



Chevy wanted drivers to feel on cloud nine once behind the wheel of their comfy grand tourer. This Astro Blue SS example belongs to Tom Porzak of Hoffman Estates.

## The 1970 Monte Carlo SS

POWER AND POSH

AS THE 1960S CLOSED, Chevy had four-wheeled contenders in all the right places, except one: the ‘personal luxury car segment’. Ford’s cushy Thunderbird was flying high there, and Chevrolet wanted in. A design was drafted that was sure to send car shoppers swooning.

Christened the Monte Carlo, it was Chevy’s first new car whose name didn’t start with a “C”. Beside the fancy title, it also featured the longest hood of any car in the brand’s history—six feet from grille to cowl. The sculpted sides were ultra-smooth, and underneath were power disc brakes and big coil springs for floating down the road. The seats were stuffed with extra-thick foam cushions and on the dash was simulated wood burl accents.

The posh vehicle aimed to blend ‘action and elegance’ and to make good on that first part, an SS variant was optional. This included a rumbling 454ci V8, capable of enough tire-smoking grunt to ensure drivers would be suited in either a smoking or jean jacket for their nights on the town.

Chevy cocked back and, in the fall of 1969, let the model fly, only for it to dive and flop. After just mere days on the market, the plant responsible for over half of the model’s production shut down, thanks to a massive workers’ strike. Dealers couldn’t get even one in stock to use for test drives. Customer enthusiasm flickered out fast. During the Monte Carlo’s first five months of availability, sales averaged a mere four vehicles per dealer.

After resolving the strike, Chevrolet regrouped and relaunched the regal model at the 1970 Chicago Auto Show. Michigan State cheerleaders highlighted the car’s features through special routines and a custom animated exhibit lifted a car’s body off the chassis to reveal inside components.

The auto show reintroduction paid off handsomely, with Monte Carlos flying out of showrooms. At year’s end, Chevy couldn’t help but look like the canary-swallowing cat; they outsold Ford’s T-bird three-to-one and established the Monte as a top dog in the segment. 



A Monte Carlo on display at the 1970 Chicago Auto Show. Photo courtesy of the Chicago Automobile Trade Association.

### Collectible Insights

The Monte Carlo model ran clear through the early 2000s, but the SS option could only be had in 1970, '71, and then again in the mid-'80s, and from '00 to '07. Around 145,000 1970 Monte Carlos were sold, with less than 4,000 of them receiving the SS package. Hagerty Insurance values one in Concours condition at around \$50,000.



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