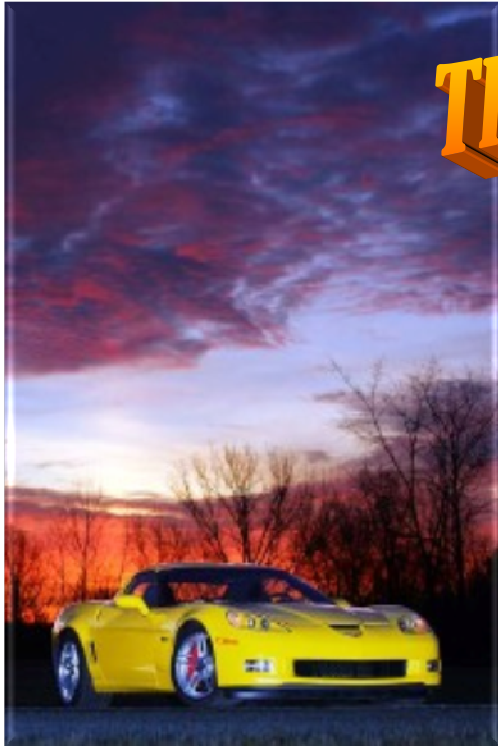


The C-6 - Best of Show (so far)



So what is it with the C6? Is it an evolution of the C5, or is it an all-new car? I remember reading somewhere that only one or two parts from the C5 carried over to the C6, but I can't remember what they were. The LS1 was completely redesigned into the LS2 for the base car, no suspension parts were carried over, no body parts, no interior parts. Not even the foot pedals. Yet it looks suspiciously like the C5.

Corvette's current Chief Engineer since 1990, Dave Hill, said *"The development of the C6 intends to not only replace the outgoing C5 Corvette, but also to create a 21st century Corvette that both thrills the legions of traditional loyalists and captures the imagination of a new generation of performance enthusiasts. The formula from the C5 era remains: extremely high*

performance capabilities in a car that offers great style, value and quality, with surprising comfort for daily driving. The C6 builds on that foundation and reaches beyond with dramatic increases in performance and refinement, wrapped in a passionate new design." He also said the design and engineering teams systematically searched out and destroyed every imperfection they could find. So, just maybe, you have it. He used the word, "replace" rather than "improve". It's an all-new car. However, having said that, it clearly didn't start from a clean sheet. Rather than the dragged-out 10 year gestation period of the C5, when that car was released in '98, talk about its replacement was already echoing in the meeting and lunch rooms. Work began in 2000, giving this car a 5 year birth period. Given the Japanese 3 year cycle, it's still long, but let's not forget that GM was still wounded financially and still caught between the car guys and accountants. The new Vette had to be fiscally responsible as well as continuing on Duntov's mantra of winning in the showrooms and the track. The competition had upped the ante and Corvette Racing now had a strong voice on what they needed to succeed at Le Mans and North American tracks – plus Dave Feehan, team director, was selling replaced race cars to European Teams who were experiencing great success and wanted more. This was in harmony with Chevy's desire to sell Corvettes in Europe – go to Porsche, BMW, Ferrari and Maserati's own turf just as they had come to America's shores. How do you sell Corvettes in Europe? Beat 'em on their own tracks! Already, on the first morning of practice at Le Mans, Frenchmen gather by the hundreds in the pre-dawn dark across from the Corvette pits just to hear that first start-up and cheer like mad at the sound of great American V-8 muscles!

So what? So the C6 was the first Corvette since '62 without pop-up headlights. Too much aerodynamic drag in those. The C6 was the first Corvette since '68 without a 5.7 liter (350 C.I.) engine. The base LS2 was 6.0 liters. It wasn't by accident that base horsepower went from 350 to 400. In '08 they even upped that to 430. The new Vette had C5 Z06 performance right off the showroom floor. Again, Dave Hill - *"The C6 is more competition-influenced – given our championship experience with Corvette Racing – than any previous Corvette. Our goal was a performance car at home in virtually any environment. That means more than just raw performance. It calls for improved ride comfort, a precisely-built and technically-sophisticated interior, and a sleek new body that is fresh and contemporary, while still instantly recognized as the new Corvette."* That sleek new body has a 0.28 coefficient of drag (cd) – slickest Corvette ever. Remarkably, the



C6 also produces hundreds of pounds of down force to keep the car stable and on the road as well. GM's European helped in another area – the C6 is five inches shorter than the C5 and one inch narrower. Old-world European roads made the C5 a very tight fit in too many places. Another racing enhancement to the C5 found its way into the production C6 – it's a front-feeder rather than a bottom-feeder. Air entering the radiator comes from the front grill rather than from underneath the nose. The shifter was redesigned and feels downright silky compared to the C5's but still retains the accuracy of gear selection. All the ergonomics were revisited and the entire cockpit layout is subtly changed to make it a more comfy place. A recent *Motor Trend* magazine compared the new Z06 to a number of other high-end cars in what was touted as a search for the "best driver's car". While the Z06 stood its ground very well, posting the fastest track time, best acceleration and braking performances as well as the top cornering numbers, they rated it mid-pack (behind a Mustang Boss 302!) simply because they didn't like how the driver's seat let the driver get thrown around too much on the track. After spending 3 weeks in my C5 this spring and never having a back-ache or even being uncomfortable, I've got to say that a driver's car should let the driver drive. And drive. And drive. Those hard Sparco seats in the Ferraris do hold you tight, but they are certainly no place to stay for even a day. Personally, I thought Motor Trend's work sucked. They've always had a European (read Porsche & Ferrari) bias. Don't think I'll renew my subscription.

But back to the C6. In particular Mr. Hill's first comment about searching out and destroying every imperfection they could find. While I have troubles finding imperfections in my C5, some of the issues which make the C6 more user-friendly are: 1) the new hood is 15% smaller, 35% lighter and 40% stiffer than mine; 2) the rear hatch has a single latch with is self-closing for proper tightness with the seals and better alignment (alright, that's a good answer after having to open a door to close my rear deck!); 3) doors are stiffer, lighter and easier to close; 4) GM's keyless access unlocks and locks the doors automatically and enables starting with the push of a button; and 5) the roof panel is 15% larger with greater stiffness and weighs the same. I'm sure there are a host of other things, like the new bushing materials in the suspension which last longer, are more precise and quieter, but we've got the point. They looked at everything and asked, "Can we make that better?" Gotta love it!

OK, OK, I know... If I don't say something about Corvette Racing I'll never hear the end of, right? The C6R took off where the C5R left off. It so dominated the GT-1 class of the American Le Mans Series that everyone else just stopped racing against them. True. They were the last ones standing. Doug Fehan and his team met with the ALMS folks and had a most unusual talk. They said they didn't like winning all the time without competition. After all, one of the chief marching orders of the team is to improve the street car with the technology learned on the track. A desire made manifest with the C6 like no other Corvette. ALMS officials met with the French & German Le Mans Series and they decided to shelf the GT-1 class, leaving only the GT class. Corvette would need a new car with a 5.5 liter engine and other spec changes, including the loss of the graphite brakes and aluminum frames, but they got paddle shifters.



The new GTs were based on the ZR1s instead of the 06s. The change has been hard on Corvette Racing. They have yet to win the series in GT, but hey, last year wasn't exactly a down year! They finished second in the team championship and the #4 cars driver finished second behind the BMWs, and by the way they DID win Le Mans by a long way, even after a member of the Saudi Royal Family who had no business being on the track took out the leading car after 20 hours. Could have been another 1-2 finish for the team with more 1-2 finishes than any other team in the history of the 24 hours of Le Mans. I'll bet they are working even now on how to



make their cars better, fix a tire wear problem and find their way to the front for 2012. It's pretty cool to drive a car on the street which is more like the car that won the 24 hours of Le Mans than any other car in that race!

Obviously Corvette isn't standing still for a minute. The release of the 505 hp Z06 was stunner. I remember the first time I heard a Z06 coming my way on a track and feel way down deep in my gut as it thundered by. That was the same kind of thrill as hearing a Lancia Ferrari Formula 1 rip up a hill and the scream of Formula One cars at 18,000 RPM. Even Tommy Ivo's four Hemi-engined dragster at over 200 mph in the night. And if that wasn't enough, then the Blue Devil. The President and CEO of GM had a thing for Corvettes and while at a press conference for the Z06 made a comment like "Now, if Corvette can build a 505 hp supercar for \$85,000 which can out-perform the best of the world, just think what they could do with \$100,000?" Dave Hill had a breakfast meeting with his inner circle the next morning and the ZR1 was born. The CEO was a Duke University man (the Blue Devils, you know), so the secret project was dubbed the Blue Devil. It was ripping the pavement up at the famed Nurburgring one year later, setting a record time which still stands as the goal for any production car.



And where does it go from here? It's November and we still don't know if there will be a C7 in 2012 or not. I'm beginning to think that it isn't ready for prime time. Maybe a summer release as a 2013? Who knows. GM and Chevy are being amazingly tight-lipped about it. None of the auto press seem to have a clue. We don't even know what it will look like. The only clue is a comment Dave Hill said about it appealing to a younger market and being a stunning departure from what has been. Maybe the concept car which appeared in *Transformers* is close. I am pretty sure that it will have a 5.5 liter V-8 with center cam and pushrods in the front and be rear wheel drive. There's still talk of a mid-engine car but I really don't see that development cost in this financial environment. Chevy already has designed and built the 5.5 liter ALMS race engine and I'll bet that's the new engine. Up front. But whatever. Until the C7 is unveiled, the C6 is the most well made, fastest, best handling and most comfortable Corvette ever. There's a mighty good case at it being the prettiest as well. And here's the litmus test of the passion built into that car...

Can any of you C6 owners just close the door behind you and walk away without looking back and smiling?

I'll bet Zora is smiling up there in Drivers & Engineers' Heaven.





SC3 Christmas Party Invitation!!!



Saturday, Dec. 3rd at the *Finish Line*
(Formerly the Dog Track)

Cash Bar 5:30 – Dinner at 6:30

Entertainment

Door Prizes

Dee Jay



\$24.50 Per Person

Please make checks payable to SC3

Mail to Bill Kenney

4727 Rosecrest Court

Pueblo, CO 81005

561-8508

~ DON'T MISS THIS ONE! ~

Veteran's Day Parade

Pueblo saw SC3's participation in their annual Veteran's Day Parade for the 5th straight year that I've been a part of, although I'm sure the streak stretches back beyond that. Folks along Union Street are used to seeing the Corvettes grace the parade and this year we were there again, in two places. Three of our cars were pulled to the front of the parade to carry officials, so we were in their face early and often! Eight cars came out and there were good feelings and lots of smiles all the way around - including the great lunch at the Gold Dust afterwards!



For more pics, take a look at our website!



- Nov 13th – Drive ‘N Dine to Coyote’s Grill at Nature Walk – 18 folks have reserved to meet at 11:00 at Rawlings Library for the Champagne Brunch!
- Nov 19th – Street Clean-up. Meet at 9:00 AM at Furr’s parking lot at Northern & Pbo. Blvd. Lucky is ramroding it.
- Nov 22nd – Club Meeting at Rawlings Library – This is our Annual Election of Officers! Meet at 7:00 PM, dining, drinks & mayhem after the meeting!
- Dec 3rd – Christmas Party at Finish Line (Dog Track). See previous page for info.
- Dec 11th – Broncos/Bears Game at Dennis & Patty’s. Info coming soon – great way & place to just have fun!!



End of the Line

(but not really)

With this issue I pass the flame to Ryan Pico (subject to the elections at our next meeting, but I can’t see why he would not be welcomed enthusiastically!). He’ll be great and will bring the gusto of youth, an amazing passion for Corvettes and an endless intellectual curiosity for what else you can do with or add to your Vette. We will all learn a ton from Ryan and have a wonderful ride doing it. Before I pass into the night, I do want to thank all those who have written articles about themselves, their cars and our events in this past year. Usually, you can look at our footprints and see where we’ve been, but in 2011, there isn’t a path – our footprints look like the dirt after a stampede! We’ve done so much that we’ve left footprints everywhere. Not only fun, but good stuff as well, like our continued support of the Wounded Warriors of Ft. Carson and our street cleanup along Northern Ave. We’ve become better at giving back, and I’m proud to be a part of the club for that. Kinda hard to see where we’re going in 2012, but with most of the

same crew at the helm, my guess is that we're gonna find a lot of ways to enjoy each other, our cars, and go to new places and do new things. As Don Quixote is reputed to have said, "Adventure awaits!" Thanks for the opportunity and honor.

Bob