

# A STORMER & A STROKER FROM CHEVELLE

A dual test of the potent 396 SS and a genteel Malibu 283

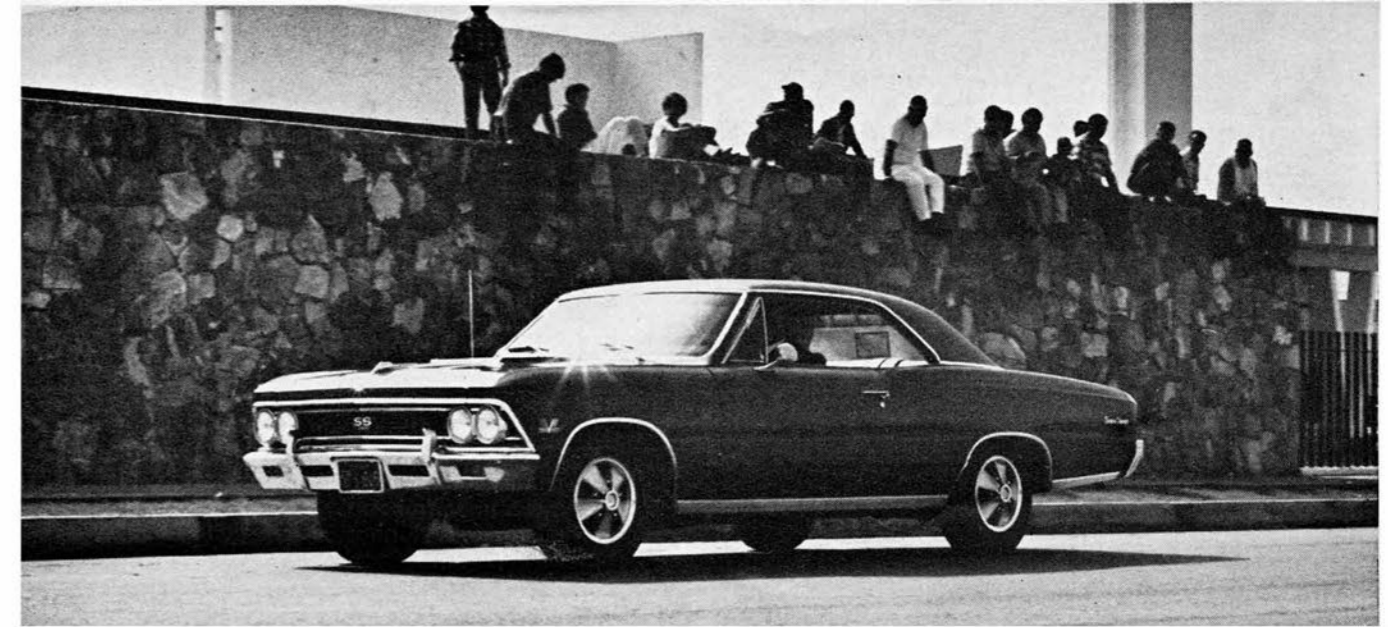
**O**UR CHOICE of the Chevelle Super Sport 396 as the subject of a test is fairly obvious. Anyone with a drop of red blood in his veins would have some natural curiosity when it comes to a potent performer like this. But there are lots of 1966 Chevilles on the road—and most are not Super Sports. Consequently for a companion test car, we requested the kind of Chevelle the average buyer would end up with after all the haggling and head-scratching.

This one turned out to be a Malibu Sport Coupe equipped as indicated in the spec panel. The Chevy people stressed that this was *about* what the average buyer would choose, but with all the options available, possible choices could literally number in the thousands.

This year's production Super Sport is quite different from the special, limited-production 1965¾ Malibu SS 396 we tested in the July, 1965, issue. The 1966 model uses standard Chevelle brakes and suspension parts throughout, except



COMPOUND USED IN WIDE RED-LINE TIRES MAKES THEM SUPER-SMOKERS. REAR SUSPENSION DOES CREDITABLE JOB OF CONTROLLING WHEEL HOP.



SPECTATORS AT JUAREZ, MEXICO GRAND PRIX WERE TREATED TO THEIR FIRST GLIMPSE OF SUPER SPORT WHEN WE TOURED CITY-STREET CIRCUIT.

the springs are about 30% stiffer, the shocks have heavy-duty valving with a different calibration, and a stiffer front stabilizer bar is used. There is no rear stabilizer bar.

You have a choice of red-stripe NF nylon tires or whitewalls to go on the 6-inch rims. (By all means, take the red-stripes—they're far more suited to a car like this.) The rear axle has a sturdier differential carrier with a larger 8.875-inch-diameter ring gear to take the extra torque of the 396 engine.

There are only two engines available for the SS: the standard 325-hp 396 and the test car's optional 396 with a higher-lift, longer-duration cam that puts out 360 hp. Transmissions start with a heavy-duty 3-speed and go on to optional street and close-ratio 4-speeds, plus a water-cooled Powerglide.

Standard axle ratio for the base en-

gine is 3.31, with 3.55, 3.73, and 4.10 as options. The 3.73 ratio is standard with the 360-hp engine and 3-speed, street 4-speed, or Powerglide, with the other listed ratios optional. When the close-ratio 4-speed is ordered, 3.31, 3.55, 4.10, 4.56, or 4.88 can be specified. The last three come with Positraction limited-slip differential standard, and it can be ordered with the others.

The nice thing about the SS is that there are very few package deals on accessories. You can choose pretty much what you please, according to your taste or the money you have to spend. While we feel the test car certainly was reasonably priced with all the options it had, several hundred dollars can be pared off the price by foregoing some of the add-ons. If it came down to it, we might give up the console, but we would have to be pretty strapped to give up the buckets.

Our other test car, the Malibu Sport Coupe, had the buckets, too. In our opinion, they're just as desirable here as on the higher-performing SS. The Malibu and SS Coupes, except for trim and identification, share the same body. This includes the flat rear window, which affords some of the clearest, undistorted rearward vision we've experienced in a long time.

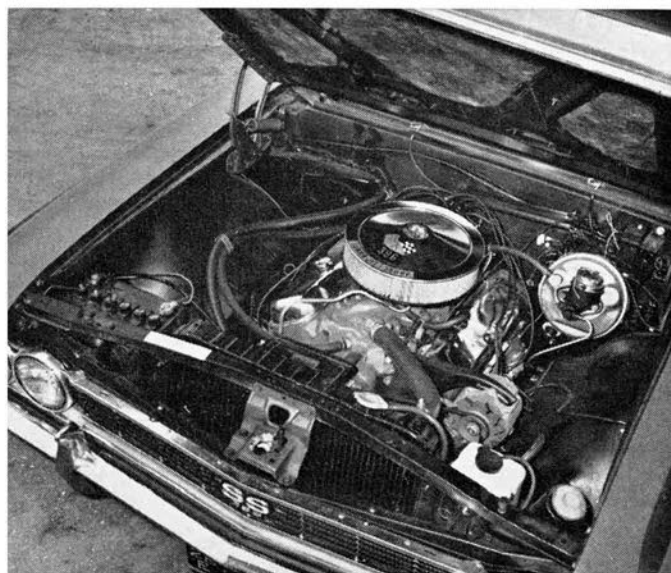
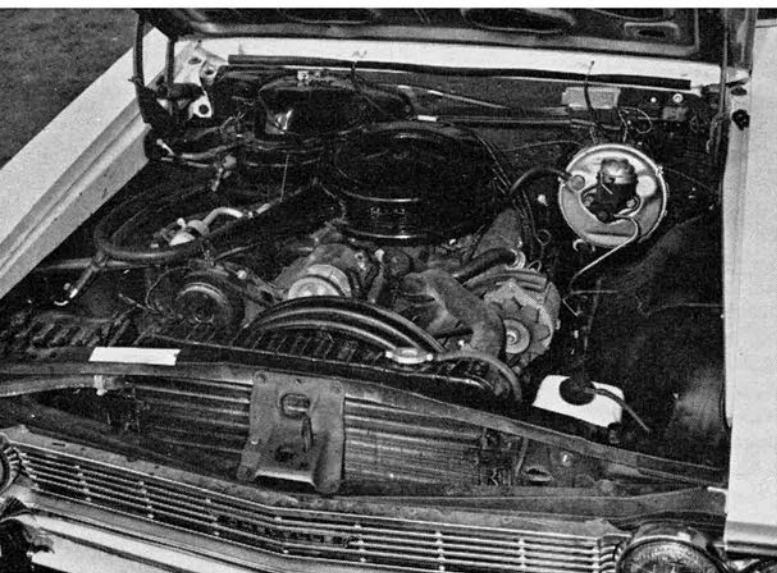
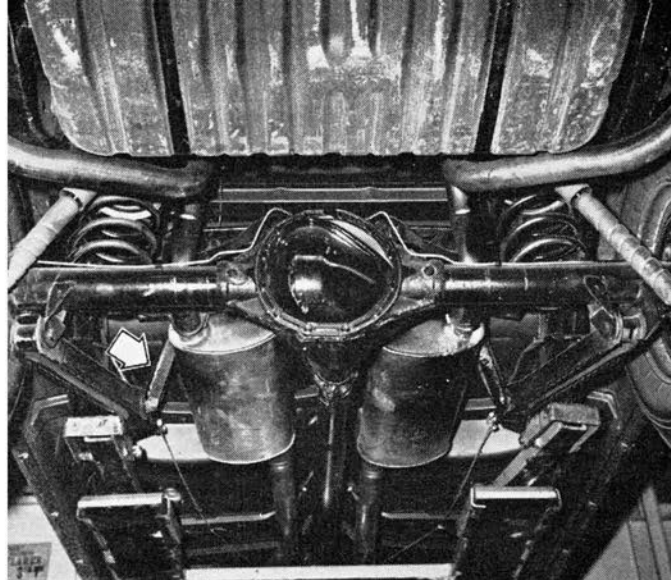
The Powerglide-equipped Malibu had an improperly adjusted throttle transmission/linkage as delivered. It upshifted at only 30 mph with the throttle wide open and wouldn't downshift until the car was brought to a halt. We got 18 mpg around town and a severe case of frustration driving it this way. After having it set up correctly, mileage dropped to just under 15, but our spirits rose considerably.

*continued on next page*

PHOTOS BY DARRYL NOREBERG, MOSES OLMOS



DISTINCTIVE TRIM AROUND WINDOWS AND LOWER BODY ADORNS SUPER SPORT ONLY. BLACK-PAINTED WHEEL WELLS EMPHASIZE FANCY COVERS.



(Top) Interior of SS shows separately optioned bucket seats and console. Scoops, visible through windshield, admit no air.

(Bottom) There's a 283 somewhere under there to move Malibu. Beefed-up accessory brackets mean less belt problems for 1966.

(Top) Super Sport gets a pair of frame reinforcement members between suspension tie-points. (Arrow points to left one.)

(Bottom) Big 360-hp 396 breathes through open-all-around air cleaner. Black grille with big emblem sets Super Sport apart.

#### CHEVELLES *continued*

The 195-hp 283 V-8 in our Malibu comes from the middle of a list of engines that includes two other V-8s and two 6s that range from 120 to 275 hp. This engine with the Powerglide transmission is by no stretch of the imagination a neck-snapper, but performance is entirely adequate for any normal need. This version of the tried-and-true 283 provides an excellent balance between performance and economy with ability to handle air conditioning and other power accessories. It also motors along happily on regular gasoline—an important but often overlooked money-saving feature.

Handling of the SS was, naturally, better than that of the Malibu, which is itself a well-mannered car. Contrary to what some who haven't tried it may think, the doctored suspension on the SS hardly takes anything away from the

ride. We took an extended trip in the SS that was mostly on highways but did include some rough stretches where construction was underway. It neither bores nor beats you to death. It's the kind of car in which you'll find yourself stopping only for food and gas, because it somehow never ceases to be a pleasure to slip behind the wheel and drive. Outstanding directional control and stability, reserve passing power, and the very comfortable bucket seats contribute to this feeling.

The speedometer tended to dispel some of our euphoria, though. About the only unequivocal reading is 60 mph, when the needle is straight up and coincides with both a mark and the numeral. Elsewhere they don't jibe, necessitating a lot of guesswork.

Once while buying gas for the Malibu, we were busily engaged in an attempt to decipher this druid sundial when a couple in an older Chevelle drove up.

Looking inside our car, the wife exclaimed, "What a beautiful instrument panel!" This is as perfect an example as you'd want to find of the triumph of art over reason.

When we were seated in the normal driving position, the tachometer on the SS, part of an optional instrument package, was obscured by a steering-wheel spoke. However, there's not much danger of over-revving, since the hydraulic lifters won't allow revs to rise much higher than 5400 rpm. Without the instrument package, the SS comes with a speedometer, gas gauge, and warning lamps for temperature, oil pressure, and alternator—same as other Chevelles.

The Malibu got between 13 and 18 mpg on regular for the test. Not surprisingly, the SS ranged between 10.4 and 14 on super-premium.

*John Ethridge*



Popular Malibu Sports Coupe, a sort of personalized Chevelle, is well balanced, handles very well with normal suspension.



More-than-adequate interior room with reduced overall dimensions and weight makes Chevelles comfortable, easy to drive.

## CHEVELLE SS 396

2-door, 5-passenger sport coupe

### ACCESSORY PRICE LIST

*Engine options: 360 hp	.....\$105.35
Automatic transmission	.....115.90
*4-speed transmission	.....105.35
Overdrive	.....—
Limited-slip differential	.....36.90
*Heavy-duty suspension	.....4.75
Whitewall tires	.....53.60
Disc brakes	.....—
*Power brakes	.....42.15
*Power steering	.....84.30
*Power windows	.....100.10
*Power seat	.....69.55
Radio AM	.....57.40
Radio AM/FM	.....157.00
Air conditioning	.....355.95
*Tinted glass	.....30.55
*Bucket seats	.....110.60
*Adjustable steering wheel	.....42.15
*Clock	.....79.00
(incl. w/spec. instr. pkg.)	.....—
*Tachometer	.....part of spec. instr. pkg.
Automatic headlight dimmer	.....—
Automatic speed regulator	.....76.40
*Vinyl roof cover	.....73.75
Head rests	.....52.70
*On test car	.....—
Dash (—) — Not offered	.....—

MANUFACTURER'S SUGGESTED LIST PRICE: \$2776  
(incl. taxes, safety equip't & PCV device)

## CHEVELLE MALIBU

2-door, 5-passenger sport coupe

### ACCESSORY PRICE LIST

Engine options: 140 hp	.....\$ 26.30
to 275 hp	.....92.70
*Automatic transmission	.....194.85
4-speed transmission	.....105.35
Overdrive	.....105.00
Limited-slip differential	.....36.85
*Heavy-duty suspension	.....4.70
*Whitewall tires	.....28.15
Disc brakes	.....—
*Power brakes	.....42.15
*Power steering	.....84.30
*Power windows	.....100.10
*Power seat	.....63.20
Radio AM	.....57.50
Radio AM/FM	.....157.00
Air conditioning	.....355.95
*Tinted glass	.....37.50
*Bucket seats	.....110.60
Adjustable steering wheel	.....42.15
*Clock	.....NA
Tachometer	.....47.40
Automatic headlight dimmer	.....—
Automatic speed regulator	.....76.40
Vinyl roof cover	.....73.75
Head rests	.....52.70
*On test car	.....—
Dash (—) — Not offered	.....—
NA — Information not available at presstime	.....—

PRICE OF CAR TESTED: \$3888.10 (incl. excise tax, delivery & get-ready charges, but not local tax & license)

MANUFACTURER'S WARRANTY: 24,000 miles and/or 24 months

### SPECIFICATIONS FROM MANUFACTURER

#### ENGINE IN TEST CAR: Ohv V-8

Bore and stroke: 4.09 x 3.76 ins.  
Displacement: 396 cu. ins.  
Advertised horsepower: 360 @ 5200 rpm  
Max. torque: 420 lbs.-ft. @ 3600 rpm  
Compression ratio: 10.25:1  
Carburetion: 1 4-bbl.

TRANSMISSION TYPE & FINAL DRIVE RATIO: 4-speed manual, all-synchromesh; single-disc diaphragm clutch. 3.31:1

SUSPENSION: Steel coil springs with direct, double-acting shocks at each wheel. Heavy-duty stabilizer bar optional

STEERING: Coaxial, recirculating ball-nut gear  
Turning diameter: 40.3 ft., curb to curb  
Turns lock to lock: 3.98

WHEELS: Short-spoke disc; steel

TIRES: 7.75 x 14 red-line tubeless, nylon

BRAKES: Duo-servo 4-wheel hydraulic; self-adjusting  
Diameter of drum: front, 9.5 ins.; rear, 9.5 ins.

#### SERVICE:

Type of fuel recommended: Premium  
Fuel capacity: 20 gals.

Oil capacity: 4 qts.; with filter, 5 qts.  
Shortest lubrication interval: 6000 mi.  
Oil- and filter-change interval: 6000 mi.

### BODY & FRAME: All-welded steel perimeter frame

Wheelbase: 115.0 ins.  
Track: front, 58.0 ins.; rear, 58.0 ins.  
Overall: length, 197.0 ins.; width, 75.0 ins.; height, 51.9 ins.  
Min. ground clearance: NA  
Usable trunk capacity: NA  
Curb weight: 3800 lbs.

### PERFORMANCE

#### ACCELERATION (2 aboard)

0-30 mph	.....3.2 secs.
0-45 mph	.....5.0 secs.
0-60 mph	.....7.9 secs.

#### TIME & DISTANCE TO ATTAIN PASSING SPEEDS

40-60 mph	.....3.8 secs., 278 ft.
50-70 mph	.....4.1 secs., 360 ft.

STANDING-START QUARTER-MILE: 15.5 secs. and 89 mph

#### BEST SPEEDS IN GEARS @ SHIFT POINTS

1st	.....35 mph @ 4000 rpm
2nd	.....49 mph @ 4000 rpm
3rd	.....63 mph @ 4000 rpm
4th	.....94 mph @ 4000 rpm

MPH PER 1000 RPM: 23 mph.

SPEEDOMETER ERROR AT 60 MPH: 10%

STOPPING DISTANCES: from 30 mph, 42 ft.; from 60 mph, 162 ft.

MANUFACTURER'S SUGGESTED LIST PRICE: \$2618.75  
(incl. taxes, safety equip't & PCV device)

PRICE OF CAR TESTED: \$3561.15 (incl. excise tax, delivery & get-ready charges, but not local tax & license)

MANUFACTURER'S WARRANTY: 24,000 miles and/or 24 months

### SPECIFICATIONS FROM MANUFACTURER

#### ENGINE IN TEST CAR: Ohv V-8

Bore and stroke: 3.875 x 3.00 ins.  
Displacement: 283 cu. ins.  
Advertised horsepower: 195 @ 4800 rpm  
Max. torque: 284 lbs.-ft. @ 2400 rpm  
Compression ratio: 9.25:1  
Carburetion: 1 2-bbl.

TRANSMISSION TYPE & FINAL DRIVE RATIO: Automatic, 2-speed torque-converter; Powerglide. 3.08:1

SUSPENSION: Steel coil springs at each wheel, with direct double-acting shocks

STEERING: Coaxial, recirculating ball-nut gear  
Turning diameter: 40.3 ft., curb to curb  
Turns lock to lock: 3.98

WHEELS: Short-spoke disc; steel

TIRES: 7.35 x 14 tubeless; rayon

BRAKES: Duo-servo 4-wheel hydraulic; self adjusting  
Diameter of drum: front, 9.5 ins.; rear, 9.5 ins.

#### SERVICE:

Type of fuel recommended: Regular

Fuel capacity: 20 gals  
Oil capacity: 4 qts.; with filter, 5 qts.  
Shortest lubrication interval: 6000 mi.  
Oil- and filter-change interval: 6000 mi.

### BODY & FRAME: All-welded perimeter frame, attached body

Wheelbase: 115.0 ins.  
Track: front, 58.0 ins.; rear, 58.0 ins.  
Overall: length, 197 ins.; width, 75.0 ins.; height, 51.9 ins.  
Min. ground clearance: NA  
Usable trunk capacity: NA  
Curb weight: 3540 lbs.

### PERFORMANCE

#### ACCELERATION (2 aboard)

0-30 mph	.....3.1 secs.
0-45 mph	.....7.0 secs.
0-60 mph	.....14 secs.

#### TIME & DISTANCE TO ATTAIN PASSING SPEEDS

40-60 mph	.....11.5 secs., 841 ft.
50-70 mph	.....9.5 secs., 559 ft.

STANDING-START QUARTER-MILE: 19.5 secs. and 75 mph

#### BEST SPEEDS IN GEARS @ SHIFT POINTS

1st	.....*NA
*Throttle control rod improperly adjusted. Car shifted manually at 4800 rpm for acceleration test	.....—

SPEEDOMETER ERROR AT 60 MPH: 1%

STOPPING DISTANCES: from 30 mph, 36 ft.; from 60 mph, 158 ft.