



STRATO-STREAK STAR: 1955 PONTIAC FULL-LINE BROCHURE

by Daniel Strohl

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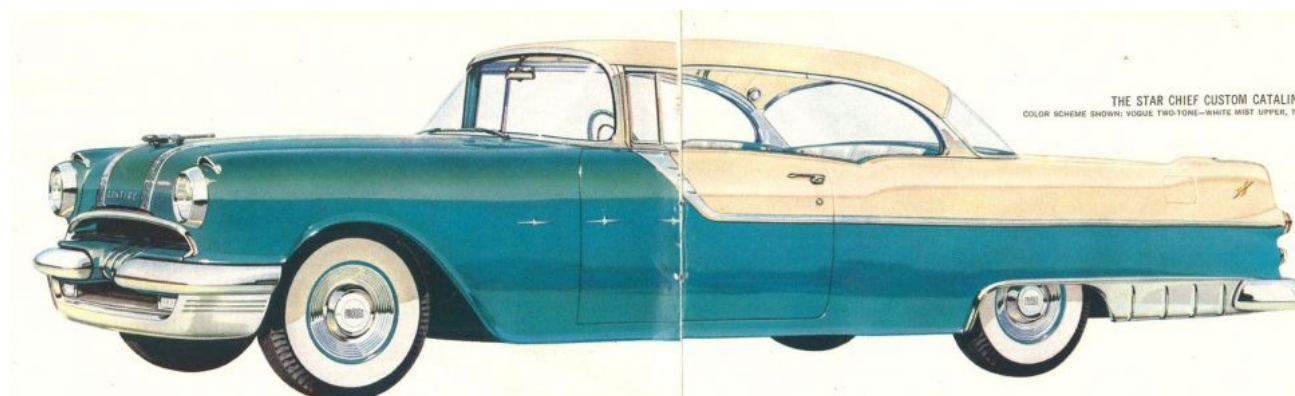
Images are from the brochure collection of Hemmings Motor News

The Pontiac division of General Motors has been gone for a decade, but even today, it is remembered for its 1960s persona of youth-oriented, reasonably priced performance. Before the advent of the game-changing GTO, Pontiac's image was more akin to a dressier-looking, better-equipped Chevrolet. But this brand was in transition in 1955, its biggest-production year to date with more than 554,000 units built. The 500,000th 1955 Pontiac was built on August 11 of that year.

As befitting its second-tier rank in the GM heirarchy, Pontiac cars ranged in cost from \$2,105 to \$2,962 (in 2019 dollars, that's roughly

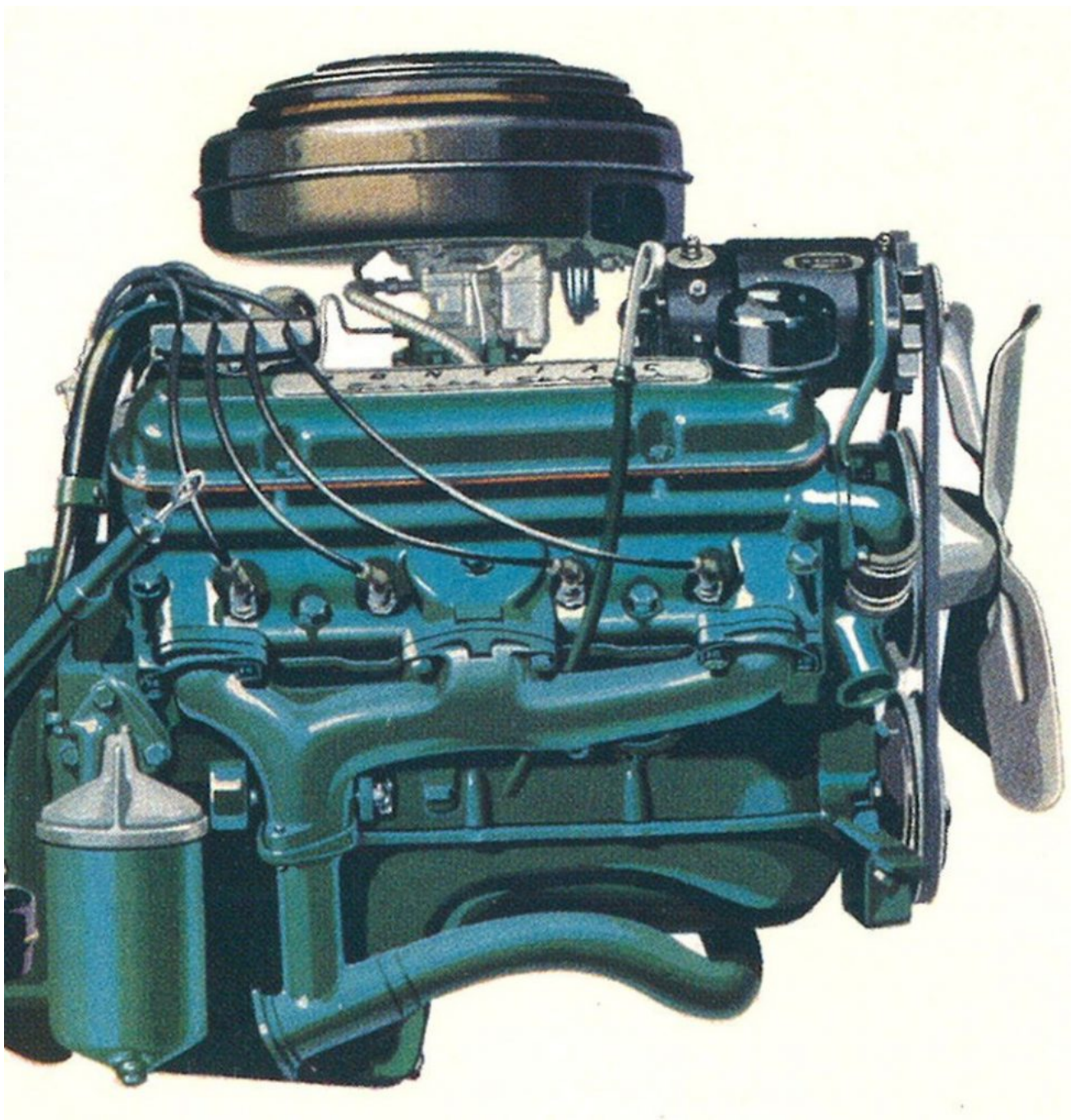
(\$2,297-\$3,276).

When this pocket-sized brochure was fresh on the rack at your friendly local Pontiac dealer, this GM division had just one year remaining to use its long-serving (21 years!) trademark “Silver Streaks” styling motif, which would disappear for the 1957 model year. More fresh were the new wrap-around windshield and wide range of available colors, inside and out.



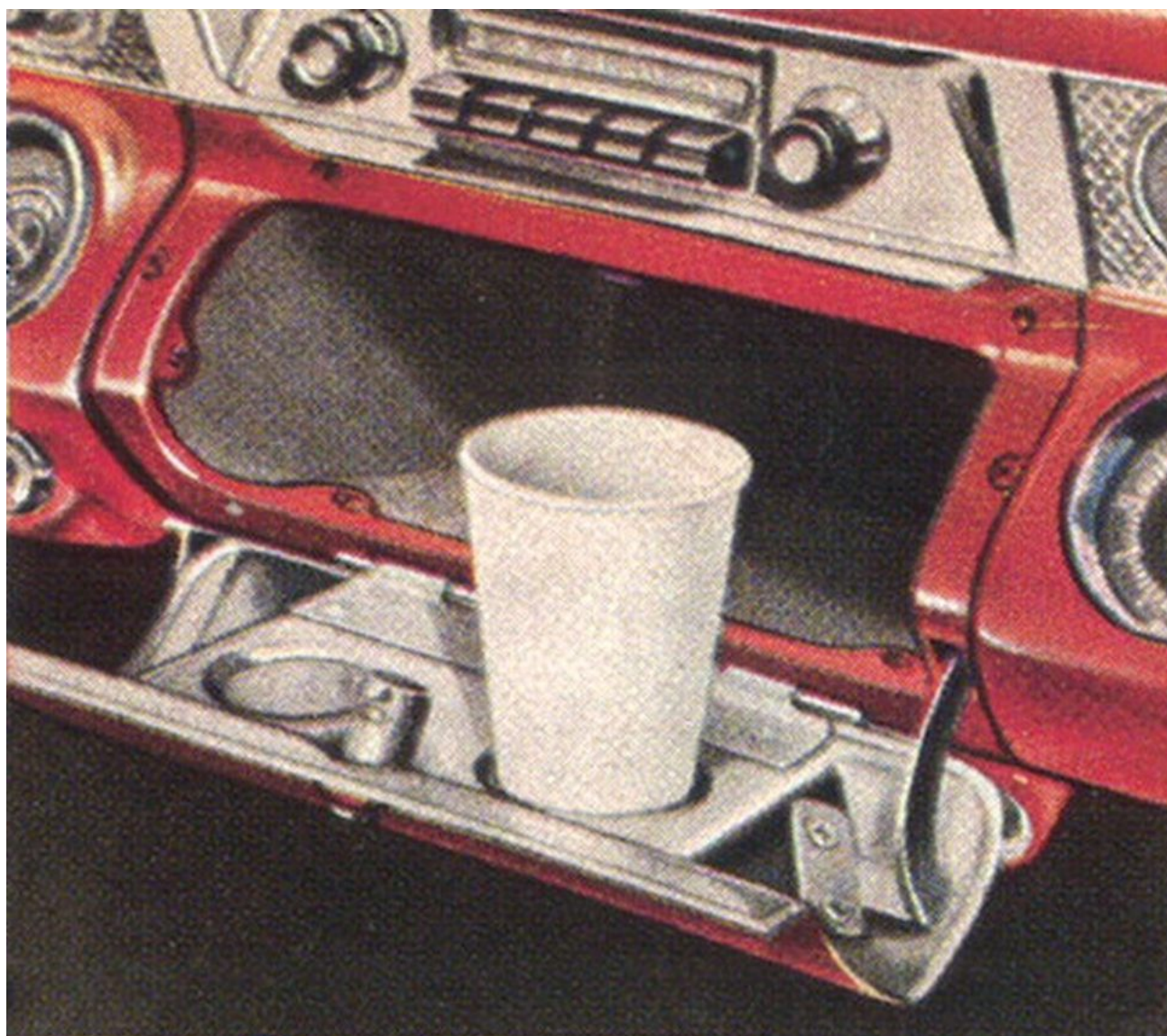
Those Streaks decorated the hoods of an expanded lineup of Chieftain 860, Chieftain 870, and Star Chief models, as well as the stylish, late-introduction Star Chief Custom Safari two-door wagon. The Chieftain 860 came in two-door sedan, four-door sedan, and two-door station wagon forms, while the 870 was available as a two-door sedan, four-door sedan, two-door De Luxe Catalina hardtop, and four-door station wagon. The Star Chief could be purchased as a four-door sedan or two-door convertible, while the Star Chief Custom was available as a four-door sedan and Catalina two-door hardtop. The biggest seller of all was the Star Chief Custom Catalina, which moved a surprising 99,929 units, while the least popular model was the pricey Safari (\$2,962; just 3,760 units were built).

long-serving flathead straight-six and straight-eights. This "Strato-Streak" engine – Pontiac's second-ever V-8 – out-muscled its predecessor to the tune of 173 hp/180 hp/200 hp (2-bbl. with manual transmission/with Hydra-Matic/4 bbl with Hydra-Matic), compared to the 1954 eight-cylinder top rating of 127 hp.



A newfound sense of style was evident inside these cars, too, with upgraded

engineers even gave these 1955 models something from the future: Cupholders! Well, sort of- there were shallow indentations inside the glovebox door intended to support a couple of beverages. Unlike the Cadillac Eldorado Brougham of 1957, they didn't come with magnetized stainless steel drinking cups, so they were better suited for drive-in dining than today's drinking while driving.



Do you have any mid-1950s Pontiac stories? If so, share them in the comments.



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