

# The Complete History of Chevrolet Corvette

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The Complete History of Chevrolet Corvette

The Chevrolet Corvette is one of America's finest sports cars that have enjoyed up to 67 years of production. Inspired by great European cars, Harley Earl invented and designed the Chevrolet Corvette in 1951 to be an American sports car that could easily compete with its counterparts. But not many know of the complete history of Chevrolet Corvettes and how it went from "an almost failed sports car" to a performance icon. So let's delve in!

## Early Beginnings 1953-1962

In the early 1950s when Chevrolet was hardly making any sales, brand manager Thomas Keating entered a deal with GM and ordered a sports car that was produced under the name Project Opal.

Designed by GM Harley Earl in 1951, the Chevrolet Corvette was first unveiled at the GM Motorama auto show in New York on January 17, 1953. Due to its first public acceptance, GM rushed into production and on June 30, 1953, the first sets of Chevrolet Corvettes rolled out of the production facility in Flint, Michigan. This first mass-produced fiberglass bodied vehicles came with a 3.9-liter Blue Flame" straight-six cylinder connected to a 2-speed automatic transmission that delivered a weak 150hp. This made it less desirable by drivers and GM sold only 183 out of the 300 cars produced.

After GM got a new V-8 engine and moved to a new assembly line in Saint Louis, Missouri, a new



model of C1 was released in 1955. This model was widely received by car race drivers as it came with a 4.3-liter V-8 engine that delivered an amped 195hp. By 1956, the remodeled Corvette was amped with a V-8 engine to produce 210hp with the standard Carter four-barrel carburetor. It also offered extra features like a power-operated folding roof, external door handles, and rolling window unlike the removable window curtains in 1955 corvettes. Things started looking better for Chevrolet's C1 when the V8 engine was enlarged to 4.6-liters in 1957 to deliver a whopping 283hp. From 1958 - 1962, the Chevrolet C1 underwent yearly modifications, and in 1962, it came with the famous quad-taillight design, 5.4-liter V-8 engine, and a great 360hp.



### Second Generation Corvettes – Sting Ray (1963-1967)

Chevrolet unveiled the second generation of Corvettes also known as Sting Ray to the general public in 1963. C2 came with a split-window design and a 327 V-8 engine connected to an automatic transmission or a three-or four-speed manual gearbox. It also

offered a bigger front anti-roll bar, dual master cylinder, and a race-ready package dubbed Regular Production Option (RPO) Z06. But these features were limited to only Corvettes equipped with the 360hp V-8 engine and a four-speed manual transmission.

In 1965, the Sting Ray came with brake improvements, optional engines, and a staggering 425hp. For 1966, Chevrolet increased the engine's bore as the 7.0-liter engine came with a 425hp and a second 427 V-8 called the L88 was also added to the C2 lineup. The second-generation C2 was characterized by upgraded features like engine option variety and special performance editions. During this era, Corvette gained more popularity and production rose from 10,000 to 27,000 cars each year.

### Third Generation Sting Ray (1968-1982)

Chevrolet replaced C2 with C3 in 1968 but still retained the StingRay name (as one word). C3 had

styling designs made from Larry Shinoda's Mako Shark II concept car and a new V-8 engine that produced 370hp. But in 1971, C3's horsepower and performance began to drop due to emission standards and GM general malaise of the 1970s. In 1978, Chevrolet celebrated Corvette's 25th anniversary by equipping the 1978 C3 models with a new fastback rear end and a 225hp engine that accelerated to 60mph in 6.6 seconds.

#### Fourth Generation Corvettes (1984-1996)

Although Chevrolet produced the fourth generation Corvettes in the early 80s, it was not unveiled until 1984 due to quality issues. The C4 models were built from scratch and came with a 205hp V-8 engine connected to either a Chevrolet's four-plus three manual gearboxes or four-speed automatic transmission.

As part of the ongoing C4 improvement, Chevrolet built a new Corvette ZR-1. But, ZR1 reached dealerships in 1990 and after which it was sold until 1995. Corvette ZR-1 came with a dual overhead 375hp 5.7-liter V-8 engine, massive 11-inch wide rear wheels, and went from 0-60mph in 4.5seconds. In 1996, Chevrolet introduced a special Grand Sport model with an LT4 engine, which was offered both as a coupe and a convertible. In all fairness, Chevrolet's C4 had increased horsepower, quality design and quickly gained popularity amongst drivers looking for affordable sports cars.

#### Fifth Generation Corvettes (1997-2004)

In 1997, Chevrolet released the fifth-generation Corvette with the new LS1 engine. C5 models were built from scratch and not as an upgrade of previous generations by using the latest technological advancements of that era. Unlike previous generations, the fifth-generation model placed its transmission at the rear of the car up against the rear differential.

The new LS1 engine delivered 345hp and connected to a six-speed manual transmission or a four-speed automatic. It also came with an 8-inch long wheelbase, large passenger/cargo space, and was 80pounds lighter than its predecessors. In 1999, Chevrolet introduced its less expensive fixed-roof coupe and the high performing Corvette ZO6 in 2001. ZO6 was produced until 2004 and came with a 385hp V-8 engine, and thinner front and rear glasses. Apart from its added power, ZO6 pushed from 0-60mph in 4.3seconds and was later bumped to 405hp for a more fun-filled driving experience.

GM clinched the top spot in lists of cars with high performance with the C5 models and was used in world-class professional races like Le Mans and the America Le Mans Series.

#### Sixth Generation Corvettes (2004-2013)

The first Chevrolet C6 was unveiled at the 2004 Detroit auto show. The new car was 5.1 inches shorter than its predecessors and equipped with a 400hp LS2 engine. ZO6 was also reintroduced in 2006 with the latest LS-series engine – LS7. The LS7 V-8 engine delivered a whooping 505hp and could go from 0-60mph in less than 3.4seconds – what an improvement!

ZR1 also made a grand re-entry into the auto market in 2009 and Corvette Grand Sport returned in 2010. Then in 2013, Corvette celebrated its 60th anniversary by building the Corvette 427 convertible which came with a ZO6's 505hp engine. The C6 generation Corvettes delivered optimal performance and were used to give race track horsepower for street driving.

## Seventh Generation Corvettes (2013-2019)

In 2014, Chevrolet produced the seventh-generation Corvette which was a huge change from the company's previous vehicle lineups. It came with a LT 1 V-8 6.2-liter engine, carbon-fiber hood, and amazing performance stunts. This generation's Corvettes was a reinvention of some of the company's older models, as ZO6 came with a 6.2-liter V-8 engine in 2015, Grand Sport in 2017 and ZR1 came with a 6.2-liter V-8 engine -755hp in 2019.

## Eighth Generation Corvettes (2020 - Present)

Chevrolet' C8 came with major change as it was the first Corvette to have its engine behind the passenger compartment and ahead of the rear axle. Apart from its 6.2-liter LT2 V-8 engine, C8 also boasts improved safety tech features, large space, defined cabin design, and chic interior styling.

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