

THE NAME GAME

by Joe Sage

The first thing you notice about the new Chevy Blazer is its name, a pleasant surprise for those who recall the name from long ago, perhaps even a bit of a shock for those who recall it as a different sort of vehicle. The passage of time—28 years since the last original full-size Blazer—can explain the difference. Then again, Chevy Tahoe has held the big Blazer slot since 1991, while the S-10 mid-size Blazer held the name till 2001. Next there was the Chevy TrailBlazer (a name that had been an S-10 Blazer trim level for two years prior) for about a decade, followed by about a decade without the name in play (not counting the complexities of parallel evolutions in other parts of the world).

Now, Chevrolet Blazer is back, though while the name is revived, the vehicle is all new. Suburban and Tahoe remain styled and built in the same vein as the Silverado 1500 pickup—following suit to the

original big Blazer—while the 2019 Blazer has unibody build and style in line with Chevy's other utilities—Trax, Equinox, Traverse.

As utility market share continues to eclipse cars, lineups are expanding, as well as their lingo, complicating longstanding compact-midsize-full-size terms. The 2019 Blazer is a new animal and fits in the lineup in a new spot, ostensibly between full-size Traverse and midsize Equinox, though its generous dimensions and cabin make it seem full-size, though with two rows to Traverse's three, while its persona and styling are distinct (even said to contain sporty cues from more distant cousin Camaro).

While folks debate whether the new Blazer looks like the original or was ever even supposed to, we just went for a couple of good long drives in it, one from the Valley to Prescott and back, then a few days later via Cottonwood to Sedona and back. The mission for the second one came up just as we returned from the first. Digging into GM's historic materials for a photo of the original big

Blazer, the blue and white '69 shown below—taken in Arizona—caught our eye. With solid clues from Nena Barlow of Barlow Adventures in Sedona (and Moab), we headed north on a partly rainy Memorial Day to seek the exact same spot. While we understand the evolution of the name versus the models, we found it irresistible to match the then-and-now Blazer nameplates in photos if we could. It took some serious orienteering and miles of vista-matching—and it's paved today—but finally the key elements were a lock. Neat find.

It's also evidence that while some things stay the same, others benefit from inevitable change. It's not your uncle's 40-year-old Blazer, nor is it meant to be (though those who prefer an original from then can of course still go out and find one.)

The all-new 2019 Blazer is a nice package. It's compact enough to provide tight maneuvers, while its power-to-weight ratio, though not extreme, is enough to chirp the tires at a stop sign.

Some features and controls are noteworthy.



SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE3.6L DOHC VVT dir inj, alum block/heads
 DRIVETRAINadvanced dual-clutch AWD
 HP/TORQUE308 hp / 270 lb-ft
 TRANSMISSION9-spd automatic
 SUSPENSION F: MacPherson strut indep w hydraulic control arm bushing, hollow stblzr bar; R: five-link indep w auxiliary spring aids, hollow stblzr bar
 STEERING...elec var rack & pinion, actv return assist
 BRAKES.....variable w pwr assist, Duralife rotors, low-drag calipers. F: 12.64 disc; R: 12.40 disc
 WHEELS(std 20" alum) 21" gloss black aluminum
 TIRESP265/45R21 ALS
 LENGTH / WB191.4 / 112.7 in
 TURNING CIRCLE38.7 ft
 HEADROOM (F/R)(w/o sunroof) 39.8 / 38.6 in
 LEGROOM (F/R)41.0 / 39.6 in
 CARGO CAPACITY30.5 / 64.2 cu.ft
 TOW CAPACITY4500 lb (w AWD & trailering pkg)
 WEIGHT4246 lb
 FUEL / CAPACITYregular unl / 21.7 gal
 MPG18/25/21 (city/hwy/comb)

RS INCL: 3.6L V6, blacked-out exterior cures w hexagon black mesh grille, RS badging, dual exhaust outlets w rectangular chrome tips

BASE PRICE\$43,500
 ENHANCED CONVENIENCE & DRIVER CONFIDENCE II PKG: Memory settings, heated-vented front seats, heated rear seats, power tilt/tele wheel, rear camera mirror, HD surround vision, safety alert seat, Chevy Infotainment 3, Bose premium audio, wireless charging, adaptive cruise, IntelliBeam headlights, following distance indicator, forward collision alert, forward auto brake, front pedestrian brake, lane keep assist, lane depart warning3575
 SUN & WHEELS PACKAGE: power tilt/slide pano sunroof, pwr sunshade, 21" gloss black alum wheels2495
 DESTINATION CHARGE1195
 TOTAL\$50,765



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