

Welcome back!

This week someone texted me:

"Sooo, where are those wonderful cars now.. AMX, Chevelle... " *

My response is about cars, but trust most everyone will understand it:

* Is that a serious question?

The AMX hasn't been built in 4 decades, it being part of the AMC car company, which went under a long time ago as well.

As for the Chevelle, it was the middle-sized Chevy, a best seller from Chevrolet, which was the base line of 5 Divisions from GENERAL MOTORS.

Chevelle was the basic one, then came Malibu, then the SS. First year for Malibu is 1964, and guess its last year? It was revived a few years ago, and is still being made as a 2024 model.

MOTOR TREND says this about it:

PROS:

- Stylish exterior
- Settled ride quality
- The last American midsize sedan

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CONS:

- Weak engine
- Mediocre fuel economy
- Cheap-feeling interior

No wonder they don't sell well! They are priced from 25 to 32K, and in case you are wondering about any other vintage models, note that at least 90% of 1960s American cars are not made anymore. Buyers want SUVs, Crossovers, & Trucks, as Automobile market is secondary for individual road transport, and currently a huge Company like FORD makes only one car: MUSTANG.

Fifty years ago FORD MOTOR COMPANY offered Automobile models starting with the PINTO then going all the way to the THUNDERBIRD, and most of those included two & four doors, convertibles, plus wagons. The wonderful vintage cars are long gone, except a smaller percentage which are cared-for originals, others existing as mere hulks of their former selves, while the rest have thankfully been restored.

For me, The Ace in the Hole for AMERICAN Cars of the 50, 60s, & many 70s, was STYLING, as most of these cars were really not that special, but their Designs and Marketing for them was superb, so profits were huge! Eventually however, "The Big Three" (FORD, GM, CHRYSLER) became complacent with their traditionally engineered/stylized autos, while at the same time the Japanese began making inroads into the market, initially with well built / reliable / affordable small cars, followed by LEXUS and INFINITI, then the Germans offered more product, followed by the Koreans, and now owning an American Car doesn't mean much at all, not even a Cadillac, which when I was a teen, was THE CAR in America representing the ultimate in Luxury, Presence, Comfort, and Style.

Now? I don't know anyone who owns a newer Lincoln, do you?

Remember OLDSMOBILE, PONTIAC, MERCURY, AMC? All gone...and if it wasn't for China, BUICK wouldn't have survived either. CHRYSLER is doing well, but is no longer an all-American Company. By the way, 60 years ago, the Best Selling Car in the World was the CHEVROLET IMPALA, and last I heard, in the U.S. it was the TOYOTA CAMRY. It should also be noted that GENERAL MOTORS long ago relinquished the crown as the biggest, most profitable Company in the world, a position it held for decades.

So when I praise & write about the Beautiful Cars of my Youth, I'm basically talking about Looks, sometimes inside as well, plus affordable fast cars, nothing more. A MERCEDES BENZ was three times more car, but not as interesting to look at in comparison, plus it was more expensive to buy and maintain, be it at Dealer or Independent Shop. Many a customer had to wait for a part to come in (shipped), especially if Volvo, Peugeot, Fiat, Citroen, and what about cars like MASERATI, that's when those cars

were for the truly wealthy, but now they hold the record of highest depreciating cars of all, and most of them are leased anyway.

My point is: I am aware of how pedestrian underneath most of the older cars I admire were, but I still love those fabulously designed automobiles, be them rakish Corvettes or sleek Thunderbirds. They may break down, but I can fix them myself, parts are usually plentiful and cheap, plus its guaranteed that everyone will want to tell a story of that one they owned...or knew somebody who did. I cherish having seen and ridden in so many of them when new, including my Fathers cars, which when he bought, he then surprised us with! The huge thrill at first sight, those new lines...the perfect paint, opening it, then sitting on the firm but comfortable immaculate seats, the smell inside ahhhh, the sparkling lights and shiny details. "Alright, were going for a ride, and don't worry guys, you can come like that, we will be right back" -"Yayyy!"

I must include other cars we didn't own but certainly admired...at the Dealer or seen running around town... Just try visualizing.... the majestic dark-blue 1960 Chrysler Imperial LeBaron, the incredible and futuristic White 1963 Corvette Stingray, the happy light yellow 1965 Mustang convertible with trunk rack, the fiery Red 1966 Mercury Cyclone with fancy wheelcovers, the swoopy light green 1966 Dodge Charger my teenage friend showed up at school with, gosh, or how about that 1970 Gold Pontiac GTO with the tan vynil roof and its Rally II wheels, always spotless, a powerful car which looked refined.

As time went on, the care to keep them pretty and healthy...until they grew tired...and the time came to start the cycle all over again! For many, this was a big part of The American Way, it certainly was in my family, and while the youth of today has no inkling of the excitement or inspiration brought about by these machines, they were the seeds of passions, all of them BEAUTIES...and positively timeless ~

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