



# **Cadillac & LaSalle Club**

## **Potomac Region**

### **Caddie Chronicle**

#### **July 2017**



#### **LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

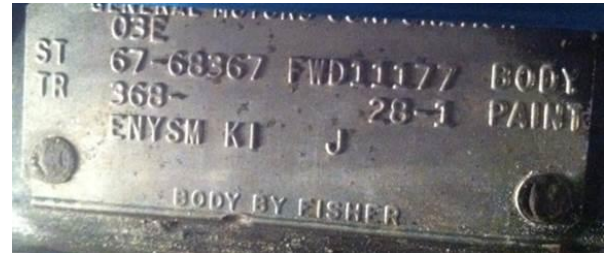


June 1, 2017

Vince,

I enjoyed your June 2017 **Caddie Chronicle**, including the article by Chuck Piel and Alan Haas on body shipments and the Cars Built report. Mr. Piel focused on an April 1967 car. Please let me add to the story.

For a number of years, I did research on the body ID plates of Cadillacs of the 1960s and 1970s. Their format depends on the model year and the plant which made the body. The coding practices differed somewhat from plant to plant and year to year, which makes it difficult to generalize about the codes on the body ID plates. For a 1964 De Ville, Fisher Body Division's "Fleetwood" plant is coded "FW" in the upper right, but for MY 1965, the code of that plant became "FWD" and moved to the upper center of the plate, as Mr. Piel's photo (at right) shows. Some plates have "P21", which signifies Plant 21 on Piquette Avenue in Detroit, where the Fleetwood 75 bodies were made.



True, some Cadillac bodies were built at the Fisher Body plant at South Gate, California (near Los Angeles), but that was not until the late 1970s. That one is indicated by "C" on the body plate, possibly standing for "California".

Remember, the body ID plate was mostly before bar coding. It helped the body plant workers get the right options onto the right body, and it probably also helped workers at the final assembly plant sort finished bodies waiting their turn to be put on the assembly line.

The codes on the body ID plate most closely corresponded to a broadcast sheet that was used to make just the body. By the 1960s, it was printed by computer and accompanied the body in the body plant. Body broadcast sheets are rather scarce but can sometimes be found under seats, in doors, and so on. The body broadcast sheet and its more lasting brother, the body ID plate, have codes only for the body. The Fisher Body plant was not responsible for the chassis options that were to be installed after the body left their plant, such as the axle ratio or tires.

At the final assembly plant, a different broadcast sheet was paired with the chassis to guide that plant's workers. It mentioned things like the axle ratio and tires.

The body ID plate was made by Fisher Body Division. The Cars Built report was an immense production summary written monthly by Cadillac Division. GM Heritage Center/Allied-Vaughn will not scan its hundreds of pages to determine for a hobbyist the rarity of an option, so Mr. Piel is right to doubt certain claims about the number of cars equipped with certain options.



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In the 1970s, the number of body options for Cadillacs increased, e.g., lighted vanity mirrors, sun roofs and special editions. Unlike the other body plants, the Fleetwood plant valiantly tried to indicate many of them on the ID plate. To do so, they enlarged the body ID plate, devised some of their own codes, and recycled codes when certain options became standard. Certain option codes at the Fleetwood body plant came to diverge from or conflict with those at Cadillac Division! In the case of "S" for 1971, it's the difference between a remote-control trunk release and pull-down installed by the Fleetwood body plant, versus "S" in the 1971 Cadillac

Data Book (pictured above via the editor), where it stood for a sun roof, which was not installed by either Fisher Body Division or Cadillac Division, but still received manufacturing code "CA1"! Such was the amazing and confusing world of Cadillac codes for the 1970s.

Do not panic if you cannot determine from a Cars Built report what factory-installed options your car received. Some Cars Built pages show option groups that may be difficult to decipher. Indeed, some of the tiny print is difficult to decipher!

Likewise, do not panic if your car has factory-installed options that were not recorded on the Cars Built report. For example, a Cars Built for April 1961 would have us believe that not a single car of 25 had an air conditioner! That column is blank.

Some of the codes on the body ID plate may not appear on the Cars Built report. The body ID plates were made by a different division of GM than the sales and final assembly documents.

Yes, the dealers had embossing machines to make Protect-O-Plates, and they also received a metal plate with the car to help them fill in their new car sales and service forms.

Some years ago, two gentlemen from your region, Jack McClow and Richard Sills, kindly made several trips to their cars and reported back to me about the body ID plates to help me decode Fisher Body codes of the 1970s.

Very truly yours,

Tom Hall  
Long Beach, California