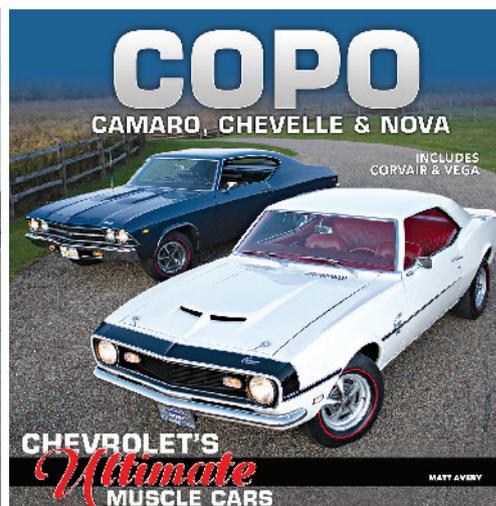




The Ingleside Miller's Dog 'n Suds offered a picture-perfect backdrop for this featured Yenka Camaro.



narrative and delivering it to readers.

Ensuring top vehicles were represented, I traveled to 14 states and Canada, inspecting, photographing, and experiencing over 45 of the planet's finest examples. For in-depth study and context, I poured over hundreds of articles in vintage newspapers and magazines, as well scores of corporate documents, looking for COPO clues. Adding to that were firsthand accounts. I tracked down and interviewed dozens of original owners, dealership sales and repair staff, factory workers, and even corporate clerks who had worked in the Central Office, hearing their stories and bringing the past to life. The substantial amount of data collected and sifted through was just what I needed to do this momentous tale justice.

These COPO creations are some of the rarest and most desirable vehicles the world over. Now, after learning, and telling, their full and fascinating story, I can fully appreciate why. You can too, by discovering more at [www.COPOthebook.com](http://www.COPOthebook.com).



Historical background elements, like this Blue Angel jet, were incorporated into the book's photography to add interest.

## The Ultimate Chevy Muscle Cars

CRACKING THE COPO CODE

**D**URING THE 1960S, Chevrolet was in hot water. A war on speed was underway, with concern from Washington redlining fast over the rumbling rides Detroit was cranking out. The brand's nimbler competitors thumbed their nose at the bureaucrats' strong talk, but Chevy was nearing a 30 percent share of the passenger car market and faced looming concerns. Federal anti-trust suits and investigations were heating up.

The only way to chill the Capitol Hill intensity was to throttle back on constructing cars that could consistently be found in the winner's circle. Reluctantly bypassing the 'win on Sunday, sell on Monday' maxim, Chevy eased off the gas, issuing internal edicts to build tamer offerings, keeping the pesky political watchdogs happy and at bay. Enthusiasts lamented, car magazines mocked, but Chevrolet committed to slow things up...or at least by all appearances.

Several key gearhead insiders couldn't stand by and let the company's storied performance image sputter out. They partnered with a handful of clued-in conspirators at the dealership level, developing a workaround through some pedestrian paperwork called a 'Central Office Production Order.'

Ever since World War II, the COPO (*ko-poh*) system was used for out-of-the-ordinary circumstances—such as getting a fleet of taxis or plumber work trucks created. Never had it been used for performance enhancement. That all changed in 1965, and until '72, the process would be used to create meaner, faster Corvairs, Camaros, Novas, Chevelles, and even Vegas. This four-wheeled band of bad rides (totaling less than a few hundred) would go down in the annals of history as the ultimate Chevy muscle cars.

It's an astonishing tale, but one never told in full or at length. After hearing scant highlights, I was sucked in, determined to decipher fact from folklore fiction. For the last two years, I've researched these mysterious machines' shadowy past, compiling my findings into a brand-new book, "COPO". Out of the gate, I hit a serious roadblock. Today, what little is known about these classics' mark on history is openly celebrated, but when new, they stayed off the record and way out of bean counters' reports. Even within General Motors archives, paperwork and historical imagery is nearly nonexistent. Still, I was drawn to the hunt and the thrill of seeking out and shedding light on the full, accurate