

1968 CHEVROLET EL CAMINO

1968 Chevrolet El Camino

Donated by: Jerry & Kim Gronewold of Kearney, Nebr.; in their family since 1971

Original cost: \$2,000.00 (In 1968: Average car cost \$2,822.00; average household income, \$7,850.00; average home cost, \$14,950.00; gallon of gas, 34 cents)

Number made: 41,791

Engine, etc.: 307 c.i.d; 200 hp; Turbo-Fire V-8 valve-in-head; 116" wheelbase

The Chevrolet El Camino was produced 1959 – 1960 and again 1964 – 1987. It could be classified as a small car but with a pick-up truck bed. The name, El Camino, means 'The Road' in Spanish.

Two years after Ford introduced their Ranchero, Chevrolet introduced the El Camino. The styling and platform were courtesy of the Impala. During its introductory year, 22,246 were produced. A year later sales slumped to 14,163 and Chevrolet cancelled production. The first generation did not achieve the success that the Ford Ranchero had accomplished. This was unfortunate, especially since the El Camino had undergone extensive styling updates during its second year.

Chevrolet reintroduced the El Camino in 1964 and it shared the Chevelle platform and styling. Two engines were offered, a 283 and a 327 cubic-inch V-8. Horsepower ranged from just under 200 to 250.

Performance was given a high priority in 1965 with the introduction of the L79 327 cubic-inch V-8 to the El Camino. The small block engine was capable of producing an astonishing 350 horsepower.

The performance trend continued into 1966 when Chevrolet offered a 396 cubic-inch big-block engine on the El Camino. The horsepower rating

skyrocketed to around 350 and gave the vehicle a mid-14-second quarter-mile time. To keep the vehicle stable at speeds, Chevrolet offered high performance shocks and springs as standard equipment. Also standard was the Synchro-Mesh three-speed gearbox with the four-speed or two-speed Powerglide automatic available as optional equipment. Just over 35,000 were produced during the 1966 model year.

The second generation El Camino's final year was 1967. Little was done, or needed, to improve upon the aesthetics of the vehicle. Updates mimicked the changes that occurred on the Chevelle. A new grille and bumper were added to the front. A vinyl roof was an option. A performance suspension was standard equipment for all El Camino's equipped with the powerful 396 cubic-inch engine. El Camino's were given air-adjustable shock absorbers to adjust the suspension depending on the cargo load.

The third generation of the El Camino, 1968 – 1972, brought about many mechanical and styling changes. The El Camino was now built on a 4-door station-wagon Chevelle wheelbase. The hood was stretched and could accommodate larger engines, such as the newly introduced Super Sport SS396. Horsepower ranged from 325 through 375. The SS versions were given six-inch wide wheels. Of the nearly 42,000 El Camino's sold during 1968, 5,190 were equipped with the SS396 option.

The fourth generation lasted from 1973-1978. Production of the fifth generation El Camino, 1978 – 1987, moved to Mexico in 1984 and continued until 1987.

Sources: Information furnished by owner.

<http://www.conceptcarz.com/z21109/Chevrolet-El-Camino.aspx>

<http://classicrodatabase.com/specs.php?series=8807&year=1968&model=30669>

See also: http://www.oldcarbrochures.com/static/NA/Chevrolet_El_Camino-GMC_Caballero/1968%20Chevrolet%20El%20Camino%20Brochure/index1.htm
| (Original sales brochure)