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# 10 Surprisingly Good American Performance Cars People Forgot About

These cars may have been lost in time, but certainly not erased from history.

BY VINCENT MUZZIO

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America has a long history of producing amazing sports cars and other performance vehicles. Many have stood the test of time and have become iconic cars, desired by collectors around the world. Many have not and fallen victim to the bigger names and the more popular vehicles.

Even within their own categories and models, some of the biggest names have been forgotten. People may remember the Camaro SS or Z28, but perhaps the IROC -Z slipped their minds. The Ford Lightning of the 90's and 2000s may have been passed over due to the new electric

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## 1985 - 1990 Chevy Camaro IROC-Z



The IROC-Z came on to the scene sporting 16" wheels, fog lights, lowered body, and a special graphics and paint package. The car was named after the International Race of Champions racing series. The IROC-Z was discontinued after Chevrolet did not renew their contract with the racing series after 1990.


As far as Camaro history goes, the IROC-Z was just a small blip on the radar. It won over the hearts of many gearheads, including those dedicated to other brands like Ford. This car had the looks, power, and performance but has been overlooked throughout the years.

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# 1994 - 1996 Chevy Impala SS

 Impala - Mecum

Via: Mecum

The Impala SS from this time period was based on the Chevy Caprice models, which was also one of the cop cars of the day. It came with the usual beefed up V8 engine, a better stance, deleted chrome, cooler wheels, and of course, dual exhaust. It was just enough to give the car a muscle look to set it apart from the cop car/family car look of the Caprice.

 Chevy Impala - ClassicCars

Via: ClassicCars


The car was different and fun. One of those cars your kids would be proud to be picked up at school in. GM discontinued this body and frame from its line of cars to focus on producing more SUVs. With such a short window of production of this car, it has been forgotten, and most people think of the Impala SS from the 60s instead of this unique one from the 90s.

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## 1987 - 1988 Ford Thunderbird Turbo Coupe

 Turbo Coupe - Mecum

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stylish, aerodynamic lines, added intercooler, and increased performance with the five-speed manual pushed this car over the edge of its predecessor.

 Turbo Coupe Front - Mecum

 Via: Wikimedia

The 1987 model was named Motor Trend Car of the Year. The Turbo Coupe was a popular car with its quick and nimble performance, stylish exterior, and comfortable Thunderbird-style luxury interior. The Thunderbird changed its look with the 1989 model year for the next generation, and out went the Turbo Coupe. A select few remember how special this American performance car really was.

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**A Detailed Look Back At The Ford Thunderbird Turbo Coupe**

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**1983 - 1988 Chevy Monte Carlo SS**

The Monte Carlo had a storied history going back to the 70s. After being discontinued for 12 years, it was brought back in 1983 and was a fierce competitor to the Buick Grand National.

 Monte Carlo - Mecum

 Vix: Motorsports

The Monte Carlo SS had the looks and power to give it that American performance feel that


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## 2003 - 2004 Mercury Marauder

 Marauder - Mecum

Via: Mecum

The Marauder was another car revived from the 60s and 70s. This one was a beefier, upgraded version of the Grand Marquis. It had a lot of draw as a sporty performance family car.

 Marauder - Hagerty

Via: Hagerty




The car was a head turner with the upgraded body package, wheels, and dual exhaust. There is a niche following of this version of the Marauder, but with very low sales, the car has been buried in history.

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## 1984 - 1988 Pontiac Fiero

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 Via: Mecum

The Pontiac Fiero was a good American Performance car. It had a unique look that also slightly resembled several small foreign sports cars. It was not a powerful car compared to other American powerhouses, but it was quick and nimble and fun to drive.

 Pontiac Fiero - Mecum

Via: Mecum

The Fiero had great sales and had a good run spanning several years, until low sales finally put a nail in its coffin. The Fiero still pops up out on the roads today and is easily recognizable but it may never be the same as it was in its prime, thanks to the bad press and heavy media attention due to engine fires, poor reliability, and performance shortcomings.

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## 1993 - 1995 Ford SVT Lightning

 1993 Lightning - Mecum

Via: Mecum

Ford introduced the SVT Lightning to help compete with some of the beefier trucks like the Chevy 454 SS. It was a new look with upgrades to the suspension and powertrain.


 Lightning - Barret Jackson

Via: Barret Jackson

Ford Lightning for 2022 which has no relation to the SVT Lightning, leading to more dirt being thrown on the 1993-1995 SVT Lightnings' grave.


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## 1984 - 1986 Ford Mustang SVO

 Mustang SVO - Mecum

 Via: Mecum

The SVO Mustang was introduced with fuel economy and emissions in mind, while still packing a punch with style and performance. The engine was a turbocharged 4-cylinder but still performed well compared to mid-80s standards.

 Mustang - Mecum

 Via: Mecum

Although this version of the Mustang performed well and had the desired appearance of a traditional Mustang, gearheads had come to expect big engines and high power from their performance cars. Hardcore enthusiasts still remember this car, but the SVO Mustang has just been shuffled back in the deck of Mustangs built throughout history, bound to be forgotten.

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## 1990 35th Anniversary Ford Thunderbird Super Coupe

 Super Coupe - Barrett Jackson

Via: Barrett Jackson

The Super Coupe replaced the popular, and also overlooked, Turbo Coupe. The Super Coupe touted a powerful and quick supercharged and intercooled V6 engine with a more aerodynamic body, including ground effects.

 Tbird - Mecum


 V6: Museum

The 35th Anniversary Edition was unique with its black paint and wheels detailed with blue stripes down the side. It came with anniversary badges as well as special interior features to set it apart from the others. There were only 3,371 Anniversary Editions produced, making this version of the Thunderbird easily lost in the long history of Thunderbirds, and American performance cars.

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## 1991 - 1993 GMC Typhoon

The GMC Typhoon is a hidden gem in American Performance car history. It was based off the GMC Jimmy SUV but packed with a highly modified turbocharged V6. It was basically a race car in an SUV body.

 Typhoon - Mecum

 Via: Wikimedia

amount of powerful new performance cars and SUVs on the market since its introduction, this car has sadly gone unrecognized.



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Vincent has been an automotive enthusiast since being a kid growing up in Europe and Asia. With his time overseas coupled with years spent in the US, he has an appreciation for a variety of automobiles. When not...

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