

1965 CHEVROLET El Camino- Ron Ciraulo

Written by Double Dragon

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Ron Ciraulo has ended up owning several very cool cars that he never planned on. His Aunt willed him a very nice Cutlass S (also profiled in this section) and he ended up with this El Camino from his father in law's will.

Both cars are in keeping with Ron's personal style. He ordered a 1964 Chevrolet Impala as his first new car (profiled in the ONE OWNER section). The additions to his menagerie fit his taste in cars. I say cars, because that is what the El Camino is. Technically it is a truck which is how it is registered in USA, but let's face facts: it is built on a car chassis.

The El Camino owes its existence to the 1957 Ford Ranchero. The Ranchero was a very good idea: provide a pickup truck bed on a car chassis. If you liked the sleek styling of a car, enjoyed the comfortable ride and interior of a car but needed to haul stuff this hybrid vehicle was made to order.

Regular pickups in the 1950s were raised high off the ground to clear road obstructions. Heavy springs created a bouncy ride. The interior of a pickup was Spartan at best with the exception of the Chevy Cameo Carrier which offered car style comforts. Other manufacturers expanded the option list on their pickups in response to the Cameo but it wasn't until the Ranchero that a true

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car based pickup appeared in USA. People liked the Ranchero and Chevrolet had to match it.

Chevrolet's answer came in 1959 with the El Camino which lasted for two model years before vanishing again. El Camino means 'The Road'. The 1959 El Camino used the full sized Brookwood station wagon chassis and low level trim (Biscayne and Bel Air) throughout the car. Meanwhile Ford got the jump once again when the Ranchero switched to the small Falcon platform for 1960 and outsold the El Camino. To see a 1965 and a 1969 Ranchero look in the ALLEY FINDS section of this website.



In 1964 the El Camino re-appeared ready to fight the downsized Ranchero. The El Camino was now based on the new for 1964 Chevelle built on GM's intermediate 'A body' platform. The ONE OWNER section of this website provides background information on the development of the Chevelle in the story about David Dodd's 1968 Chevelle SS 396.

The El Camino used the Chevelle body from the doors forward, sharing interior and drive-train. Although smaller than the prior 1959-60 incarnation, the new El Camino still had a decent amount of hauling space. The size and style were popular enough for the El Camino to remain in production for two decades with 1987 being the final model year.

Since the El Camino was a new vehicle in 1964, GM left it alone as a carryover for 1965 except for minor tweaks of styling details. The 1964 Chevelle and El Camino were good looking and sized exactly right for most people, so there was no reason to tamper with the formula.

The OCCC 1965 El Camino VIN starts with 136805Z. The six digit sequential ending numbers

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are left out of this list for privacy reasons.

1= Chevrolet

36= Malibu

80= El Camino

5= 1965 model year

Z= Fremont, California factory

The cowl tag date code 12 A means the OCCC El Camino was built the first week of December, 1964. This dovetails with the low sequence number. Triple letter paint codes were only used on cowl tags from the Fremont factory. The first two Vs mean the upper and lower parts of the El Camino were painted Cameo Beige. The third 'V' indicates that the wheels were also painted Cameo Beige. Trim code 763 F indicates Light Fawn Ramada Cloth seats with Fawn interior trim.

The OCCC El Camino made good use of the bed for hauling during its first phase of ownership. Ron Ciraulo's father in law lived in Clearlake, California and commuted long distances to work with the El Camino. He also hauled quite a lot of stuff in that car on a regular basis.

The El Camino logged over 300,000 miles during its 18 year stint with the first owner. The passage of time wore out the original 283 and Powerglide two speed automatic. A 350 with TH350 replaced the tired original drive train.

When his father in law passed away in 1983, Ron inherited the El Camino. At this point it had already been repainted tan which didn't match the original color. It was in need of a repaint. The El Camino had logged so many miles that most parts were replaced or altered already, so Ron had no compunctions about changing the car. He painted it white. When the exhaust was due, Ron switched to headers, duals and Flowmasters. Cragar SS mag wheels and new tires were other 'Day Two' items Ron added to the car.

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