



2012 Chevrolet Cruze Eco.

## Detroit Auto Scene® ROAD REPORT

### Cruze Compact is Big Fun

BY GERALD SCOTT

We spent a week in a 2012 Chevrolet Cruze Eco recently and is there a better drawing who'd thought we'd quote our overall driving experience as "big fun?"

Compact car, big fun. Indeed, perhaps that's the best way to describe the car, one with the now-rare manual transmission, which is how it achieves its remarkable 42 mpg highway fuel economy rating.

The sticker on the car listed it at 42 hwy/28 mpg city, and is there a better drawing card for buying a compact like the Cruze Eco these days than those numbers?

Indeed, the Cruze is generally selling like gangbusters in the U.S., but also around the world.

Most Cruzes are the base model, our test car happened to be the Cruze Eco, which achieves its hybrid-like highway fuel economy using a 1.4L Ecotec turbocharged engine, six-speed manual transmission and features that improve its aerodynamics, minimize weight and reduces rolling resistance.

(Cruze Eco is also available with an automatic transmission, rated at about 39 mpg highway, by the way).

The Cruze sells itself, so to speak, as GM's fun-to-drive compact segment car.

It's the only car in its segment with 10 standard air bags, including frontal driver and passenger air bags; roof rail-mounted head curtain side air bags that help protect the front and outboard rear seating positions; seat-mounted side-impact air bags (front and rear), and front knee air bags.

Other rather high-tech features on the car include a front passenger/seat occupant sensing system and rollover sensing and protection system; collapsible pedal assembly to help against lower-extremity injuries and StabiliTrak electronic stability control, traction control and antilock brakes.

As it happened, our test car came equipped with what is



Eco interior.

called the Aero Performance Package, a series of mostly exterior add-ons and supplements, all to jazz up the car without having to go to an aftermarket specialist.

The Aero kit includes lower front grille air shutter, mid-body aero panels and front fascia air dam. This all helps the Cruze to breeze through the atmosphere in a more aerodynamic way, adding to gas mileage and "fun factor" open-road driving all at the same time.

Arguably, for our \$21,560 out-the-door sticker price, the typical Cruze buyer seems to be getting the equivalent of a Chevrolet Malibu at Cruze prices. About the only sacrifice between the family car-sized Malibu and Cruze is the drop in front-back legroom, plus trunk space, but look at the price gain in return.

The car was blue granite metallic exterior color together with jet black interior, making for a very sporty, modern appearance package. The car had both OnStar and XM Satellite radio, giving the driver even more security.

#### 2012 CHEVY CRUZE ECO

- Base Price: \$19,325
- As Tested: \$21,560
- Engine: 1.4L Ecotec
- Mileage: 42 hwy/28 city
- Length: 181 in.
- Wheelbase: 105.7 in.
- Trans: 6-spd manual
- Rear Axle: 3.83 ratio
- Assembly: GM Lordstown

#### OPTIONS:

- Entertainment package including radio, AM/FM stereo with CD and MP3 playback, nav system with 7-inch color touchscreen display (\$995); Audio system/premium (\$445).

## Former Ford P.R. Guy Writes Chevy History Book

By Gerald Scott

An idea whose time has come has finally arrived – a thorough picture book about the 100-year anniversary of Chevrolet.

It's arriving about a year after Chevy celebrated its centennial (1911-2011), but presumably the auto industry would welcome such an endeavor all the same.

Written by local author Michael Davis, the photo history of Chevrolet has actually been written in two parts, with 1911-1960 having just been released, followed by 1961-2011 coming out in December.

Published by Arcadia Publishing, it's another in a series of those handy picture books that help capture local history and folklore in the way that concisely edited photographs only seem to do.

Davis, a former Ford public relations man who was on staff at Lincoln-Mercury in the early to mid-1960s, has earlier written a whole series of these picture books on different angles of Big Three history, so he seems reasonably well-suited to tackle Chevrolet.

"By 1960, Davis writes, it could be said that the auto industry – in which Chevrolet was the largest producer – accounted for one out of every seven jobs in America.

"I have never owned a Chevrolet or any other General Motors product. To top it off, I spent 25 years in public relations with Ford Motor Co., where General Motors was the enemy, the overwhelming competitor. The reader and Chevy enthusiast might well ask: what is a Ford guy doing with a book about Chevy history?"

Davis answers his own question with three explanations, including that Detroit is actually a "small town" with one industry with plenty of overlap among the Big Three.

He likens it to different branches of the armed forces. That, and after retiring from Ford, Davis branched out in his career and is respected around town and at the Automotive Press Association, as a top-notch writer, historian and journalist of note. Finally, he's published a whole series of these Arcadia history books, so who better, actually, than Mike Davis of Royal Oak?

For all of the attention that the Chevrolet centennial drew



1955 Corvettes on an under-construction Los Angeles freeway.

last year, this new book, "Chevrolet: 1911-1960," adds great value to all of the previous folklore. Author Davis was able to flesh out a number of pictures and anecdotes that many industry insiders, much less Chevrolet employees or retirees, probably haven't seen before.

Writes Davis: "By 1911, when Durant started Chevrolet, there were some 270 vehicle brands on the U.S. car market. Today, only four of those 270 American makes survive: Chevrolet, its sister-GM brands Buick and Cadillac, and Chevrolet's longtime archrival, Ford.

"Chevrolet's first 50 years were arguably its most successful. Chevrolet overcame Ford's production and sales leadership in the 1920s, expanding that dominance to the 1930s, then made important but little-heralded contributions to the Arsenal of Democracy in the 1940s and pioneered long-lasting product developments in the 1950s.

"In the final decade of its first 50 years, Chevy introduced new creature comforts such as automatic transmissions and power steering for the 'low-priced' market followed by the Corvette sports car and the small-block V8 that ultimately propelled Chevrolet from its traditional value image to street-and-track high performance for



GM Design VP Harley Earl, right, shows the finer points of a 1956 Custom Corvette to His Royal Highness, Prince Bertil of Sweden.

the muscle car era of its second 50 years."

Indeed, a good part of the book examines Chevrolet's roots and development in Flint, "Vehicle City," and all of the various Chevrolet car and truck facilities there at the beginning of the 20th century.

By the end of the 20th century, Flint had earned the title "Buick City," but before that, it was Chevrolet that held sway and helped sustain the town – especially during Chevrolet's first 50 years leading up to 1960.

Davis argues in the book, and in an interview, that 1960 represents a pivot point in both general automotive and Chevrolet history because that's when the market began

to branch off into so many niches, including pickup truck, sports car and, after 1964, the Mustang, the pony car market, too.

Says Davis, "Corvette is America's Sports Car – very different than the Ford Mustang. Lee Iacocca conceived the Mustang as a response to the Corvair Monza.

"(GM President) Ed Cole, the father of the Corvair, told me in an interview he wanted a Porsche-like car but the GM Board wanted a family sedan."

Davis will be signing his book at the Auto Zone in Birmingham from 1 to 5 on Thursday, Aug. 16, just ahead of this year's Woodward Dream Cruise.

## Supporters and Diehards Trying to Bring Back State Fair to Novi

NOVI, Mich. (AP) – Plans for reviving the state fair in Michigan include a circus as well as more traditional agricultural events, competitions and entertainment offerings, organizers have announced.

The Great Lakes State Fair will be held Aug. 31 to Sept. 3 at Suburban Collection Showplace in Novi. Organizers last week released more details of

the attractions, including Shrine Circus shows that are expected to include high wire performances, acrobatics, clowns and wild animal acts.

Kent Roberts, vice chairman of the Great Lakes State Fair Board, said in a statement that organizers are "delighted to bring back a state tradition" with modern updates. The event will include

livestock exhibits, education stations, product displays, rides, a beer garden and entertainment stages.

"We've created an exciting venue that builds upon the tradition of past fairs and packages it into a 21st century version focused on Michigan's rich agricultural and arts heritage," he said, adding that "the entire show will in-

clude mostly Michigan-made content, including all entertainment, exhibits and concessions."

The Michigan State Fair, which took place in Detroit, closed in 2009 because of a lack of funding.

In addition to having a different name and location, the new event isn't funded by the state in any way.

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See dealer for details. All payments are based on GM Employee pricing except where otherwise noted. 2012 Cruze and 2012 Equinox lease payments require 800+ credit score, and assume you have a NON-GM lease in the household. Other payments slightly higher. Down payment, first payment, tax, title, and plate due at signing. Offer expires 08/31/2012

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