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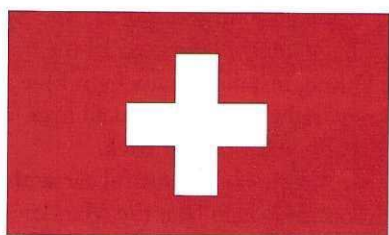
VINTAGE CHEVROLET CLUB OF AMERICA
JANUARY 2023



NEVER GIVE UP **TOURING**

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By Martin Sinzig, VCCA #46433, Berg, Switzerland



Jean-Marc Kohler giving plaque
to restaurant owner





AFTER PAUSING FOR TWO YEARS, THE LOUIS

Chevrolet Memorial Tour in Switzerland was back on. Its 23rd edition led a pack of 29 classic cars and trucks on a five-day trip through beautiful valleys and over steep mountain passes, beating the summer heat and proving the durability of the old machines. Ten Chevys were among them, ranging from a 1949 3100 Pickup to a 1975 Caprice Classic Convertible.

Loosely associated with the VCCA, the Louis Chevrolet Memorial has its roots in the early 1990s, at a time when more and more people became aware of the role that Louis Chevrolet played in the forming of the Chevrolet Motor Car Company. A first meeting was held back in 1991 in La Chaux-de-Fonds, the famous watch-making town and birthplace of Louis Chevrolet, celebrating 80 years of the Chevrolet brand and remembering its namegiver's death 50 years earlier.

Jean-Marc Kohler, a classic car enthusiast born in La Chaux-de-Fonds, was the organizing force behind this first event. He claimed a relative of Louis Chevrolet approached the local tourist office earlier on, which kind of sparked the idea for this meeting. Approximately 40 cars, mostly Chevys but also two rare Durant cars were present.




Martin Sinzig's 1964 Chevelle

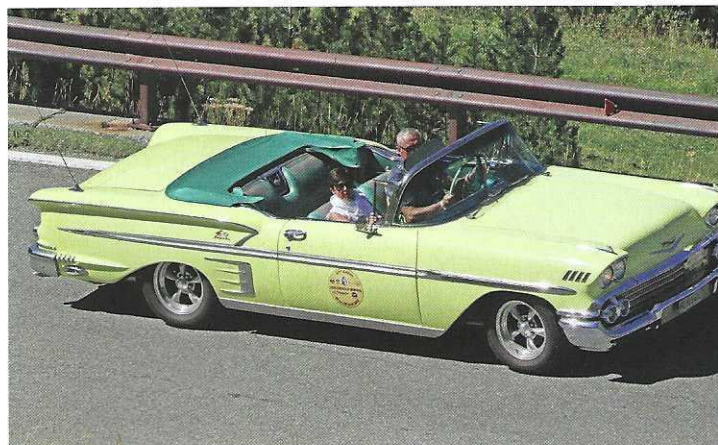


A few years later, Jean-Marc joined forces with the tourist services and came up with the concept of a multi-day tour. A first two-day tour was organized in 1997, which was followed by events on a yearly basis and expanded up to five-day tours, mostly starting and finishing in La Chaux-de-Fonds and exploring the footsteps of Louis Chevrolet's early years.

A three-day trip in 2000 led the participants to Beaune, France, the wine capital of Burgundy where the Chevrolet family moved to around 1886 and where Louis spent his teenage years before leaving for Paris and preparing for his emigration to North America. In 2011, a one-day centennial meeting in La Chaux-de-Fonds was held, attracting 1,000 Chevys from Switzerland, Germany and France. A five-day tour in 2014 explored the car manufacturing history of FIAT in Turin, Italy, which is in some way related to Louis Chevrolet's racing career, as he started off racing in a FIAT back in 1905.

More memorable tours were to follow until pandemic restrictions hit. But finally, in 2022, the Louis Chevrolet Memorial came back to life, with a demanding route. Stretching over a distance of almost 600 miles, more than 10 mountain passes had to be conquered. Man and machine were tested on steep passages, narrow roads and tight turns, only to be rewarded by breathtaking views and beautiful backroads in the mountainous areas of southeastern and central Switzerland.

Pulling off this latest tour has been possible thanks to the effort of Jean-Marc Kohler and his team of seven car enthusiasts. Some of the participants have done the Louis Chevrolet Memorial tour for 20 years and more, and although attendance could have been better, the organizers are hopeful to revive the tradition and to attract more and younger car enthusiasts. But most of all, it's about having fun touring our country and paying a tribute to our beloved Louis Chevrolet, who coined the phrase "Never Give Up." 



Top: 1957 Corvette reaching the top of a mountain pass

Center: Lorella & Pierre-Olivier Pfirter having fun with their 1958 Impala

Bottom: 1952 Woody on mountain pass