

Torque Tube

A members' forum for Chevrolet anecdotes - or other random topics. Contributions welcome!

Universal acclaim for the 1930 "Universal" Chevrolet

Recent "Torque Tube" talk focused on the 1929 Chevrolet; now that 2020 has dawned, meaning that 1930 Chevrolets will turn 90 this year, it seems logical to move on a year and pay tribute to the "Universal" AD Chevrolet early in its anniversary year. Where better to start than a reference to Doug Bell's book "Cast Iron Wonder" – Chevrolet's Fabulous Six, published in 1961 by Floyd Clymer Publications, Los Angeles, California 90004. Most early members will have a copy, which was invaluable for learning to distinguish different Chevrolet models between 1929 and 1953. For those who came in later, where better to appreciate the 1930 models than to look at Ian & Nola Herse's two restored beauties (roadster and sedan), Michael & Jodi Ferguson's tourer or Geoff and Barbara Clegg's roadster!

Doug Bell points out that while superficially identical to the previous year, careful examination of a 1930 Chevrolet will reveal the smaller 19" wheels (often wire-spoked) and the revised dashboard layout, with four separate circular instruments including a fuel gauge for the first time. Not so visible are the Tryon spring shackles, cable-operated brakes, enclosed rear brakes and differential improvements including heavier axle shafts. Single-acting hydraulic shock absorbers became standard equipment. Just one year old, but the "Cast Iron Wonder" 6-cylinder Chevrolet engine was already improved for the release of the 1930 model with a slightly heavier crankshaft, larger intake valves, smaller exhaust valves, giving a smoother and livelier engine with a 4HP increase – up to 50HP.

From the National Library of Australia's 'Trove' website comes a glowing press report printed in the "Townsville Daily Bulletin" for 18th June 1930. In part it reads " With the introduction of the 1930 Chevrolet on May 1st, although no radical changes have taken place in the fundamentals, the refinements which have been incorporated in the new model provide a product which is definitely outstanding in relation to its competitors in value and performance. Last year, when Chevrolet made the announcement of a six cylinder car in the price range of the four, the car won immediate popularity and over 1,300,000 were delivered in 1929 – a record never equaled or approached by a similar car."

"To capitalize on this satisfaction, numerous refinements in comfort, appearance and suitability for Queensland conditions are shown in the 1930 model. The engine has been made smoother and quieter by the use of lighter bronze bushed pistons and an improved carburetor and manifold. A special combustion chamber gives high compression from ordinary fuel and horsepower is up to 50HP at 2,600 r.p.m. An easier clutch action, new self-adjusting spring shackles and new enclosed water-tight brakes are further improvements. A new instrument panel includes an improved motor temperature indicator and fuel gauge. The recent Chevrolet Six Petrol Consumption Contest held in Queensland and Victoria furnishes concrete evidence of the economical performance of the Chevrolet Six ... up to 29.75 m.p.g."

“A full range of the new models is on display and ‘Auto Sales and Service Ltd’ issue a cordial invitation to the general public to ride in or drive the new 1930 Chevrolet. Cars on display daily and in addition the show rooms will be kept open every evening this week.”

Past pages of “The Royal Mail” are also a depository of interesting bits of Chevrolet history. The March 1995 issue has a copy of another 1930 press report entitled “Improved Chevrolet Announced – many new features” which cites Mr W. E. Hill, Manager of the Adelaide Branch of General Motors (Australia) Pty Ltd. Mr Hill gives similar information to that in the “Townsville Daily Bulletin” above, but does offer further explanation of the petrol consumption test: “Mr Hill declared that the Chevrolet offered unusual economy. Hundreds of owners in carefully supervised petrol consumption contests in various States had obtained big mileage to the gallon. In these contests 454 Chevrolet Six motor cars, all body styles, and driven under ordinary driving conditions, returned an average of 29.75 miles to the gallon. A number of owner-drivers showed performances of 38, 39 and 40 miles per gallon.”

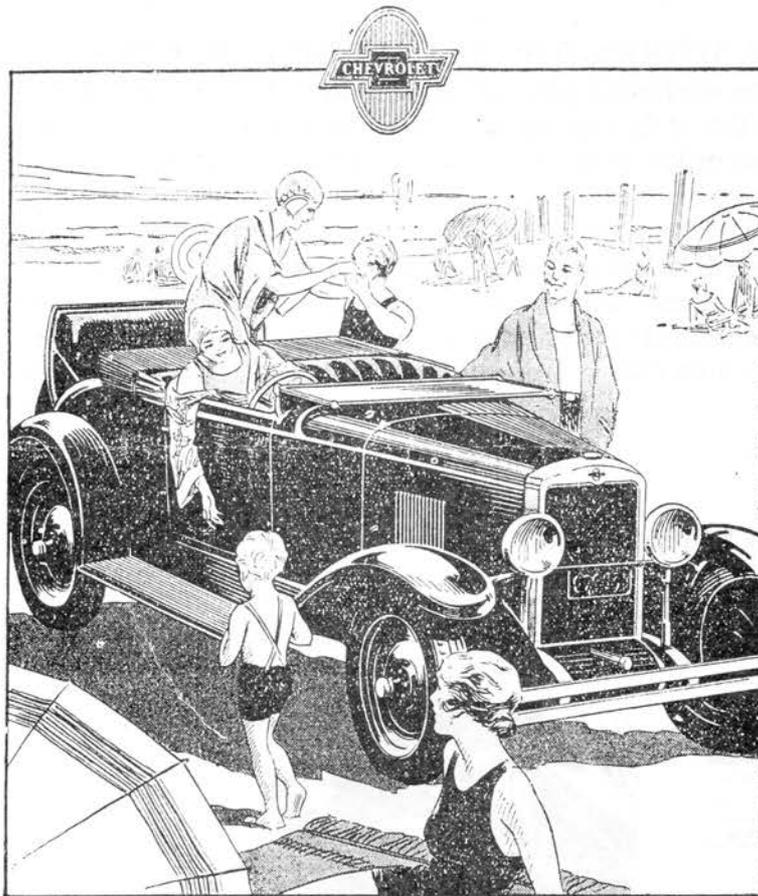
“The Chevrolet Six is available in two series” - continued Mr Hill - “the Suburban series and the Club series, with seven body styles. The advancement in modern design and craftsmanship is clearly shown in the all-Australian body work. All models conform to latest style developments, and all are comfortable and generously proportioned for ample accommodation.”

The article is accompanied by an illustration of the Club Sedan, with wire wheels and rear-mounted spare; also visible is the distinctive oval rear window that is unique to the Holden bodies made in Adelaide.

Another archived item, from the April 2001 issue of “The Royal Mail”, is reprinted on the next page, showing an advertisement for a 1930 Chevrolet roadster from the Tasmanian distributor “Motors Pty Ltd.” But some 1930 Chevs retained wood-spoked wheels, as shown by this unrestored example hibernating in a shed in Mt Morgan in early 1972 by Ron Daw and Bryan Cantrell.



That brings to a close this tribute to the 1930 Chevrolet. The quaint style of English expression in the press reports reflects a less-hurried age gone by, yet has a certain vintage charm we may still enjoy reading.



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Tail Light Page

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