



I have enjoyed writing this column for the past year. But my ramblings are coming to an end. I look forward to another year as president and the adventures we will have.

Larry and I talked and instead decided to start a new feature highlighting tools and supplies that might be interesting to our members. John D has written a story of his father's toolbox, which is the perfect way to kick off this new idea.

Of course I will continue to post on the forum, and welcome feedback or any other ideas members may want to see in the newsletter.



November Meeting

The November meeting was bowling and elections at Flaherty's Arden Bowl. There was quite a turnout of bowlers of varying skill levels.

This was followed by dinner, and then elections. Getting elected is a complicated process. If you say you are willing to fill a slot, you are elected. Sometimes there is even a vote.

The following members were elected to serve as officers for 2018: Chris Pittman – President, Hank Millette – Vice President, Mike Sabby – Treasurer, Stan Shinker – Webmaster, and Jenny Staniec – Secretary.

Larry Lucast will continue to publish the newsletter in 2018.



Let me introduce myself...

I'm a 1948 Snap-On model KR-56 tool chest, sitting on a 1948 KR-377 Coaster-Cab (with the added



KR-437 drawer kit in the lower compartment).

I was built in Kenosha Wisconsin, and purchased by a 19-year old mechanic recently graduated from the Pullman Tech automotive program in Chicago, Illinois. His name was John M. Delke. Here's a few pictures of me from the catalog...

Snap-on ALL STEEL ROLL CABINET
with features that make it mechanics first choice!

ROOMY TOOL CHESTS
KR-56 Tool Chest—Overall measurements are 24" wide, 17" deep and 17" high. Drawers are arranged to provide the most convenient storage for hand tools. Has 2 extra strong trunk type handles. All drawers are fitted with "one-right" slide runs. Can't fall out or tip. One lid is reinforced and has roll strength piano type hinge and handle type lock. Top has three tool compartments: 20", deep one; 20", 8 1/2", another is 25", 7 1/2" and the third is 8 1/2" wide. There are three small drawers, equal size, 10 1/2" wide, 7 1/2" deep and 1 1/2" high. Ideal for ball-peen hammers, screwdrivers, sockets and tapset wrenches, etc. Three partition drawers are 24" long and 10 1/2" wide, one is 1 1/2" deep, one is 1 1/2" deep and bottom drawer is 1 1/2" deep. These drawers give you plenty of room for longer wrenches and hand tools. Top compartment accommodates KCT-1 Trolly-Tray. (Note: these are not furnished with chest). Red enamel finish. Shipping weight 80 lbs., net 62 lbs.

EASY MOVING ROLL CABS
KR-350 Roll-Cab—This big, roomy Roll-Cab is designed as a companion for tool chest shown above. The big, heavy drawers and lower compartment will hold large equipment. The front panel folds in place to protect entire contents and slides out of the way under the drawers when cab is in use. Overall size is 20 1/2" long, 18" wide, 20 1/2" high. Top heavily reinforced for extra strength. 16" wide, roll-in drawers are 20" deep, 10 1/2" wide, 1 1/2" deep. All drawers have "one-right" feature described above. Spot welded construction. Extra heavy gauge steel is used to give greatest rigidity and durability for hand, bag service, flat, chop, gliding 2 casters (2 swivel, 2 fixed). Red-on-Red Enamel finish. Net wt. 14 lbs., G.W. 30, 31 lbs.

KR-350 Roll-Cab Combination. For greatest convenience we recommend this combination of KR-350 Roll-Cabinet and KR-56 Tool Chest.

TOTE TRAYS
KTR-1 Tote-Tray—A convenient tray for holding these tools that are naturally in use. It has a built-in socket tray and fits into the top compartment in the above Chest. Size is 20 1/2" wide x 8 1/2" deep and 2 1/2" high. Has a handy carrying handle. Rubber-on-Roll Padded Finish.

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New Snap-on Coaster Cab **Universal Midget Kit**

Modern! Convenient! Practical!
Rolls Right to the Job—No Lost Time Hunting for Tools

KR-377 Coaster Cab. This sturdy coaster-cab provides convenient storage for all your tools from Midget sizes to big drills and gear pullers. Overall measurements are 24 1/2" long, 18 1/2" wide and 20 1/2" high. For the mechanic who wants the best at a moderate price, here is the bench to buy. Its distinctive design, size and construction make it a unit you will be proud to own.

Get the most out of your floor and bench space... stop taking up valuable room with unattractive, old-fashioned, inefficient wooden benches... modernize your shop with value bench convenience... include all your tools and take them to the spot where they are needed—flexibly built of heavy steel, electrically welded for greatest strength.

Four Handy, Roomy Drawers.
Ample drawer space for wrenches and hand tools, even long tapping bars and nut drivers. For extra convenience, drawers are fitted with "one-right" slide runs for easy opening at all times and to prevent drawers from sagging or falling out.

Top Top Drawers are 11" long, 17" wide and 1 1/2" high. Bottom drawer is 11" long, 17" wide and 1 1/2" high. One lower compartment is 16 1/2" long, 10 1/2" wide and 1 1/2" high.

A "midget" front panel encloses the lower compartment and slides into a rack under the lower drawer when bench is in use. One handle locks the entire contents. Heavy, padded metal top provides plenty of smoothly working bench space right at the job. Coaster casters, (2 swivel, 2 fixed), roll your "Coaster-Cab" easily and quickly to the job.

The attractive red enamel finish is even baked at high temperature so the cabinet will keep that new, shiny finish indefinitely. Treat yourself to modern bench convenience and stop juggling acts to the bench... that old bench would not give it up for the big price because of the increased efficiency it makes possible.

Net weight: 123 lbs., Song. Wt. 100 lbs. This cabinet is available either assembled or drawn or knocked down.

Built to Hold Complete Assortments of Small Tools for Ignition, Carburetor, Radio Service, etc.

KR-45 Universal Midget Kit. Isn't this the kind of a small cabinet you have always wanted... with extra space to hold a complete set of Midget wrenches of all types and all sizes? A chest that is only 11 1/2" long, 7 1/2" wide and 10 1/2" high. That's what you get in this beautiful Universal Midget Kit chest. Actually, you will save by estimating the loss of small tools for it. It is well known fact that most small tools are lost, "misplaced" or mislaid that are ever more out of the shop. In simple—they are so small, they are never placed until you need them again. Perfect them in this Midget chest which is so designed that there is a definite place for every tool. When you finish a job and start packing up your tools, you will instantly realize it one in a million and can look for it "immediately" before it is hopelessly lost.

Easy to Find the Tool You Want
There has never before been a box so ideal in its design and construction for use by radio, typewriter, ignition and maintenance, electrical, precision and refrigeration servicemen—or any man who has a lot of small tools he wants to safeguard. There are no drawers to pull out or tools to remove for the top section as shown in the picture simply moves back on a specially designed type of roller support which is so designed that there is a definite place for every tool. When you finish a job and start packing up your tools, you will instantly realize it one in a million and can look for it "immediately" before it is hopelessly lost.

Sturdily Built—Conveniently Carried
Exceedingly made of heavy gauge steel with spot welded construction throughout. Equipped with two sturdy hinges and easy-to-carry metal handles. A variable type lock is provided in cases can be locked and the contents secured. Red-on-red enamel finish. Once you have investigated your small tools in this chest, you will never think of leaving them anywhere else.

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My 1st shop was the Borden Dairy repair garage, where we worked on light & medium duty delivery trucks. This was back when you got your milk delivered to your house, the bottles in a rack, and placed in a galvanized box on your front porch.

After than we got a job as a mechanic at Zweifel Ford, in Evanston Illinois. We worked there for many years, and we got a reputation for doing fast, but quality work.

One of our off-hours specialties was hopping up the Ford Flathead V8's of the time, and we got the nickname "Stroke". It was said it was because we knew how to have a crankshaft off-set ground properly (increase the stroke), and assemble the engines so they'd live.



Another thing we got involved with was the recent purchase by Zweifel of one of the 1st in the area's "Bean Visualiner" alignment racks. John and I quickly became some of the best front-end guys in northern Chicago-land. This reputation let us to another interesting adventure – working on the Muntz "Jet" sportscar.

When "Madman Muntz" moved production from Glendale CA, to Evanston IL, and started using Lincoln engines and Ford sedan steering gear on the Jet, nobody at the factory could get the front-end aligned properly. Our reputation made its way around town, and because Zweifel had a "Visualiner" rack, we worked on several of the new Jets to get a baseline setting for the assembly workers. There are quite a few stories of how late at night the Evanston Police blocked off McCormick Blvd. in Evanston so John could make some high-speed runs to road test the cars. These were the days!

Here's a picture of a Muntz Jet.



This is where my story starts to take a sad turn. John progressed in his career, eventually becoming a Service Manager, then moving into sales. He no longer made his living turning my wrenches every day, and I was moved into the home garage. We still worked together, but only doing occasional oil-changes, and minor repairs on the family cars. The day to day excitement was over for me. We moved many times, but never back into a real shop.

John eventually realized one of our dreams, and opened our very own car dealership in 1970. I was very excited when we moved to Crystal Lake IL, but my new home was a storage closet in the dealership. Occasionally one of the mechanics would raid one of my drawers for something, but that came to a stop when John found my keys and locked me up.

The dealership closed in 1976, and we were on the move again. This time to Park Ridge, IL. I got a spot of reasonable honor in the family garage again, and we worked together doing repairs on the family cars.

Around 1980 things started looking better for me. John's son got interested in cars, and we started working together. These were good times. Young John cleaned me up, organized me a little, and we worked on a lot of cars together.

But again, things change. John Jr. grew up, and moved away to MN in 1984. Not long after that I moved (again) to a garage in Mt. Prospect, IL., and "big" John & I were back together, occasionally doing oil-changes and maintenance again.

About 1996 there was a big change for us. John (Sr) and I moved to Minnesota to be close to John Jr.! I was still in the family garage and doing minor repairs, but occasionally John Jr. would visit and borrow one of my tools for something he was working on.

I had a big shock in April of 2008. My longtime partner died. We had 60 years together.

I moved again, into another family garage, but was barely used. It was better than the closet in the dealership, but not by much. I'd found out that John Jr. had his own toolbox, and had little use for me and my tools. He'd come by from time to time and borrow something, but I pretty much sat in the corner collecting dust for 9 years.

In 2017 there was another big change in my life. The house I was in was sold, and I had to move – again – but this time I was moving back with John Jr. into a workshop called "The 40-Watt Garage"!

I've got my own special spot in the shop, right next to one of my much younger siblings. (He's a young buck only in his 30's but we seem to get along...)

John Jr. recently cleaned me up again, and went through my drawers and cabinets. He found some things that I'd forgotten I had sitting in me, and some of the specialty tools "big" John and I used in our hey-day.

I hope you enjoyed my story.

Chevelle Trivia.

Chevelle Trivia El Camino

Chevrolet El Camino is a coupé utility/pickup vehicle that was produced by Chevrolet between 1959–60 and 1964–1987.

Introduced in the 1959 model year in response to the success of the Ford Ranchero pickup, its first run lasted only two years. Production resumed for the 1964–1977 model years based on the Chevelle platform, and continued for the 1978–1987 model years based on the GM G-body platform.

Although based on corresponding Chevrolet car lines, the vehicle is classified and titled in North America as a truck. GMC's badge engineered El Camino variant, the Sprint, was introduced for the 1971 model year. Renamed Caballero in 1978, it was also produced through the 1987 model year.

Ford Australia was the first company to produce a coupé utility as a result of a 1932 letter from the wife of a farmer in Victoria, Australia, asking for "a vehicle to go to church in on a Sunday and which can carry our pigs to market on Mondays". Ford designer Lew Bandt developed a suitable solution, and the first coupé utility model was released in 1934.[1] Bandt went on to manage Ford's Advanced Design Department, being responsible for the body engineering of the XP, XT, XW, and XA series Ford Falcon utilities. General Motors' Australian subsidiary Holden also produced a Chevrolet coupé utility in 1935, Studebaker produced the Coupé Express from 1937 to 1939. The body style did not reappear on the American market until the release of the 1957 Ford Ranchero.

Both the coupé utility and the similar open-topped roadster utility continued in production, but the improving economy of the mid- to late-1930s and the desire for improved comfort saw coupé utility sales climb at the expense of the roadster utility until, by 1939, the latter was all but a fading memory.



1957 Chevrolet Cameo Carrier

The mid-1955 introduction of Chevrolet's Cameo Carrier pickup truck helped pave the way for the El Camino. Although it was a model variant of Chevrolet's Task Force light-duty pickup, the Cameo offered an array of car-like features that included passenger-car styling, fiberglass rear fenders, two-tone paint, a relatively luxurious interior, as well as an optional V8 engine, automatic transmission, and power assists. As always, there was a GMC version offered during the same time, called the GMC Suburban Carrier with the same features offered on the Chevrolet. In 1957 a special version was made for GMC to be shown at national car shows called the Palomino which had a Pontiac 347 cu in (5.7 L) V8 installed, borrowed from the 1957 Star Chief.

Other pickup truck producers, including Dodge, Ford, Studebaker, and International, began to offer flush-side cargo boxes on some of their 1957 models, such as the Dodge C Series, and the Studebaker E-series Deluxe. However, Ford also introduced the 1957 Ranchero, and established a new market segment in the U.S. market of an automobile platform based coupé utility. In 1959, Chevrolet responded with the El Camino to compete with Ford's full-sized Ranchero. The original El Camino and Ranchero would compete directly only in the 1959 model year.

First generation (1959–1960)

The El Camino was introduced for the 1959 model year two years after the Ford Ranchero. According to Chevrolet stylist Chuck Jordan, GM Harley Earl had suggested a coupé pickup in 1952.

Like the Ranchero, it was based on an existing and modified platform, the new-for-1959 Brookwood two-door station wagon, itself based on the completely redesigned, longer, lower and wider full-sized Chevrolet. Highly stylized, it initially sold 50% more briskly than the more conservative Ranchero, some 22,000 to 14,000.

1959 El Camino

Unlike the Brookwoods wagon and a sedan delivery variant, the El Camino was available with any full-sized Chevrolet drivetrain. It came in a single trim level, its exterior using the mid-level Bel-Air's trim, and the interior of the low-end Biscayne. Its chassis featured Chevrolet's "Safety-Girder" X-frame design and a full-coil suspension, both introduced in the 1958 model year. The 119-inch (3,000 mm) wheel-base was 1.5 inches (38 mm) longer, and overall length for all 1959 Chevrolets was up to 210.9 inches (5,360 mm). The El Camino's payload rating ranged from 650 to 1150 pounds, with gross vehicle weights ranging from 4400 to 4900 pounds depending on powertrain and suspension. The somewhat soft passenger car suspension of the base model left the vehicle level without a load, in contrast the Ranchero, where standard 1100-pound rated heavy duty rear springs gave it a distinct rake when empty. The quirky Level Air suspension option, in its second and final year, was listed as available, but was almost never seen on any Chevrolet model, much less an El Camino. The 1959 El Camino was promoted as the first Chevrolet pickup built with a steel bed floor instead of wood. The floor was a corrugated sheetmetal insert, secured with 26 recessed bolts. Concealed beneath it was the floor pan from the Brookwood two-door wagon, complete with foot wells. Box capacity was almost 33 cubic feet (0.93 m³).



Among the performance engines offered were a 283-cid Turbo-jet V8 with two- or four-barrel carburetion, several Turbo-Thrust 348-cid V8s with four-barrel or triple two-barrel carburetors producing 335 bhp (250 kW; 340 PS), and 250- and 290-bhp 283-cube Ramjet Fuel Injection V8s.

Hot Rod magazine conducted a test of an El Camino equipped with the hottest powertrain combination available in early 1959—a 315 bhp (235 kW; 319 PS), triple-carb, solid-lifter 348 V8 mated to a four-speed. Staff testers clocked 0-60 mph times of around seven seconds, estimated top speed at 130 mph (210 km/h), and predicted 14-second/100-mph quarter-mile performance with a rear-axle ratio suitable for drag racing installed.

A total of 22,246 El Caminos were produced for 1959. That bested the count of 21,706 first-year Rancheros made in 1957 and the 14,169 Ford sedan pickups built in direct competition for the 1959 model year. But 1960 would be a different story.

1960 El Camino

The similar but less flamboyant 1960 model started at \$2366 for the six-cylinder model; another \$107 for a V8 with the two-barrel 283. At first glance, the exterior once again had a Bel Air look, with that series' bright-metal "jet" appliqué and narrow trailing molding used to accent the rear quarters. Inside, Biscayne/Brookwood appointments also persisted. The seat was now covered in striped-pattern cloth with vinyl facings. Available interior trim shades were once again gray, blue, and green. Floor coverings were in medium-tone vinyl. Mid-1959 powertrain availability was carried over with minimal



changes for 1960: The base 283-cid V8 was detuned a bit for fuel economy and was now rated at 170 bhp (127 kW; 172 PS), and the fuel-injected engines were officially gone.

Orders plummeted by a third, to just 14,163, at which point Chevrolet discontinued the model; meanwhile, Ford moved 21,027 Rancheros, which were now based on the brand-new Falcon compact. The pioneering American sedan pickups just did not connect with enough car-buying Americans. Perhaps these early "crossovers" didn't carry enough passengers; in a time when baby-boomer families dominated the market, three across was the best they could offer. Cargo volume was meager compared with pickup trucks. The low-level trim and marketing efforts focused almost exclusively on commercial customers may have inhibited sales, as well.

Second generation (1964–1967)

Chevrolet reintroduced an all new, mid-size El Camino four years later based on the Chevrolet Chevelle. The 1964 model was similar to the Chevelle two-door wagon forward of the B-pillars and carried both "Chevelle" and "El Camino" badges, but Chevrolet marketed the vehicle as a utility model and Chevelle's most powerful engines were not available. Initial engine offerings included six-cylinder engines of 194 and 230 cubic inches with horsepower ratings of 120 and 155, respectively. The standard V8 was a 283 cubic-inch Chevrolet small block with two-barrel carburetor and 195 horsepower (145 kW) with optional engines including a 220-horsepower 283 with four-barrel carburetor and dual exhausts. Added to the El Camino's option list during the course of the 1964 model year were two versions of the 327 cubic-inch small block V8 rated at 250 and 300 horsepower (220 kW)—the latter featuring a higher compression ratio of 10.5:1, larger four-barrel carburetor and dual exhausts. El Caminos also featured Air shocks in the rear, as well as fully boxed frames. The shocks were continued over all generations, the frames only thru 1967.

1965

The 1965 El Camino received the same facelift as the '65 Chevelle, with a more pronounced V-shaped front end, and a higher performance L79 version of the 327 engine rated at 350 hp (261 kW) that was also available in Chevelles. Most of the other engines were carried over from 1964, including the 194 and 230 cubic-inch Turbo Thrift sixes, the 195-horsepower 283 cubic-inch Turbo-Fire V8 and 327 cubic-inch Turbo-Fire V8s of 250 and 300 horsepower (220 kW).

1966

In 1966, GM added a 396 cu in (6.5 L) V8 engine to the lineup rated from 325 to 375 hp (280 kW). The 1965 327 would run low 15s in the 1/4 mile (at some 90 mph), while 1966 to 1969 models were easily into the mid-to upper-14s. New sheetmetal highlighted the 1966 El Camino, identical to the Chevelle. A new instrument panel with horizontal sweep speedometer was featured. Inside, the standard version featured a bench seat interior and rubber floor mat from the low-line Chevelle 300 series, while the Custom used a more upscale interior from the Chevelle Malibu with plusher cloth-and-vinyl or all-vinyl bench seats and deep twist carpeting, or optional Strato swivel bucket seats with console. A tachometer was optional.

1967

The 1967 El Camino followed the Chevelle's styling facelift with a new grille, front bumper, and trim. Air shocks remained standard equipment on the El Camino, allowing the driver to compensate for a load. The year 1967 also brought the collapsible steering column and options of disc brakes and Turbo Hydramatic 400 3-speed automatic transmission. It was the second year the 396 (L35, L34, and L78) could be had in the El Camino (both 13480 300 Deluxe base and 13680 Malibu series). Since the L35 396/325 hp engine was the base for the SS396 series, the number of L35 engines reported sold by Chevrolet in 1967 (2,565) were sold in

one of the two El Camino series, which were the only other series the engine could be ordered in. Since the L34 (now 350 hp) & L78 (375 hp) were available in either El Camino series as well as the two SS396 body styles, there is no way of knowing how many of these optional engines went to which body style. Chevrolet does report 17,176 L34 and 612 L78 engine options were sold in 1967 Chevilles, but there is no breakdown of body styles. The TH400 3-speed automatic was now available as an option (RPO M40) with the 396 engine in both the SS396 series and the 396-equipped El Caminos. The 3-speed manual transmission remained the standard transmission with a heavy duty (RPO M13) also available along with the 2-speed Powerglide and either M20 wide ratio or M21 close ratio 4-speed transmissions. Although there was no actual factory El Camino Super Sport until 1968, many owners have "cloned" '67 SS396s using 1967 Chevelle SS396 badges and trim.

Third generation (1968–1972)

Chevrolet introduced a longer El Camino in 1968, based on the Chevelle station wagon/four-door sedan wheelbase (116 in (2,946 mm), overall length: 208 in (5,283 mm)); it also shared Chevelle Malibu exterior and interior trims. The interior was revamped including cloth and vinyl or all-vinyl bench seats and deep twist carpeting. All-vinyl Strato bucket seats and center console were an \$111 option. Power front disc brakes and Positraction were optional. A new, high-performance Super Sport SS396 version was launched. The Turbo-Jet 396 had 325 bhp (242 kW) or 350 bhp (260 kW) versions. Returning to the official options list for the first time since late 1966 was the 375 bhp (280 kW) L78. It had solid lifters, big-port heads, and an 800 cfm Holley four-barrel on a low-rise aluminum manifold. A three-speed manual was standard with all engines, and a four-speed or automatic was optional. In 1968, the SS was a separate model (the "SS-396").

The 1969 models showed only minor changes, led by more-rounded front-end styling. A single chrome bar connected quad headlights, and a slotted bumper held the parking lights. New round instrument pods replaced the former linear layout. For the first time, the Chevrolet 350 V8 was used in an El Camino. The Super Sport group included a 265- or 325-horsepower 396-cubic-inch V8 beneath a double-domed hood, along with a black-out grille displaying an SS emblem. More potent editions of the 396 engine, developing 350 or 375 horsepower (280 kW) also made the options list. Options included power windows and locks. Curiously, back-up lights moved from the rear bumper to the tailgate, where they were ineffective when the gate was down.

The 1970 models received sheet metal revisions that gave the bodies a more squared-up stance, and interiors were also redesigned. The new SS396, which actually displaced 402 cu in (6.6 L) (although all emblems read 396) was available. Chevrolet's largest and most-powerful engine of the time was also put into a select few El Caminos. The LS6 454 CID engine, rated at 450 hp (336 kW) and 500 lb·ft (680 N·m) of torque, gave the El Camino 1/4-mile times in the lower 13-second range at around 108 mph (174 km/h).

The 1971 El Camino got fresh front-end styling that included large Power-Beam single-unit headlights, a reworked grille and bumper, and integral park/signal/marker lights. For 1971, mandated lower-octane unleaded fuel necessitated a reduction in engine compression, and GM's A.I.R. system, a "smog pump", was added to control tailpipe emissions. Power and performance were reduced. Engine offerings for 1971 included the 250-6, small-block V8s of 307 and 350 cubic inches; and big block V8s of 402 and 454-cubic-inch displacements. Horsepower ratings of those engines for 1971 ranged from 145 for the six to 365 for the RPO LS5 454 – all in gross figures. The LS6 454 V8 was gone forever. A rebadged El Camino, the GMC Sprint debuted in 1971. It shared the same engine and transmission offerings as its Chevrolet counterpart.

The 1972 El Caminos wore single-unit parking and side marker lights on their front fenders, outside of a revised twin-bar grille, but little changed. For 1972, horsepower measurements were switched to the "net" figures as installed in a vehicle with all accessories and emission controls hooked up. Engine offerings included the 110 horsepower (82 kW) 250-6, a 307 V8, a 175 horsepower (130 kW) 350-cubic-inch V8, and big block V8s of 402 and 454 cubic-inch displacements. The 402-cubic-inch (still known as a 396) produced 240 horsepower (180 kW); the 454 managed to put out 270 horsepower (200 kW) under the net rating system.

Super Sport equipment could now be ordered with any V8 engine, including the base 307-cubic-inch version. All 1972 El Caminos with the 454 ci engine have a "W" as the fifth digit in the VIN, and the 454 was only available with Super Sport trim.

Fourth generation (1973–1977)

For 1973, the El Camino was redesigned. Matching the Chevelle line and using the wagon chassis, it was the largest El Camino generation. Energy-absorbing hydraulic front bumper systems on these vehicles added more weight. There were two different trim levels of El Caminos during this period. The base model and SS option shared interior and exterior appointments with the Chevelle Malibu, while the El Camino Classic (introduced for 1974) shared its trim with the more upscale Chevelle Malibu Classic.

1973 El Camino

The chassis design was as new as the bodies with 1-inch (25 mm) a wider wheel track, front and rear. The left wheel was adjusted to have slightly more positive camber than the right, which resulted in a more uniform and stable steering feel on high-crown road surfaces while maintaining excellent freeway cruise stability. Clearances for spring travel were also improved for a smoother ride over all types of surfaces; the coil springs at each wheel were computer-selected to match the individual car's weight. Front disc brakes were now standard on all '73 El Caminos. Additional new features were an acoustical double-panel roof, tighter-fitting glass, flush-style outside door handles, molded full-foam seat construction, flow-through power ventilation system, inside hood release, refined Delcotron generator and sealed side-terminal battery, a larger 22-US-gallon (83 L; 18 imp gal) fuel tank, and "flush and dry" rocker panels introduced first on the redesigned 1971 full-size Chevrolets. New options included swivel bucket seats (with console) and Turbine I urethane (backed by steel) wheels, as was the instrument gauge cluster.[13] A benefit of the new body designs was much better visibility of which the unusually thin windshield pillars contributed. A structural improvement was a stronger design for the side door guard beams. El Caminos shared the "Colonnade" frameless door glass with other Chevelles, and would continue this feature into the next generation as well.



The 307 2-barrel V8 of 115 hp (86 kW) was the base engine. Options included a 350 2-barrel V8 of 145 hp (108 kW), a 350 4-barrel V8 of 175 hp (130 kW), and a 454 4-barrel V8 rated at 245 hp (183 kW). Hardened engine valve seats and hydraulic camshafts made these engines reliable for many miles, and allowed them to accept the increasingly popular unleaded regular gasoline. The three-speed manual transmission was standard; 4-speed manual and Turbo Hydra-Matic 3-speed automatic transmissions were optional. Crossflow radiators and coolant reservoirs prevented overheating.

1973 El Camino SS

The SS, now a trim option, included a black grill with SS emblem, bodyside striping, bright roof drip moldings, color-keyed dual sport mirrors, special front and rear stabilizer bars, rally wheels, 70-series raised white-lettered tires, special instrumentation and SS interior emblems. The SS option was available with a 350 or 454 V8 with the 4-speed or Turbo Hydra-Matic transmissions.



The 1974 El Caminos sported an elongated, Mercedes-type grille. Inside, the new top-of-the-line El Camino Classic featured luxurious interiors with notchback bench seats (or optional Strato bucket seats) upholstered in cloth or vinyl, carpeted door panels and woodgrain instrument panel trim. The 350 V8 became the base engine

and a 400 V8 engine was new this year. The 454, the top engine, was available with the Turbo Hydra-Matic 400 automatic or 4-speed manual transmission.

The 1975 models featured a new grill, providing a fresh appearance. Suspension upgrades offered a quieter ride, and radial-ply tires became standard. Dual remote mirrors, new twin sport mirrors, intermittent wipers, and cruise control were among new convenience features this year. The 1975 high energy ignition (HEI) provided spark to the spark plugs with minimal maintenance and increased power. The larger distributor cap also provided better high-RPM performance by decreasing the likelihood of the spark conducting to the wrong terminal. The 250-cubic-inch in-line six of 105 hp (78 kW) was offered as the base engine. The 454-cubic-inch V8, downrated yet again to 215 horsepower (160 kW), made it into 1975 as an El Camino option, but this would be its last go-around. It was not available in California, and the optional four-speed stick was no longer offered. Buyers could now choose an Econominder instrument package that included a vacuum gauge to point out when optimum fuel economy was being attained.

1977 El Camino Classic

For 1976, El Camino Classic models now featured the new rectangular headlights that other high-end GM cars were sporting. These were quad units in stacked arrangement. The base model retained the previously used dual round headlights. Engines included the base 250 I6 engine, a new 140-horsepower 305-cubic-inch V8, two- and four-barrel 350s (with availability still depending on California delivery), and the 400-cubic-inch V8, still good for 175 hp. All engines except the 250 I6 came with the Turbo Hydra-matic automatic transmission as the only transmission available. The 250 I6 came with a 3-speed manual or an optional Turbo Hydra-matic.



The 1977 models were little changed, except the 400 V8 was gone. The El Camino Classic was again the top model and the SS option continued.

Fifth generation (1978–1987)

The 1978 through 1987 El Caminos were produced in four trim levels: Classic, Black Knight (1978)/Royal Knight (1979–83), Conquista and Super Sport, and shared chassis components with the Chevrolet Malibu. Chevrolet 90° V6 and Buick V6 engines were used for the first time. The optional 305 cubic-inch small block V8 was rated at 150 or 165 horsepower (123 kW), and from 1982–1984, the Oldsmobile-sourced Diesel engine was also optional.

1979 El Camino

A new, trimmer El Camino was unveiled in 1978, adopting the new, more sharp-edged Malibu styling, and a one-inch longer wheelbase of 117 in (2,972 mm). The front end sheet metal and doors were shared with the Malibu, and the rear tailgate and bumper was shared with the Malibu station wagon. For the first time, though, the El Camino had a unique chassis – it was shared with no other Chevrolet. The front end featured a new single rectangular headlight design. The base engine was a 200-cubic-inch (3.3-liter) V6 that developed 95 horsepower (71 kW), except in California where, to meet emissions standards, the 231-cubic-inch Buick engine was the base engine. Two upgrades could be ordered: a 305-cubic-inch V8 with 145 horsepower (108 kW), or a 350-cubic-inch V8 with 170 horsepower (130 kW) that was only available in El Caminos and Malibu station wagons. It was not available on Malibu passenger cars (with exception to coupe and sedan Malibu 9C1 police vehicles). Among GM makes, at least, the era of bigness was fading into history, overtaken by a new age of efficiency and economy.



The 1979 model got minimal changes following its debut as a redesigned "new-size" model in 1978. Alterations to the 1979 El Camino amounting to little more than a new divided grille. However, a "small-block" 267-cubic-inch (4.4-liter) V8 joined the options list and slotted between the standard 3.3-liter V6 and the optional 5.0-liter four-barrel V8. The 350-cubic-inch (5.7-liter) V8, developing 170 horsepower (130 kW) was again available. Both three- and four-speed manual transmissions had floor shifters.

The 1980 El Camino started out the 1980s with few changes, though engine choices were shuffled a little. The base V6 displaced 229 cubic inches, up from 200 the year before. Horsepower increased from 94 to 115. Optional again were a 267-cubic-inch V8 with 125 horsepower (93 kW) and a 305 V8, now with 155 horsepower (down five). The 350 with 170 horsepower (130 kW) offered in 1979 was dropped. A three speed floor shifted manual transmission was standard, but most got the optional three-speed automatic.

The 1981 models received a new horizontal tube grill. The 1981 engines mostly continued from 1980, but now used GM's Computer Command Control (CCC) emission system. The base 229-cubic-inch V6 made 110 horsepower (down from 115), as did the California-only 231-cubic-inch Buick V6. Optional engines were the 267-cubic-inch V8 with 115 horsepower (86 kW) and The 305-cubic-inch V8, now with 150 horsepower (110 kW). The three-speed automatic added a lock-up torque converter to aid highway mileage.

1982

The 1982 (through the final 1987) El Camino sported a new frontal appearance with a crosshatch grille flanked by quad rectangular headlights. New under the hood for 1982 was a 105-horsepower 5.7-liter (350-cubic-inch) Diesel V8, which was also offered in Chevrolet's full-size cars. Though mileage with the diesel was commendable, it was an expensive option and would eventually amass a dismal repair record. Gasoline-engine choices were unchanged, except Chevrolet's 229-cubic-inch (3.8-liter) V6 was now standard in California-bound cars, replacing Buick's 231-cubic-inch V6.

In 1983, the 4.4-liter V8 was gone, leaving the 5.0-liter version as the only optional gas V8. The standard engine was again Chevrolet's 3.8-liter V6 with 110 horsepower (82 kW), though California cars, once again, got a Buick V6 with similar specifications. Continuing on the options list was the 5.7-liter V8 Diesel with 105 hp (78 kW). The sister Malibu sedan and wagon were discontinued after the 1983 model year.

The 1983–87 El Camino SS was offered as a conversion (completed by Choo-Choo Customs Inc., of Chattanooga, Tennessee) to include the aerodynamic front end similar to the Monte Carlo SS, but did not receive the L69 engine package.

For 1985, GM shifted El Camino production to Mexico, and the new 4.3 L was standard through 1987.

1982–1987 El Camino

The mythical 1988 model year

El Camino production ended quietly in late 1987. The serial number of the last El Camino to roll off the line was not publicised; and the GM Heritage Center did not acquire the last one built for its collection. Speculation in online forums indicates 3GCCW80H2HS915586 may be the final vehicle.

Confusion exists because Automotive News lists 420 El Caminos and 325 GMC Caballeros as new car retail deliveries in calendar year 1988. Some of these vehicles have been titled as 1988 models, based on the date of first retail sale. However, these 1988s have "H" as the tenth character in their VIN, so they are actually leftover



MY (model year) 1987 vehicles. A legitimate MY 1988 car must have a "J" as the tenth VIN character. Finally, the GM Media Archive/Heritage Center confirmed that no MY 1988 El Caminos or Caballeros were produced.

Next meeting: Holiday Party December 16 . See the forum for more information