



Riviera

SILVER ARROW



In 1963, the Riviera Silver Arrow concept car helped define the beginning of a remarkable chapter in Buick history. In 1998, the limited-edition 1999 Riviera Silver Arrow production car marked the end of that era.

Over four decades, Riviera has proven one of the most distinctive of U.S. automobiles. Riviera is renowned for its unique styling and smooth power, and its appeal has spanned many generations and demographics.

When the first Riviera was unveiled for the 1963 model year, it was quickly labeled a "modern classic" by automotive writers. Reminiscent of that original fanfare, the most recent generation of Riviera has often been described as one of the most dramatic designs of the 1990s. The Philadelphia Inquirer, for example, in August 1998 described Riviera as "easily the most creative, most interesting automotive design of the decade."



The Riviera, in its 1998 form, is described as "easily the most creative, most interesting automotive design of the decade."





GM Design Chief Bill Mitchell's 1963 concept Riviera, the Silver Arrow (left), with 1999 Riviera Silver Arrow prototype (not yet badged).





During its 35 years, the Riviera brand name has encompassed a notable collection of distinctive automobiles – the superb, sculptured models of the 1960s; the “boat tails” of the early 1970s; Gran Sports from 1965-75; the wildly popular 1979-85 models, one of which earned a Motor Trend “Car of the Year” award; and the sporty, limited-edition convertibles from 1982-1985.

Since its inception, 1.1 million Rivieras have been sold. This level of appeal can be attributed to Buick’s cutting-edge approach to vehicle design. Riviera’s latest design – introduced for the 1995 model year – prompted the National Automotive History Collection of the Detroit Public Library to characterize Riviera as “most collectible car of the future.”

Collectors were officially put on alert in the fall of 1998 when Buick announced the discontinuance of the Riviera line. However, Riviera’s demise was not made final. Company officials held out the possibility of resurrecting the revered Riviera name someday.

In commemoration of Riviera’s historical run, 200 of the ‘99 Rivieras were adorned with a distinctive silver exterior, a paint color not available on any other ‘99 Riviera. Each vehicle was badged as the Riviera “Silver Arrow” – a name recalling the 1963 concept car, displayed at the Buick Gallery and Research Center of the Sloan



Riviera is renowned for its unique styling and smooth power.





Museum in Flint, Michigan. The '63 Silver Arrow was commissioned by William L. Mitchell, then General Motors design chief, and has a lowered roof line and lengthened hood. GM went on to create two additional concepts, Silver Arrow II and III, which featured minor modifications of production Rivieras.

Mitchell's inspiration for the '63 Riviera came to him while visiting England. He found himself transfixed with the sight of a Rolls-Royce engulfed in a softening fog in front of London's Claridge Hotel. Mesmerized by the vehicle's sharp, elegant lines, he returned to the U.S. and organized a team to create a hybrid concept vehicle with a design suggestive of a combination of a Ferrari and Rolls-Royce.

The car's original sketch was made by Ned Nickles, who had originated such late '40s and '50s Buick styling cues as portholes (originally called ventiports), sweep-spears and hard-top convertibles. The sketch provided the design team with a blueprint for this historic vehicle.

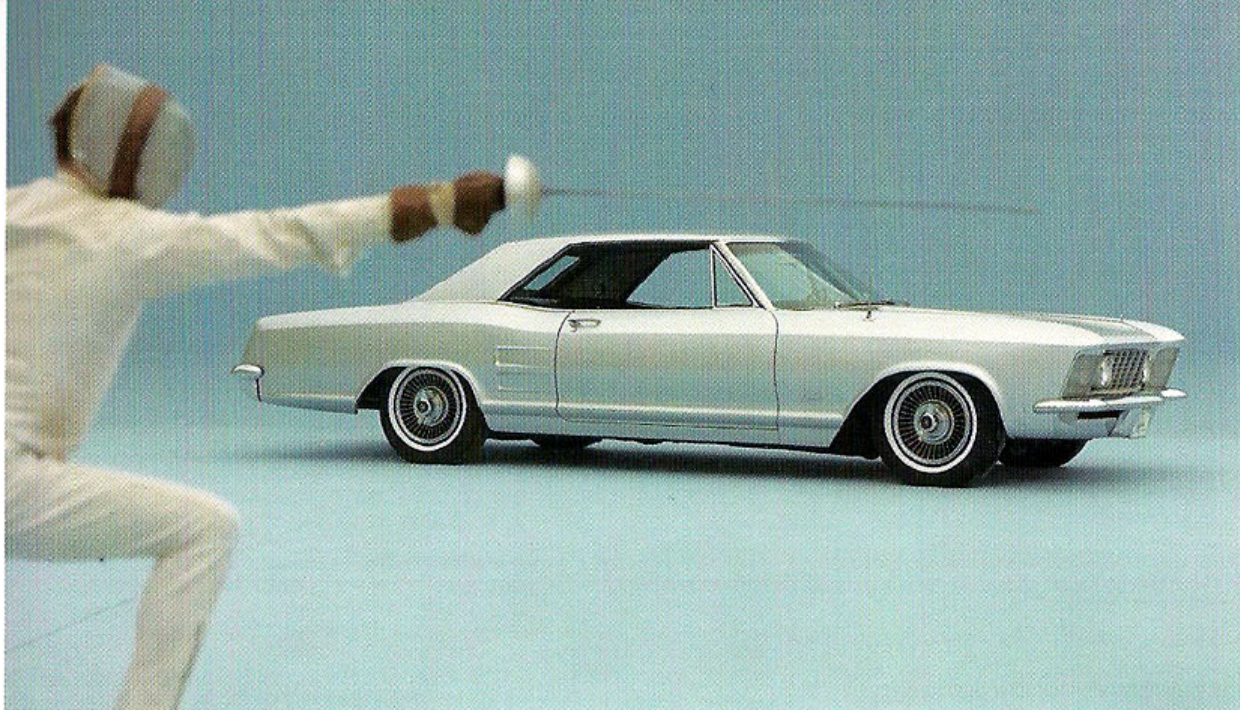
The commemorative '99 Silver Arrow is a perfect reminder of the Riviera's enduring legacy. Featuring Sterling Silver Metallic paint, it also has exterior logos replacing the name Riviera just behind the doors on both sides. The logos consist of the Silver Arrow name in capital letters, underlined by an arrow, identical to the



(Above) The original Silver Arrow concept car.

(Left) A sharply sculptured roof line, low silhouette and long hood were distinctive features of the 1963 Riviera.





(Opposite) Ned Nickles, then Buick's chief designer, sketched the '63 Riviera in his apartment. Former GM styling chief Bill Mitchell admired the design and helped see the car through production as it was drawn.

(Left) The Riviera concept resulted from Mitchell's vision of a vehicle offering a sporty, yet elegant, design.



(Left) Riviera's classic design for 1965 included new hidden headlamps.





design taken from the '63 concept car. A plaque with the Silver Arrow logo and the series number adorns the instrument panel and headrests for the front seats are embroidered with the Silver Arrow logo.

"The Riviera has many fans, and we didn't want to end production of this model without offering something special in the way of a finale," said Katherine J. Benoit, Riviera brand manager. "All '99s will be collectible – there will only be about 2,000 – but only 200 of those are Silver Arrows. We're just adding a little flair to celebrate a great automobile."

The '99 Riviera is driven by a 240-horsepower, supercharged 3.8-liter 3800 Series II V-6 engine, connected to an electronically controlled four-speed automatic transmission. Since its introduction as a '95 model, the latest generation of Riviera has won numerous awards, including a design and engineering award from Popular Mechanics, exceptional merit award from Robb Report, "Best Luxury Car – Drivers' Choice Awards" from the TV show Motor Week, and a place on the "10 Best" list of the Chicago Sun-Times.



(Above) The Silver Arrow's unique logo from the 1963 concept car appears on the '99 model's Sterling Silver Metallic exterior just behind both doors.

(Opposite) The latest edition of Riviera (including Silver Arrow) offered plenty of front and rear-seat roominess.



H E R I T A G E



(Above) Buick first used the Riviera name on this 1949 "hard-top convertible," named Roadmaster Riviera.

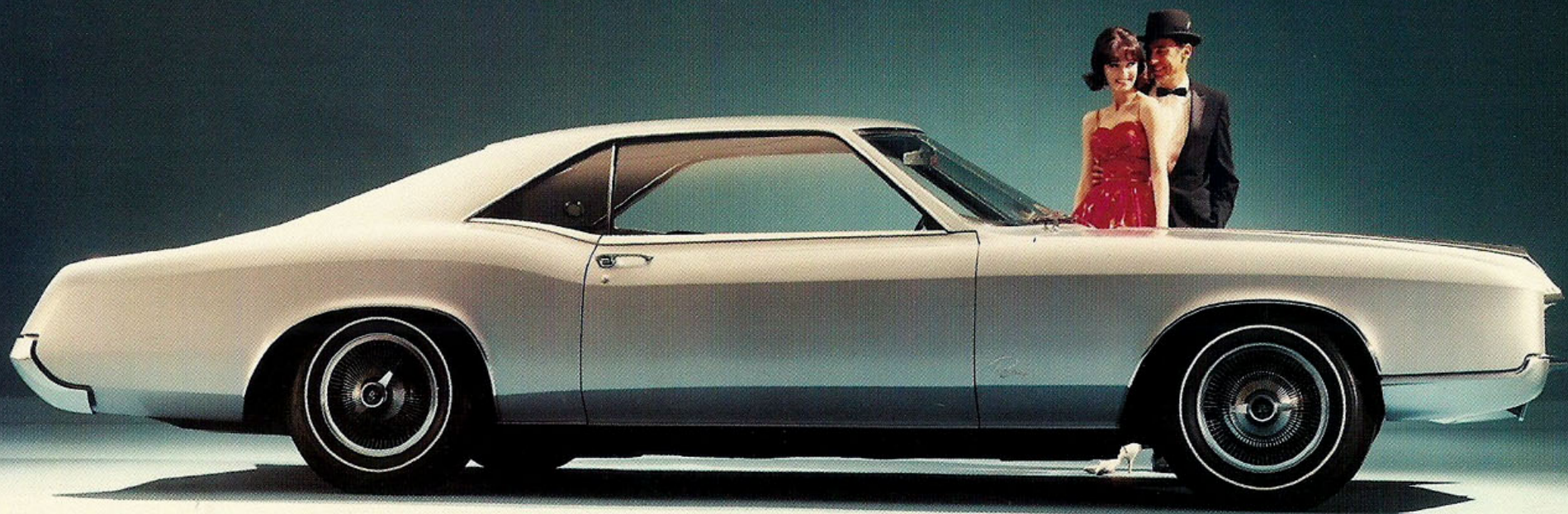
(Opposite) The Riviera, here in 1964, was inspired by Mitchell's glimpse of a fog-engulfed Rolls-Royce parked along a London street.

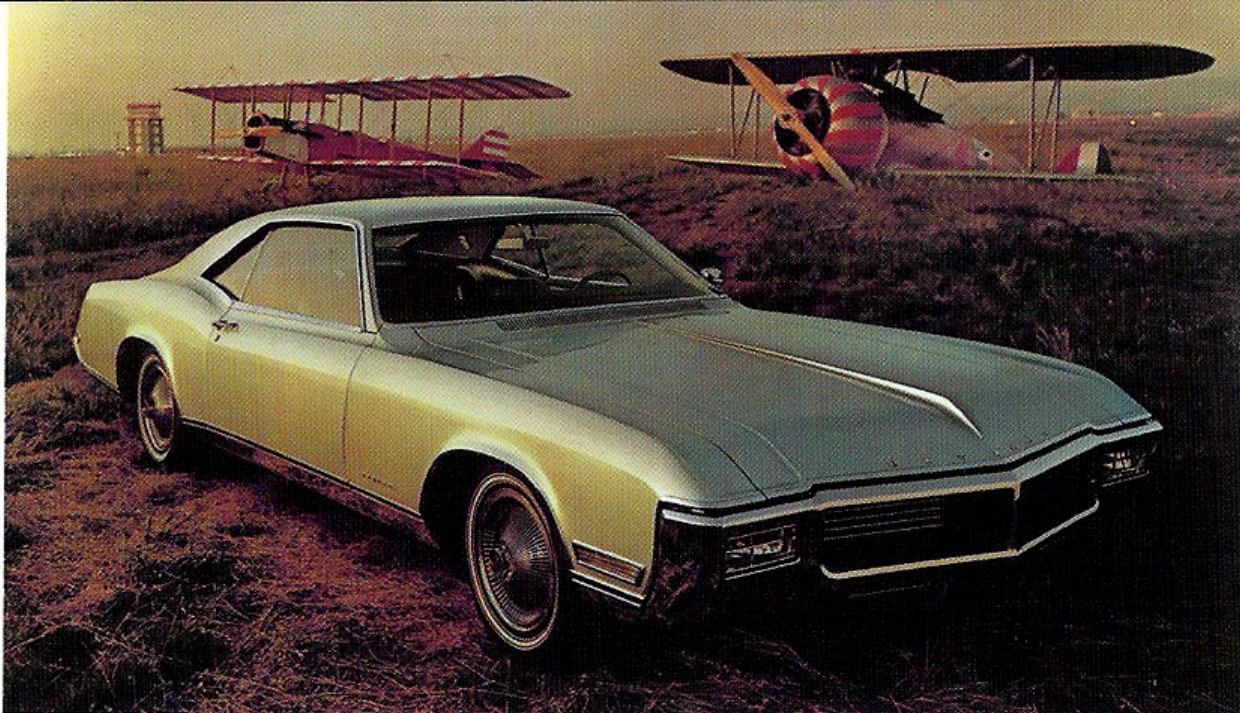
Although the first true Riviera was produced for 1963, Buick had been using the name as early as 1949 to delineate its Roadmaster Riviera "hard-top convertibles," a popular style that eliminated the center side pillar. In the 1950s, the Riviera name also described specific Special, Century, Super and Limited models.

The first true Riviera was introduced for '63, and it was a hit. Sales for the first model year totaled 37,179. By 1969, annual sales were close to 50,000. The original Riviera was produced in only one model, a coupe, and had a 401-cubic-inch V-8 engine with 325 horsepower. The price was \$4,333. A \$50 option was a bored-out engine of 425 cubic inches with 340 horsepower. Car and Driver magazine said the '63 model "stands alone among American cars in providing a combination of luxury, performance and general roadworthiness that approaches Bentley Continental standards at less than half the price."

In 1965, the brand flexed its muscle when the Riviera Gran Sport, equipped with a 360-horsepower V-8 engine, went from zero-to-60 mph in a mere seven seconds. This impressive clocking, coupled with new, stylish disappearing headlamps and an ongoing reputation for performance and comfort, enabled the Riviera to win the "Top Performance Car of the Year" award from Cars Magazine. In '66, Riviera continued to reinvent itself with







(Opposite) The 1967 Riviera, with the continuation of the 1966 Riviera style changes, stood out for its redesigned grille, longer hood, more sloping windshield, modified fastback roof and rear deck and frameless side windows without vents.

(Left) Riviera Gran Sport for 1968 featured a 430 cubic inch motor, with a single four-barrel carburetor, which enabled the car to exceed speeds of 130 miles per hour.



(Left) In terms of total sales, the 1969 Riviera remains one of the most popular models ever produced by Buick – with close to 50,000 units sold.





(Opposite) It wasn't long before Riviera's clean design, shown in 1968, began influencing other Buick car lines with its sloped roofline, lower hood and shorter rear deck.

(Left) The 1969 Riviera was the last model to feature hidden headlamps in its grille package.



(Left) The 1970 Riviera featured newly designed grilles, bumpers and ornamentation.



(Opposite) Riviera's controversial new design for 1971 included a boat-tail rear end that swept down to a point.

(Above) Not since the 1930s had a major manufacturer offered boat-tail styling, seen on this 1973 model.

amenities such as a new grille, longer hood, more sloping windshield and modified fastback roof. However, the real innovation wasn't in what Buick added, but what it left out. Riviera set a trend by eliminating front seat window vents from its models.

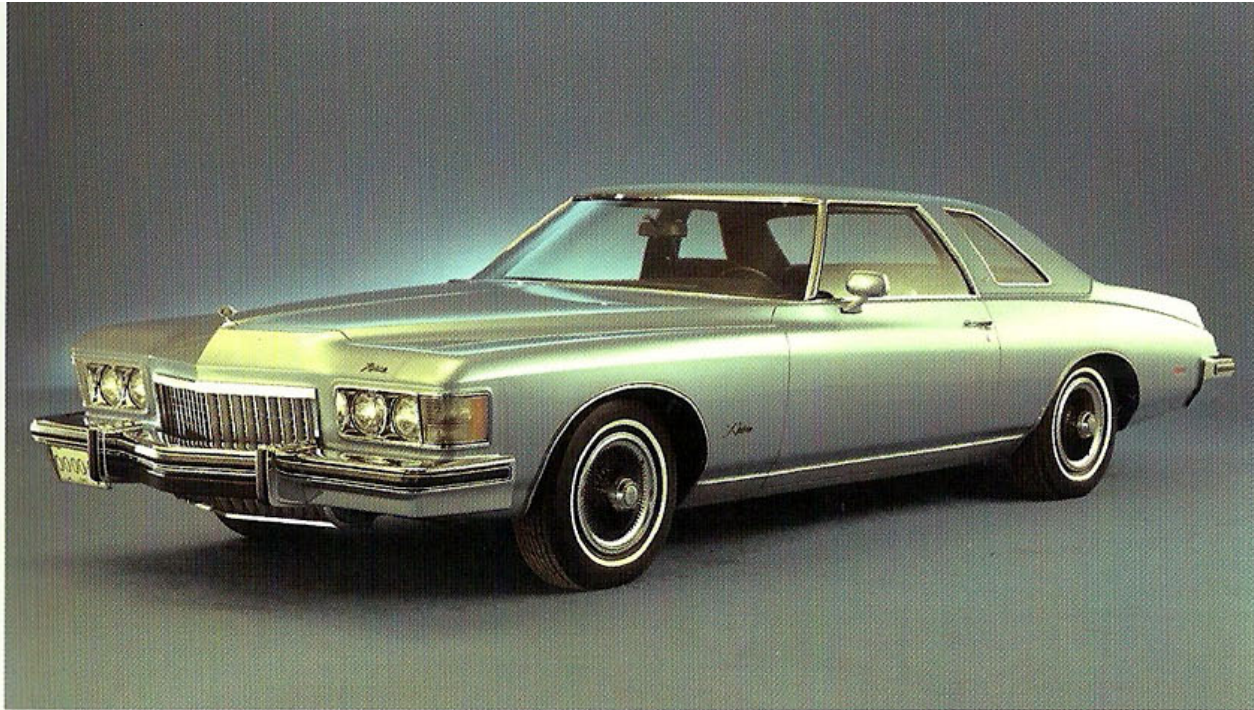
The biggest design change occurred in 1971, when the boat-tail styling appeared on the Riviera. This was one of the most controversial cars of its time. While the boat-tail is considered desirable by many present-day vintage automobile collectors, it was widely criticized at the time – even by its designers. By the 1974 model year, the boat-tail was gone – though now there was criticism that the new model was devoid of any distinguishing features. A highlight of this decade was the release of Buick's 75th anniversary edition of the Riviera in 1978. This car, of which 2,899 models were produced, was painted with the lower body in silver and the upper portion in black.

The 1979 Riviera – Buick's first front-wheel-drive car – was a hit the day it wheeled into showrooms across America. The turbocharged S Type was named Motor Trend magazine's "Car of the Year." The buying public was equally impressed, purchasing 50,449 units that year.

Between 1982 and 1985, Buick answered the country's demand for more fun from their vehicles. Riviera was offered for the first time as a convertible, available in

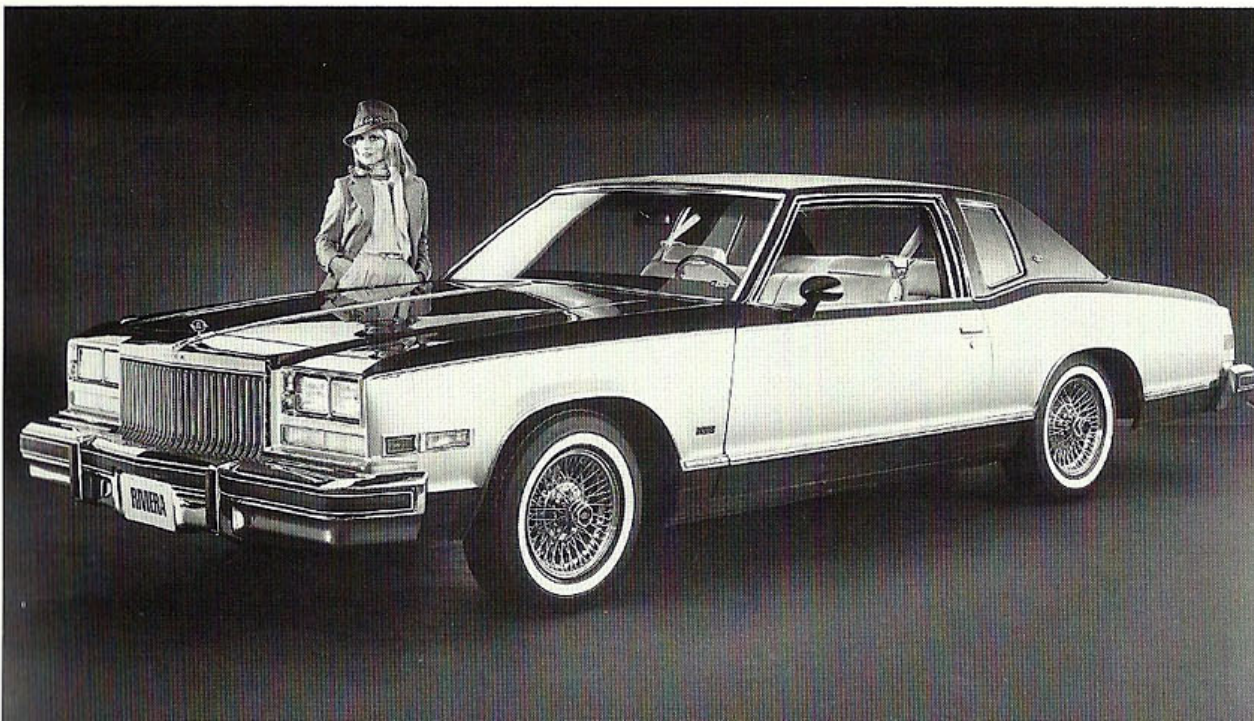




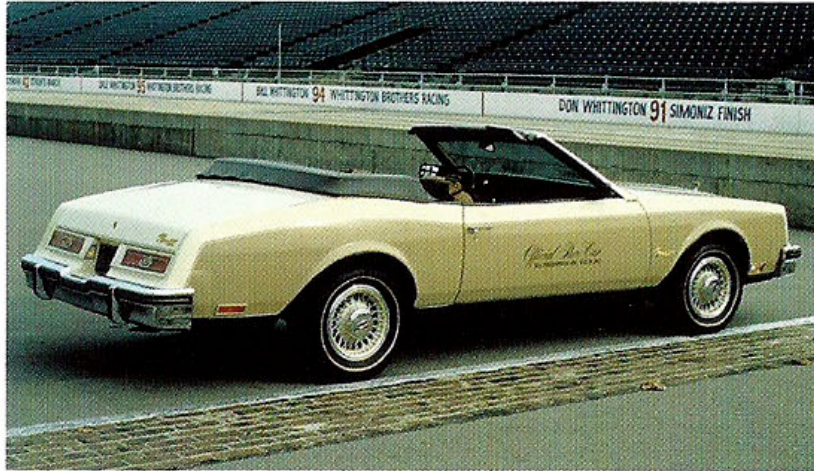


(Opposite) Inspired by the original 1963 model, the redesigned 1979 Riviera S Type earned Motor Trend's "Car of the Year" honors. It was the first model to feature computerized digital instrumentation.

(Left) By 1974, the Riviera's controversial boat-tail design was eliminated.



(Left) A special 1978 edition Riviera marked Buick's 75th anniversary. Only 2,899 were produced with a silver lower and black upper body as well as a black hood, trunk lid and vinyl roof.



(Above) Riviera convertible with a sophisticated twin-turbo engine was the official pace car of the 1983 Indianapolis 500.

(Opposite) The 1985 Riviera convertible was the last model to offer the soft top roof option.

white or red. A supplier executed the conversions to Buick's specifications. Popular Mechanics magazine described the stylish drop-tops as "the Rolls-Royce of American convertibles – a stunning \$25,000 package." Their presence also helped spearhead the resurgence of the convertible market which had disappeared from the American landscape during the 1970s.

Buick gained further attention in 1983 when Riviera was named the official pace car of the Indianapolis 500. The special edition Riviera convertible, powered by a twin-turbocharged 4.1-liter Buick V-6 engine, was a natural for this pre-eminent race, packing 450 horsepower.

Lloyd E. Reuss, then Buick's general manager, said the engine "may well be the most technically sophisticated powerplant ever to appear at Indianapolis Motor Speedway, in a pace car or in a race."

The 1986-88 downsized Rivieras were much less popular than the 1979-85 coupes. However, customers were intrigued with the Riviera's latest technology, video-screen instrument panels. To meet market demands, in 1989 Riviera was lengthened 11 inches by stretching the rear-end design. The Riviera team, under the direction of Anthony H. Derhake, who would become Buick's chief engineer, compressed the normal three-year development time into 1-1/2 years. Sales doubled from 1988 to '89.





Because a totally redesigned Riviera for 1995 (originally planned for '94) was to be introduced in dealer showrooms in the early summer of 1994, Buick decided not to continue the previous model and so there was no 1994 Riviera. Besides a spectacular design, the 1995 Riviera also boasted one of the most rigid body structures in the world. Riviera was powered by a 3800 Series II V-6 engine with a supercharged version optional. The 240-horsepower supercharged engine first became standard for 1998. At its unveiling, the design received endless praise. The sentiment still rings true today, especially among members of the automotive media. "What's particularly wonderful about this sleek and beautifully proportioned design is the way it changes when viewed from different angles," remarked Al Haas, a Philadelphia-based automotive writer. "In effect, it keeps reinventing itself as you walk around it."

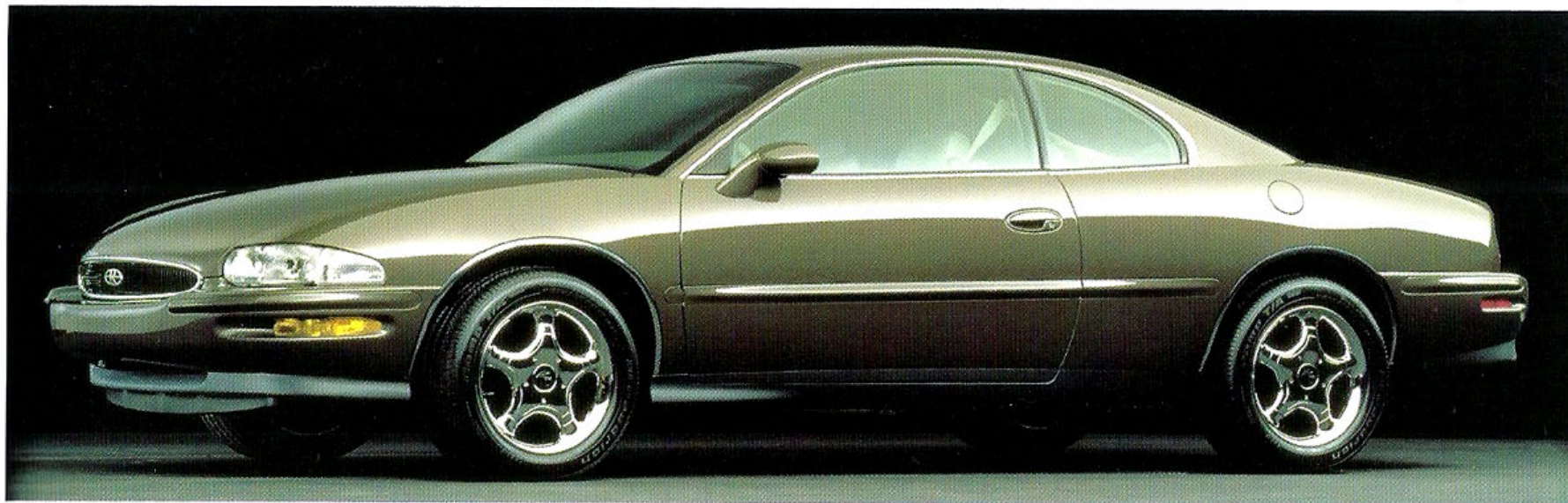
Riviera's heritage has been a long and celebrated journey. Its evolution followed the ebbs and flows of American culture – spontaneous, robust, dramatic at times, and ultimately stylish and sophisticated. Although the name has been retired – at least temporarily – Riviera will be remembered as an unusually stylish American luxury car. The model lasted more than 35 years, involving thousands of people and impacting the lives of a million more.



(Opposite) The 1995 Riviera is viewed by many automotive media as having the best overall design of any vehicle in the '90s.

(Above) The 1999 Silver Arrow caps four decades of production during which the Riviera has become one of America's most distinctive automobiles.





This beautiful 1996 Riviera features enhancements by fashion designer Richard Tyler and was raffled to support GM Concept:Cure, a GM/fashion industry program to raise funds for breast cancer research. The exterior is painted in two rich shades of mocha brown. Custom chrome wheels feature a laser-cut Richard Tyler logo. The interior design of the Richard Tyler Riviera showcases Tyler's attention to detail and fine workmanship. Exquisite stitching forms an intricate design on the taupe pearlized leather seats. Even the floor mats bear a special Tyler design. A second version of this car was also produced and raffled for GM Concept:Cure.





RECOLLECTIONS OF THE 'RIV': A DESIGNER'S VIEW



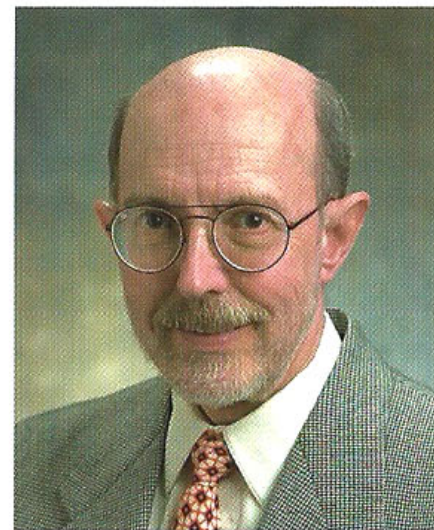
During its 35 years, Buick's Riviera has undergone a number of transformations. Usually flamboyant, seldom mundane and at best simply gorgeous, the Riviera stands as one of the most distinctive vehicles in the history of American automobile design.

Bill Porter, a retired Buick chief designer and automotive historian/professor, has had a hand in a number of the Riviera's eight major body configurations. According to Porter, the Riviera's legend was established with its inaugural model in 1963. "The 1963 Riviera was the first 'personal luxury' car in automotive history," he said. "It had its own special identity – the perfect combination of elegance and performance."

With a sleek, sporty design, this contoured, two-door hardtop was a hit among both male and female consumers. Buick continued this popular body style for the next two years, adding only slight modifications such as disappearing headlamps.

Despite the ongoing popularity of the original body, Buick unveiled an all-new Riviera in 1966. Still the epitome of the personal luxury car, the 1966 was even more dashing and graceful than its predecessors.

"The 1966 Riv is considered one of the most beautiful Rivieras of all time," Porter recalled. "It is one of the finest designs in a decade known for handsome automobiles



(Above) William L. Porter, retired chief of Buick's exterior design studio.

(Opposite) The Detroit Public Library's National Automotive History Collection once classified Riviera's last model line, shown here in its 1998 form, as the "most collectible car of the future."

and it's one of the most beautiful cars ever produced by General Motors."

This popular body style continued until 1970. Then Buick's designers created a radically new look for the 1971 Riviera – exchanging its sloping trunk line with a fastback shape terminating in a "boat-tail" configuration.

"The boat-tails were patterned after similar trunks on smaller sports cars, such as the Corvette Sting Ray," Porter said. "The feeling among many designers at the time was that the Riviera was too big for the boat-tail styling. They felt the larger body made the boat-tail effects appear overly stated and forceful."

Or as Bill Mitchell, the former styling chief at General Motors, once commented, "What hurt the boat-tail was the decision to widen it. It got so wide, a speedboat became a tugboat."

This opinion was shared by many consumers, who avoided the longer Rivieras, resulting in poor sales. Two years later, the boat-tails were discontinued in favor of a more traditional design. (In later years, however, the boat-tail Riviera became a favorite of collectors.)

According to Porter, the Riviera continued to muddle through the '70s, lacking the uniqueness enjoyed by earlier models. But in 1979, the distinctiveness and flair reminiscent of past Rivieras returned.

"The Riviera from 1979 to 1985 was enormously successful in the marketplace because it had regained its own style – its combination of grace with formality," Porter said. "The massive central grille gave the car a stateliness, while the long flowing fender lines provided the flair.

"The boxy, razor edge upper provided the requisite dressiness," he added. "The combination held great appeal for its particular market segment at the time."

As an extra bonus, between 1982 and 1985 Buick produced Riviera convertibles in red and white.

In an era known for "downsizing," Buick released a smaller, more fuel-efficient version in 1986. Porter said Buick's decision to downsize the Riviera was a poor one, alienating those buyers who had come back to the larger 1979-85 Rivieras.

One of the most innovative features of the 1986-88 Rivieras was the video-screen instrument panel. These interiors were years ahead of their time, but consumers offered mixed reviews. The instrument panel was changed back to a more conventional layout in 1989, and the overall vehicle was lengthened by 11 inches by stretching the rear-end design.

It wasn't until the early 1990s that the Buick design staff was given the opportunity to return the Riviera to glory – with an all-new design. Designers called on a



number of great cars of the past to serve as their conceptual inspiration. They included: the 1963 Riviera; the 1966 Riviera; a wild Italian show car from the 1950s dubbed the B.A.T. 7; the E Type Jaguar of the 1960s; and the designers' favorite Buick from the past, the 1942-48 "C" Body.

"Each of these great cars had some quality or characteristic that we wanted to attain in the 1995 Riviera. These cars were our benchmarks, so to speak," Porter said. "We wanted to draw spirit from them, to equal or exceed their excellence. (But) we had absolutely no intention of copying them in any way. We did not want a retro car. Our goal was to create a potent new statement that would inspire Buick now and in the future."

Early on, Porter's team started off with the design theme from the Lucerne, a Buick concept car which proved successful on the show circuit during the early 1990s. However, as the design progressed, the Lucerne theme proved less and less compatible with the spacious new seating package. However, Eric Clough, a designer on the team, created a sketch featuring a new elliptical front end. This concept led the team to develop a daring ellipsoidal fuselage theme and developed the "fault planes" running the length of the body through the hood and deck, and the "Coke bottle" waistline.

"You could feel it in your bones that this was the great new design theme we were looking for," Porter said. "This new theme worked with the package – its forms and surfaces could provide for roominess, structural superiority, safety and total performance that the engineering team was building into this new vehicle."

Porter said the 1995 Riviera fulfilled its promise of providing design direction for later Buicks, including two designed under Porter's direction. The 1997 Park Avenue and Park Avenue Ultra evolved from the major body motifs of the Riviera, adapted to the sedan package. The body forms of the 2000 LeSabre are also based on the Riviera, but with a totally different emphasis in keeping with this family vehicle.

Porter has been enthusiastic about the latest Riviera design – that culminated in the 1999 Riviera Silver Arrow – from the moment his team began working with the final design concept.

"The proportions, the position of the upper and lower sections of the body, the balance fore and aft, everything worked with this new theme," he said. "It was curved in all the right places. From the first week that the new theme came together, I had the very strong feeling we were working on a significant car. You just knew that this was going to be a great car."



R I V I E R A P R O D U C T I O N R E C O R D B Y M O D E L

YEAR	DESCRIPTION	UNITS	YEAR	DESCRIPTION	UNITS
1963	Model 4747 Two-Door Coupe	40,000	1980	Model 4EZ57 Two-Door Coupe	48,621
1964	Model 4747 Two-Door Coupe	37,658	1981	Model 4EZ57 Two-Door Coupe	52,007
1965	Model 49447 Two-Door Coupe (Includes Gran Sport 3,355)	34,586	1982	Model 4EZ57 Two-Door Coupe	42,823
1966	Model 49487 Two-Door Coupe (Includes Gran Sport 5,718)	45,348		Model 4EZ67 Convertible	1,248
1967	Model 49487 Two-Door Coupe (Includes Gran Sport 4,837)	42,799	1983	Model 4EZ57 Two-Door Coupe	48,484
1968	Model 49487 Two-Door Sport Coupe (Includes Gran Sport 5,337)	49,284		Model 4EZ67 Convertible	1,750
1969	Model 49487 Two-Door Sport Coupe (Includes Gran Sport 5,272)	52,872	1984	Model 4EZ57 Two-Door Coupe	57,363
1970	Model 49487 Two-Door Sport Coupe (Includes Gran Sport 3,505)	37,336		Model 4EZ67 Convertible	500
1971	Model 49487 Two-Door Coupe (Includes Gran Sport 3,175)	33,810	1985	Model 4EZ57 Two-Door Coupe	64,905
1972	Model 49487 Two-Door Coupe (Includes Gran Sport 2,171)	33,728		Model 4EZ67 Convertible	400
1973	Model 4EY87 Two-Door Coupe (Includes Gran Sport 3,933)	34,080	1986	Model 4EZ57 Two-Door Coupe	22,138
1974	Model 4EY87 Two-Door Hardtop (Includes Gran Sport 4,119)	20,129	1987	Model 4EZ57 Two-Door Coupe (Includes T Type 2,587)	15,223
1975	Model 4EZ87 Two-Door Hardtop (Includes Gran Sport 3,101)	17,306	1988	Model 4EZ57 Two-Door Coupe (Includes T Type 2,065)	8,625
1976	Model 4EZ87 Two-Door Hardtop	20,082	1989	Model 4EZ57 Two-Door Coupe	21,189
1977	Model 4EZ37 Two-Door Coupe	26,138	1990	Model 4EZ97 Two-Door Coupe	22,526
1978	Model 4EZ37 Two-Door Coupe	20,535	1991	Model 4EZ57 Two-Door Coupe	13,168
1979	Model 4EZ57 Two-Door Coupe	52,181	1992	Model 4EZ57 Two-Door Coupe	12,585
			1993	Model 4EZ57 Two-Door Coupe	4,555
			1994	No Production	—
			1995	Model GD07 Two-Door Coupe	41,422
			1996	Model GD07 Two-Door Coupe	18,036
			1997	Model GD07 Two-Door Coupe	18,827
			1998	Model GD07 Two-Door Coupe	10,953
			1999	Model GD07 Two-Door Coupe	1,956
				Silver Arrow	200
				TOTAL PRODUCTION:	1,127,376

Riviera®