

Pontiac History:

1950-1958

The name Catalina was first used on the 1950 [Chieftain](#) Series 25/27 hardtop, Pontiac's top of the line model at the time. Originally referred to as 'hard-top convertibles', these vehicles offered pillarless design in the door and window areas, along with the top-grade convertible appointments. The advantage this fixed-roof design offered was its sporty, airy feeling without the expense and drawbacks normally associated with convertibles. With the exception of the 1958 [Bonneville](#), all Pontiac hardtops were designated Catalina from 1950 to 1958. Powered by a [flathead straight-8](#) engine at the time of its debut, it would receive Pontiac's new 287in³ OHV V8 four years later.

1959-1960

For **1959**, Pontiac dropped the name Chieftain for its entry level model and renamed it *Catalina*, while demoting the former top-line *Star Chief* to mid-line status and expanding the *Bonneville* nameplate to a full flagship series that included sedans, coupes, convertibles and *Safari* station wagons.

In the lower-priced Catalina line, Pontiac Division advertising placed higher emphasis on the top trimmed two and four door hardtops, convertible and *Safari* station wagons instead of the pillared two and four door sedan variants despite the fact that the four-door sedan was the bread-and-butter best seller in this line.

The Catalina, though it was the lowest-priced full-sized Pontiac, was still a substantial step up from the [Chevrolet Impala](#) in trim and appointments and only a short step below the [Buick LeSabre](#) and [Oldsmobile 88](#) in trim and appointments but priced about \$100 to \$200 less. Catalinas also came standard with more amenities than Chevrolet models and included a larger and more powerful V8 engine of 389 cubic inches, compared to the Chevy's six-cylinder or 283 cubic-inch V8. Pontiacs also benefited from a much better automatic transmission than their Chevrolet counterparts - the three or four-speed [Hydra-Matic](#) or [Turbo Hydramatic](#) - versus the Chevy's two-speed [Powerglide](#).

Though the basic Catalina was well equipped with features such as full carpeting, glovebox and trunk lights, dual front ashtrays, cigar lighter, glove compartment snack bar (two cup indents on the glovebox door that could be opened for use at drive-in restaurants), heater/defroster and a choice of cloth and Morrokide vinyl upholstery or expanded Morrokide (all-vinyl trim), Pontiac buyers could add even more trimmings for a few dollars more by ordering the Decor Group which added full wheel covers, deluxe steering wheel, chrome pedal trim plates and more. Also offered from 1962 to 1970 on most Catalina models was the Ventura custom interior (which was a separate model in 1960 to 1961), which included the interior and exterior upgrades offered with the extra-cost decor group option plus a slightly more luxurious interior of cloth or Morrokide trims similar to the costlier Pontiac Star Chief or Executive depending on year.

Catalina and other 1959 Pontiacs were completely restyled on a new General Motors B-body that was shared by all GM divisions from Chevrolet to Cadillac, replacing the previous A-body utilized for Pontiacs and Chevrolets through 1958. Styling highlights included thin-pillar rooflines and greater use of glass for increased visibility. Pillared four-door sedans featured six-window

styling, while two-door hardtops were dubbed the "bubbletop" due to the thin c-pillar and large rear window and four-door hardtops featured flat-blade rooflines with an overhang past the rear window. Wheelbases on all models remained at 122 inches, but overall length was 213.7 inches.

The 1959 Pontiacs featured a new styling trademark - the "split grille" which easily distinguish a Pontiac from any other car on the highway and has remained a Pontiac trademark to this day. Along with the wider body came a wider chassis in which the wheels were moved further out by five inches almost to fender level. This not only improved the appearance of the car, but Pontiac engineers discovered that pushing the wheels further out also led to vast improvements in ride and handling - hence the term "Wide Track" which Pontiac would use in its promotional efforts for many years to come.

All Pontiacs were powered by various renditions of the new 389 cubic-inch Trophy V8, which was basically a bored-out version of the 370 cubic-inch V8 used in 1958-model Pontiacs and based on the same Pontiac V8 design introduced in 1955. Catalinas came standard with a 235-horsepower version of the 389 with two-barrel carburetor and 8.6 to 1 compression mated to the three-speed manual transmission. When the optional four-speed Hydramatic transmission was ordered, the standard engine was 283-horsepower version of the same engine with higher 10.5 to 1 compression ratio. Available as a no-cost option with the Hydramatic transmission was the 215-horsepower 389 (dubbed the Economy V8) with 8.6 to 1 compression ratio which burned cheaper regular gasoline, instead of the premium and super-premium fuels required for the high-compression engines, and capable of achieving more than 20 MPG on the highway. Optionally available at extra cost were higher-power of the 389 V8 with four-barrel carburetion rated at 283 horsepower with stick shift or 303 with Hydramatic, or "Tri-Power" options with three two-barrel carburetors and horsepower ratings of 318 and 330.

For **1960**, Catalina and other Pontiacs received a minor facelift of the '59 bodyshell with a new full-width horizontal bar grille similar to the 1930s Cord replacing 1959's split grille (for this year only-the split grille returned in 1961) and round taillights. Bodystyles and drivetrain offerings were unchanged from 1959. New to the option list was a "Sportable Transistor" radio that could be used in the car in place of the regular "in-dash" radio or removed from the car for use as a portable with battery power. Also new for 1960 were the optional "eight lug" aluminum wheels with integral brake drums that not only enhanced the car's looks but also provided improved stopping power. Another popular option for performance enthusiasts was the "Safe-T-Track" limited slip differential. Inside, a revised instrument panel featured a new horizontal sweep speedometer along with minor changes in trim patterns.

1961-64

The **1961** full-sized Pontiacs were completely restyled with more squared-off bodylines, the reintroduction of the split grille first seen in 1959 and dropped for 1960 and an all-new Torque-Box perimeter frame with side rails replacing the "X" frame chassis used since 1958. The new frame not only provided greater side-impact protection than the "X" design but also improved interior roominess.

Rooflines were more squared off on four-door models with the six-window styling dropped on pillared sedans and wider C-pillars with flat rear windows on four-door hardtops. A revised version of the 1959-60 "bubbletop" roof was used on two-door hardtops. Wrap-around windshields were dropped in favor of flatter glass work for improved entry and exit to the front seat.

The new body was somewhat smaller and lighter than the 1960 model with wheelbase down three inches to '119, overall length reduced by the same to 210 inches and width dropping nearly two inches to 78.2 from 80 in 1960. Despite the reduced length and width, the wider track between the wheels was retained for outstanding ride and handling characteristics. The new '61 Pontiac was advertised as "On a New Wide Track."

All engines were again 389 cubic-inch V8s as in previous years. Standard engines were two-barrel units rated at 215 with the three-speed manual transmission or 267 with the optional Hydramatic, with a 230-horsepower regular-fuel economy V8 offered as a no-cost option with the Hydramatic. Offered as extra-cost options were more powerful versions of the 389 including a 303-horsepower version with four-barrel carburetor or 318-horsepower Tri-Power option with three two-barrel carburetors. New to the option list were two higher performance versions of the 389 V8 including a four-barrel 333 horsepower unit and a 348-horsepower Tri-Power option, both with higher 10.75 to 1 compression ratios.

A new three-speed Roto Hydramatic transmission replaced the previous four-speed unit for 1961. The new transmission was slimmer and lighter than the older four-speed Hydramatic, which was continued on the larger Star Chief and Bonneville models. Also new for 1961 was a four-speed manual transmission with Hurst floor shifter, available on special order.



1962 Pontiac Catalina

The **1962** Pontiacs received a heavy facelift of the 1961 design with more rounded body contours and new rooflines on two-door hardtops featuring convertible-like bows. Catalina sedans and coupes got a one-inch wheelbase increase to '120, after spending 1961 on a '119-inch spread shared with full-sized Chevys (Safari wagons retained the 119-inch wheelbase through 1964).

Most regular engine/transmission offerings were carried over from 1961 with the 389 cubic-inch Trophy V8 again ranging in horsepower ratings from 215 to 348. A small number of 1962 Catalinas and other Pontiacs were built with a "non-streetable" 421 cubic-inch Super Duty V8 with dual quads (two four-barrel carburetors) and 405 horsepower, along with various "over the counter" performance options offered by Pontiac including aluminum bumpers and even lighter frames with drilled holes (which were dubbed the "Swiss Cheese" frames).



1963 Pontiac Catalina

For **1963**, Catalinas and other full-sized Pontiacs featured cleaner, squared-off bodylines and vertical headlights flanking the split grille, but retained the same dimensions and basic bodyshell of 1961-62. Engine offerings were revised as the 333 and 348 horsepower versions of the 389 V8 were dropped in favor of "production" versions of the larger 421 cubic-inch V8 rated at 338 horsepower with four-barrel carburetor, 353 with Tri-Power or an "HO" version with Tri-Power rated at 370 horsepower. The 405-horsepower "Super Duty 421" was still offered to racing teams during the early portion of the model year but discontinued after General Motors ordered Pontiac (and Chevrolet) to "cease and desist" from factory-supported racing efforts in February, 1963. New options for 1963 included a tilt steering wheel that could be adjusted to six different positions, AM/FM radio and cruise control.



1964 Pontiac Catalina 2-door hardtop

Mild face lifting including new grilles and taillights highlighted the **1964** full-sized Pontiacs. Engine/transmission offerings were unchanged from 1963 except for a new GM-built Muncie four-speed manual replacing the Borg-Warner T-10 unit. Also new for 1964, was the 2+2 option package available on Catalina two-door hardtops and convertibles that included bucket seats, heavy-duty suspension and other performance equipment, along with the same selection of 389 and 421 cubic-inch V8s found in other Catalinas.

Throughout most of the 1960s when Pontiac annually captured third-place in industry sales behind leaders Chevrolet and Ford, the Catalina was also often the industry's third best-selling full-sized car behind the first-place Chevrolet Impala and second-place Ford Galaxie 500. The Catalina's success in the low-medium priced field led many competitors to respond with similar products such as the 1961 Chrysler Newport, a less-expensive Chrysler that was priced lower than base models bearing the Chrysler nameplate in recent previous years; and the 1962 Dodge Custom 880 and 1963 Mercury Monterey, both of which were introduced as full-fledged low-medium priced full-sized cars in size and power that followed unsuccessful efforts by Mercury and Dodge to bring out downsized full-sized cars.

In 1964, even Pontiac's mid-priced rivals within General Motors responded to the Catalina's success in the marketplace as well as to capture Chevy Impala owners "trading up" to cars from upscale GM divisions. Buick took its lowest-priced big car, the LeSabre, and lowered the base sticker cost further by substituting a smaller 300 cubic inch V8 engine and two-speed automatic transmission from its intermediate-sized cars in place of the larger 401 cubic-inch V8 and three-speed automatic used in other big Buicks. Oldsmobile went even further by creating a whole new full-sized series, the Jetstar 88, which was \$75 lower than the Dynamic 88 series (but still a few dollars higher than comparable Pontiac Catalina models) and also got a smaller engine - a 330 cubic-inch V8 and two-speed automatic transmission from the intermediate F-85/Cutlass line, along with smaller 9.5-inch brake drums (also from the GM intermediates) compared to the 11-12 inch drums still found on all other GM full-sized cars from the "strippo" six-cylinder Chevrolet Biscayne to the Cadillac 75 limousine. And since the Catalina was still priced lower than the Olds Jetstar and Buick LeSabre, the lowest-priced full-sized Pontiac was often perceived by buyers as a better value in the marketplace due to its larger standard V8 engine and three-speed automatic transmission, and in comparison to the Olds Jetstar 88 - bigger brakes.



1965 Catalina 2+2

1965-68

The **1965** full-sized Pontiacs were completely restyled with more flowing sheetmetal featuring "Coke-bottle" profiles and fastback rooflines on two-door hardtops. Wheelbases increased to 121 inches on all models.

A new three-speed Turbo Hydramatic transmission replaced the previous Roto Hydramatic unit on full-sized Pontiacs for 1965. The "Turbo" was a three-speed torque converter unit similar in basic design to Chrysler's Torqueflite and Ford's Cruise-O-Matic transmissions - a move that made torque converter automatics the universal design for shiftless transmissions, and relegated the original fluid-coupling Hydramatic to history. Though the "Turbo" transmission continued to use the Hydramatic name, it shared none of its design with the older transmission. The Turbo Hydramatic also adopted the standardized "P-R-N-D-S-L" shift pattern which replaced the "P-N-D-S-L-R" pattern long familiar to owners of Hydramatic-equipped Pontiacs, Oldsmobiles and Cadillacs.

The 389 and 421 cubic-inch V8s received a number of revisions including thinner wall block castings. The standard engine for Catalina models was the 389 two-barrel rated at 256 horsepower with base three-speed manual transmission and 8.6 to 1 compression or 290 horses with Turbo Hydramatic transmission and higher 10.5 to 1 compression. An economy regular-fuel

265 horsepower version of the 389 two-barrel with 8.6 to 1 compression ratio that burned regular gas was available as a no-cost option with Turbo Hydramatic. Optional engines included a four-barrel 389 rated at 325 horsepower with Turbo Hydramatic or 333 with stick shift, a Tri-Power 389 rated at 338 horses, a four-barrel 421 rated at the same 338 horsepower, 353 horses with Tri-Power or the 421 HO with Tri-Power and 376 horsepower.

The 2+2 option changed from a trim package to an all-out performance car package for 1965 similar to Pontiac's intermediate-sized GTO. The base engine with the 2+2 was now the 338-horsepower 421 four-barrel with the 353-horsepower Tri-Power or 376-horsepower 421 HO with Tri-Power available as options.

The **1966** full-sized Pontiacs received minor a facelifting of the '65 body with new grilles and taillight treatment. Inside, the instrument panel was revised along with interior trim. The 2+2 was upgraded from an option to full model status and engine/transmission offerings on all Catalina models remained the same as 1965 with the exception being the elimination of the 338-horsepower 389 Tri-Power option.



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1967 Pontiac Catalina convertible

For **1967**, Catalinas and other full-sized Pontiacs received a heavy facelifting of the '65 bodysell with more rounded wasp-waisted body contours and fuller fastback rooflines, along with concealed windshield wipers - an industry first. Replacing the 389 and 421 V8s of previous years were new 400 and 428 cubic-inch V8s built off the same Pontiac V8 design in use since 1955. The standard Catalina engine was a two-barrel unit rated at 265 horsepower with three-speed manual transmission or 290 horsepower with Turbo Hydramatic. The 265-horsepower engine was available as a no-cost option with the Turbo Hydramatic and differed from the standard 290 horsepower unit by using regular gas as opposed to premium fuel. Optional engines included a four-barrel 400 rated at 325 horsepower, a four-barrel 428 rated at 360 horsepower or the four-barrel 428 HO rated at 376 horsepower. The Tri-Power engine options were dropped for 1967 thanks to a new GM corporate policy which prohibited the use of multiple carbs on all vehicles except the Chevrolet Corvette. Front disc brakes and stereo 8-track tape player were new additions to the option list.

The 2+2 was offered for the last time in 1967 in both hardtop coupe and convertible. The 360-horsepower 428 was standard and the 428 HO was optional. This model was dropped due to low sales since its 1964 introduction as performance car buyers overwhelmingly preferred smaller and lighter intermediates such as Pontiac's own GTO and the new Firebird ponycar, which was introduced for 1967.

For **1968**, Catalinas and other full-sized Pontiacs received a minor facelifting of the '67 body with a new beak-nose split grille along with a reverting back to horizontal headlights, and revised taillights. Engine offerings were similar to 1967 with revised horsepower ratings including 340 for the four-barrel 400, 375 for the 428 four-barrel and 390 for the 428 HO.

1969-70

The **1969** Pontiacs received a major restyling with somewhat more squared off sheetmetal (though not as much as similar cars from other GM divisions) and rooflines. However, the basic 1965 chassis, inner-body structure and four-door pillared sedan roofline were retained although vent windows were dropped on all models and Safari wagons got a new two-way tailgate that could be opened to the side like a door or downward like a tailgate. Catalinas also got a one-inch wheelbase increase to '122.

Variable-ratio power steering was a new option this year and front disc brakes were now automatically included when the power brake option was ordered.

Engine offerings consisted of a standard 290-horsepower 400 two-barrel (or no-cost optional regular-fuel 265-horsepower 400 with Turbo Hydramatic transmission), 330-horsepower 400 four-barrel, 370-horsepower 428 four-barrel or the 428 HO rated at 390 horses. The standard three-speed manual transmission and optional three-speed Turbo Hydramatic were continued as before, but the four-speed manual with Hurst shifter was dropped from the option list.

All full-sized Pontiacs, including Catalinas, received a new Grand Prix-like V-nose grille for **1970** along with exposed horns on a facelifted front end and new taillights mounted in the rear bumper. Catalina sedans and coupes now came standard with a smaller 255-horsepower 350 cubic-inch Pontiac V8 as standard equipment with optional engines including the previously-standard 400 two-barrel rated at 265 and 290 horsepower (still standard on convertibles and Safari wagons), a 330-horsepower 400 four-barrel and a two versions of the new 455 cubic-inch V8 rated at 360 horsepower or 370 horses with the "HO" option. As in past years, a three-speed manual transmission with column shift was standard equipment, but most cars were equipped with the optional three-speed Turbo Hydramatic. Also offered for 1970, but seldom ordered, was a two-speed automatic transmission (basically a badge-engineered Chevrolet Powerglide) that was available with the 350 V8.

1971-1976

In **1971** the mid-level *Executive* and Ventura trim option for the Catalina were both discontinued and replaced with the *Catalina Brougham*, which offered a more luxurious interior trim than the regular Catalina. The *Brougham* was dropped in 1973 after its sales failed to meet expectations. 1972 also marked the final appearance of the Catalina convertible.

For **1971**, Catalina and other full-sized Pontiacs were completely redesigned and restyled from the wheels up with long hood/short deck proportions and fuselage styling somewhat similar to Chrysler Corporation's 1969 full-sized cars, along with a double shell roof for improved roll-over protection and flush pull-up exterior door handles - the latter two features first seen on the 1970 1/2 *Firebird*. Catalina and Catalina Brougham sedans and coupes rode on a 123-inch wheelbase while Bonneville and Grand Ville used a longer 126-inch wheelbase, and Safari wagons were an inch longer at 127' inches. Station wagons also got their own multi-leaf spring rear suspensions, while sedans and coupes continued to be suspended with front and rear coil springs.

New for 1971 was the *Catalina Brougham* series, which offered a plusher interior trim than the regular Catalina, available as a two-door hardtop, four-door hardtop and four-door pillared sedan. The "Brougham" was essentially a replacement for the "Ventura" custom trim option offered on most Catalina models since 1962.

The Catalina Safari wagon became simply the *Pontiac Safari* for 1971 (though it continued to share interior and exterior trimmings with Catalina sedans and coupes) while the more luxurious Executive and Bonneville wagons were replaced by the new Grand Safari wagon which paralleled the new Grand Ville series as the division now grouped its full-sized wagons as a separate series from their sedan counterparts. Both wagons received GM's new clamshell tailgate which lowered under the floor and window that electrically raised into the roof section.

All models featured new Grand Prix-style wrap-around cockpit instrument panels that placed controls and instruments within easy reach of the driver along with two round pods for a speedometer and the other for warning lights, fuel gauge or optional gauges and electric clock. Interior trims were available in cloth and Morrokide vinyl or expanded Morrokide depending on model.

Standard engine in Catalina sedans and coupes was a 255-horsepower 350 V8 with two-barrel carburetor. Catalina Brougham models and Safari wagons came standard with a 400 cubic-inch V8 with two-barrel carburetor rated at 265 gross horsepower that was optional on other Catalina models. Optional engines included a 455 cubic-inch V8 with two- or four-barrel carburetion and respective horsepower ratings of 285 and 325, respectively. All Pontiac engines for 1971 were designed to run on lower-octane regular leaded, low lead or unleaded gasoline thanks to a GM corporate edict, necessitating reductions in compression ratios.

Power front disc brakes were made standard equipment for the first time in 1971. As in previous years, variable ratio power steering and Turbo Hydramatic transmission were extra-cost options but became standard equipment midway through the 1971 model run. Also available on early 1971 Catalinas with the 350 engine was a two-speed automatic transmission in addition to the standard column-shift three speed manual.

For **1972**, Catalinas and other full-sized Pontiacs received new Grand Prix-style "V" nose grilles and sturdier front bumpers that could withstand crashes of up to 5 MPH, a year ahead of the Federal standard that took effect in 1973, along with revised taillight lenses.

The two-barrel 400 cubic-inch V8 was standard on all Catalina/Brougham/Safari models rated at 175 net horsepower compared to 265 gross horses in 1971 thanks to a switch in horsepower measurements from gross ratings which were measured by a dynamometer with no accessories attached while the "net" figures were measured "as installed" in a vehicle with all accessories and emission gear hooked up. Optional engines included a two-barrel 455 rated at 185 horsepower and a four-barrel 455 rated at 250 horsepower. The year 1972 was the last for the Catalina convertible and the Catalina Brougham series.

Catalina and other **1973** full-sized Pontiacs featured more full-width split grilles along with the now-federally mandated 5 MPH front bumper, and revised taillight lenses. Instrument panels continued the "wrap-around" theme but the two round gauges were housed in square pods. With the Catalina Brougham discontinued only the regular Catalina models and Safari wagons were offered this year. Catalinas and other full-sized Pontiacs including Bonneville and Grand Villes now rode on a common 124-inch wheelbase for sedans and coupes though Safari and Grand Safari wagons continued on their own 127-inch wheelbase.

Catalina sedans and coupes came standard with a 350 cubic-inch V8 rated at 150 horsepower with a 170-horsepower 400 two-barrel optional and standard on Safari wagons. Optional engines included a 230-horsepower 400 four-barrel and 250-horsepower 455 four-barrel V8.

A new Mercedes-like center split grille and revised rear styling with new 5 MPH bumpers on the aft end and license plate moved above the bumper highlighted the **1974** Catalina and other big Pontiacs. Two-door hardtop coupes featured new fixed triangular side windows, which eliminated true pillarless hardtop designs, while the four-door pillared and hardtop sedans were virtually unchanged from 1973. Interiors were much the same as 1973 except for a revised standard steering wheel and new cut-pile carpeting.

New to the option list were adjustable accelerator and brake pedals, a Pontiac exclusive and seldom-ordered, and a Radial Tuned Suspension that included the upgraded tires along with other suspension mods such as front and rear sway bars.

The 170-horsepower 400 V8 with two-barrel carburetor was now the standard engine on all models with a 225-horsepower 400 four-barrel and 250-horsepower 455 four-barrel V8 available as options. Also for 1974, the Safari wagon was renamed the *Catalina Safari* and continued to share interior and exterior trims with sedans and coupes.

The year **1975** brought revised front and rear styling to Catalinas and other full-sized Pontiacs, along with standard radial tires and electronic ignition. The same assortment of 400 and 455 engines carried over from 1974 with reduced horsepower ratings ranging from 170 to 200, but now mated to catalytic converters, which provided improved driveability and fuel economy over previous emission control equipment, but mandated the use of unleaded gasoline. Four-door pillared and hardtop sedans featured new six-window styling with the sixth window on the hardtop sedan functioning as an opera window.

For **1976**, only minor detail changes were made to Catalinas and other full-sized Pontiacs that included revised grilles (with rectangular headlights now on Catalinas with the "Custom Trim Option-round headlights continued on base models) and taillight lenses. This year was the last for the 1971-vintage bodyshell, optional adjustable pedals, 455 V8 and the clamshell tailgate on Safari wagons.

1977-1981

1977-1981	
Engine(s)	231 in ³ Buick V6 265 in ³ Pontiac V8 301 in ³ Pontiac V8 350 in ³ Pontiac V8 400 in ³ Pontiac V8
<u>Transmission(s)</u>	3-speed THM200 4-speed THM200-4R

In 1977, Pontiac and other GM divisions downsized their full-sized cars in an effort to lighten weight and improve gas mileage. The Catalina continued as Pontiac's entry-level full-size automobile with a Buick-built 231 cubic-inch V6 now standard in sedans and coupes (Safari wagons came standard with V8 power) and optional V8s of 301 in³, 350 in³ and 400 in³ displacements, each Pontiac-built engines and offered in all states except California. The Pontiac 350 was offered in 1977, but replaced by Buick and Olds 350 V8s from 1978 to 1980; and the Pontiac 400, offered through 1978, was replaced by an Oldsmobile 403 V8 in 1979 only. An Olds-built 350 Diesel V8 was optional for 1980 and 1981, along with another cut-down Pontiac V8 of 265 in³.

With the downsized 1977 model, the Catalina Safari got a new two-way tailgate that could be opened to the side as a door or lowered as a tailgate which replaced the more complicated 1971-76 clamshell tailgate design. The wagons also shared the same full-coil spring suspension as their sedan counterparts, rather than the multi-leaf springs found on 1971-76 Safaris.

As Pontiac V8s were completely blackballed from the State of California beginning in 1977 due to the inability to meet the Golden State's more stringent emission control standards, Catalinas (and Bonneville) sold in California were equipped with engines from other GM divisions through 1981. Those included the Buick 231 V6 and an assortment of V8s including the Chevrolet 305, Oldsmobile 307, Buick and Olds 350s, and Olds 403 V8.

The Catalina was discontinued after the 1981 model year along with the more luxurious Bonneville as Pontiac sought to abandon the full-sized car market as part of GM's continued downsizing program. The 1982 Bonneville was introduced as a mid-size car. When production of the Catalina nameplate ended in 1981, over 3.8 million Catalinas had been sold since 1959.

Laurentian (Canada and Canadian export only)

In the 1950s through 1970s GM of Canada designed an unique hierarchy of "full size" Pontiac "series" or trim lines dissimilar to the American Catalina, Star Chief, Executive and Bonneville series offered by GM's Pontiac Motor Division in the US. Closely paralleling Chevrolet's Biscayne, Bel Air and Impala series, by 1958 the Canadian models were nomenclatured Strato Chief, Laurentian and Parisienne. When Chevrolet introduced the "Super Sport" as a distinct model line in 1962, GM of Canada soon made available a similarly equipped Pontiac "Custom Sport" (in 1967 rebadged Pontiac "2+2" to mirror a name used by Pontiac in the US for a sporty model based on its Catalina series.) And when Chevrolet rolled out its topline "Impala Caprice" model in mid-1965 to compete with Ford's newly introduced upscale Ford "LTD" model, GM of Canada introduced the "Grand Parisienne" trim series for the 1966 model year. Like all Canadian Pontiacs built before the early Seventies, Laurentians used full-size Chevrolet chassis, drive trains, and other parts, using slightly downsized US Pontiac bodies. Thus, the 1964 Pontiac Laurentian has more in common with a Chevrolet Bel Air, than a U.S. Pontiac Catalina or Executive, even though its exterior trim pieces were similar to the Catalina. The Laurentian was available in all the body styles used for the Chevrolet Bel Air, including the hardtops offered until 1963 when they became available only in the highest trim series (Parisienne and Grande Parisienne, and Impala and Caprice respectively.) Laurentians like Strato Chiefs and Parisiennes before 1983 were never sold in the United States; they were built for the Canadian market and for export from Canada as disassembled "crate" or "kit" cars.

A number were assembled from CKD kits by GM Holden in Australia and more - SKD assembly this time - in neighbouring New Zealand. As well, these kits were assembled at GM plants in the Netherlands and South Africa. Canada Pontiacs were used in part because, as a fellow Commonwealth country, there were advantages with import duties. But largely due first to the economies of part sourcing two separate GM lines from the same parts bin. Second, with higher gasoline prices and lower discretionary spending than in the US, Canadian Pontiacs like Chevrolets were more affordable, hence more marketable overseas. Thirdly, without the bulk and weight of American Pontiacs, their Canadian counterparts were better adapted where space can be limited, as in Europe and in a British LHD environment where an overly large full-size car has overly large disadvantages.

These RHD cars had the same dashboards whether Chevrolet (Impalas and Bel Airs also made it to Australia; NZ took just Impalas) or Pontiac and only one dash design per bodyshell run so the 62-64 models had the one dash even though it changed annually in Canada and the 65-68s all had a 'transposed' version of the '65 Chevrolet dash. The RHD cars also had antiquated, short, 'clap-hands' wipers that almost met in the middle of the windshield rather than the parallel wipers of the LHD Canadian cars. Local radios, upholstery and two-speed heater/demisters were fitted - some Australian cars had local Frigidaire air conditioning.

Pontiac Parisienne

Pontiac Parisienne	
Manufacturer	<u>Pontiac</u>
Parent company	<u>General Motors</u>
Production	1983-1986 (<u>U.S.</u>) 1958-1986 (<u>Oshawa Car Assembly, Canada</u>)
Assembly	<u>Oshawa, Ontario, Canada</u>
Predecessor	<u>Pontiac Catalina</u> (For U.S.)
Class	<u>Full-size</u>
Body style(s)	2-door <u>coupe</u> 4-door <u>sedan</u> 4-door <u>station wagon</u>
Layout	<u>FR layout</u>
Platform	<u>B-body</u>
Related	<u>Chevrolet Caprice</u> <u>Chevrolet Impala</u> <u>Buick LeSabre</u> <u>Oldsmobile</u> <u>Custom Cruiser</u>



Oldsmobile
Eighty-Eight
Buick Electra
Pontiac Safari

The **Pontiac Parisienne** was a full-size rear-wheel drive vehicle that was sold by Pontiac on the GM B platform in Canada from 1958 to 1986 and in the US from 1983 to 1986. The Parisienne wagon continued under the Safari nameplate until 1989.

For most of its life, the Parisienne was a Canadian nameplate, sold in Pontiac's Canadian showrooms, while American Pontiac dealers sold the Catalina, Ventura, Star Chief and Bonneville. Interestingly, Canadian Pontiacs were essentially Chevrolet platforms with Pontiac outer body panels installed. Therefore, the Parisienne used the same engines found in full-size Chevs, including the 283, 327, 350, 396, 409, 427, etc, as well as the Powerglide and Turbo-Hydramatic transmissions. This was done due to import/export tariffs between the U.S. and Canada, which made the manufacture of uniquely Canadian Pontiac engines and chassis components, too costly. During the mid- and late-1960s, the Grande Parisienne introduced, based on the US-market Grand Prix, a larger, more luxuriously trimmed offering.

The Grand Parisienne became a standard Pontiac again in 1969, while the US-market Grand Prix became a "personal luxury" model. In 1982, the Bonneville was downsized on the G-body while Pontiac's version of the B-body was dropped.

In early 1983, to gain back Pontiac customers who longed for a large rear wheel drive car, the Parisienne was imported from Oshawa, Ontario, Canada (where the full-size model had not been dropped) and sold in the United States. Externally, it was a rebadged Chevrolet Impala (1983-84 models had the Impala rear taillight panel fitted with Pontiac-spec taillight lenses, whereas the nose was borrowed from the Chevrolet Caprice fitted with a Pontiac grille). The 1985 to 1986 models resumed use of the rear-end styling from the 1980 to 1981 Bonneville.

Two Parisienne ranges were sold - a base model (similar to the former Catalina and the then-current Oldsmobile Delta 88 Royale) in four-door sedan and Safari station wagon form, and a more-luxurious Brougham four-door sedan (with velour upholstery that featured loose-pillow fitted seats). No two-door models were offered for the United States market, although a coupe version was available in Canada through 1983.



1977-1981 Canadian Parisienne



An 80s Parisienne wagon

The Pontiac Parisienne was a success, especially with customers who wanted a nicely appointed car at a reasonable price. The Parisienne still sold well when GM decided to drop the line after the 1986 model year. A front wheel drive model with the Bonneville name replaced the Parisienne; however, the wagon model (known just as "Safari") continued until 1989.