

DRIVING THE HOT '67s

CHEVELLE SS 396

... still the hot one to beat



Handling at speed is as easy and stable at 80-mph-plus as it is at 25 mph, thanks to standard equipment Wide-Oval tires.



Wrap-around tail lights are an added safety measure for '67. Special hubcaps and wheels with cooling vents proclaim disc brakes are on the car, but don't bother to say "front only." Fake hood scoops now look like a part of the car rather than the earlier "let's put it here" appearance. Front and rear overhang is minimal, and the ground clearance is exceptional.

TASTEFUL RESTYLING from the belt line down on the '67 SS 396 Chevelle has made the car look distinctively different, something not always accomplished in Chevrolet's annual, multi-million tooling expenditures. Wheelbase, overall length, width and height are not changed but the car does look all-new.

Front disc brakes are finally available for the SS 396 and we hope none of these heavyweights goes out the door without them. A car this size with the front end weight it carries, can ill afford to go without discs or at least the metallic linings that are also optional when the standard brakes are specified.

Another first for the SS 396 is the optional Turbo-Hydra-Matic that is offered for '67. This is the same 3-speed unit that has been used successfully on the 427 engines in the big Chevys for

the last year. A Powerglide transmission is also optional behind the 396 V-8, but from reactions of present owners of 396s with Powerglides, there are going to be a lot of them left on the shelf at the factory now that the Turbo can be ordered. Other transmission options for the SS 396 include a heavy-duty all-synchro 3-speed, and two 4-speeds — one a close ratio and the other wide. The standard gearbox is a 3-speed manual with all-synchro forward gears with a column-mounted selector.

Compared to the first SS 396 in '65, the handling of the '66 and '67 version is below par. Spring rates for the '67 SS 396 are 320 pounds per inch, same as in '65, and the rears at 130 pounds are 10 pounds greater. The big difference lies in the front stabilizer bar which is smaller this year and would contribute to the better handling of the '65. The

'67 version of the 396 includes quite a bit of beefing in the suspension area over its regular Chevelle counterparts, but it's still not the road-hugger that the original SS 396 was.

Engine ratings are down this year from '66. Initially two 396 V-8s were made available last year — a 325-hp and a 360-hp version. Later in the year, a 375-hp was added (the standard engine in '65s), giving a choice of three powerplants. This year, only two choices can be made, a 325-hp or a 350-hp engine. Compared to last year's 360, the 350-hp is the same engine but with a milder cam.

An ironic note to the engine story is that in the rest of the Chevelle line, a 325-hp, 327-cubic-inch V-8 is offered. Its rating is at almost the same rpm, but its torque is lower. Still, it would be interesting to see how well the smaller

engine, with its lighter weight, would fare against the big 325-hp, 396 V-8.

SS 396 emblems are emblazoned prominently on the outside of the car, and the scoops which appeared tacked onto the hood in '66 have found a more permanent-looking home on raised portions of the engine cover. The front grille work has been de-confused with simple horizontal bars, and the rear end features wrap-around tail lights, visible from the side as well as the rear. The spit-back-prone gas tank is still low and inside, behind the license plate.

In addition to the optional disc brakes available, a dual braking system with a failure warning light is standard on all Chevelles, and back-up lights, 4-way flashers, and lane-changing directional signals are among those items included as regular safety equipment.

Wide-Oval nylon tires are standard items on all '67 SS 396s, and these tires do much to put the new model to a reasonable approximation of previous handling capabilities. At over 100 mph, the Wide-Ovals still feel like they're biting the road as well as they did at 25 mph.

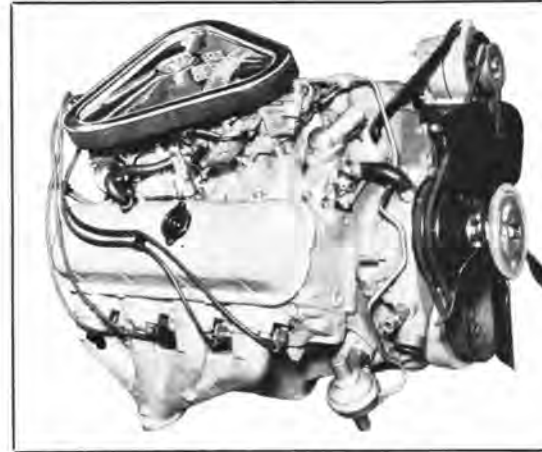
Inside of the SS 396, things are still about the same. The most significant change made was moving the tachometer from the right-knee-striking position below the steering wheel to a more eye-level position on the left side of the driver. Hung possum-like from the top rail of the dash, the driver can't miss seeing it. Because it blocked a portion of the instrument layout there, the indicator light for the left-turn signal is now in the bottom of the tach face. Ingenious, eh?

Pushing the '67 around the GM test track, we found it to be a fun car. It's good in simulated city traffic, having a fairly easy clutch pedal and good low-rpm engine response, but one really appreciates it on a long and curvy open stretch. Very little vibration and road noise filter into the passenger compartment, and while going through turns at fairly high speeds, the SS 396 felt sure-footed at all times. When needed, the optional disc brakes brought it to quick, straight-line stops. Even with Wide-Oval tires, wheelspin to an excess was noted in hard acceleration, pointing out the need for a set of good "slicks" if you're ever going to put the car on a drag strip.

While the '67 SS 396 lags behind the '65s and '66s in performance, it makes up for it in safer features, more comfortable boulevard driving, and a wider range of options. There is enough speed equipment on the market to make it outperform any of its predecessors, if that's what's desired. The SS 396 Chevelle still rates as one of the best all-round performers in the "hot car" field, and carries with it universal appeal for devotees of any car that smacks of performance and pure driving fun.



Sting Ray dash is unchanged for '67. Emergency brake lever is between seats.



3-sided air cleaner covers 3-in-a-row carb set-up option for Corvette 427 V-8 engine.



Massive scoop on 427 'Vettes needs only a touch of the coping saw to be functional.

STING RAY

... power's up, handling's better

THIS YEAR'S STING RAY is based on the '66 design and powerplant line-up, but a new triple-carb version of the 427-cubic-inch V-8 boosts horsepower to 435. The new 435 hp version with its 11.0-to-1 compression ratio can be recognized at the gas station where it will be tapping the super-super premium pump. Two other 427 displacement engines are offered: one has three carbs and 10.25-to-1 compression which lowers the horsepower to 400, and the other is an identical version of the 400-hp with only a single 4-barrel carb to rate it at 390 hp. The standard engine is a 300-hp, 327-cubic-inch V8. Optional 327 engine is rated at 350 hp, and can be ordered only with either a wide- or close-ratio

4-speed, depending on driver choice.

Only a close-ratio 4-speed can be ordered with the biggest 427 engine, and either a wide- or close-ratio 4-speed or a Powerglide can be ordered with the two smaller 427s. The standard Sting Ray engine can be optionally mated to a wide-spread 4-speed gearbox or a Powerglide.

Wide-Oval tires won't fit under the fiberglass fenderwells of the '67 Sting Ray, but Super Sports tires that have the same principle can be ordered. We remember how light the back end became on '66s without specialty tires, when a little extra power was called for in a turn. That's past history now with Super Sports tires as they stick like glue.