

by Bob McVay
Assistant Technical Editor

LAST YEAR, you couldn't order a Chevy II V-8 from the factory, but you could have one installed by your friendly dealer for \$1500 plus labor. Getting a V-8 Chevy II this year is a lot less trouble and *much* less expensive. Option L-32 plus an extra \$107.60 brings a new Chevy II into town with a 283-cubic-inch V-8 neatly installed, without any additional labor charges or extra waiting.

Lots of things have been going on at the Chevy II works lately. First, they decided to drop the Nova SS convertible and hardtop models, hoping people

who'd normally buy them would upgrade themselves to similar models of the new Chevelle. Such wasn't the case, and soon the howls of customers and dealers alike brought a re-introduction of the popular hardtop model. The convertible has yet to make its reappearance.

The big change for 1964 is the new engine option and a slight increase in the size of the Chevy II's brakes, plus a few other changes. Except for some emblem and trim relocations, this year's Chevy II hasn't changed much in appearance. Biggest difference former Chevy II owners will notice is the 75-hp increase. Last year's Six wasn't a neck-snapper, but the 195-hp V-8 is. It takes the Chevy II out of the ho-hum category

and makes it fun to drive — at least a lot more fun than the 120-hp Six version.

Fully equipped with every possible power accessory and comfort option, our test hardtop weighed 3000 pounds ready for action. Our (standard) 3.08 rear axle wasn't the best choice for performance, but it's a good one for overall family driving. Even so, it peeled nearly five seconds off last year's 0-60-mph time, with a best run of 11.3 seconds. Thirty and 45 came up in 3.5 and 6.8 seconds, but when the two-speed automatic made its first and only shift at 51 mph and 4300 rpm, acceleration dropped off considerably until the car expired completely at 4500 rpm and an honest 100 mph. Our measured quarter-mile

came up in 18 seconds flat, with a top speed of 75 mph.

Optional ratios of 3.36 and 3.55 are available for mountain driving and better acceleration. Either the standard three-speed column shift or Chevrolet's new four-speed Muncie gearbox option (\$188.30) would knock seconds off the car's acceleration times, since Powerglide isn't the best choice for top performance. The "283" is also Chevelle's top engine, and with a four-barrel carb giving 220 horses, it shouldn't take a great deal of mental gymnastics or money to make a real performer out of the Chevy II.

A Chevy II sedan, equipped with the V-8, starts for as little as \$2167.60 with standard three-speed transmission. It'd be a lot lighter than our test car, because it wouldn't be loaded with heavy, power-stealing accessories. Its performance should be much better than our test car's due to weight saving alone. Now add Positraction, that nice, precise, four-speed transmission, and one of the optional axle ratios — and you've got a Chevy II that goes. Since the "283" V-8 has been around for years, speed shops and parts houses carry a huge array of bolt-on options and special equipment for it. Now that the price of a factory-installed V-8 option is within reason, its possibilities are almost limitless for the do-it-yourselfer.

In addition to engine possibilities, heavy-duty options can be ordered to make the car handle and stop better than in standard form. One particularly helpful option would be the sintered metallic brake linings that go for a modest \$37.70, plus Positraction at the same price. By ordering the options and accessories carefully (the car's light enough so it doesn't really need power brakes or steering, especially since power steering doesn't decrease the turns between locks), you could have a Chevy II V-8 with exceptionally good performance capabilities for around \$2600.

So much for performance talk. The Chevy II is primarily an economy compact and fits that niche very nicely. Its light handling (if somewhat vague with power assist) and small exterior dimensions have endeared it to thousands of wives and husbands. It's an exceptionally good choice for an around-town car, because it's easy to maneuver and park and has a short, flat hood for good all-around vision.

In addition to its easy handling and peppy performance, it has other endearing features that make it a good family car. It has a big trunk for its size, the lid pops open with a twist of the key, and women will appreciate the all-vinyl interior that's durable and easy to keep clean. Station wagons and SS models have all-vinyl interiors, while sedans use

CHEVY II V-8 ROAD TEST



CHEVY II STILL LEANS QUITE A BIT AND UNDERSTEEERS IN CORNERS, BUT OPTIONAL V-8'S ADDED POWER MAKES FOR MUCH BETTER CONTROL.

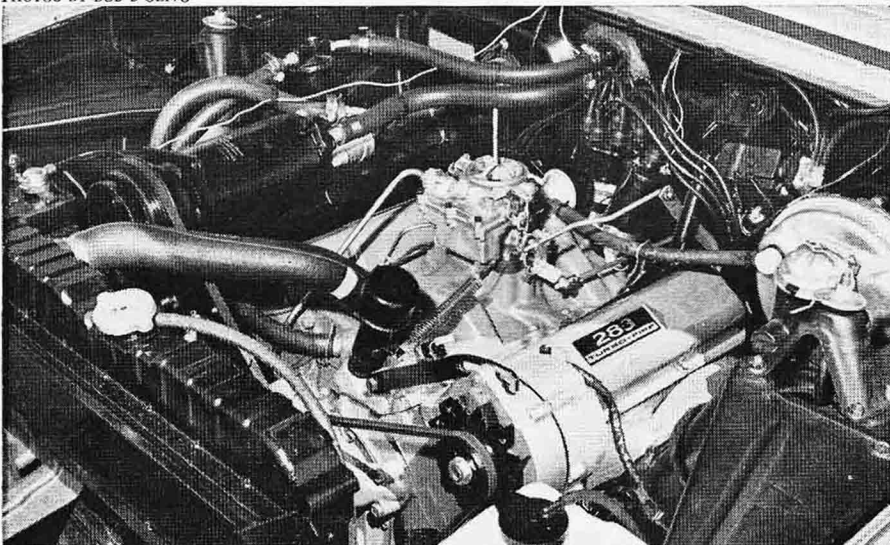


New grille, lack of ornamentation give Chevy II clean, uncluttered look.



Accessory-loaded car with automatic was no drag strip contender, but one with four-speed trans, Positraction, and a few other mods could be fun on street or drag strip.

PHOTOS BY BOB D'OLIVO



Only two-throat carb is offered with V-8 package, but bolt-on goodies are readily available for this popular engine. Chevy's "283" has been on the market since '57.



Dash of SS model is simple, easy to read, and uses gauges instead of warning lights. Automatic shift lever is vague in operation. Protruding knobs could bark knuckles.

a combination of cloth with vinyl trim in five color selections: fawn, aqua, red, blue (ours was blue), and saddle.

The Chevy II's seating still leaves something to be desired. Those who tried it felt the seat backs didn't have enough rake and that some means of seat adjustment should be provided so owners can make their cars fit them in each individual case.

Out on the road, the Chevy II has adequate handling for normal driving. Chasing sports cars over winding, mountain roads isn't its forte. If not exciting, its handling is honest and predictable. The heavier V-8 makes itself felt during cornering. The car understeers — more as the speed gets higher — and the car isn't at its best in a fast bend, although the extra 75 horses give a greater amount of control for holding a line through a turn. Excessive body lean is still a characteristic.

We found the car much more pleasant at average cruising speeds. Body lean, understeer, and tire scrubbing telegraph the car's limits to the driver. The Nova didn't break loose suddenly on dry pavement, but once the road got a little damp, the forward weight bias made itself felt. You have to take extra care to avoid wheelspin on take-off and skidding when making tight turns on slick streets.

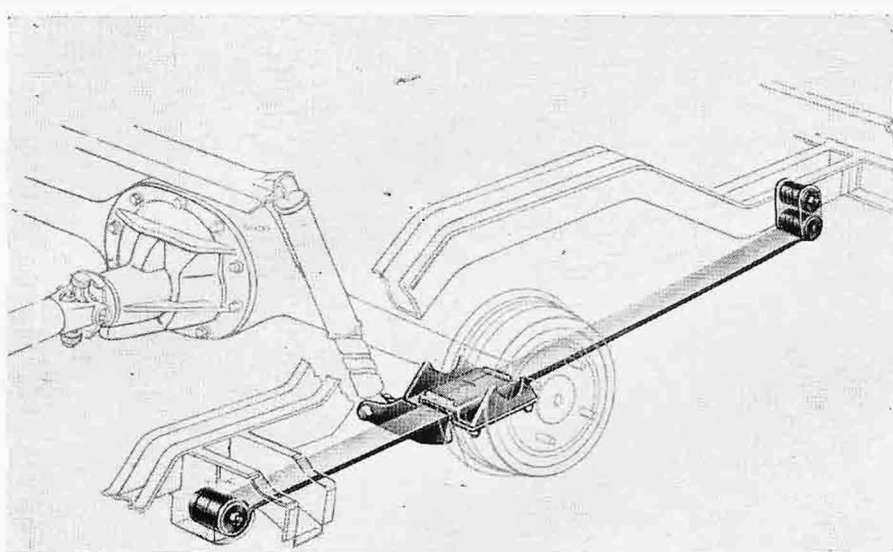
Neither does the Chevy II lend itself to overly high-speed driving. It's perfectly content cruising at any legal speed, but the front end feels progressively lighter as speed increases, and crosswinds have a tendency to change the car's direction at higher speeds.

Our test car seemed well built and well detailed inside and out. Wind noise wasn't excessive at normal cruising speeds, but the commotion caused by full-speed operation of the heater or air conditioner was enough to raise conversation to shouting. Both units did their jobs well and, once the desired temperature was reached, the blowers could be turned down to maintain the temperature.

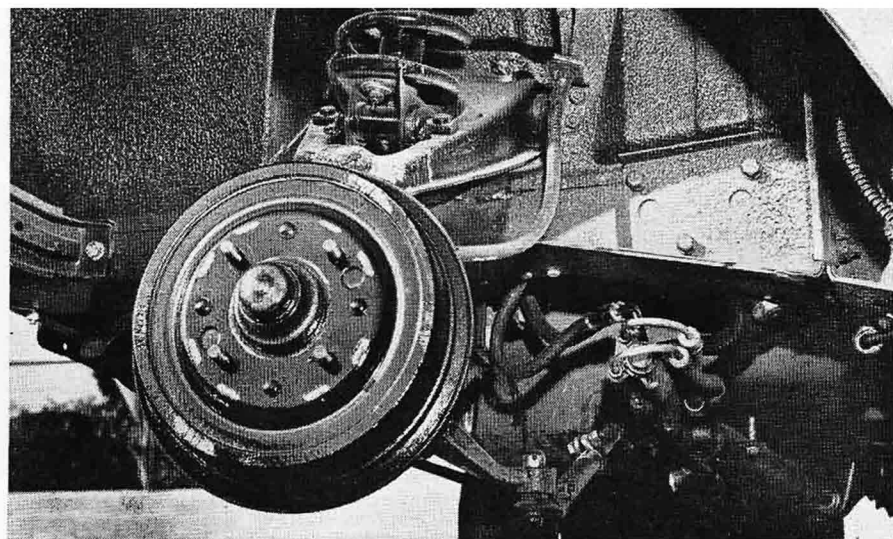
Ride wasn't bad, but the shorter-wheelbase Chevy II tends to ride somewhat rougher than its longer-wheelbase stablemates. The heavier V-8 helps hold the front end down so it doesn't bounce much on sharp dips, and the suspension soaks up all but the sharpest bumps

(OPPOSITE) Chevy II was never meant as a road racer, but handling is predictable on winding roads. Understeer and body lean increase with speed, letting the driver know just how far away he is from the car's limit. Car rides well, is comfortable.





Unusual single-leaf rear springs, rubber-bushed at shackle and hanger, are made of chrome carbon steel, have identical spring rates as six-cylinder Chevy II offerings.



SLA front suspension uses high-mounted coils extending into fender well. The power-steering mechanism still hangs too low—it could easily be damaged by obstructions.



Car has very roomy trunk for its size, allows two-suiters to stand up and spare to be removed without unloading everything. Lip is low for easy loading, lid opens wide.

CHEVY II *continued*

well enough for a reasonably comfortable ride.

The Chevy II's power brakes were a bit touchy in operation, but they're lots stronger stoppers than last year's. Effective lining area is increased by 27.7 square inches, and drum diameter has gained a half inch. Wheels tended to lock up fairly quickly on panic stops, but the car didn't swerve too much, and it wasn't hard to keep in a straight line. Average compared with other 1964 cars, Chevy II's brakes are a big improvement over those of last year. They gave stops from 60 mph in 169 feet—that's 30 feet less than our 1963 Chevy II took.

For those who put economy above all else, Chevy II still offers their in-line Four, rated at 90 hp. It's standard with a three-speed manual transmission and optional with Powerglide, as is the 120-hp Six. Somehow, we feel lots of buyers are going to prefer the V-8 and will be quite willing to pay the extra dollars for the extra performance. We certainly would.

Additional models in the Chevy II line-up include two- and four-door sedans and a four-door, six-passenger station wagon in the Nova and lower-priced "100" series. The standard Sport Coupe is offered in the Nova series with bench seats. The Super Sport hardtop (our test car) tops the line. Who knows? If buyers scream long and loudly enough, maybe they'll even bring back that nice little convertible. It'd make a fine package with the V-8 option.

Loaded with every possible option or in stripped form, the Chevy II makes sense as a family car. It's easy to drive and meets most of the needs of normal-sized families. It also shares Chevrolet's 24-month/24,000-mile warranty as well as their extended maintenance periods. It's more a daily go-to-work car than a high-speed ground-eater, but it's equally at home in traffic or on the highway at legal speeds. Its size and maneuverability make it a good choice for those who do most of their driving in traffic, and any of its three engines should give long life and good fuel economy—they're all designed to run on regular fuel. As an example, our test car with automatic transmission gave a high of 19.6 mpg on the highway and a 12.3 low in heavy traffic, with an overall average of 14.4 mpg.

The V-8 is the big news for 1964. Now that the price is within reason, it can range from a family workhorse to a low-priced hot rod, depending on options and accessories. By adding a V-8 and bigger brakes, plus detail changes, Chevrolet has made a nice compact even more desirable and a much better performer. /MT



ALTHOUGH CAR DOESN'T HAVE OUTSTANDING STOPPING POWER, BIGGER BRAKES SHORTENED LAST YEAR'S BRAKING DISTANCES BY 30 FEET.

CHEVY II NOVA SS SPORT COUPE

2-door, 5-passenger hardtop

OPTIONS ON CAR TESTED: Powerglide, air conditioning, power brakes and steering, radio with rear-seat speaker, heater, tinted glass, whitewalls, seat belts, misc. access.

BASIC PRICE: \$2550.75

PRICE AS TESTED: \$3503.15 (plus tax and license)

ODOMETER READING AT START OF TEST: 1200 miles

RECOMMENDED ENGINE RED LINE: 4800 rpm.

PERFORMANCE

ACCELERATION (2 aboard)

0-30 mph.....	3.5 secs.
0-45 mph.....	6.8
0-60 mph.....	11.3

Standing start 1/4-mile 18.0 secs. and 75 mph

Speeds in gears @ shift point

1st.....	51 mph @ 4300 rpm
2nd.....	100 mph (actual top speed) @ 4500 rpm

Speedometer Error on Test Car

Car's speedometer reading.....	32	48	54	64	74	84
Weston electric speedometer.....	30	45	50	60	70	80

Observed miles per hour per 1000 rpm in top gear.....23.0 mph

Stopping Distances — from 30 mph, 30 ft.; from 60 mph, 169 ft.

SPECIFICATIONS FROM MANUFACTURER

Engine

Ohv V-8
Bore: 3.875 ins.
Stroke: 3.00 ins.
Displacement: 283 cu. ins.
Compression ratio: 9.25:1
Horsepower: 195 @ 4800 rpm
Torque: 285 lbs.-ft. @ 2400 rpm
Horsepower per cubic inch: 0.69
Carburetion: 1 2-bbl.
Ignition: 12-volt coil

Steering

Recirculating ball nut, with linkage-type power assist
Turning diameter: 38.4 ft.
Turns lock to lock: 4.5

Wheels and Tires

5-lug, steel disc wheels
6.50 x 14 4-ply rayon whitewall tires

Gearbox

2-speed automatic (Powerglide); floor-mounted lever

Driveshaft

1-piece, open tube

Differential

Hypoid, semi-floating
Standard ratio: 3.08:1

Suspension

Front: Independent, SLA, high-mounted coil springs, with integral double-acting tubular shocks, anti-sway bar
Rear: Rigid axle, with single-leaf semi-elliptic springs, double-acting tubular shocks

Brakes

Hydraulic, duo-servo; cast-iron rim, steel web, with integral power assist; self-adjusting
Front: 9.5-in. dia. x 2.5 ins. wide
Rear: 9.5-in. dia. x 2.0 ins. wide
Effective lining area: 172.7 sq. ins.

Body and Frame

Unit construction
Wheelbase: 110.0 ins.
Track: front, 56.8 ins.; rear, 56.3 ins.
Overall length: 182.9 ins.
Overall width: 70.8 ins.
Curb weight: 3000 lbs.