

Mr. Chevrolet

Most people know the name Chevrolet, but few people know much about the man behind the Chevrolet brand.

The Chevrolet car company is actually named for one man — Louis Chevrolet — a dare-devil who came from France to America and became famous as a racing driver.

SOME FACTS ABOUT LOUIS CHEVROLET:

- ▶ As early as July 16, 1895, Louis Chevrolet was the winner of a French cycling race as reported in the "Journal de Beaune."
- ▶ In May 1905, Chevrolet's name first appeared in press reports in connection with motorized races. Driving a massive Fiat racer at Morris Park, N.Y., Chevrolet broke the track's flying-mile record with a 68-mph run. He then went on to win a three-mile flying-start race at the same event.
- ▶ During the 1906 speed trials at Ormond Beach, Fla., Chevrolet drove a French-built Darracq race car, powered by what was at the time a spectacularly powerful 200-hp V8, to a then world-record speed of 118.7 mph.
- ▶ On March 5, 1909, Chevrolet was engaged as a driver for William C. "Billy" Durant's famed Buick racing team. Subsequently, Chevrolet's successes as a race car driver multiplied. While brothers Arthur and Gaston would also race professionally, Louis generally lead the Chevrolet team when they competed together.
- ▶ Despite all of the spectacular successes, Chevrolet paid a price for his racing career. Celebrated in the American press as "the dare-devil Frenchman," he is said to have spent nearly three years in hospital beds as the result of various accidents. When the youngest Chevrolet brother, Gaston, died as the result of a racing accident in 1920, Louis vowed to never race again.

