between a correct car and a tribute is written in codes, not in chrome.

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