

1976 CADILLAC ELDORADO CONVERTIBLE

1976 Cadillac Eldorado Convertible

Owners: Bernie and Janice Taulborg Collection

Number made: 14,000

Original price: Base price, convertible: \$11,049 (In 1976, average annual income, \$16,000; average cost of a house, \$43,400)

Engine, etc.: V-8; 500 cu. in., 190 hp; front-wheel drive; wheel base 224"; 5,153 lbs.

The Eldorado name was first used in 1953 by General Motors and given to a limited-edition, low production convertible. Varying stories report the origin of the name with one stating it came from a Cadillac in-house competition and was based on the Spanish word meaning "golden one", to another story that it came from a legendary but undiscovered city filled with riches in South America.

The 1976 Eldorado was advertised as the "last of a magnificent breed". It was the final American production convertible of its era. The cost of making these vehicles in low quantities was proving to be a financial drain on Cadillac. Public tastes were changing also, with improved stereo systems which did not perform well with high wind noise of a convertible, higher highway speeds, and widespread use of air conditioning.

The car was large, luxurious and very heavy. Weighing 5,153 lbs. with a 500 cubic inch engine, the Eldorado was one of the biggest regular production cars ever offered and it had the gas mileage to prove it. The engine was weakened and detuned compared to prior years, as a result of more rigorous emission standards. It was the world's biggest car with front-wheel drive.

The Eldorado offered nearly every available option as standard. It also had four-wheel power disc brakes, power steering, steel-belted radial whitewall tires, and a leather interior.

Styling changes for 1976 included new amber-lensed parking lights, new tail lamps in continuous slots below the deck lid and above the bumper, backup lights on each side of the license plate, and additional red lenses in the chrome fender extensions. New wheel covers had a black center hub with bright metal raised wreath and crest. Eldorado script was on the rear fenders and deck lid.

The Eldorado decreased substantially in size by 1986 and, following a less-than-successful attempt with a variable displacement engine in 1981, sales slowed considerably. In 1992 the Eldorado was reborn and regained much of the prestige it had lost over the years.

Production of the Eldorado ceased in 2002.

Sources: <http://www.conceptcarz.com/vehicle/z1635/Cadillac-Eldorado.aspx>

<https://www.motorera.com/cadillac/cad1970/cad76e.htm>

See also:

http://www.oldcarbrochures.com/static/NA/Cadillac/1976_Cadillac/1976_Cadillac_Brochure/dirindex.html (Original dealers brochure)