

Chevrolet's flagship Impala for 2014 comes with handsome new styling, seating for five adults with the topline LTZ with V6 engine starting under \$40,000.



Impala is Canada's full-size success story

STORY & PHOTOS
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Earlier this year I briefly drove the 2014 Chevrolet Impala and said at that time I would book one long enough to really test its mettle.

There are several reasons for this, the first being it is built in Oshawa on GM's 'Flex' line which allows for Impalas, the Cadillac XTS and all manner of Camaros to come down the same assembly line.

I wanted to see if the Impala would feel 'right'; in other words soundly built. I know in this day and age computers rule out error, but when you see all those different cars rolling out (as

I did) I just had to find out for myself.

Another reason is quality. The good members of the CAW are building a car that is a cornerstone of the Chevrolet brand. Would their efforts be reflected in the final product?

Lastly, in a world of SUVs, CUVs and compact everything, is an unabashedly full-size sedan what people want?

Let's answer the last question first by saying many people desire full seating for five passengers but not a van or SUV. And if you check the road around you, you'll see the full-size sedan is still one of the main forms of transportation on the road.

As for the build quality and the people who put it all together, try this

simple test. Take two credit cards and run them along the gap between body panels or doors. If it flops around or pinches, it's a bad fit. If it glides smoothly, it's a good fit—and Impala passes with ease.

As an example of what Chevrolet builds into the Impala just in terms of noise, vibration and harshness (NVH), you will find acoustic windshield and side glass, triple sealed doors with an acoustic perimeter rain deflector, acoustic baffles between the inner and outer body panels, cavities filled with foam and sound deadener on the cargo floor.

Aiding all this is 12 per cent better aerodynamics through a number of things such as wind tunnel tuned side

mirrors and wind blockers in front of the tires. The four-cylinder models also gets under body panels and a shuttered radiator grille.

There are two engines offered and a six-speed automatic driving the front wheels. There is no plan for an all-wheel-drive version.

The topline engine is GM's ubiquitous 3.6-litre V6 with 305 hp and 264 lb/ft of torque. Also available is a new, 2.5-litre four-cylinder with 196 hp and 186 lb/ft of torque.

Fuel consumption rating for the V6 is 11.1/6.9/9.2L/100 km (25/41/31 mpg) city/highway/combined and 9.9/6.3/8.3L/100 km (29/45/34 mpg) for the 2.5-litre.

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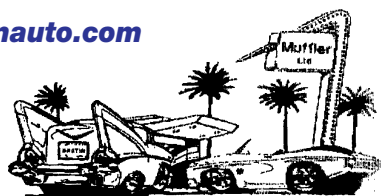
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