

Nomads Introduction



The Chevy Nomad owes its' unforgettable lines to a 1954 Motorama concept car that was built to show that the popularity of the 1953 Corvette could be incorporated into a family car. The Corvette or "Waldorf" Nomad was the work of many of the talented designers working for Chevrolet in that era. Under the direction of Harley Earl, the Chevrolet design studio called on the services of Chuck Stebbins and Clare MacKichan to come up with the concept of the Corvette station wagon. The idea for the roof line came from another designer named Carl Renner.

The Nomad show car for the 1954 Motorama had a fiberglass body that was mounted on the 1953 Chevrolet station wagon chassis. As you can see from the photo above, the front and rear fiberglass panels were Corvette inspired. At the rear of the wagon, the tailgate was decorated with vertical chrome rub strips designed by Chuck Stebbins who was the head of the design studio at that time. These strips sometimes referred to as "bananas" were to become one of the distinctive features of the Nomad.

The 1954 Motorama show car was not a running model and given the weak sales experienced by the Corvette in 1953 and 1954, the decision was made to put the Nomad in production for 1955 as a standard size Chevrolet rather than a Corvette station wagon.

With the decision made, the Chevrolet design studio went to work to combine the components of the Waldorf Nomad show car in what would be the production release model. The ribbed roofline was cut and stretched to mate to the basic design of the 1955 Chevrolet lower body. This was a marriage of the best design features of both. The fluted roofline and the wide "B" style roof pillars and wrap-around rear side glass were all kept to give the Nomad its unique and sporty profile. The tailgate retained the vertical chrome strips and the full rear wheel housing cut-outs were maintained. The front clip was basically the stock 1955 Chevrolet front end with the side moulding now accenting the headlights.