

SPORTS CARS



Introduction

First motor vehicles were associated with science, engineering and a new kind of transportation. At the end of the nineteenth century, car racing began to gain popularity. In the beginning of the twentieth century and especially after First World War, numerous attempts have been made to establish land-speed records. Special cars have been designed and built explicitly for racing. However, development of the car industry and changes of customers' attitudes evolved sport cars into a product for satisfaction of customers' demands. Thus, today's concept of sport cars is way beyond small low vehicles with high-powered engines, two doors, specialized suspension and one or two seats. Intention based concept of a sports car gained popularity and support. This concept implies that any modern vehicle, including high-powered sedan car, can be considered a sports car if it is made for greater performance or energy in comparison with standard choices.

What Is a Sports Car: Analysis and Evaluation

There are various definitions of sports car depending on a point of view of the authority that creates definition. Former "classic" image of a sports car was "An automobile equipped for racing, especially aerodynamically shaped one-passenger or two-passenger vehicle having a low center of

gravity and steering and suspension designed for precise controls at high speed" (American Heritage Dictionary). The whole definition sounds ancient by today's standards, perceptions and practices, but sports sedans fulfill most of the criteria. Modern technologies allow taking attributes of a sport car and incorporating it into a mass production vehicle. Thus, many "relatives" of sports car were created with claims that they were sport cars as much as their prototype. Distinction between "classic" and contemporary understanding of a sports car got blurred since experts, manufacturers, general public and insurance companies did not follow strict guidelines for identification of what sport car is.

Definition of a sport car is being stretched and applied loosely to describe a wider range of sporty vehicles. Thus, textbook definition of a sports car is becoming less relevant and applied. Every attribute that depicts a sport car can be challenged and made in an attribute of "non-sport" car that results in the creation of a sports car "relative". Car manufacturers enhanced this type of "relatives" with numerous features of a sports car. Thus, many vehicles that are called a sports car might be a far concept from classic sports car definition. However, this does not undermine sporty characteristics and superior performance of sedans that do not fit into a rigid framework of a sports car definition. Additionally, dictionary does not capture the way public views a sports sedan. Thus, old concept of a sports car has been challenged since a wide variety of cars is being labeled as sports cars. Although modern sedan descendants of a "sport breed" might not fulfill every technical requirement, their look, performance, energy and spirit give us right to call them nothing else but sports cars. Thus, sports car may be purpose built or simply a "road-going sports car" (Meaning of sports car; Bharat). Dictionary definition of two-seat rule appears to be outdated. Presently, many sport cars offer four doors and two back seats. Although the status of a four passenger sedan as a sports car is questioned (Spell),

such cars as four doors Mustang and Camaro are often referred to as sports cars by their manufacturers, some liberal experts, insurance companies and the general public. Recent terminology was enriched by new definitions of the high performance cars. It includes such labels as "sport sedans", "near sport cars" and "sporty cars". It seems that narrow original meaning of a sports car has been redefined. Car industry has developed "sport packages and add-ons" that increase performance, change looks and enhance features of what could have otherwise been a regular car (Meaning of sports car). This allows turning a sedan into a successful sports car. In some circles suspension and handling of the car are considered to be main attribute of a sports vehicle. Since lines of distinction become more blurred, intension based classification for defining the status of a sport vehicle gains more support. Intension based definition states, "When a vehicle is made for performance much more compared to utility, it's a sport vehicle" (Meaning of sports car). Such definition does not specify the number of doors, passengers, size, height or steering and suspension differences and does not exclude sedans from "sporty" car family. Former narrow definitions of sports car are not suitable for today's diverse automotive variety. "If your vehicle was created rich in performance or race-like abilities in your mind, it may most likely be securely called a sport vehicle. Some purists may balk at this type of liberal perspective, but alternative definitions fall far lacking precisely distinguishing sport cars from regular production models" (Meaning of sports car).

Comparison of two vehicles confirms that classic two door sports car and a four door sport sedan are very much alike (see table 1). Thus, sedan can claim his status of a sports car.

Table 1

Comparison of a sport sedan Dodge Charger SRT8 RWD and Chevrolet Camaro SS

Characteristics	Model	
Vehicle specifications	Dodge Charger SRT8 RWD, sport sedan, four doors	Chevrolet Camaro SS coupe, sports car, two doors
Standard engine	6.4 L	6.2 L
Standard transmission	5 Speed automatic	6 Speed automatic/manual
Fuel economy city/hwy	14/23	16/25
Combined fuel economy	17	19
Horse power	470	426
Price	\$45,450	\$37,035

Sources: Technical specs; 2011-14 Dodge Charger; 2013 Chevrolet Camaro SS; Car and Driver.

Conclusion

Originally, sports cars were meant to be racing vehicles. However, current concept of sports cars stretches beyond small low vehicles with high-powered engines, two doors, specialized suspension and one or two seats. Presently, intention based concept of a sports car gains a lot of support. This concept implies that any modern vehicle, including high powered sedan car, can be considered a sports car if it is made for greater performance or energy in comparison with standard choices.