

## CLASSIC CORNER

### 1954 BUICK WILDCAT II CONCEPT



Meld a Corvette with Buick styling and you've got the Buick Wildcat II—one of the most outlandish concepts to emerge from the postwar era of futuristic and unrestrained “what if” show cars.

Like the Corvette, which went into production a year before its debut at the 1954 General Motors Motorama in New York City, the Wildcat II was a two-seat roadster wrapped in a curvaceous fiberglass body. In fact, it's not difficult to see the link between the Wildcat II and Chevy's innovative sports car—it looks pretty much like an early Corvette with a chrome-toothed Buick nose grafted to the front end.

Open front fenders and exposed headlamps were unique features, while hood portholes, a large, oval grille and

prominent, pointed bumper guards—known cheekily as Dagmars (look it up)—were pure Buick cues of the day. The car also featured a unique brake-cooling air scoop mounted on the front wheels. Power came from a 322-cubic-inch V-8 that breathed through four carburetors to produce 220 horsepower.

Although many show cars of the 1950s were scrapped after the spotlights on them were turned off, the Wildcat II survived. Its original blue finish was changed to tan and other details were altered over the years, but it was restored several years ago to its original appearance and is on display at the Alfred P. Sloan Museum in Flint, Mich.

## WINTER WARM-UP: SHOULD I LET MY VEHICLE WARM UP IN COLD WEATHER?



To most Canadian drivers, the ritual of letting their cars warm up a few minutes before driving is a time-honoured one. Although there's the comfort factor of getting into a warm vehicle for that drive to work, the practice has come under scrutiny in recent years for its environmental impact. That's because the advent of electronically controlled fuel injection has virtually eliminated the reasons drivers in decades past, so a prolonged warm-up basically wastes gas. However, that's not to say there aren't valid reasons for a brief warm-up in very cold weather – the most important being the circulation of oil throughout the engine.

In temperatures below freezing, oil can thicken up and flow more slowly, so it's important the engine is warmed up sufficiently to ensure normal oil circulation—and it doesn't take long. A good rule of thumb is the freezing mark: If it's above freezing, no warm-up is needed. If it's below freezing, a minute or two is fine. Beyond that, you're just wasting gas.

# TIME FOR A NEW BELT?

The timing belt is an essential component for the operation of your vehicle's engine, and it requires periodic replacement due to wear. Linked to and driven by the engine's crankshaft, the timing belt turns the camshaft(s) to open and close the intake and exhaust valves, keeping the engine running.

To be clear, we're not talking about the serpentine belt you can see when you open the hood and that drives items such as the alternator. The timing belt is located behind a sealed cover at the front of the engine and is not visible.

Because it's not replaced often, timing belt service is easy to overlook when your car is running well. Unfortunately, there are no warning signs or symptoms of a worn belt. It may simply break and the engine will stop running—whether you're in your driveway or on the freeway. With some types of engines, a broken timing belt could also cause severe internal engine damage that could require a major repair or even a new engine.

Your Owner's Manual will have mandatory replacement recommendations starting as early as 40,000 miles, depending on the make and model, but whether it's 65,000 kms, 80,000 kms or 160,000 kms, the recommended replacement intervals should be followed closely. The inconvenience and possibly greater cost—including engine repair—of a broken timing belt isn't worth the risk.

**ACDelco offers timing belts for most makes and models. Ask your ACDelco Professional Service Centre Program member to help check the replacement interval for your vehicle and schedule the service if it's due. Talk about perfect timing!**



## DID YOU KNOW?

As part of the four-cycle combustion process, a spark plug fires once for every four engine revolutions. That's 625 jolts of electricity generated every minute at 2500 rpm—at around 50,000 volts apiece! In a six-cylinder engine, that's 3,750 sparks per minute—or 225,000 sparks after only an hour on the road!

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## WHAT'S THAT DASH LIGHT?



You're driving down the road and all of a sudden a dash light illuminates showing an icon of a battery or the word "CHARGE."

### + What does it mean?

The battery has an insufficient charge to power the vehicle's electrical systems and accessories.

### + What action should be taken?

Immediately find a safe place to pull over. The battery charge will be depleted shortly and the vehicle will shut down.

### + So, the battery is bad?

Not necessarily. The problem is likely due to a bad alternator, which failed in its duty to charge the battery while the engine was running.

### + Will a jump-start help?

Not really. It will help for a few minutes, but because the alternator isn't charging the battery while the engine is running, the charge will be depleted again very quickly.

### + What's the fix?

Have the alternator inspected and likely replaced. Depending on where the alternator failed, it may require towing to your ACDelco Professional Service Centre Program member.

## MAKING THE GRADE

Vehicles are only as strong as the minds that take care of them, and as vehicles become more advanced, the training needed to build strong technicians must keep pace. That's why ACDelco is proud to play a role in supporting technicians across the country with online and in class training. With this training, we can help build stronger technicians who can diagnose the latest vehicles more quickly and repair them more accurately.

**Putting the tools, training and expertise in the right hands puts us all in a better position to succeed.**

**ACDelco**