1967 CHEVROLET IMPALA SS 427
Full-Size Performance

Carol Duckworth, courtesy of Mecum Auctions

Ford, Mercury, Chrysler and Pontiac all offered full-size performance cars. But the SS 427 had something they didn't: the heart of a Corvette

VIN: 168877U126126

by Tom Glatch

- 427-ci engine
- 4-speed transmission
- 12-bolt rear end
- Power steering
- Power brakes
- Dual exhaust
- Detailed engine compartment
- Royal Plum with black vinyl top
- Black bucket seat interior
- Console
- Factory gauges
- Rally wheels
- Redline tires
- Owner's manual

ACC Analysis *This car, Lot T198, sold for $50,300, including buyer's premium, at Mecum's Kissimmee, FL, auction on January 22, 2015.*

The 1967 Chevrolet Impala SS 427 takes living large to a whole new level. At just under 18 feet long, it will barely fit in a contemporary garage. Its gracefully sweeping fastback roof must have set some kind of record for its length. Even under the hood, the massive 427 big-block V8 seems lost. This is not your typical American performance car by any means, and cars of this size are not for everybody. But the Impala SS 427 was hardly unique for its time.

Bigger is better

As strange as the concept of a full-size performance car may seem, most manufacturers offered one in the mid-to-late-'60s. Ford offered its big Galaxie in "7-Litre" form, with most propelled by the powerful 428 V8 and some fitted with the full-race R-code 427 "Side-Oiler." Mercury had the same complement of powerplants in its Monterey models. Chrysler never succumbed to installing a Hemi in the full-sized Plymouth Fury or Dodge Monaco, but some of the same 440 engines found in Mopar's muscle cars were available. And at GM's performance division, Pontiac's giant Bonneville and pre-1969 Grand Prix were as large as Impalas, and many were powered by the 428 V8s that GTO and Firebird owners wished they could have had from the factory. All of these decidedly masculine coupes were perfect for the family man who still needed that big V8 kick. None of them, though, had the heart of a Corvette.

The Super Sports

The Chevrolet Super Sport concept that became so popular on Camaros, Chevelles and Novas in the later '60s actually got its start as a trim package on the '61 Impala. Impala Super Sport models could be ordered with the 409 big block in '61, the Mark IV 396 in early 1965, and the 427 starting in 1966. These cars were at the top of the Chevrolet passenger-car pecking order, offering space, style and plenty of performance.

While the 427 engine was available in Chevrolet's 1966 lineup, the SS 427, offered as its own model under the RPO Z24, was all-new for 1967. The 1967 brochure proclaimed: "SS 427 — for the man who would buy a sports car if it had this much room." Indeed, this car had room to spare. Five could sit very

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comfortably in the expansive interior, and the trunk looked like it could swallow a VW Beetle whole.

But the real magic was under the hood, where a version of the Corvette's L36 was the heart of the SS 427 package. Rated at 385 horsepower, it produced just five fewer ponies than it did in the Corvette. As 427 Chevy engines go, it's as mild as any to come out of the Tonawanda engine plant. But its 460 lb-ft of torque propelled the beast impressively.

"Here is a Chevrolet with the most advanced mobile creature comforts currently available in combination with performance which was, until very recently, reserved for drag strip specials," wrote Car Life magazine in its December 1967 issue. "It may well be the ultimate average car — the status symbol for Everyman — at least for the duration of 1967."

They found the "ride was good, handling fair to good, braking barely passable, and the acceleration/speed exciting." They saw 0–60 in 8.4 seconds, and the quarter mile in 15.75 seconds — amazing for a 4,280-pound projectile. Of course, they also saw 9.5 mpg, but with premium gas at around 27 cents a gallon, who cared?

Rare then, rare now

At a price of over $5,000 new — about as much as a 390-hp Corvette — the Impala SS 427 was never a big seller. Just 2,124 were sold in 1967, with another 1,778 in '68. 1969 was the end of the road for the SS 427, and buyers responded by ordering 2,455 of them. In a company as high-volume as Chevrolet, the SS 427 was a surprisingly small player, but among those who have owned them, they've earned a very devoted following.

Of course, Chevrolet could have installed any of the higher-output Corvette engines in the SS 427, as big-block engine dimensions are the same across the board. But in the hierarchy of Chevrolet, the Corvette always stood above all other models as the true flagship of not only Chevrolet, but all of GM. This was an edict that came from the very top floor of the General Motors building, and associating the Corvette name with anything other than the real thing was absolutely forbidden.

I'm not aware of any dealer-installed upgrades from that era, either, like Yenko or Nickey did with Camaros and Chevelles. But somewhere in our feature car's history, a few modifications were made, including the addition of a later-model Demon Tri-Power induction setup. As good as the factory SS 427 was, more power makes this car a really impressive performer — and the view under the hood is priceless. Better yet, it's an easy swap back to stock, assuming the original intake and carb came with the car.

The right money

Barrett-Jackson sold an SS 427 in 2006 for $93k (ACC# 40568), but that was an anomaly likely due to a spirited bidding war. Most good SS 427 Impalas from any of the three years of production typically sell for around $50,000–$60,000. That's less than most '67 Corvettes but comparable to similar Camaro SS and Chevelle SS cars from that year.

Dressed in rare Royal Plum paint and Redlines, with those three deuces under the hood sucking air and fuel at a frightening rate, this is one desirable plus-size coupe. Someone is living large — really large — at about the right price. For the money spent here, both buyer and seller should be well pleased.

(Introductory description courtesy of Mecum Auctions.)

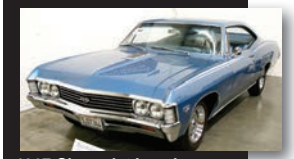
Detailing

Years produced: 1967–69
Number produced: 2,124 (1967)
Original list price: $4,906
Current ACC Valuation: $50,000–$65,000
Tune-up/major service: $150
Distributor cap: $22.58
VIN location: Plate on driver's side instrument panel behind windshield
Engine # location: Stamped on pad on passenger's side of engine block, ahead of cylinder head
Club: National Impala Association
More: www.nationalimpala.com
Alternatives: 1966 Ford Galaxie 7-Litre, 1967 Pontiac Bonneville 428, 1967 Mercury S-55
ACC Investment Grade: C

Comps

1967 Chevrolet Impala SS 427
Lot S684, VIN: 168877L166557
Condition: 2+
Sold at $51,700
Russo and Steele, Newport Beach, CA, 6/20/2014
ACC# 244407

1967 Chevrolet Impala SS 427
Lot S178, VIN: 168877L130736
Condition: 2-
Sold at $51,840
Mecum Auctions, Kissimmee, FL, 1/17/2014
ACC# 232401



1967 Chevrolet Impala SS 427
Lot 168, VIN: 168877J195096
Condition: 2+
Sold at $56,160
Bonhams, Portland, OR, 6/11/2011
ACC# 179571