

# 1949-54 Chrysler Imperial: Breaking Out of the Box

by Richard M. Langworth





**Chrysler Imperials had fine engineering, added model choices, and, from 1951, V-8 power. But conservative looks in the style-conscious Fifties were a tough sell.**



Designed by engineers, early Fifties Chrysler Imperials like the 1953 Custom sedan were incredibly practical cars but not very exciting to look at. Styling would be addressed by the all-new 1955 models. (Owner: John White)

It seems like blue distance of the Middle Ages now, but 1949 was a brave new world for the U.S. auto industry. Overseas competition was nonexistent: Nobody could slip a wedge into the rock-hard post-World War II dollar market. Detroit's Big Three—General Motors, Chrysler, and Ford (they ranked in that order by sales)—finally parted company with prewar styling and were sailing into the commercial azure on the wings of eagles, Chrysler eagles being represented by what a wag called “three-box styling”: one box on top of two others.

“We’ll be fine,” hummed company president Kaufman Thuma Keller, “Old K. T.,” successor to founder Walter Percy Chrysler, who had died young in 1940. The “true” ’49s, introduced that March after a brief run of leftover ’48s, would be evolutionary, not revolutionary—cars that fit people.



It wasn't that Chrysler didn't have more modern-looking ideas. Clay models and prototypes at its Highland Park, Michigan, design studios represented both major postwar design trends: the “Chunky Whale School” (Hudson, Packard, Nash, and the Ford makes), and the “Sculpted School” (Studebaker, the GM makes, and—by early 1950—Kaiser). But for the moment, practicality ruled.

Chrysler had always been an engineer's company. Chief stylist Oliver Clark and chief clay modeler Charles Walker were body engineers. They reported to engineering vice president James Zeder, brother of Fred Zeder, who with Owen Skelton and Carl Breer had designed every Chrysler since the inaugural 1924s. Their fascination with aerodynamics, combined with their lack of styling instincts, had led to Chrysler's greatest flop, the 1934-37 Airflow. Ray Dietrich, the renowned coachbuilder brought in to style post-Airflow models, told this writer: “If only those engineers had left him alone, Walter Chrysler would have lived longer.”

Like Walter P. Keller was a self-made man with total faith in the engineers—





1. In 1949, the Crown Imperial eight-passenger limousine sat atop the Chrysler line. (A similar eight-passenger sedan was offered as well.) 2. Wheelbase was a majestic 145.5 inches. Power came from a 135-bhp 323.5-cid "Spitfire Eight" shared with lesser Chryslers. Rear-hinged "suicide" rear doors eased passenger entry and exit. This large automobile weighed a substantial 5295 pounds and prices started at \$5334. Production came to a mere 45 units. 3. The chauffeur rode on a black leather bench seat. 4. 5. Rear passengers sat in comfort on wool broadcloth. Jump seats for two additional passengers folded out of the divider that separated the front and rear compartments. (Owners: Robert Lasher and Robert Wagner)



who had, let's be honest, developed some stunning cars before the Airflow. The greatest of these were the Classic-era Imperials of the late Twenties and early Thirties. With the advent of all-new styling for 1949, Chrysler was again eager to establish Imperial as a serious rival to Cadillac and Lincoln.

From its birth in 1926 and through 1939, Imperial was the ultimate Chrysler, riding conventional and extended wheelbases with body styles ranging from roadsters to limousines. From 1940, however, the name had been confined to long sedans and limousines on a 12-foot wheelbase, almost the longest Chryslers ever built.

The '49s offered an opportunity to restore the broad range of "owner-driver" Imperials that had won prestige and admirers a decade or more earlier, but the boxy new styling was a problem. It looked fine on the Crown Imperial with its 145.5-inch wheelbase. Reviving a line of smaller Imperials with this bodywork to compete with the likes of the '49 Cadillac posed more of a challenge.

Old K. T. was adamant, however: "The buyer is proud of his car's symphony of line," Keller had told the Stanford Business School in 1948. "But he bought the car to ride in. . . . Many of you Californians may have outgrown the habit, but there are parts of the country containing millions of people where both the men and the ladies are in the habit of getting behind the wheel, or in the back seat, wearing hats." Indeed, quipped *Fortune*, the '49s "may not knock your eye out . . . but they will certainly not knock your hat off."

There were other practical reasons for these conservative cars with bolt-on rear fenders, *Fortune* continued: "For one thing, Chrysler has an eye to a wheel design that can accommodate the super-sized tires that are now appearing on many new cars. For another, it takes into account the difficulties encountered by repairmen with the oh-so-sleek, self-vanishing fender."

This reasoning was valid so far as it went, but it went only so far as the post-war seller's market. In the days when a company could sell anything on wheels because of huge pent-up demand, the option of a luxurious box instead of a sleek torpedo was reasonable. But one day real competition would return—as Keller and his colleagues would learn to their cost.

Imperial's expansion began with a





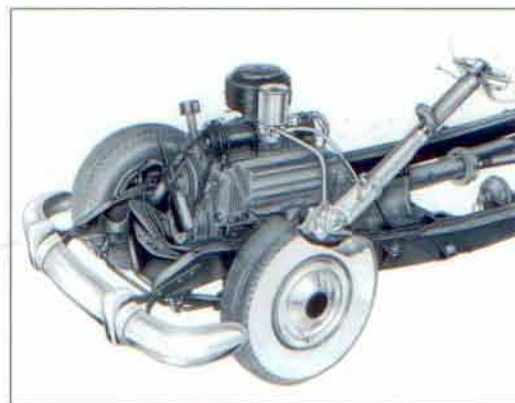
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Crowns were augmented by new "owner-driven" Imperials. 1. After a run of 50 custom-made '49s, Chrysler built the 131.5-inch-wheelbase four-door sedan in-house in 1950. A wraparound backlight was new. 2, 3. The four-car 1951 Imperial series included a sedan (2) and club coupe (3). 4. The biggest news in '51 was Chrysler's first V-8, the 180-bhp 331-cid "FirePower" with hemispherical heads.

solitary 1949 sedan on the 131.5-inch New Yorker chassis. Where the New Yorker started at \$2726 (\$26,000 in today's money), the Imperial—with an exquisite leather-and-broadcloth upholstery and custom built in a shop established by Dietrich—cost \$4665 (\$45,000 today). Only 50 were built following a late introduction in September 1949. Like its Chrysler linemates, the Imperial aped Cadillac with three-way-visible taillights. They weren't as nicely integrated, being applied in a way that awkwardly mimicked Cadillac's tailfins. The Crown Imperial, which saw only 85 copies in 1949, retained conventional in-fender taillights.

The '49 Imperial did offer lots more glass, admitting more light and air, and a new, modern dash designed by Henry King, later Clark's successor. A full array of needle instruments mounted in a cluster ahead of the steering wheel were

flanked by one of the industry's first padded interior surfaces, a thick, sponge-rubber bar covered with stitched leather. Below the bar were controls for the radio and heater, a speaker, clock, ashtray, and glovebox. On the "short" sedan, opening ventwings adorned each door; side windows were geared to wind quickly, using clever handles with hinged knobs that folded down when not in use. The interior was roomy enough for six Paul Bunyans, and the trunk held all their luggage. Crown Imperials featured hydraulically operated windows and "suicide"-style rear doors, plus jump seats that boosted seating capacity to eight.

Despite the advent of trick names for mechanical features—Safety-Level ride, Hydra-Lizer shocks, Safety Rim wheels, Full-Flow oil filter, Cyclebonded brake linings—Imperial mechanicals were little changed from 1948. Chrysler was working on a new V-8, but it wasn't ready, so Imperial soldiered on with its 135-bhp 323.5-cid "Spitfire Eight," albeit with slightly higher compression. The standard semiautomatic transmission—based around Chrysler's famous Fluid Drive—was renamed "Prestomatic." There was, however, one farsighted mechanical innovation standard on the Crown Imperial: Detroit's first production disc brakes.

Efficient and reliable, the Chrysler

disc was invented by H. L. Lambert and built by Auto Specialties Manufacturing Company (Ausco) of St. Joseph, Michigan. Unlike today's caliper discs, the Ausco-Lambert used twin discs that spread apart to rub the inner surface of a cast-iron drum, which doubled as a housing. During contact, small balls set into oval holes leading to the braking surface would be forced up the holes, helping to force the discs apart and augmenting braking energy. Today's drivers would find Ausco-Lamberts powerful, with some grabbiness and pedal sensitivity.

For 1950, the Imperial sedan received an eggcrate grille, a cleaner rear deck, and a hardtop-style wraparound backlight. The model was now wholly factory built, which allowed a much lower starting price of \$3055. A new Deluxe version at \$121 more featured Chrysler's first electric window lifts. Sales took off, leaping to 10,650.

Crown Imperial volume was up sharply to 415 units but was still a long way from Cadillac's comparable Series 75 and commercial chassis (1460 and 2052 sold, respectively). Old coachbuilder Derham dressed up some Crown Imperials for 1950, offering both long sedans and limousines with leather-covered roofs and "blind" rear quarters. Only a handful were built.





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1-3. A convertible was also added to the "short-wheelbase" Imperial line for 1951. The '51s benefited from Imperial-exclusive design touches including a two-bar grille, "biplane" bumpers, skirted rear fenders, and large triangular taillights integrated with the fenders. 4. 5. All-leather upholstery was available; a padded dash panel was standard. The ragtop started at \$4402 and found only 650 buyers; it did not return for 1952. (Owner: Chip Loree)



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For Imperial, 1951 was a breakout year, a serious attempt to match Cadillac's broad lineup. It was an ideal opportunity, since Chrysler had finally completed a revolutionary engine, ideal for a luxury car: the 331-cid FirePower V-8, better known as the "hemi."

Chrysler had been looking for alternatives to the traditional valve-in-head, inline engine since 1937, considering everything from rotary valves to the sleeve-valve Knight. But nothing offered the efficiency and power of the short-stroke ohv V-8. This was also Cadillac's conclusion, but unlike GM's luxury division, Chrysler opted for a hemispherical combustion-chamber design that produced unprecedented power for displacement.

The hemi had high volumetric efficiency thanks to complete separation of the ports, together with wide spaces between the valve seats. The flow within the cylinder, Chrysler said, "is not restricted by any barriers or tortuous passages." While Cadillac's two-year-old V-8 also displaced 331 cubic inches, the hemi developed 20 more horsepower, 180 total. And the FirePower could run on lower-octane fuel, available octane being one of the chief barriers to high performance in those days.

Granted, the hemi was relatively complex, requiring four—not two—rocker shafts; eight intake and exhaust pushrods; and eight rockers, each set different. Though lighter than the old L-head eight, its heads were 25 percent heavier than Cadillac's V-8 (120 pounds versus 94 pounds). Nor was it an industry first: Hemi heads had been around since 1904 and were featured on Jaguar's contemporary six-cylinder XK120. But it was Chrysler that would make the most of the idea over the next six decades.

Other important Imperial developments for 1951 were ventilated brake drums and Chrysler's first power-assisted steering. Electric window lifts were now offered on all models. Standard-equipment Fluid-Matic transmission, a further permutation of Fluid Drive, mounted a torque converter ahead of the clutch. The clutch pedal was used to select the shift range: One shifted simply by lifting one's left foot.

Imperial now had a world-class V-8 and, car for car, was quicker than Cadillac. An indication of its performance was *Road & Truck's* test of a '51 Saratoga (smaller and 200 pounds lighter): 0-60 in 10 seconds, the quarter-mile in 18.7 at 108 mph. And though no fan of Detroit iron, the maga-



1, 2. The big Crown Imperials also received many of the 1951 updates. The eight-passenger limousine listed for \$6690. This one received some personalization, including blanked-out rear-quarter windows and a padded top, performed by Derham. 3. Side windows were raised and lowered by electric motors. Crown Imperials remained low-production models—just an estimated 442 in '51. (Owner: Joseph Herzberg)

zine praised the redesigned brakes. "No other car tested by *R&T* has approached the Chrysler's braking ability. Brake fade appeared only after severe applications."

Imperial officially became a separate series for 1951, but separate-make status like Cadillac's was still in the future; for now it remained a Chrysler Imperial. Another facelift brought a two-bar grille that was much neater than 1950's design, "biplane" bumpers, and skirted rear fenders, all of which were unique to Imperials. They adorned an expanded array of body styles, as the six-passenger sedan was joined by a convertible, club coupe, and Imperial's reply to Caddy's Coupe de Ville, the Newport hardtop, with "low-swept, road-hugging lines of a convertible" and a solid top "giving the convenience of a sedan."

The '52s saw few changes, thanks in part to Korean War materiel shortages and government limits on civilian production. The situation led Chrysler to drop the two slowest-selling Imperials: the convertible, which did not return for '52, and the club coupe, which was axed in February. Thus, between 1949 and 1954, it's 1951

that allows the closest direct comparison between Imperial and Cadillac on a full-line basis:

	Chrysler Imperial		Cadillac 62	
	Price	Production	Price	Production
4d sedan	\$3,674	13,678 <sup>1</sup>	\$3,528	55,352
coupe <sup>2</sup>	\$3,661	749 <sup>1</sup>	\$3,436	10,132
hardtop <sup>3</sup>	\$4,042	2,174 <sup>1</sup>	\$3,843	10,241
convertible	\$4,402	650	\$3,987	6,117

	Crown Imperial		Cadillac 75	
	Price	Production	Price	Production
4d sedan	\$6,573	227 <sup>1</sup>	\$5,200	1,090
limousine	\$6,690	213 <sup>1</sup>	\$5,405	1,085

<sup>1</sup>Estimate based on 63 percent of combined 1951-52 production. <sup>2</sup>Imperial pillared coupe vs. Series 62 hardtop coupe. <sup>3</sup>Imperial Newport vs. Series 62 Coupe de Ville.

Clearly, Imperial was no sales threat to Cadillac in the early postwar years. Neither was any other luxury make. In volume, there was no comparison, and while Imperial prices were generally competitive, Cadillac's larger dealer network and economies of scale allowed price discounts on some models.





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In late 1950, Old K. T. resigned as president to become Chrysler's board chairman. His successor, Lester Lum "Tex" Colbert, didn't like three-box styling and determined to change it forever. The man who would work the change was Virgil M. Exner.

"Ex," who had helped shape the early postwar Studebakers at the Raymond Loewy studios, came to Chrysler at Keller's invitation and set to work on a new styling direction for all of Highland Park's cars. Experienced and innovative, a vintage-car enthusiast, and a student

of European design, Exner favored the classic open wheelhouse and prominent grille as major design elements. Though he couldn't do much with the existing production bodies, his thinking was previewed by a series of dramatic "idea cars" built in Italy by Ghia, such as the 1951 K-310.

A sometime colleague, Frank Bianchi, remembered Exner in a 1987 interview on the University of Michigan's automotive site (<http://bit.ly/ofSRtk>): "Of all the superiors that I had and all the people I worked for, Exner was probably the best



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automobile designer in the business. . . . It's too bad he wasn't noticed. Of course, Exner did go do a stint with General Motors [before joining Loewy], and I don't know why Harley Earl didn't recognize him as one of the supers. . . . Exner was one of the very best."

I once asked Maury Baldwin, Exner's chief of advanced styling, why Ex had mounted the 1953-54 Imperial eagle hood ornaments so far forward that they dipped down. "It seemed like a good idea at the time," Baldwin quipped. "In those days we were more decorators



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than designers. It was still an engineers' company." Ironically, the cringing eagle proved symbolic of Chrysler's worst two years since the Thirties Depression.

Tex Colbert had told Jim Zeder he wanted the '53s to be smoother and sleeker, and the engineers obliged. Although front-end styling was little changed, the '53 Imperial six-passenger sedans gained two inches in wheelbase and looked more graceful thanks to Exner's introduction of a one-piece curved windshield and lower hoodlines. Now called "Custom Imperial," the '53 lineup added

a "town limousine"—replete with retractable divider window—on the 133.5-inch wheelbase. Priced around \$4800, it was a curious development since the Crown Imperial still offered limousines on the more-appropriate 145.5-inch span. Only 243 of these stubby limos were built. The luxury image would have been better served by reviving the convertible. The Newport hardtop was missing at the start of the model year, but reappeared in the spring, albeit on the old 131.5-inch wheelbase.

Already blessed with the ideal luxury-

car engine, Imperial finally gained a suitably worthy transmission for 1953: Chrysler's fully automatic PowerFlite, combining a torque converter with a two-speed planetary gearbox. Unlike GM's Hydra-Matic, PowerFlite didn't have a different gear for nearly every traffic situation, but it delivered plenty of get up and go, unlike Packard's Ultramatic.

All things considered, the '53 was the most attractive Imperial since the war. Yet despite a good year for Chrysler Division as a whole, sales slipped roughly a thousand units below the production-limited



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1, 2. The fourth Imperial body style for 1951—a new one—was the Newport two-door hardtop. It was Imperial's answer to the Cadillac Coupe de Ville. One was turned into the specially trimmed "Rose Car" that Chrysler dispatched to 1951 auto shows. The interior was finished in white and rose, with the door panels and leather seats done in different patterns than the regular-production cars. 3, 4. Like other Chrysler products, the 1952 Imperial sedan was essentially unchanged from the 1951 model, though the starting price went up by \$165 to \$3839. (Owners: Frank Oatman and John Wood) 5-7. In 1952, the Newport priced from \$4224. An estimated 1276 were sold. (Owner: Glenn Koets)





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1, 2. Though hard to tell by looking at the front, 1953 Imperials were much changed. A one-piece windshield was new, as were the roof and rear fenders. Six-passenger four-door models added two inches of wheelbase. (Owner: John White) 3, 4. The Newport didn't bow until spring 1953, still on the old wheelbase. 5. Custom Imperial was the new name for the line of owner-driver models. (Owner: Art Astor) 6, 7. With the world attuned to the 1953 coronation of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II, Chrysler marked the occasion with the "Coronation Imperial." The one-off Custom town limousine was done in purple and white. 8. A new grille and side trim greeted 1954 Imperials. Discreet air intakes above the rear fenders, as on this limo, indicated the car had optional air conditioning.



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1952 total: 8859 Customs and 160 Crowns. Late in 1953, longtime Chrysler Division General Manager Dave Wallace, "father" of the glamorous Town & Country, retired in favor of E. C. Quinn, who coined the slogan "Sell More in Fifty-four." Instead they sold less. A lot less.

The 1954 Imperial, again leading the horsepower race with the 331 V-8 boosted to 235 bhp, was a big, conservative-looking car with a toothy new grille and an important new luxury option. Chrysler had invented Airtemp for the first air-conditioned skyscraper, New York's art deco Chrysler Building, in 1930 and had technically offered an automotive version in 1941-42. Highly efficient by comparison to its complicated, cumbersome rivals, Airtemp not only cooled a vehicle's interior but recirculated air as well and had the highest capacity of any automotive unit.

Like PowerFlite, Airtemp was disarmingly simple, controlled by a single dashboard switch marked "low-medium-high." The system could cool an Imperial from 120 degrees to 85 in two minutes, while eliminating humidity, dust, pollen, and tobacco smoke. Drawing in 60 percent fresh air, it avoided the staleness associated with other systems. Air entered from unobtrusive intakes nearly flush with the body, rather than clumsy add-on scoops. And there were no gawky plastic tubes on the rear package shelf. Instead, small ducts directed cool air toward the ceiling, where it filtered down around the passengers instead of blowing directly at them. In addition, Airtemp took up relatively little space. The condenser mounted slantwise ahead of the radiator, while the rest of the apparatus occupied the kick-up over the rear axle on the trunk floor.

Alas, all these good developments were trumped by the inevitable end of the postwar seller's market—and Ford's reaction to it. Having seen his company regain its traditional number-two rank by outproducing Chrysler in 1952, Henry Ford II was now determined to catch GM. Ford factories began shipping cars, whether ordered or not. Dealers discounted heavily to move them out; some even "bootlegged" excess inventory to out-of-state used-car lots. General Motors reacted in kind, and by mid 1953 a Ford-GM sales blitz was raging.

Ford didn't catch GM, but its cutthroat sales tactics almost put the independents and Chrysler out of business. By the end of model-year 1954, Ford had upped its





1, 2. A 1954 Custom Imperial Newport with an accessory exterior spare-tire carrier and optional wire wheels. Apart from the new grille, '54 Imperials saw several improvements. For one, the 331-cid "hemi" engine was boosted to 235 bhp. 3, 4. The instrument panel was new; a power-steering option had been around since 1951. (Owners: Gary and Donna Stengle)

## 1954 Chrysler Imperial: Selected Specifications

### General

Wheelbase (in.)	
Custom	131.5 (hardtop), 133.5 (others)
Crown	145.5
Overall length (in.)	
Custom	221.75 (hardtop), 223.75 (others)
Crown	236.38
Overall width (in.)	
Custom	77.75
Crown	82.88
Overall height (in.)	
Custom	63.00
Crown	68.75
Tread, front/rear (in.)	
Custom	57.81/60.38
Crown	57.88/66.00
Cooling system (qt)	25.0
Fuel tank (gal)	20.0

### Construction

Layout	front-engine, rear-wheel drive
Type	body-on-frame
Body material	steel

### Engine

Type	90-degree ohv V-8
Material	cast-iron block and heads
Bore×stroke (in.)	3.81×3.63
Displacement (cid)	331.1
Horsepower @ rpm	235 @ 4400
Torque (lb-ft) @ rpm	330 @ 2600
Compression ratio	7.5:1
Main bearings	5
Valve lifters	hydraulic
Carburetor	Carter 4-bbl downdraft

Lubrication system	full-pressure
Electrical system	
Custom	6-volt
Crown	12-volt

### Driveline

Transmission type	2-speed automatic with torque converter, column-mounted shifter
Axle type	hypoid gear
Axle ratio	3.54:1

### Suspension

Front	independent with coil springs, tubular shock absorbers, stabilizer bar
Rear	solid axle with semielliptic leaf springs, tubular shock absorbers

### Steering and Brakes

Steering type	center-arm with equal-length tie rods, power-assisted on Crown <sup>1</sup>
Steering ratio	25.8:1 <sup>2</sup>
Brake type	
Custom	4-wheel hydraulic internal-expanding, 12-inch-diameter cast-iron drums, power-assisted

Crown	4-wheel hydraulic lateral-expanding disc, power-assisted
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### Tires and Wheels

Tire type and size	
Custom	4-ply whitewall 8.20×15
Crown	6-ply whitewall 8.90×15
Wheel type	steel disc <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Power assist optional for Custom. <sup>2</sup>Without power assist; 16.2:1 with power assist. <sup>3</sup>Standard. Chrome wire wheels optional.

stake to 30 percent of the market against a dwindling Chrysler's 16.5 percent. Imperial's rivals made serious inroads. Lincoln, which traditionally managed about 20,000 sales a year, averaged close to 40,000 in 1953-54; Cadillac sold a near-record 109,000 of its '53s and almost 97,000 the following year. Imperial's 1954 tally was only 5661 Customs and just 100 Crowns—a 36-percent drop-off from '53.

Chrysler executives could do nothing about the Ford-GM blitz except grouse at the Detroit Athletic Club, but Chairman Keller blamed part of the debacle on the boxy styling he had earlier endorsed. "I have seen the error of my ways," he said. Lackluster looks were certainly no help to Imperials competing with tailfined Cadillacs and svelte new Lincolns.

But help was on the way. In late 1952, Exner had been named director of design, the first professional stylist to have held that role at Chrysler. "One of Dad's first special showcars," Virgil Jr. recalled, "was the Imperial Parade Phaeton, on a stretched '52 Crown Imperial chassis. That was the inspiration for and remarkably similar to the all-new '55s, which turned everything around." Symbolically, the '55 Imperial eagle ornament flew level again—and it did so on the hoods of cars that were no longer considered to be Chryslers.

More than half a century has flown by since the days of Old K. T. and the Zeder brothers, of Ex and Tex, of the mistakes they made and the triumphs they cre-





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ated. In the years since, their company has weathered several near-death experiences. But Chrysler carries on, not the least thanks to the outstanding survivor of those days: the fabled hemi. **CA**

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#### Clubs for 1949-54 Chrysler Imperial Enthusiasts

Online Imperial Club  
Website: [www.imperialclub.com](http://www.imperialclub.com)

National Chrysler Products Club  
P.O. Box 64  
Fayetteville, PA 17222  
Website:  
<http://nationalchryslerproductsclub.com>

WPC (Walter P. Chrysler) Club, Inc.  
P.O. Box 3504  
Kalamazoo, MI 49003-3504  
Fax: (269) 375-5535  
Website: [www.chryslerclub.org](http://www.chryslerclub.org)

### 1949-54 Chrysler Imperial: Models, Prices, Production

1949	Weight	Price	Prod
<b>(wb 131.5)</b>			
4d sedan	4,300	4,665	50
<b>Crown (wb 145.5)</b>			
4d sedan, 8P	5,250	5,229	40
limousine, 8P	5,295	5,334	45
Total Crown Imperial			85
Total 1949 Chrysler Imperial			135
<b>1950</b>			
<b>(wb 131.5)</b>			
4d sedan	4,245	3,055	9,500
Deluxe 4d sedan	4,250	3,176	1,150
Total Imperial			10,650
<b>Crown (wb 145.5)</b>			
4d sedan, 8P	5,235	5,229	209
limousine, 8P	5,305	5,334	205
chassis	—	—	1
Total Crown Imperial			415
Total 1950 Chrysler Imperial			11,065
<b>1951</b>			
<b>(wb 131.5)</b>			
4d sedan	4,350	3,674	13,678 <sup>1</sup>
club coupe	4,230	3,661	749 <sup>1</sup>
Newport hardtop cpe	4,280	4,042	2,174 <sup>1</sup>
convertible coupe	4,570	4,402	650
Total Imperial			17,251 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Crown (wb 145.5)</b>			
4d sedan, 8P	5,260	6,573	227 <sup>1</sup>
limousine, 8P	5,450	6,690	213 <sup>1</sup>
chassis	—	—	2
Total Crown Imperial			442 <sup>1</sup>
Total 1951 Chrysler Imperial			17,693 <sup>1</sup>
<b>1952</b>			
<b>(wb 131.5)</b>			
4d sedan	4,315	3,839	8,033 <sup>1</sup>
club coupe	4,220	3,826	440 <sup>1</sup>
Newport hardtop cpe	4,365	4,224	1,276 <sup>1</sup>
Total Imperial			9,749 <sup>1</sup>

#### Crown (wb 145.5)

4d sedan, 8P	5,395	6,872	133 <sup>1</sup>
limousine, 8P	5,430	6,994	125 <sup>1</sup>
Total Crown Imperial			258 <sup>1</sup>
Total 1952 Chrysler Imperial			10,007 <sup>1</sup>

#### 1953

##### Custom (wb 133.5; hardtop 131.5)

4d sedan	4,305	4,225	7,793
town limousine	4,525	4,762	243
Newport hardtop cpe	4,290	4,525	823
Total Custom Imperial			8,859

#### Crown (wb 145.5)

4d sedan, 8P	5,235	6,872	48
limousine, 8P	5,275	6,994	111
chassis	—	—	1
Total Crown Imperial			160
Total 1953 Chrysler Imperial			9,019

#### 1954

##### Custom (wb 133.5; hardtop 131.5)

4d sedan	4,355	4,260	4,324
town limousine	4,465	4,797	83
special town limousine	4,475	—	2
Newport hardtop cpe	4,345	4,560	1,249
convertible coupe	—	—	1 <sup>2</sup>
chassis	—	—	2
Total Custom Imperial			5,661

#### Crown (wb 145.5)

4d sedan, 8P	5,220	6,922	23
limousine, 8P	5,295	7,044	77
Total Crown Imperial			100
Total 1954 Chrysler Imperial			5,761

<sup>1</sup>Estimated. As with other corporate makes, Chrysler combined model-year production figures for 1951-52. However, production totals are known for several 1951-only models, making production estimates of remaining models spanning both years more accurate. In the above cases (<sup>1</sup>), numbers shown add up to the known total of specific body styles produced over the two-year period and are derived from the known production percentages of the run: 63 percent in 1951 and 37 percent in 1952. <sup>2</sup>Prototype, likely on 131.5-inch wheelbase. Sources: *Collectible Automobile*®, February 1997; *Collectible Automobile*®, June 1998.