

CAR LIFE ROAD TEST



427

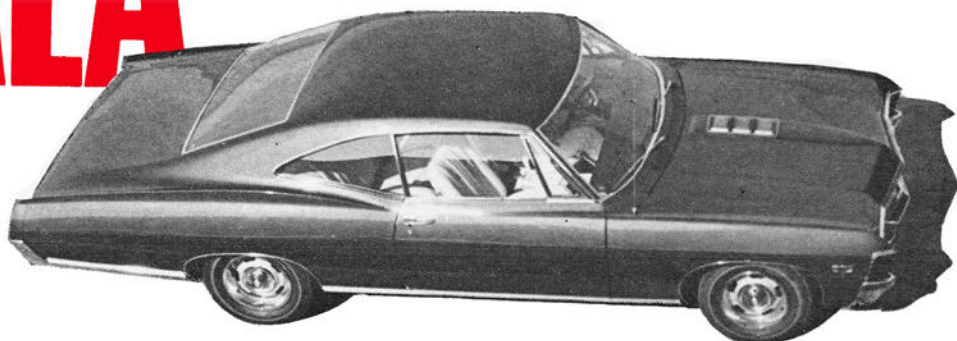
IMPALA

NOT SO MANY years ago a motorist shopping for one of the "low-priced three" knew that no matter which make and model he elected to buy, he would drive home a car instantly recognizable as basic, no-frills transportation. His neighbors were aware that here was a man who was putting practicality ahead of ostentation, that this was a man who demanded—and got—a means of transport at minimum cost. If his thinking was reasonably advanced he probably included a heater, and if he was especially daring, he may have ordered a true luxury accessory—a radio.

For better or worse, that era is gone, and the fact that it's not coming back soon was brought forcefully home while testing the Impala SS 427. Here is a Chevrolet with the most advanced mobile creature comforts currently available in combination with performance which was, until very recently, reserved for dragstrip specials. It may well be the ultimate average car—the status symbol for Everyman—at least for the duration of 1967. What really made the package significant was the pricetag, erasing forever the image of Chevrolet as a member of the low-priced three. With transportation (West Coast), license and local sales tax, it was substantially more than \$5000. It would have been possible to raise the price another couple of hundred by putting on a few additional accessories—perhaps power windows and seats would have been in keeping with this car's character—but even without them *CL*'s SS 427 was what salesmen term "loaded."

Is a Chevrolet worth \$5000? The answer, it seems, is integral to evaluating the car in terms of what it does and who is likely to be attracted to it. Lest *CL* be accused of an approach which says that the only good car is a practical car, this just isn't so. *CAR LIFE* liked the Impala. Ride was good, handling fair to good, braking barely passable, and the acceleration/speed exciting. Turn on the air conditioning, tune in the FM multiplex stereo (or, if out of FM range, push in a tape cartridge and listen to Lorne Greene narrate "Songs of America"), and the sensation is pure luxury—the approximate

**IS A CHEVROLET WORTH \$5000?
ASK A SWINGING FAMILY!**



equivalent of the most expensive automobiles available. Note the qualifying word "approximate"; no production Chevrolet ever will match the richness and fine detailing inherent in cars where base pricing starts \$1000 above the Impala's delivered price

THE SS 427's MOST impressive feature, logically, is the 427 engine. At 385 bhp, the configuration is new this year. Coupled with a Turbo Hydra-Matic, also new for Chevrolet in 1967, and Positraction differential, the engine stands at the head of a formidable power train. Granted, it falls into the heavy blunt instrument class, but forward progress starts immediately. During acceleration runs, the biggest problem was controlling rear wheelspin from a dead stop. The engine seemed willing to rev well past its published limits. There was an orange segment on the tachometer at 5200-5500 rpm; the automatic was shifted L-1, L-2, D within this range. Drivers were careful to avoid the red, which started at 5500, for two reasons: No one wanted to risk breaking the engine, and the bhp peak is at 5200, so it was fruitless to press much past that point.

Chevrolet offers a heavy-duty 3-speed manual transmission and a 4-speed with the 427 engine. Certainly some of the sporting types will opt for the 4-speed box simply because there remain those who enjoy shifting. As a practical matter, the Turbo Hydra-Matic is an excellent choice, offering good control and smooth shifting. In drive range, maximum upshift point 1 to 2 is 59 mph, 2 to 3 is 99. Kickdown speeds are 46 and 93. It has a suggested list price of \$226.45, compared with the 4-speed's \$184.35, and the heavy-duty, synchronized 3-speed at \$79.

While the showroom-stock quarter-mile times were reasonably impressive, this is the kind of car in which acceleration could have been improved with minor alterations. For one thing, tires with more bite would have cut elapsed time and improved the speed. The SS 427 package calls for Nylon red stripe tires, but for some reason CL's test car did not have them. And Superlift or equivalent shock absorbers would have aided in delivery of power to the ground. Indeed, an extra 6-8 mph are available without touching the engine or exhaust system. The optional performance axle ratio, 3.31:1, also would prove an asset.

One thing the engine doesn't offer in abundance is economy, although an economy axle ratio, 2.73:1, is listed. Parsimony shouldn't be expected from 427 cu. in. Around town the 427 drinks super-premium fuel at about 10 mpg, improving slightly on the open road. However, the type of motorist who selects a 427 engine shouldn't be concerned with fuel mileage, except to have a general idea of how far he can go without running out of gasoline—on the average, 287 miles.

IN SPITE OF M. Bugatti's low opinion of the importance of brakes ("I build cars to go, not to stop"), most people like to stop safely and quickly every time they apply pressure to the brake pedal. On this point the SS 427 is deficient. CL's standard 80-mph maximum deceleration stops revealed two things; rear wheel lock-up and significant fade. The latter was quite pronounced on the second stop. The option book reveals a \$79 cure—front wheel disc brakes, which are part of a package that includes 15-in. wheels. The fact is, normal, low-effort stopping is quite good, so decep-

tively good that a driver would surely be unaware of the problems revealed instantly in a high-speed panic stop. A lesser option that should prove helpful is sintered-metallic brake linings, priced at \$36.90.

Up front, the Strato-Bucket seats are comfortable—firm and with reasonably good support for back and thighs. There were headrests in the test car, and frankly they appeared more decorative than functional. They are adjustable upward, but their flush position in relation to the seat plane makes them more suitable as whiplash protective devices than as something designed for passenger relaxation. An infinitely adjustable seat recliner would have been a welcome addition that could have made the headrests of genuine value for a passenger, and would have given the driver a welcome change of position.

INSTRUMENTS, WELL displayed, included a large tachometer, matching speedometer, which was steady and dead accurate, and a clock—all directly in front of the driver. Smaller gauges, the instrument package option, tell engine condition without benefit of idiot lights.

The dash center section has three horizontal control levers for simplified operation of heater/air conditioning, defrost and choice of vent outlets, a very good system and most effective. Below this was \$467.65 worth of radio and tape equipment. That's a bundle of money to lay out purely for en-

IMPALA



ONLY the SS and 427 medallions say this car differs from run-of-the-mill Impala family sedans. Price, appointments and appearance, however, put this particular Impala in the luxury car class.



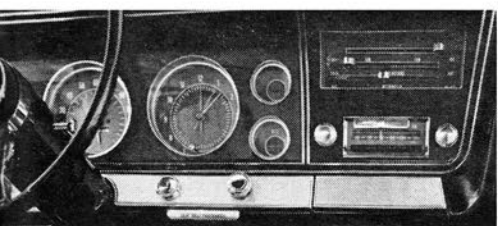
PAUL HANSEN PHOTOS

CLEAN OF line, the Impala SS 2-door displays fewer than average bits of chromium trim, with one exception—the dummy induction ports mounted on the hood. Basically, the car performs, but does so in an unobtrusive manner.





WHITE vinyl upholstery and bucket seats contribute to the Impala SS sporting look.



CIRCULAR instruments, in neat array, provide all necessary progress and engine information.

route entertainment, but the 4-speaker FM multiplex or stereo tape can spoil the listener for ordinary auto music. It's such great sound it's almost sinful, and the equipment in the Impala offered magnificent reproduction and reception. Unfortunately, FM multiplex broadcast is limited mainly to the larger cities, and its range is short, but the tape cartridge picks up where FM leaves off.

In order to really concentrate on the Impala's characteristics, the music must be turned off. Ride was medium-firm, not harshly so, but not feather-soft either. It was, in fact, fairly good, though the tar strips could be felt and, at one point, a back-slapping resonance, known to Detroit engineers as "freeway hop," was encountered. It seems there are freeways in certain areas which have regularly spaced concrete joints, and at just the right combination of speed and suspension the result is most unpleasant. Auto factories, including GM, search for these spots and go to great lengths to select suspension combinations which will smooth them out.

Power steering, at four turns of the wheel lock-to-lock, seemed a bit slow. The impression of nimbleness and agility aren't created by this car. Rather, it offers a sort of average aim-and-go

handling quality, about what is expected from a large Chevrolet with a large V-8 engine.

When all that's happening within inches of the driver/passengers is considered, it becomes evident how well sound-proofed is the modern American car. This particular Impala was quiet on every count. With windows up there was a bare minimum of engine sound, while wind and road noises were exceptionally low. Noise is, after all, a significant factor in fatigue, so it might be concluded that a quiet car is a safer car. Of course, with air conditioning it is practical to travel indefinitely without ever opening a window.

AT PRECISELY 600 miles on the odometer, a tire went flat. A forced tire change is the best possible way to evaluate trunk space and stowage of the spare tire and wheel. The conclusion reached after the impromptu change is that CL crewmen don't know where the spare belongs, but it surely is in an inconvenient location in the Chevrolet Impala SS. The drill was to unload the trunk, scramble inside, being careful to avoid a knock on the skull, then muscle the spare from its mounting and pull it over the trunk sill to the ground. It wasn't easy.

1967 CHEVROLET IMPALA SS 427



DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase, in.....	119.0
Track, f/r, in.....	62.5/62.4
Overall length, in.....	213.2
width.....	79.9
height.....	54.4
Front seat hip room, in.....	23.3 x 2
shoulder room.....	62.4
head room.....	37.6
pedal-seatback, max.....	43.3
Rear seat hip room, in.....	54.9
shoulder room.....	61.0
leg room.....	34.6
head room.....	37.4
Door opening width, in.....	43.3
Floor to ground height, in.....	12.2
Ground clearance, in.....	6.4

PRICES

List, FOB factory.....	\$3003
Equipped as tested.....	4903
Options included: SS 427 package, emission controls; power steering and brakes, AM/FM/Stereo radio and stereo tape player; air cond., appearance groups; limited-slip diff., Turbo Hydra-Matic trans.; special instrument pkg.	

CAPACITIES

No. of passengers.....	5
Luggage space, cu. ft.....	17.3
Fuel tank, gal.....	24.0
Crankcase, qt.....	4.0
Transmission/diff., pt.....	8.0/4.0
Radiator coolant, qt.....	22.0

CHASSIS/SUSPENSION

Frame type.....	perimeter
Front suspension type: Independent by s.l.a. with ball joints, concentric coil springs and shock absorbers.	
ride rate at wheel, lb./in.....	104
antiroll bar dia., in.....	0.9375
Rear suspension type: Link type, 2 lower and 1 upper control arms, coil springs, telescopic shock absorbers.	
ride rate at wheel, lb./in.....	105
Steering system: Coaxial power steering with parallelogram linkage behind wheels.	
gear ratio.....	17.5
overall ratio.....	21.2
turns, lock to lock.....	4.0
turning circle, ft. curb-to-kerb.....	40.8
Curb weight, lb.....	3835
Test weight.....	4280
Weight distribution, % f/r.....	55/45

BRAKES

Type: 2-line hydraulic duo-servo shoes with cast iron drums.	
Front drum, dia. x width, in.....	11.0x2.75
Rear drum, dia. x width.....	11.0 x 2.00
total swept area, sq. in.....	328.3
Power assist.....	integral, vacuum, line psi @ 100 lb. pedal.....
	717

WHEELS/TIRES

Wheel size.....	14 x 6 JK
optional size available.....	15 x 5 K
bolt no./circle dia., in.....	5/4.75
Tires: UniRoyal Laredo Nylon.	
size.....	8.25-14
recommended inflation, psi.....	24/24
capacity rating, total lb.....	5520

ENGINE

Type, no. cyl.....	ohv 90° V-8
Bore x stroke, in.....	4.251 x 3.76
Displacement, cu. in.....	427
Compression ratio.....	10.25
Rated bhp @ rpm.....	385 @ 5200
equivalent mph.....	125
Rated torque @ rpm.....	460 @ 3400
equivalent mph.....	82
Carburetion.....	Rochester, 1x4 barrel dia., pri./sec.....
	1.38/2.25
Valve operation: Hydraulic lifters, pushrods, overhead rocker arms.	
valve dia., int./exh.....	2.06/1.715
lift, int./exh.....	0.461/0.480
timing, deg.....	56-114, 110-62
duration, int./exh.....	350/352
opening overlap.....	118
Exhaust system: Dual, reverse-flow mufflers with resonators.	
pipe dia., exh./tail.....	2.50/2.00
Lubrication pump type.....	gear
normal press. @ rpm.....	50-75 @ 2000
Electrical supply.....	alternator
ampere rating.....	37 @ 12 V.
Battery, plates/amp. rating.....	66/61

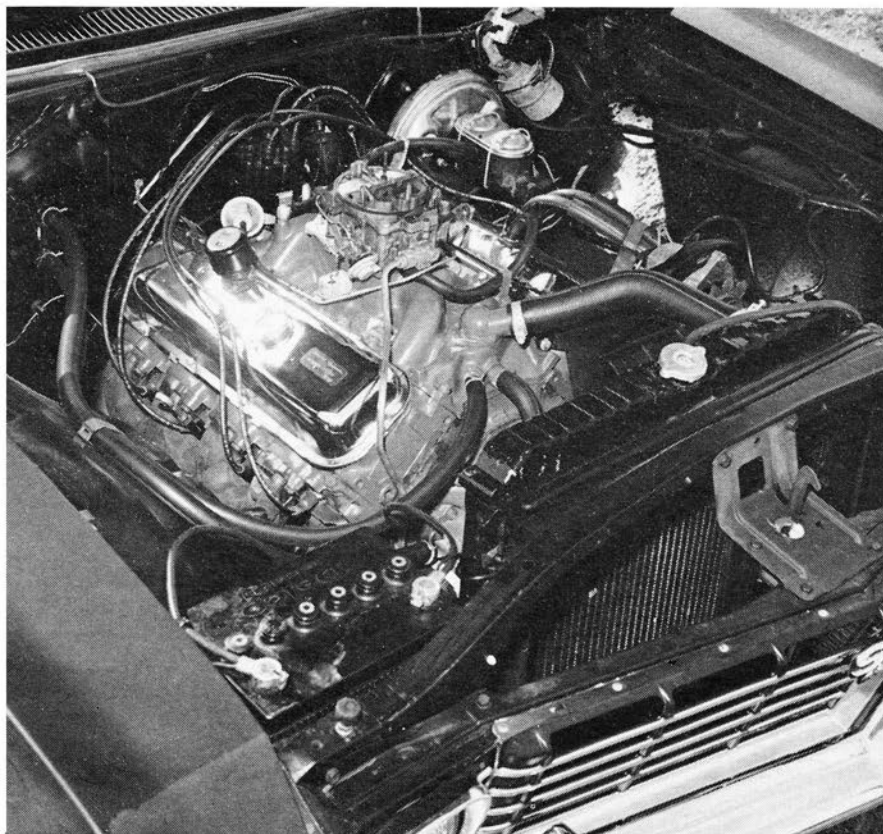
DRIVE TRAIN

Transmission type: 3-speed planetary gearbox with torque converter.	
Gear ratio	
3rd (1.00) overall.....	3.07
2nd (1.48).....	4.54
1st (2.48).....	7.61
1st x t.c. stall (2.04).....	15.53
Shift lever location.....	console
Differential type: Hypoid, overhung pinion axle ratio.....	3.07

In the main, assembly, paint and trim were good. There weren't any glaring gaps, the vinyl roof cover appeared well installed, paint was smooth, and things which were supposed to operate, did.

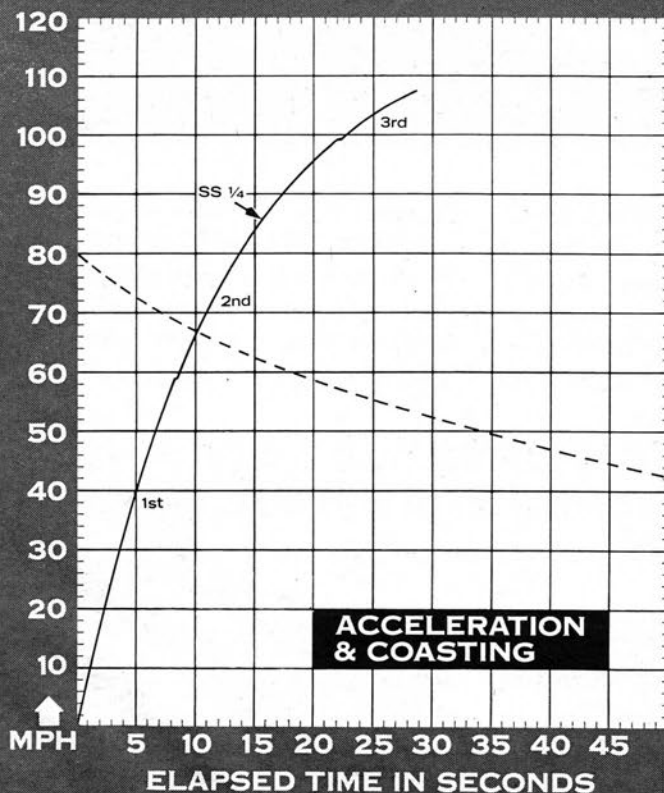
In regard to styling, the hood louvers, one of the 427's distinctive features, are simulated, but after a while the driver doesn't notice them. If they had been functional their necessity could be understood. A regularly heard comment was the favorable reaction to the fastback roofline. It is graceful, a neat trick on a big car. Totally out of the styling theme were the wheel covers—simulated wire wheels. All they added was an extra \$55.85 to the price sticker.

That's the SS 427—a family car for a swinging family, or possibly a good choice for a traveling swinger without a family. Because Chevrolet's image of practicality has persisted through several decades, no one will accuse the driver of a Chevrolet 2-door hardtop of extravagance—unless shown the pricetag. Which returns us to the original question: Is a Chevrolet worth \$5000? In this case, on basis of performance and included features, it is. Those who shake their heads in wonder are old enough to remember when the low-cost three really were. ■



TURBO HYDRA-Matic and Positraction axle coupled to the 427's hefty 385 bhp at 5200 rpm and 460 lb.-ft. of torque at 3400 rpm prove a very formidable combination. Options are 3- and 4-speed manual gearboxes.

CAR LIFE ROAD TEST



CALCULATED DATA

Lb./bhp (test weight)	11.1
Cu. ft./ton mile	137
Mph/1000 rpm (high gear)	24.0
Engine revs/mile (60 mph)	2375
Piston travel, ft./mile	1480
Car Life wear index	35.1
Frontal area, sq. ft.	24.1
Box volume, cu. ft.	535

SPEEDOMETER ERROR

30 mph, actual	31
40 mph	40
50 mph	50
60 mph	60
70 mph	70
80 mph	80
90 mph	90

MAINTENANCE INTERVALS

Oil change, engine, miles	6000
trans./dif.	12,000/n.s.
Oil filter change	6000
Air cleaner services, miles	12,000
Chassis lubrication	6000-36,000
Wheelbearing re-packing	as req.
Universal joint service	none
Coolant change, mo.	24

TUNE-UP DATA

Spark plugs	AC43N
gap, in.	0.033-0.038
Spark setting, deg./idle rpm	4/550
cent. max. adv., deg./rpm	32/5000
vac. max. adv., deg./in. Hg.	12/12
Breaker gap, in.	0.019
cam dwell angle	28-32
arm tension, oz.	19-23
Tappet clearance, int./exh.	0/0
Fuel pump pressure, psi	5.0-6.5
Radiator cap relief press., psi	14-16

PERFORMANCE

Top speed (5200), mph	125
Shifts (rpm) @ mph, manual	
3rd to 4th ()	
2nd to 3rd (6070)	99
1st to 2nd (6100)	59

ACCELERATION

0-30 mph, sec.	3.6
0-40 mph	5.0
0-50 mph	6.5
0-60 mph	8.4
0-70 mph	10.7
0-80 mph	13.6
0-90 mph	17.2
0-100 mph	22.3
Standing 1/4-mile, sec.	15.75
speed at end, mph	86.5
Passing, 30-70 mph, sec.	7.1

BRAKING

(Maximum deceleration rate achieved from 80 mph)	
1st stop, ft./sec./sec.	25
fade evident?	no
2nd stop, ft./sec./sec.	20
fade evident?	moderate

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Test conditions, mpg	9.5
Normal cond., mpg	10-13
Cruising range, miles	250-325

GRADABILITY

4th, % grade @ mph	
3rd	14 @ 73
2nd	24 @ 54
1st	39 @ 38

DRAG FACTOR

Total drag @ 60 mph, lb.	150
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