

I UNDERSTAND that you want to drive the Monte Carlo," Mauri Rose said to me when Don MacDonald and I met him at the General Motors Proving Ground for a ride in a '56 Chevy.

"The Monte Carlo?" I asked.

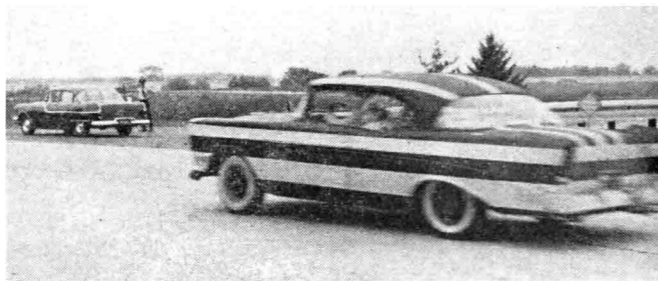
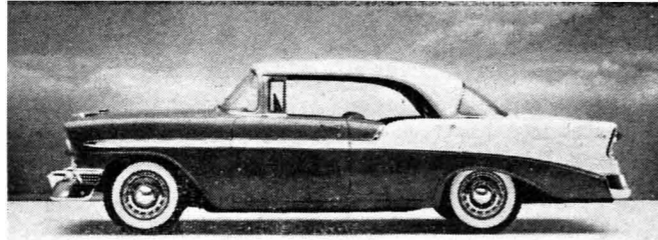
"Yes, our code name for the Chevrolet Zora Arkus-Duntov drove to a new record up Pike's Peak last Labor Day," he answered. (Due mostly to the current mixup over who is to replace the Triple A Contest Board, NASCAR sanctioned the run which saw Duntov make it up the grade in 17:24.05, 2 minutes and 3 seconds under the existing record.)

"Sounds like a good one to me; what does it have?"

We can answer that question quite simply, and so can you if you have read Chevrolet ads since their near win at Daytona, 1955. Dollar for dollar, Chevy's performance has been tops for the year. This time around, their prima (so-called powerpack) car offers 205 horses, bringing a very genuine sports car power/weight ratio to the low-priced (newly defined as within reach of the *average aficionado*) field.



Convertible deserves "baby Eldorado" nickname. Unlike last year's design, heavier bars in new grille do not lose their identity when viewed from distance. "Two-Ten" sedan, midway in price range, is popular family model. Hood is 4 inches longer for new year



This Bel Air 4-door hardtop is a duplicate of the one below that set a record up Pike's Peak. Chevrolet added further to its racing laurels when strictly stock '56 sped up the Peak in 17:24.05. Chevy's new chrome trim on side aids in integration of 2-tone color schemes

New for them is a 4-door hardtop sedan. This is essentially the car about which Walt said: "Sounds like a good one to me; what does it have?" In other words the Monte Carlo, which in camouflaged form sneaked so speedily up Pike's Peak, is in essence the poor man's Eldorado.

Without undue publicity, Chevrolet offers availability of seat belts and shoulder harnesses, AC's new precision-aimed headlights (more about this in Jan. MT), and crashproof door locks, which have been an *unpublicized* GM feature since mid-1955.

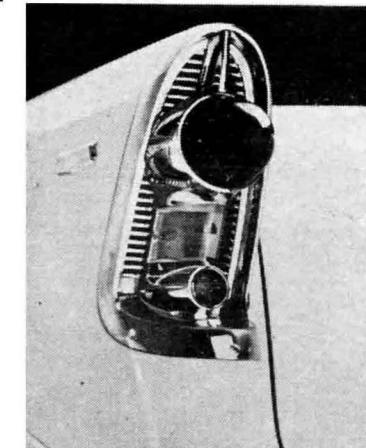
Biggest improvement, acceleration-wise, appears to be at the top end (50 to 80 mph) which is logical from the standpoint that cams newly ground for performance prove their mettle in this range. We made this jump in approximately 12 seconds.

In the standing starts, with this standard shift car, we made it in from 0 to 60 mph in slightly under 12 seconds. This is not too much faster than last year's 162-hp job with Powerglide and also just about the same as the real hot job that we drove in an impromptu performance test at the proving grounds last year.

The difference partially lies in the fact that the project Monte Carlo car had been driven out in its short 1200 miles of usefulness. When we tried it, it had a standard clutch instead of the usual Auburn version that comes stock with the powerpack.

Chevrolet had no reason to radically change their suspension and running gear this year; it had proven good enough to rate a tie for MT's best-handling award for 1955. About the only

Typical of Chevrolet's styling changes for 1956 is heavier, chrome-lined "eyelid." Belying its workaday role as a handy gas filler that masks unsightly paint chips, left tail light closes to become aircraft-like unit combining all lights, reflector



difference is a slight outboard movement of the rear shackles and a refinement of steering geometry.

The particular car that we were driving and which Mauri Rose demonstrated for us around the proving ground handling course is probably a better handler than the standard car since it has "export" rear springing. He cruised around this road racer's nightmare at speeds up to 80 mph, and we were in a 4-wheel drift practically all the time except when we switched from a left- to right-hand turn. At no time did the car want to break loose.

Powerpack Chevrolets like the Monte Carlo are only part of the story. The new 6 rates at 140 horsepower. The "family" V8 still holds to 162 or 170, the latter with Powerglide. The "Super Turbo Fire" with 4-barrel carburetor which we drove has an all-time-high (for Chevrolet) compression ratio of 9.25 to 1. Hydraulic valve lifters are now standard on both V8s and 6s regardless of transmission. Cams have a higher lift in all engines.

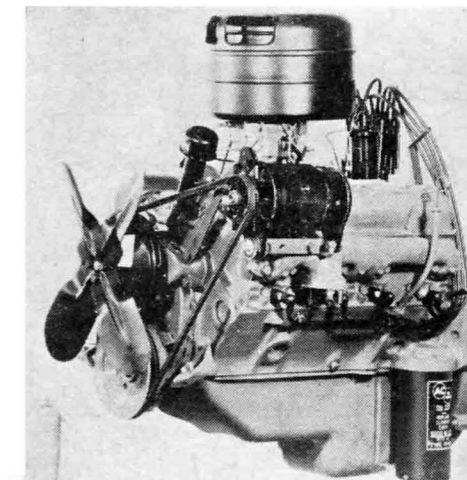
Chevrolet's performance may make good advertising copy, but there is more to it than just that. Down in the range where we all normally drive a car, I pushed the Monte Carlo from 30 to 50 in approximately 4½ seconds. Later on, going into a 7.2 per cent grade (the Pike's Peak type), we indicated 85 mph at full throttle in high gear all the way up. This comment is included in the paragraph on normal driving because performance like this gets you around that semi-trailer lugging up the mountain with room to spare. I wouldn't want to commit myself on top speed right now, except to say that the Monte Carlo with a clutch seriously weakened by our acceleration tests clocked a 5th wheel 106 mph from a standing start at the end of 0.8 miles! The car's speedometer at this point had ducked out of sight on the right side of the instrument.

The Bel Air 4-door hardtop could be named Monte Carlo. The station wagon line includes a new 9-passenger model with 3 rows of seats, the latter 2 of which can be folded for full cargo-carrying potential.

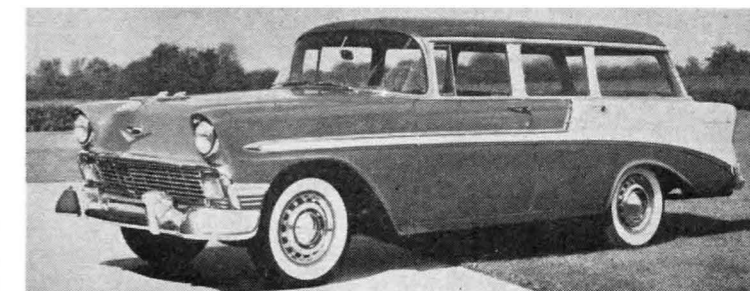
Most every option known can be had here. There is a cowl-mounted air-conditioning system; power windows, seats, steering, and brakes. Fancy chromed side trim is standard even on the previously prosaic 150 series.

Chevrolet's 1956 facelift was an expensive one, involving all-new front and rear fenders, a new hood, a grille still Ferrari-like but more Americanized, and reshaped bumpers. Not content with being the country's No. 1 seller, it is now out after Cadillac with a gas filler concealed under a hinged left tail light.

—Walt Woron and Don MacDonald



Full-flow oil filter is optional this year on Chevrolet V8s. Otherwise, the engines, in both the 6-cylinder and 8-cylinder models, remain substantially the same as '55



Success with redesigned wagons in '55 has spurred Chevrolet to higher goals. Among many choices is this well-appointed wagon with seats for 9 people



CHEVROLET