

Black, White & Red All Over

Maisto 1955 Buicks

It's the classic case of getting the most from what you've got. Maisto's extensive inventory of castings gives the multi-national company a big advantage in the market place. The skilled design team has a knack for being able to pull from not only this list but also its parts bin to create vastly different offerings without the need to start from scratch. Perhaps the best example of this is the story of Maisto's 1955 Buick Century coupes.

From 1954 to '57, Buick reestablished the brand as a performance icon with the Century. Using the formula of a big Buick engine and a short wheelbase with a lighter overall package, these were hardtops and convertibles capable of speeds in excess of 100mph. This not only made them a factory hot rod but also a prime candidate for law-enforcement use. Despite the car's 3,800 pounds, the hopped-up 322cid OHV V-8 engine could easily run down nearly anything on the road. Priced far less than its showroom

brother the Skylark, Century models were extremely popular.

The pinnacle of run was 1955 and '56. These years offered more refinement than '54s and were far and away superior in build quality than those offered in '57. During the filming of the new television show "Highway Patrol," Hollywood made a star out of the Buick. In later years the Buicks were traded in from Mercury Monterey and Dodge Coronet models, but the early airings provided the lasting memories of the Highway Patrol "black &

whites."

On the civilian side, the '55 Buick Century fell victim to the same fate as all cars from that era, a backseat in popularity to the Chevy Bel Air. With the exception of Buick loyalists, the Century was a fairly forgotten car. About 20 years ago, the collector car community rediscovered the splendor of these old Buicks. More recently, the Century has become the poster child for a brand and time that forged our automotive culture. The resulting effect has made Century hardtops and convertibles hot items in both



OUT OF THE BOX



the restoration and customizing interests.

TO EACH HIS OWN.

Maisto's two 1:26-scale Buicks are about as far apart

in interior appeal as possible. Despite being at such ends of the styling scale, each has its special allure. The Pro Rodz version is slammed and candied in that oh-so-California



Caption 1

custom fixation. The law-dog version also has that California Highway Patrol. Both cruisers are exactly the same reasonably good castings, although



Caption 4

the engine of each is the same molded drop in replica of the 322 OHV V-8. The primary difference is the finish: the Pro Rodz in chrome, and the CHP in service black. Both are OK, but chances are, when you display either or both the hoods will be shut.

THE SAME—ONLY DIFFERENT.

If this is beginning to sound like a broken record from 1955, it might be. The undercarriage of the Maisto Buick is the same; the Pro Rodz got some chromed enhancements. It's the tires and wheels that set the tone of difference. The Pro Rodz

trick two-tone candy paint, it's the CHP version that captures the most shelf attention.

TO CHROME OR NOT TO CHROME. Like the exterior,



Caption 2

Caption 3



Caption 5

Caption 6

FAST FACTS

Highway Patrol

The 1955 Buick Century was made famous in the television show "Highway Patrol." In 1957 the producers switched to Dodge Coronets. In '58, Mercury Montclairs were also used before going back to Dodges in 1959. Despite the changes, the most memorable television Highway Patrol car is the '55 Buick.



offered the massive 20-something set with deep offsets and super-tucked attitude. The Dan Matthews special was issued with factory bias-

features a matte white look with an odd bench seat with side racing bolsters. It also got a trick billet steering wheel, dash-mounted tach

IT'S A LAW AND ORDER VERSUS A NO-HOLDS-BARRED CONTRAST THAT MAKES THEM COMPELLING

ply rubber and chrome wheels and dog-dish hub-caps. The steering is also semi-operative on the old black & white. Both tire and wheel packages fit the theme of the respective styles quite well; although, you may be tempted to swap chassis to see what a Pro Rodz copper might look like.

CHANGE AT LAST. It's what inside that counts, at least when it comes to these two Buicks. The Pro Rodz hardtop

and black insets on the door panels. The CHP machine was fitted with gray bench seats and the factory-like wheel with full horn ring. One cool add-on was the amber light on the rear window tray.

DON'T GET ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER. The real power of these two Maisto Buicks is in play when displayed

together. It's a law and order versus a no-holds-barred contrast that makes them compelling. With the popularity of the mid-50's Buicks on the rise, and the fact that many Boomers grew up watching the old "Highway Patrol" television series on reruns, Maisto has once again proven it has excellent market timing. Both are a 10-4 and deserve a 10-20 on collector shelves.

SOURCE
Maisto maisto.com

FEATURES

- > Opening hood
- > Opening doors
- > Opening trunk
- > Working steering (CHP version only)
- > Rolling wheels

SPECS

Scale	1:26
Length	7.75 in.
Wheelbase	6.25 in.
Width	2.75 in.
Height	2 in.
Price	\$15 each

PR

	1	2	3	4	5
BODY, PAINT	5	4	3	2	1
WHEELS, TIRES	5	4	3	2	1
ENGINE	5	4	3	2	1
CHASSIS	5	4	3	2	1
INTERIOR	5	4	3	2	1
PRESENTATION, PROPORTION, STANCE	5	4	3	2	1
COLLECTIBILITY	5	4	3	2	1

CHP

	1	2	3	4	5
BODY, PAINT	5	4	3	2	1
WHEELS, TIRES	5	4	3	2	1
ENGINE	5	4	3	2	1
CHASSIS	5	4	3	2	1
INTERIOR	5	4	3	2	1
PRESENTATION, PROPORTION, STANCE	5	4	3	2	1
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