



Exhaust Whistle

Great Southern Region AAC

January 2026 - Official publication of the AAC Great Southern Region - Serving Central Alabama



Vol. 38 No. 1

Dinner Out Location to be Determined February 26 at 6 pm



A Special Visitor

This past Monday we received a very special visitor to Birmingham, West Peterson. West is the editor of the Antique Automobile Magazine, and he was in town to take pictures for the cover shot of the March/April Issue. It was a beautiful day with lots of sunshine, although a bit cool. I had asked

Ken if he could come over and help move stuff around as West directed. It was a good thing he came because where I put the vehicles was not where they needed to be.

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A Note From The PRESIDENT

Greetings to all during this last of January. We sure are experiencing some very cold weather that doesn't make us want to take the cars out but never fear, Alabama weather can change in an instant and we'll be out driving again. I encourage you to take some time to examine the National AACA calendar and check out the many National shows and tours that are taking place in 2026. Phyllis and I have already found at least 2 National shows and 2 tours we want to take part in. I bet there are several that can work in your calendar as well.

Even though we didn't have a large group to attend the January dinner/meeting, I was encouraged by those who did attend and agreed to begin taking on the new format of signing up for members' monthly activities. The actual activity will be passed along to the group as details are available and will also be posted on our Facebook page and website. Here are the people who have already sign up:

Bill Gardner - February

Bill Corn - April or May - Drive

Bill and Linda Gardner - July

Pepper Place Car Show - September 5th

Helena Old Town Car Show - November

Art and Vicki Bolton - November

Eddie and Suzanne Bibb - Christmas Party

Please let me know what month you would like to participate in planning an activity. I look forward to experiencing what all our members can share with the group.

It should be a great year!

Ken McClellan



Great Southern Region AACA
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A monthly publication of the Great Southern Region - AACA



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Founded 1935 717.534.1910
www.aaca.org

**Dedicated to the preservation,
restoration and maintenance of
automobiles and automotive history**

Membership in the AACA is required to be a member of the Great Southern Region. Ownership of an antique car is optional.

The Exhaust Whistle

Great Southern Region, Birmingham, AL
Email stories and photos to Charlotte at
Realracegrl1@gmail.com
www.greatsouthern.aaca.com
facebook: gsraaca

The Exhaust Whistle is a monthly publication of the AACA Great Southern Region, views expressed in the Exhaust Whistle are not necessarily those of the Region officers of AACA. Original material may be reprinted if credit is given.

2026 Officers

President: Ken McClellan

Vice President: Bill Gardner

Treasurer: Vicki Bolton

Secretary: Vicki Bolton

Editor/Webmaster: Charlotte Dahlenburg

Activities: Bill Gardner





Here West is taking a picture of both of us

West was so nice and so encouraging. There were lots of pictures so it will be interesting to see what actually ends up as the final pictures to be in the magazine.



And of course we had to have one with the dogs



Here are some of the pictures of Ken's car being photographed:



This is my arrangement

West has that special gift of making you feel so at ease that you don't feel nervous at all about the pictures.

It was great day followed by lunch at Outback Steakhouse. - Vicki



West is reviewing the picture to see if he liked it or not



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West is taking engine shots



Getting the car ready for another shot

What Have You Been Up To?

Christmas 2025

I have received some pretty good Christmas presents in my life, but none that has excited and surprised me as much as the one I received this year.

On Christmas morning, we sat at our granddaughter Chase's home in Florida watching our great granddaughters opening their presents. It took me back so many years to when I was a child and I remembered the anticipation and excitement wondering what Santa Claus was bringing me this year.

When the girls had finished destroying the house



and Chase and Kevin had opened their presents, Chase brought out my present to Eddie for him to open. He was pleased with the Apple tablet, but he kept looking at Chase in an odd way.

She nodded to him and then reached into the far back corner of the tree to pick up a small jewelry style

AACA Winter Nationals

March 26-28, 2026

Georgia Highland College • Cartersville, GA



box just the size to house a bracelet that I had been hinting about all year. I smiled and took the present from her. I opened the box expectantly, but instead of a bracelet, there was a Cadillac key chain with two keys on it. I looked at Eddie, asking if he had bought another Cadillac. He just smiled and said, "Look outside."



**AACA Southeastern Spring Nationals
April 11, 2026
at Charlotte AutoFair**
Hosted by Hornets Nest Region




AUTOFAIR
April 9 - 11, 2026

Information:
Region Office
704-841-1990
Mon-Thur 9-3

Hornets Nest Region
9307-H Monroe Road
Charlotte, NC 28270
hnraaca@gmail.com

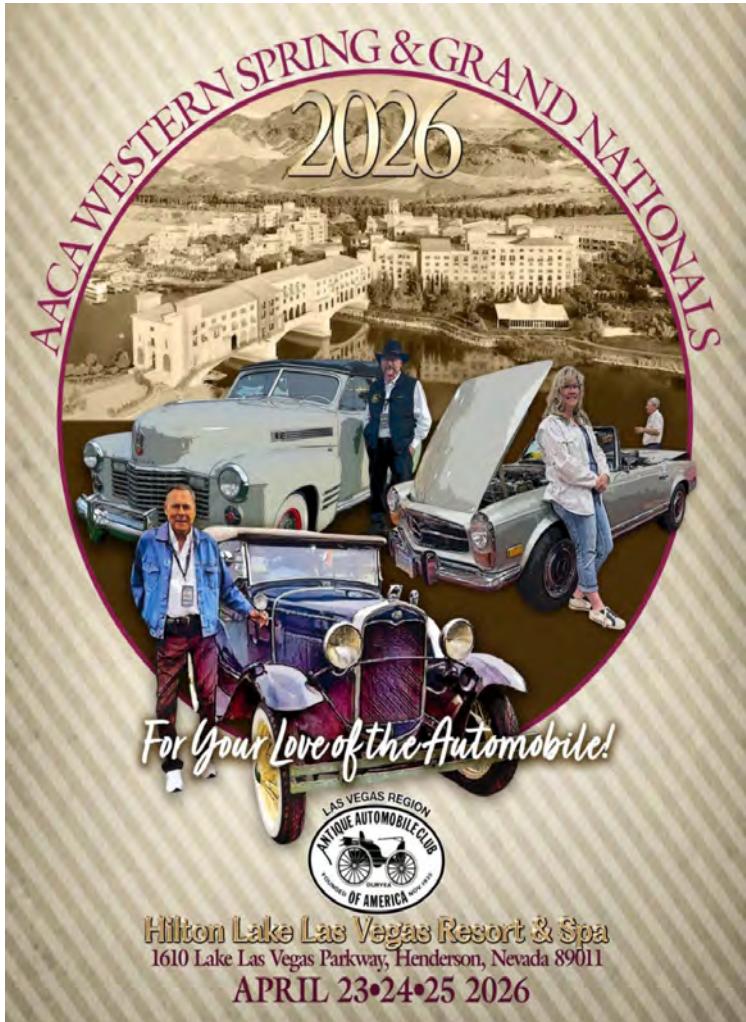


Vehicle Registrations Will Be Handled
With the Customary AACA Process.

Cautiously, I went to the back door expecting to see a brand-new Cadillac of some sort. Instead, my number one bucket list item was sitting in their carport—a 1991 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am GTA!

Look out world, this little old lady may not be in Pasadena, but she intends to Go, Granny, Go!

- Suzanne Bibb



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GSR Calendar

January 22 Dinner Meeting
February 26 Dinner Meeting
March 26 Dinner Meeting
April 23 Dinner Meeting
May 28 Dinner Meeting
June 25 Dinner Meeting
July 23 Dinner Meeting
August 27 Dinner Meeting
September 24 Dinner Meeting
October 22 Dinner Meeting
November 19 Dinner Meeting
December Christmas Gathering

AACA Calendar

March 19-21
Special Nationals
Location: Guaynabo, Puerto Rico Host: Puerto Rico Region
March 26-28
Winter Nationals
Location: Cartersville, GA Host: Lake Allatoona Region
April 9-11
Southeastern Spring Nationals
Location: Charlotte, NC Host: Hornets Nest Region
April 23-25
Annual Grand Nationals/Western Spring Nationals
Location: Las Vegas, NV Host: Las Vegas Region
May 28-30
Eastern Spring Nationals
Location: Indiana, PA Host: Shannock Valley Region
June 11-13
Southeastern Fall Nationals
Location: Oak Ridge, TN Host: Volunteer Region
June 15-19
Sentimental Tour
Location: Mechanicsburg, PA Host: Pontiac-Oakland Worldwide Region
July 23-25
Central Spring Nationals
Location: Green Bay, WI
August 5-8
Southeastern Divisional Tour
Location: Hendersonville, NC
August 19-22
Annual Grand Nationals / Zenith Awards
Location: Allentown, PA 717-534-1910
September 9-14
Founders Tour (1932-2001)
Location: Williamsburg, VA Host: Historic VA Peninsula Region
September 20-26
Revival AAA Glidden Tour (Pre-1943)

At Note From The EDITOR

Christmas is packed away and resting safely in the shed for most of the year now, though I'll happily drag it all back out again when fall rolls around. I've always found it a little funny and a lot wonderful that I truly enjoy each season for what it is.

While today feels especially cold and the next few promise even colder temperatures, my thoughts are already drifting ahead to spring and the car show season. Which car will earn the honor of traveling to some of my favorite shows? And which one will begin its transformation into a shiny new star? Winter seems to be the perfect season for dreaming, planning, and imagining what's next.

Long nights and chilly weather also offer the perfect excuse to slow down and catch up on some reading. Have you spent time lately with your Antique Automobile magazine? If not, now is the time.

Be sure to read Vicki Bolton's story in this issue because our Great Southern Region has a very special year ahead. We'll have the pleasure of following Vicki across the country as she serves as President of AACA, and she'll be doing it in true style.

The magazine is packed with valuable information about what AACA is doing nationwide, features on a wide variety of vehicles, and announcements for Nationals and Tours. Don't let it go to waste once you've finished reading it. Take it with you to shows, and when you're talking with a friend about the club, share the magazine and invite them to join us at our next dinner meeting.

Winter is for dreaming but spring will be here before we know it.

Charlotte

Puerto Rico
2026 AACA
SPECIAL NATIONALS
MARCH 19-21, 2026 GUAYNABO, PR



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Raymond Beniquez
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raybeniquez@gmail.com

Best Antique Car Show on the Island, By Far!

Request registration materials from AACA National



Local Calendar

Cruise Ins

Cruise Ins

1st Tuesday - 5-8pm Petro Bucksville 22526 Highway 216 McCalla

Thursday Weekly - 6-9pm VFW Post 6022, 7001 University Blvd E, Cottondale

1st Saturday - 8-11am Hoovers Tactical Firearms Cruise In 1561 Montgomery Hwy. Hoover. Hosted by Dixie Vintage Antique Automobile Club

1st Saturday - 9-12 pm MOB Inc Monthly Car Show 40 Inverness Pkwy, Hoover

First Saturday - 9-2pm. Cruising on the Square. Downtown Jasper (April – Sept)

2nd Saturday - 5-8pm Apr-Oct Bee Line Highway Classics & Cruisers Railroad St, Hartselle

2nd Saturday - 6-9pm Apr-Oct Alabama Misfits Jack's Exit 267 off I-65 1195 Walker Chapel Rd, Flutondale

2nd Saturday - 8-11am - Magic City Octane. 6200 Grand River Blvd E, Leeds, AL

3rd Saturday - 6pm Tallahassee Shopping Center 400 Gilmer Ave

3rd Saturday - 2-5pm Hooters Hwy 119 & Oak Mountain Park Road, Pelham

3rd Saturday - 3:30-8:30pm Home Depot 41310 US Hwy 280 Sylacauga

3rd Saturday - 4:30-7:30pm Home Depot 3784 US 431 Phoenix City

3rd Saturday - 6-9pm Jack's Drive in Blountsville (May-Aug)

4th Saturday - 5-9pm Pizza Bar 141 2nd St NW Carbon Hill

4th Saturday - 8-10:30am 1110 Sparkman St. NW Hartselle American Legion Post 52

Saturday Weekly 8:30-10:30 Shops of Colonnade 3418 Colonnade Pkwy, Birmingham

3rd Sunday - 1-5pm Casual Pint, 5541 Grove Blvd, Hoover

3rd & 5th Sunday 3pm 1204 Forestdale Square, Forestdale

Last Saturday – 5pm-? 7900 Vaugh Rd at Taylor Rd Montgomery

Shows

March

7 13th Annual Comer Museum Car & Bike Show 9-2pm 711 N. Broadway, Sulacauga, AL Door prizes, food, entertainment, 50/50 Entry \$256

7 6th Annual Anna Jent Memorial Scholarship Fund Car Show 9-1pm Main Street, Sumiton. Cars, Trucks, Motorcycles along with Model and Diecast Cars. Rg. \$20. Info 205-317-6298

14 The Worx Auto Expo 10-3pm The Village Green 3113 Park Court Millbrook

21 2nd Annual Car Show 8-1pm. 200 Parker Dr, Pelham. Food Trucks, DJ, Silent Auction Best of Classes - Top 30 \$20entry.

April

18 4th Annual Pell City Car Show 9am-3. Pell City High School 1300 Cogswell Ave, Pell City \$20 entry

18 3rd Annual Music & Motors. 8-1pm. 650 McConnel Loop, Fayette Reg \$10. Music, Food, Trophies, 50/50.

May

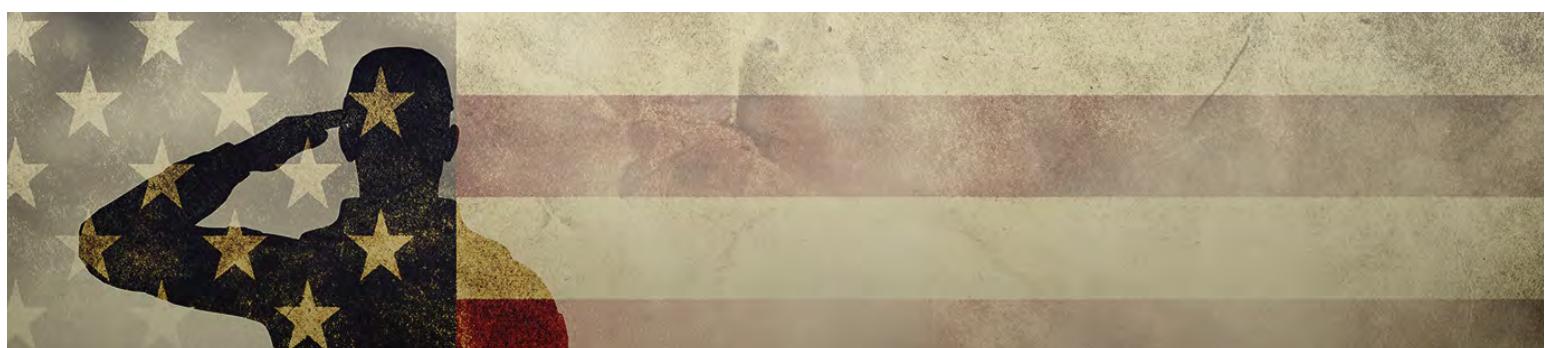
1 4th Annual Irondale Auto Classic. 8-1pm. 3900 Grants Mill Road, Irondale

June

6 24th Annual Alabaster Cityfest Cruise-In Car Show. 9-2pm. 1921 Warrior Pkwy at the Thompson High School enter from Thompson Rd, Free Event, Register for door prizes

September

10 Vette Spectacular 9-2pm Classic Car Motoring 3900 Grants Mill Rd. Irondale



The Military Sponsorship Program is available to all of the Military Veterans that have proudly served to protect our homeland and freedoms.

With this program, AACA is extending a limited number of complimentary 2023 memberships for first-time AACA applicants. More information on this program

and an application can be found on the AACA website under member information and drop down to Military. These complimentary 2023 memberships are for first-time AACA applicants and are limited by the funds available for this program. These complimentary applications for membership are intended for individuals who have a genuine interest in the antique car hobby.



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1957 Chevrolet Bel Air: 'Moving while standing still'



The 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air Convertible is considered the crown jewel of the "Tri-Five era, 1955-1957. The Bel Air convertible was a head-turner for its flamboyant styling and engineering milestones. It is often referred to as the "ultimate '50s car" due to its appealing mix of chrome, fins, and V-8 power. (Photos courtesy of GM Heritage Archive)

The jet-age styling of the 1957 Chevrolet was created by GM design chief Harley Earl and overseen by Chuck Jordan

By Mark Maynard - Mark Maynard has written about cars, their people, and products for 30 years. You can email him at MaynardsGarage@gmail.com or visit his website, MaynardsGarage.com.

The 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air was a masterclass in Jet Age styling. Its fast lines reflected the optimism and technological fascination of 1950s America. Led by two legendary GM designers, chief Harley Earl and overseen by Chuck Jordan, the car was intentionally styled to mimic high-end luxury and modern aviation.

The 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air convertible was Chevrolet's top-of-the-line model that year, marking the end of the popular "Tri-Five" generation — 1955-1957.

The 1957 Chevrolet was a monster on the track, winning 49 NASCAR Grand National races, more than any other car in NASCAR history. This 1957



Chevy Bel Air was photographed on track at Daytona.

Key Design Inspirations

Jet Aircraft and Rocketry: The most famous features—the sharp tail fins—were inspired by the rear stabilizers of military aircraft. This theme



continued with twin rocket-style hood ornaments and front bumper guards (bumperettes) that resembled jet fighter nose cones.

A “Baby Cadillac” Influence: To keep up with rivals, Chevrolet executives wanted the car to look more expensive than it was. To create an upscale “imperial” feel, designers borrowed several cues from Cadillac. Among the treatments were a chrome-heavy front grille with gold anodized trim on the grille and emblems.

Ferrari-Inspired Front End: While the rear was all American jet, the front grille took subtle inspiration from Italian Ferrari designs of the era. The stance was intended to appear wide and aggressive.

The “Motoramic” Concept: This was a marketing and design philosophy at GM aimed at making cars look lower and wider. For 1957, this was achieved by switching from 15-inch to 14-inch wheels, which dropped the car’s center of gravity and enhanced its sleek, “moving while standing still” silhouette.



1957 Chevrolet Bel Air convertible in Larkspur Blue with India Ivory rear fins. A restored Bel Air Convertible in this color scheme typically commands between \$95,000 and \$135,000 depending on the engine (V-8 vs. Fuel Injection).

Notable Cosmetic Details

Gold Accents: Exclusive to the Bel Air trim, the mesh grille and fender chevrons were finished in gold.

Ribbed Aluminum Inserts: Side “spears” on the rear quarters were filled with ribbed aluminum to further distinguish them from the lower-tier 150 and 210 models.

Hidden Fuel Filler: In a clever bit of design integration, the gas cap was hidden behind a chrome trim piece above the left tail fin. The treatment helped maintain the car’s clean lines.



50th Anniversary 1955 Chevrolet Bel Air sport coupe in solid color gold, marking the 50th million GM vehicle. Every piece of hardware that was normally chrome or stainless steel—including the bumpers, trim, and grille—was plated in real 24-karat gold.

Technical Innovations

Turboglide Transmission: A new automatic transmission that featured a “Hill Retarder” to help save the brakes on steep downgrades.

Safety Upgrades: Chevrolet introduced “crash-proof” door locks, padded dashboards, and optional seat belts (which were rare for the era).

Racing Success: The '57 Chevy was a monster on the track, winning 49 NASCAR Grand National races, more than any other car in NASCAR history.

The 1957 Bel Air Convertible

The convertible body style spoke to the lure of the open road in the 1950s. Its soft-top roof could be raised or lowered with a push-button. Approximately 47,562 convertible units were sold that year.

Innovative Options: The '57 models offered many options previously reserved for luxury cars, including:

- Power brakes, steering, and windows;
- Air conditioning;
- The “Autronic eye” for automatic headlight dimming.

* The Turboglide turbine automatic transmission was also available.



1957 Chevrolet Bel Air convertible in Surf Green and India Ivory.



Three Main Series for 1957

Chevrolet offered 20 different models across three distinct series, including convertibles (only on 210 and Bel Air models) and station wagons:

Bel Air: High-end and upscale; \$2,290-\$2,757 w/6-cylinder;

Two-Ten: Midrange features and pricing; \$2,174-\$2,402 w/6-cylinder;

One-Fifty: Economy and fleet models; \$2,048-\$2,307* w/6-cylinder.

*Note: Add \$100 for a V-8 engine.



1956 Chevrolet Bel Air hardtop sedan driver area with rare option of air conditioning.

1957 Bel Air Engine Family

The 1957 Chevrolet offered a wide and powerful range of eight engine options for the Bel Air, including the famous small-block V-8s (which were painted orange, except for some early 265s) and a powerful straight-six.

While the standard engine was a 235 cubic-inch straight-six, the car's performance was driven by the optional 283 cubic-inch small-block V-8.

Inline-Six: 140-hp 235.5 cubic-inch, single one-barrel carburetor. Base engine, known as the "Blue Flame Six." In 1957, the six-cylinder was an economical and reliable choice, often paired with the manual transmission or the Powerglide automatic, offering a more practical, lower-cost option than the performance-oriented V-8s.

V-8 Turbo-Fire: 162-hp 265 cu. in. two-barrel. The entry-level V-8 option.

V-8 Turbo-Fire: 185-hp 283 cu. in. two-barrel. The standard 283 V-8.

V-8 Super Turbo-Fire: 220-hp 283 cu. in. four-barrel. The most common optional performance engine.

V-8 Super Turbo-Fire: 270-hp 283 cu. in. two 4-barrel. High-performance option, often called the

"Dual Quad."

V-8 Fuel-Injected: 250-hp 283 cu. in. Rochester Ramjet Fuel Injection. Early fuel injection option.

V-8 Fuel-Injected: 283-hp 283 cu. in. Rochester Ramjet Fuel Injection. The top engine achieved the milestone of one horsepower per cubic inch.

The powerful V-8 options put Chevrolet into the competitive motorsports arena and greatly contributed to the car's popularity.



1957 Chevrolet Bel Air Nomad wagon in two-tone Highland Green (a deep, dark metallic green) with Surf Green (the lighter pastel green) on the roof and upper body. The 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air Nomad remained the division's most expensive car.

AACA Central Spring Nationals

July 22-26, 2026 • Green Bay, Wisconsin

Registration & Hotel Deadline: June 20

Show Highlights: Lambeau Field Tours • Welcome Party • Craft Event • Members Roundtable • Judging School • Ice Cream Social • Oneida Dancers • Leisure Time @ Oneida Casino • Judges Breakfast • CJE • Nationals Car Show • Cocktail Hour & Banquet

Host Hotel: Tundra Lodge

865 Lombardi Avenue, Green Bay, WI 54304
877-888-3727, ask for AACA rate
Includes \$10 daily breakfast if you show your AACA badge

Questions? Contact Chairman:

Russ Walker, 920-819-1407, russellswalker@aol.com



Request registration materials from AACA National



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1957 Chevrolet Bel Air Retail Pricing

The original price for the Bel Air models was relatively affordable, though the convertible was significantly more expensive than the hardtop. A V-8 option added just \$100 for most models. The final price would increase depending on the engine choice (such as the high-performance Fuelie V-8) and optional equipment, such as power steering and power brakes.

The 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air was offered in two- and four-door sedan styles:

Four-Door Sedan (Post Sedan): The base price for the 4-door sedan with a V-8 engine was approximately \$2,390. This body style featured a structural “B-pillar” between the front and rear doors. This was the entry price for the top-trim Bel Air, making it one of the most popular and accessible choices for buyers wanting the iconic '57 style.

Four-Door Sport Sedan (Hardtop): This model, often called the 4-door hardtop, had a slightly higher MSRP of \$2,399, as it lacked the central B-pillar. The styling gave the sport sedan a sleeker, open look when the windows were down.

2-Door Sport Coupe (Hardtop): Around \$2,399, with V-8;

2-Door Convertible: Approximately \$2,611, with V-8).

These prices were for the base V-8 versions. Opting for the top-tier fuel-injected engine added about \$500 to the cost.

Note: Pricing details from the “3rd Edition of Standard Catalog of American Cars 1946-1975.”



The front seat area of the 1956 Chevrolet Bel Air sedan 6 cylinder.

1957 Bel Air Transmissions

The 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air was available with a manual or automatic transmission.

The primary transmission options available were:

3-Speed Manual (Synchro-Mesh): This was the standard transmission. It offered a 3-speed setup and utilized a high-capacity 10-inch semi-centrifugal clutch. A special close-ratio version was available, particularly for the high-performance engines.

3-Speed Manual with Overdrive (optional): This was a popular option for highway driving; it added an overdrive gear to the standard 3-speed manual, allowing for lower engine RPMs at cruising speeds.

2-Speed Powerglide Automatic (optional): This was Chevrolet's venerable 2-speed automatic transmission, offered since 1950. It was the most common automatic choice, known for its simplicity and relatively smooth operation. (Some enthusiasts referred to it as the “slush box.”)

Turboglide Automatic (Optional): Introduced for the 1957 model year, the Turboglide was a more advanced, turbine-driven automatic transmission. It was designed to offer a smoother, more continuously variable feel (similar in effect to modern CVTs), avoiding distinct shifts. However, due to its complexity and reputation for reliability issues, many buyers stuck with the simpler Powerglide.

Today, collector prices for a pristine, original convertible with the 283 hp Fuelie engine can exceed \$100,000.



1957 Chevrolet Bel Air wagon, two-tone Matador Red and India Ivory.

Sources for this story include: Wikipedia;
GRAutogallery
Audrain Auto Museum.



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Speedster articles courtesy of AACA

You Are Running Out of Time to Renew Your AACA Membership for 2026!

By Karen White, AACA Membership Manager, kwhite@aaca.org

Your AACA membership runs on a calendar year from January 1 through December 31.

If you have already renewed your membership for 2026, thank you!! If you have not renewed your membership yet, please take a few minutes to do it now.

The quickest and easiest way to renew your membership right now is by using our super simple online renewal system. Just log in with your membership number and PIN, review the information currently listed on your membership record and make changes if necessary. Review your information one more time and click on credit card. Payment options include Visa, MasterCard and Discover. Your payment will automatically record to your membership record, you will receive an email confirmation and you will be renewed in our membership database immediately.

Your membership number and PIN are printed on the renewal form included with your Antique Automobile magazine. It can also be found on your membership card. If you don't have access to a renewal form or your membership card, call National Headquarters at 717-534-1910 or email kwhite@aaca.org to get your numbers. Please DON'T try to pay your dues by using the JOIN AACA tab. This WILL NOT renew your membership – instead, it will create a new one.

You can also renew your membership by mailing in the renewal form with payment or by calling National HQ at 717-534-1910.

REMINDER: Your 2026 membership dues MUST be paid before you can receive registration information or register online for any 2026 National Shows or Tours, including the Annual Convention.

Regarding Membership Renewal Forms & Antique Automobile Magazine

During this time of year, we are receiving membership renewals on a daily basis. Please know that we always try to process them as quickly as possible. Having said that, we do have to send the mailing file for Antique Automobile magazine about 3 weeks before you actually receive it in your mailbox so some renewals may not get processed before the mailing list is created. If you know that you sent your renewal in to us or that your region/chapter sent in your renewal, please disregard the extra renewal notice. Thank you in advance for understanding the situation!



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