



John and Marilyn's 57

As many other club members, my first cars were Chevys, a 51 sedan when I turned 16, followed by a turquoise and white 57 hardtop. I then bought a 57 all Inca Silver 57 hardtop. I had many good times in those 57's going to school in Richland. I got back into old cars when I inherited my grandmother's 50 coupe.

However, when I saw the white and silver 57 for sale in Richland while visiting, I had to buy it. I soon replaced the 327, which went bad on a trip back from Richland. This started a restoration that is still in progress today.

We have taken it on a number of events, such as Northwest Meets, Hot August Nights, and with the Ziegler's back to the Nashville meet in 1991. As John mentioned, it was not a trouble free trip, but it was memorable and even enjoyable. I have thought about modifying it, but it's a tough decision because it appears that the majority of 57's are either total show cars or hot rods.

For those who like numbers, GM made 166,426 Bel Air Sport Coupes. Total model year production was 1,515,177, a little more or less than Ford in 1957, depending if you are talking model or calendar year. The engine is a 220 horse powerpack engine and the automatic is a powerglide. Too bad it doesn't have the 283 horse fuel injection engine

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more on next page



1957 Bel Air *provided by Ana Maria Haley*

If any single car defines the Fifties, it has to be the crisply face-lifted '57 Chevy, led by the top of the line Bel Air. What's hard to believe is that so many shoppers shunned Chevrolets back then, turning instead to restyled Fords. Chevy trailed Ford in model-year output by 170,000 cars, as Plymouth rose to number three. Not until years later was the '57 recognized by many as the sharpest Chevy of the decade, best looking of the 55-57 classic era, if not the make's full life span, as well as an engineering marvel. Sure, the basic design was getting a little dated, but masterful reworking cleverly concealed the car origins, making it look almost brand new. Riding new 14 inch rubber, Chevrolets stood 2.5 inches longer and 1.5 inches lower. Twin lance-shaped wind splits down the hood substituted for the customary ornament. Modest, if sharp, fins brought up the rear, a mere hint of things to come. Bel Air came in seven models, wearing anodized aluminum trim panels on their rear body sides. In pastel shades, such as turquoise and white, a '57 convertible or Sport Coupe is enough to send shivers through many an enthusiastic today, especially when it's loaded with factory extras. Nomad again was the costliest Bel Air, with just 6103 built, far below the 166,426 Sport Coupes and 47,652 ragtops. For every Nomad, more than four times as many Bel Air Townsman four door wagons were purchased. The best selling Bel Air was a practical pillared four door sedan.

Under the hood, customer could get anything from the long-lived six or 265 cid V-8, to half a dozen interpretations of the enlarged 283 cid engine. Some Bel Airs even carried fuel injected V-8s, on loan from Corvette and whipping up as much as 283 horsepower, one horse power per cubic inch, in an ordinary passenger car from the low priced three. It seemed only fitting that Ed Cole, who'd been responsible for the original V-8 and its offshoots, now served as Chevrolet's general manager. The Bel Air convertible found more than 47,000 buyers, a good figure for a car costing \$2,511.

From the "Chevrolet, complete history" (Consumers Guide)