

1960 CHEVROLET Bel Air- Alameda, CA

Written by Double Dragon

Thursday, 26 March 2015 21:30 - Last Updated Thursday, 26 March 2015 22:24

1960 CHEVROLET Bel Air- Alameda, CA

oneownercollectorcar.com

Writing and photography copyright D. S. Brown



The Big Three domestic car manufacturers were heating up to a crescendo of sales and size as the US economy started to recover from a recession at the close of the 1950s. The 1960s saw massive growth and production. The full size Chevrolet had been enlarged to a 119 inch wheelbase and a length of 210 inches. That is a big car. Note that the remnants of 1950s style remains on the longer wider car with an upright tall roofline. The final ingredient for the classic 1960s style was lower. The 1960 Bel Air hadn't been through that final revision just yet.



The excessive rear fins had not yet faded out of the American scene at the start of the 1960s. Despite being longer and wider the busy design on this Bel Air doesn't broadcast the new dimensions. The jet age theme of the 1960s is evident with the arrow built into the rear door that carries to the rear of the car. Note the curved front glass. This was a styling gimmick that provided a more panoramic view due to the A pillar being bent back out of the sightline. Some owners didn't like the intrusion into the line of ingress and exit caused by the pulled back A pillar design. In a few years forward placed A pillars would return with designers pushing for slimmer

1960 CHEVROLET Bel Air- Alameda, CA

Written by Double Dragon

Thursday, 26 March 2015 21:30 - Last Updated Thursday, 26 March 2015 22:24

A pillars.



The side view of the Bel Air gives a feel for the huge size of the car which was becoming more streamlined and smooth now that the 1960s had arrived. The bunched up look of the 1950s was phasing out in stages. The tall profile of the 1950s came mostly from 2 things: the X frame that limited how close to the ground the occupants' feet could get and the intentionally high roofline. Men still wore hats when they went outdoors at this time and of course they kept their hats on in their cars. As the 1960s continued the rooflines came down significantly which encroached on headroom. The 1950s cars were more comfortable but the 1960s cars looked so good most consumers accepted the limited headroom.



This Bel Air has gigantic rear fins that instead of pointing up as fins did in the 1960s, they point outwards to create bat wings when viewed from behind. For 1961 the bat wing motif was preserved without the actual fins. By 1962 the gaudy chrome laden 1950s were truly over and the longer, lower, wider domestic cars were styled to emphasize these proportions. This Bel Air is caught between the 1950s and the 1960s but has more 1960s in its flatter longer profile than 1950s.



1960 CHEVROLET Bel Air- Alameda, CA

Written by Double Dragon

Thursday, 26 March 2015 21:30 - Last Updated Thursday, 26 March 2015 22:24

Many models were available to fill every need and budget. The number of full size variations available from Chevy indicates that the majority of people were buying a full size car. Some had to spend frugally and sit pat with a 6 cylinder engine and 3 on the tree manual shift. Others could afford a V8 and automatic transmission. Further up the food chain some people could afford to jump beyond the 283 V8 and drop in a 348 cubic inch V8. This 348 eventually became the source block used to create the famous 409 in 1961.



This Bel Air has an automatic transmission and an AM radio. The heavy duty trailer towing hitch in rear suggests the presence of the 348 engine. The exhaust exiting behind the driver's rear wheel seems to be a custom touch. Note the crossed flag insignia in the center of the hubcaps.



The blue interior tells us this was likely blue on the exterior originally. The body is decent for a car that has suffered the grind of traffic for 55 years. The driver's rear view mirror is missing, the front grille and bumper have been crunched and a few pieces of chrome trim are missing. There are nicks in the paint but in general the car seems like it is all there.

The Bel Air retains the original black California license plate on the rear and lacks a front plate.

1960 CHEVROLET Bel Air- Alameda, CA

Written by Double Dragon

Thursday, 26 March 2015 21:30 - Last Updated Thursday, 26 March 2015 22:24

The car is not that faded for a California car so we must assume the majority of its life was spent garaged or it has a repaint.

