

1971

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Consequently, attention shifted from subtle style change to engine modifications. Compression ratios were lowered to accommodate lower octane and unleaded fuels. 1971 was the last year for "gross" horsepower ratings because the industry was about to convert to a "net" rating system (the system remains applicable today) that took into account power bleed-off from a vehicle's exhaust system, vehicle accessories and other components to provide a truer measurement of an engine's performance. Therefore, in anticipation of Clean Air Act regulations, General Motors decreed that all its cars would be designed to run on lead-free gasoline with no more than a 91 octane rating.

Meanwhile a special big block, 454ci V-8 engine, designed to run on low-lead fuel and able to produce 425 horsepower, became available. It featured aluminum heads and could be used with an automatic transmission.

While the 1971 was the model with the least changes over the preceding year, it was last time a fiber-optics headlight monitoring system, introduced back in 1968, would be available. One minor cosmetic change to the car's exterior was amber parking light lenses.

Production, having resumed a normal cycle, went back on the upswing with 14,680 coupes and 7,121 convertibles manufactured.