# 5 Legendary Muscle Cars That Debuted During the 1964 Model Year

Throughout its history the American automotive industry had several epic model years, but few were as memorable as 1964. For automotive enthusiasts, 1964 meant the year that muscle cars rose to prominence, kicking off the most exciting era of the American automotive industry.

Let’s take a moment and rediscover the five most impressive muscle that debuted during the 1964 model year.

### 🏁 Pontiac GTO




Often called the **GOAT (Greatest Of All Time)**, the Pontiac GTO is widely credited with helping launch the muscle car era. Debuting in 1964 as a **performance package for the Pontiac Tempest/LeMans**, the GTO brought Pontiac’s powerful 389-cubic-inch V8 to an intermediate-size car.

But the GTO wasn’t alone. About six months later, Oldsmobile introduced its own high-performance package for the F-85 and Cutlass: the **442**,
originally referring to a **four-barrel carburetor, four-speed transmission, and dual exhaust**.

### 🏁 Oldsmobile 442



The 1964 Oldsmobile 4-4-2 featured a 330-cubic-inch V8 producing 310 horsepower, along with heavy-duty suspension and dual exhausts. Unlike the GTO, the 4-4-2 came standard
with a Muncie M20 four-speed manual transmission, making it a serious performer that could hold its own in a stoplight battle.

**🏁 Chevrolet Chevelle Malibu SS**



The 1964 Chevrolet Chevelle joined GM's growing lineup of midsize cars, offering several body styles and options. The sporty SS package initially offered a 283-cubic-inch V8 producing 220 horsepower. Midway through the year, Chevy added a 327 V8 available with 250 or 300 horsepower. With the 300-hp version, the Chevelle became a true muscle car, setting the stage for the legendary 1965 SS Z-16.

**🏁 1964 Ford Fairlane Thunderbolt**



As Ford embraced its "Total Performance" racing philosophy, it answered Chrysler's 426 HEMI-powered drag specials with the Fairlane Thunderbolt. Based on the two-door Fairlane, the Thunderbolt was stripped down for weight and powered by a 427-cubic-inch V8 producing 425 horsepower.

Only 100 were built, and the Thunderbolt went on to win the 1964 NHRA Super Stock championship, becoming a legendary drag-racing icon.

🏁 **Plymouth Savoy A-864 Super Stock**




In 1964, Chrysler introduced the legendary 426 HEMI “Elephant”, initially developed for NASCAR and NHRA racing. Plymouth installed the race HEMI in the lightweight Savoy A-864 Super Stock, stripping weight and replacing steel panels with aluminum. Rated at 425 horsepower, the HEMI-powered Savoy dominated drag racing in 1964, winning the NHRA U.S. Nationals and Winter. Nationals in the Top Stock Eliminator class. 1964 was truly a landmark year for American performance cars.

1964 was truly a landmark year for American performance cars. From the Pontiac GTO to the Plymouth Savoy, these five machines helped define the muscle car era and left a lasting mark on automotive history. Their power, performance, and unmistakable personalities continue to make 1964 one of the most exciting years in American automotive history.

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