

LOUIS CHEVROLET

Louis Chevrolet is 49 years old. He lives at 26 W. 36th Street, Indianapolis.

Chevrolet is a world famous auto racer and designer and builder of racing cars that won the 500 mile classic on the Indianapolis Speedway in 1920 and 1921. In 1920, Chevrolet won the event with a four cylinder Monroe and in 1921 with his eight-in-line Frontenac.

Chevrolet was born in Switzerland. When he was eight, his parents moved to France. At 16, Chevrolet started his career in a bicycle shop in Paris. The owner of the shop had a one and one-quarter horsepower single cylinder motor tricycle. The motor was wrecked and the disgusted owner gave it to Chevrolet. After working hours, he repaired and rebuilt the tricycle.

Chevrolet soon became the head mechanic in the factory making the tricycle.

In 1898-99 Chevrolet was a mechanic in the Darracq Motor Company plant in Paris. In the fall of 1899 he worked in the Mors Auto factory experimenting with motors and the possibility of developing more horsepower. He also worked in the Hotchkiss Company factory.

Then came the desire for America. At 21, in 1900 Chevrolet came to New York, and was connected with the Dion Bouton Motorette Company in Brooklyn. Although working as a mechanic, Chevrolet was constantly experimenting to develop a high speed motor. In 1902, he made a truck and a touring car for the head of the Tutti-Frutti Gum Company. In 1903 he went with the Pope-Toledo Motor Company. In these two years, Chevrolet was rapidly developing into an expert motor designer and builder.

On May 5, 1905 at the Morris Park Motor Racing Club, Chevrolet won his first race with a Fiat stock car. He made a world's dirt track record of a mile in :52 4/5 seconds.

Chevrolet continued racing in 1905, driving to many victories at Hartford, Chicago and New York. He entered the Fiat in the Vanderbilt Cup Race on Long Island in 1905, and was forced to give up his winning position when a front wheel broke.

In 1906 Chevrolet returned to experimenting. He connected with the Bliss Company, of Brooklyn, N. Y., and assisted in building the 12 autos made by that company. The Bliss Company discontinued in the auto trade.

In 1907-08 he continued experiments in several shops in New York City and the Autocar Company, of Ardmore, Pennsylvania, and the Madison Auto Company, Wilkes Bars, Pennsylvania.

In 1909 he went to Detroit with the Buick Company as designer and built the Buick racer that made that name famous. For two years, he and Bob Burman, Lewis Strang won scores of races for the Buick. His brother, Arthur Chevrolet, joined the team.

W. C. Durant, one time vice-president of the General Motors Company, Louis Chevrolet and William H. Little, former factory manager of the Buick plant, started the Chevrolet Motor Company, in Detroit, Chevrolet was with Durant a designer and engineer until the fall of 1914. He left the Chevrolet Motor Company, and again started work on a racing car. Chevrolet decided to name his new racer the Frontenac, after the noted first governor of Quebec, Frontenac. His car was the first all aluminum motor ever built. Chevrolet won the main event at the Uniontown, Pennsylvania, meet in 1916 with his new small car.

During the years 1917-18-19 Chevrolet raced his four cylinder Frontenac in all classics in the country. In 1920 Louis and Gaston Chevrolet won first and second with Frontenacs at the Cincinnati Decoration Day Races.

In 1920 Chevrolet built the Monroe racing car that won the Indianapolis 500 mile race with Gaston at the wheel. It was the first year of racing cars with 183 cubic inch displacement. In 1921 Chevrolet returned to the Indianapolis track with his eight-in-line Frontenac and again won the classic with Tommy Milton driving. Milton's average was slightly less than 100 miles per hour.

In 1921, Allen A. Ryan of New York and Chevrolet made plans to start the Frontenac Motor Company, and manufacture pleasure cars. The company was preparing for operations when Ryan crashed.

Chevrolet then designed and built the Frontenac motor for Ford cars. During 1922-23-24-25 he was busy with his motor for Fords and building special racing cars for noted drivers. The new Ford has cut into the overhead motor sales, now operated by the younger brother, Arthur, in Indianapolis.

Chevrolet started gathering information and data for the proper motor for the commercial aircraft industry. Chevrolet interviewed many pilots and users of commercial planes. Chevrolet's first ideas were for a radial type motor. He considered the radial type for a short time, and decided that a straight line inverted motor is best. He found that a motor to supplant the OX-5 Curtiss, which is being used by commercial planes, is in big demand. The OX-5 is a war type motor, and today is obsolete.

Chevrolet says that four and eight cylinder inverted motors will replace the OX-5 style. Chevrolet says the inverted motor will give at least 30 more horsepower with 100 pounds less installed weight.

The public is fast demanding a two passenger commercial plane, and the inverted four cylinder 80 horsepower is most capable to meet the needs, in Chevrolet's opinion.