

## 1964 CHEVROLET Impala- Ron Ciraulo

Written by Double Dragon

Monday, 29 October 2012 10:02 - Last Updated Friday, 22 July 2016 08:39

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Ron Ciraulo is a car guy. All of his cars are in 'Day Two' condition, some of which can be seen in the ONE FAMILY section of this website. Ron's 1964 Impala has served many purposes over its life from family hauler to musclecar cruiser. It has been painted various colors and has survived several thefts over the years.

We don't have many photos of the Impala because it was boxed in between a fence and the side of a house with light filtering through tree branches making it rather hard to see properly. Luckily for us, POPULAR SCIENCE took a nice picture of a 1964 Impala painted the same shade that is currently on Ron's car. See the picture a few paragraphs below.

Ron has his Impala wedged into an awkward spot for some good reasons. The Impala has been stolen three times and there won't be a fourth time. Aside from security, Ron and his sons have so many cool cars that space for parking at their own house was long ago used up. The cars are scattered about in rental spots. Having too many cars has its price, but also rewards. Ron likes to have his choice of several cars when he wants to take a classic out for a ride. He's not so thrilled about the extrication process!

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Ron didn't set out to own many cars, and in fact this Impala was his only new car. Ron was born May 31, 1935 and grew up in San Francisco. He graduated from Santa Clara University with a BS in Engineering which led to work with the State of California as a Civil Engineer. Ron was 28 years old and a newly married man with a stable job in the fall of 1963. Ron's mother, Mary had some car advice for him. Instead of harping about buying some low priced economical practical used car she urged him to get a brand new car!

"You should start out your new life with a new car."

Ron wasn't going to argue with that logic. Mothers are famous for pushing the freshly married son towards station wagons or four door sedans. Not Ron's mother,

"You should get a two door. If you have kids, they can't accidentally open a back door and get out."

Why didn't all those car guys back in the 1960s come up with this creative rationale for buying a brand new hot two door hardtop? Ron acted upon his mother's suggestions before someone wised up. Ron chose Stewart Chevrolet based on a positive experience at the dealership earlier in the year. When Ron's wife Marie Lucille had a fender bender Stewart Chevrolet sourced a replacement fender and left a lasting impression of high quality facilities and staff. In 1963 Stewart Chevrolet was located on 3146 Mission Street close to Army Street in downtown San Francisco, California. For more information read the story filed under 'CALIFORNIA/SAN FRANCISCO Area' in the DEALERSHIPS section of this website.

Ron ordered a pretty hot car. The 1964 Chevrolet Impala is a full sized car with nice styling and a reasonably low curb weight for such a long, wide vehicle. The various configurations of the small block Chevy V8 provide ample power in this platform. The 1964 Impala was well on its way to becoming the best selling model of any car. Only six years earlier, the Impala started out as an option that added some extra glitz to the 1958 Chevrolet Bel Air. The Bel Air is the third and top step in the hierarchy of the full size Chevrolet. The Impala proved so popular that it became a separate series the following year as the highest trim level of the full size Chevrolets.

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The picture below of the 1964 Impala four door hardtop illustrates what the car looks like with the original high profile skinny bias ply tires and hubcaps. Ron's is a two door and has Day Two mag wheels which enhance the lines of the car. The structure behind the Impala in the POPULAR SCIENCE photograph is the framework for the GM building on the 1964 World's Fair site in New York. The shot was taken during the summer lead-in for the new car model release.



When Ron was looking at cars in 1963, the new 1964 model Chevelle V8 wasn't much lighter than the Impala two door hardtop sport coupe which amazingly only weighed 3,415 pounds in base V8 form. The 327 added some weight, but it was still a lightweight when you consider that the Impala rides on a 119 inch wheelbase and is 209.9 inches long. Ron decided to give himself the extra room offered in a full size car. This turned out to be a wise decision as he ended up having five kids over the next few years.

Ron explains that in fall of 1964 no one had heard much about the Pontiac GTO. The GTO was released under the radar and gained notoriety towards the start of 1964. By then Ron's car had already been ordered. In hindsight, Ron is happy with his choice. The Impala was a quick car with good weight distribution even if it isn't a killer fast car like the first year GTOs.

Ron knew he wasn't going to get a 409 past his wife or mother. He counted himself lucky that he managed to score a two door hardtop. But Ron wasn't going to sit pat with a standard six cylinder or even a 283. He ordered his Impala with the Turbo Fire 250 HP 327 four barrel, one of Chevy's truly great small blocks. In concession to his wife Marie Lucille, he had to order an automatic transmission. Back in 1963 GM didn't have their transmission act together the way Ford and Chrysler did. GM offered an old school two speed Powerglide. Ford and Chrysler had

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three speed automatics available which caused the street crowd to regard the Powerglide transmission with disdain. Ironically the Powerglide has earned a lot of respect over the years with drag racers.

Thinking of Marie Lucille again, Ron specified power steering but at that point he drew the line. He didn't want to sap his engine, so he passed on power brakes, A/C, rear defrost and any other weight adding power robbing options. To compensate for a lack of A/C, Ron ordered a tinted windshield. Ron took delivery December 14, 1963. Because he refrained from a lot of options the car went out the door for \$3,243.00 including tax and license fees.

When Ron took delivery of his new car it was painted a maroon color named Palomar Red Metallic. Sun and salt air took their toll causing a repaint in 1970. Ron repainted the Impala Canary Yellow. Interestingly, after a brief period as a yellow car Ron wanted to change the color. See the story on the 1970 Pontiac Acadian in the ONE FAMILY section of this website. That factory yellow car was also repainted a less visible color after a few years of ownership. Ron repainted the Impala Silver Blue Metallic. Eventually daily use forced the need for rust repair and another repaint. The Impala was repainted yet again, this time a dark blue.

The Impala covered a lot of miles in its first decade of life. The car was a daily driver for Ron's job at the City of San Francisco as well as being used for family outings. Every summer starting in 1967 Ron took the family to Yosemite for three weeks. Ron is an avid car guy and keeps the Impala in top form at all times. The good state of tune wrings out maximum performance, including mileage. The Impala posted a high of 19.9 MPG when highway cruising at 60 to 65 MPH. Ron tracked the car for a period of 4,000 miles of commuting including some open road mountain driving which netted 15 MPG. The Impala was fairly economical for a full size car of the time period.

As the Impala rolled into the 1980s the kids were of age to drive and each used the car for high school and college duty. The Impala logged enough miles to eventually become due for engine, trans and rear end rebuilding. The interior was thrashed; the body had started to rust. The entire car needed a redo.

The first repaint and rebuild followed a car theft. The Impala was stolen early in its life in the 1960s and again in 1971. The car was recovered quickly each time. The third time it was stolen in the 1980s the drive train was thrashed and it was in need of an alignment. Ron relates a funny story that indicates how many cars he had at the time. He raced out of the house to start

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combing the neighborhood for his car and called to Marie Lucille to call the police because,

"The Chevy was stolen".

Once Marie Lucille had the police on the line, she didn't know which of Ron's numerous cars had been stolen. Ron had forgotten that he had several Chevies at the time!

After the third theft Ron parked the Impala in a storage area awaiting a refresh. His youngest son Mike was enlisted to start the car and drive it forwards and back in a narrow lane where the car was stored. Mike was about 7 when he started the preservation routine with the Impala. By the time he was 13 Mike had convinced Ron that it was imperative that they get the Impala out of storage and back on the road.

Some basic rust issues were dealt with on rear quarters and blue paint was applied by a family friend. All the original chrome was in good shape and retained. A family friend who owned an upholstery shop redid the seats at this time. When the engine was rebuilt, ram's head Corvette exhaust manifolds and an open element air cleaner were added to the engine to provide some extra power.

Mike drove the car to college and avoided any mishaps until one day he didn't give the wheel enough turns when negotiating out of the tight underground parking garage. The passenger rear chrome got snagged and pulled off the fender. Rising gas prices combined with his purchase of a 1972 GTO took Mike away from the Impala. Ron keeps it fired up but doesn't drive too much due to cataracts.

Ron now keeps the Impala in a narrow space between a house and its property line. It's boxed in by several cars which solved the theft problem. The downside is that Ron rarely drives it. He does keep it in regular use, but not to the extent he used to drive it.

Ron's car taste has rubbed off on his sons who have amassed an impressive list of classic muscle cars over the years. Check out son John's 1970 GTO in the TWENTY YEARS PLUS section and son Mike's 1972 GTO in the ALLEY FINDS section. Several of Ron's cars were

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inherited from family members. You can see his 1965 El Camino and his 1969 Cutlass S in the ONE FAMILY section of this website. Ron's collection contains nothing but nice classic two doors. Ron's mother was really onto something all those years ago when she urged him to buy a nice new two door!

A recent sad update to this story: I'm sorry to report that Ron died September 29, 2012. Ron was very gregarious with a terrific personality and will be missed by his family and anyone who had the pleasure to meet him.