

Get to know the history behind Chevrolet Mid-Engine Corvette Prototype

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- On March 30, 1968, Chevrolet unveiled its first mid-engine Corvette Prototype, Astro II, at the annual New York International Auto show in 1968. This mid-engine internally known as XP-880 was designed by the father of Corvette – Zora Arkus-Duntov.

Duntov, a former race driver, designed the mid-engine Corvette to compete with other European sports cars of that era. His life-long obsession in creating a mid-engine Corvette began in 1957 after Corvette SS's DNF at the 12 Hours of Sebring. According to Duntov, the race inspired him to tuck the engine behind the driver's seat after Racer John Fitch's feet were burnt by the exhaust pipe's closeness to the magnesium firewall. Another incidence that further fueled his desire was when he witnessed mid-engine Auto Unions frequently beat Mercedes-Benz racers on the track.

"The mid-engine Corvette was first produced 60 years ago because Duntov did not like the inefficiencies associated with the first set of Corvettes produced," says Avi. "While it frustrated him that he could not fully switch Corvette to a mid-engine platform, his prototypes created the ideal framework for other car designers to turn his dreams into reality."

The Astro II came with a 427 cubic inch V8 engine tucked behind the driver's seat and the rear axles. And because of Chevrolet's inability to place the engine properly, the prototype success ended at the auto show of 1968. But Duntov was determined to build mid-engine corvettes, and during the following decades, more prototypes were made and released by Chevrolet.

"The main reason Duntov was obsessed with the mid-engine placement platform was that it



gave the vehicle more traction control and makes the ABS brakes work better. This gives the vehicle more stability and also increases the vehicle's safety."

Models of the mid-engine Corvette made over the past 66 years include 1959 CERV-I, 1963 CERV-II (both of which were hidden from the public and later unveiled in 1960), 1970 XP-882, 1972 XP-895, 1973 XP-897, 1973 four-rotor Corvette, 1977 Aerovette, 1986 Chevrolet Corvette Indy and the 1990 CERV-III.

After more than 3 decades since its last mid-engine prototype, the automaker released its first production mid-engine Chevrolet Corvette Stingray in 2020.

Avi Zaslavskiy
212World
+1 212-470-9349
[email us here](#)

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