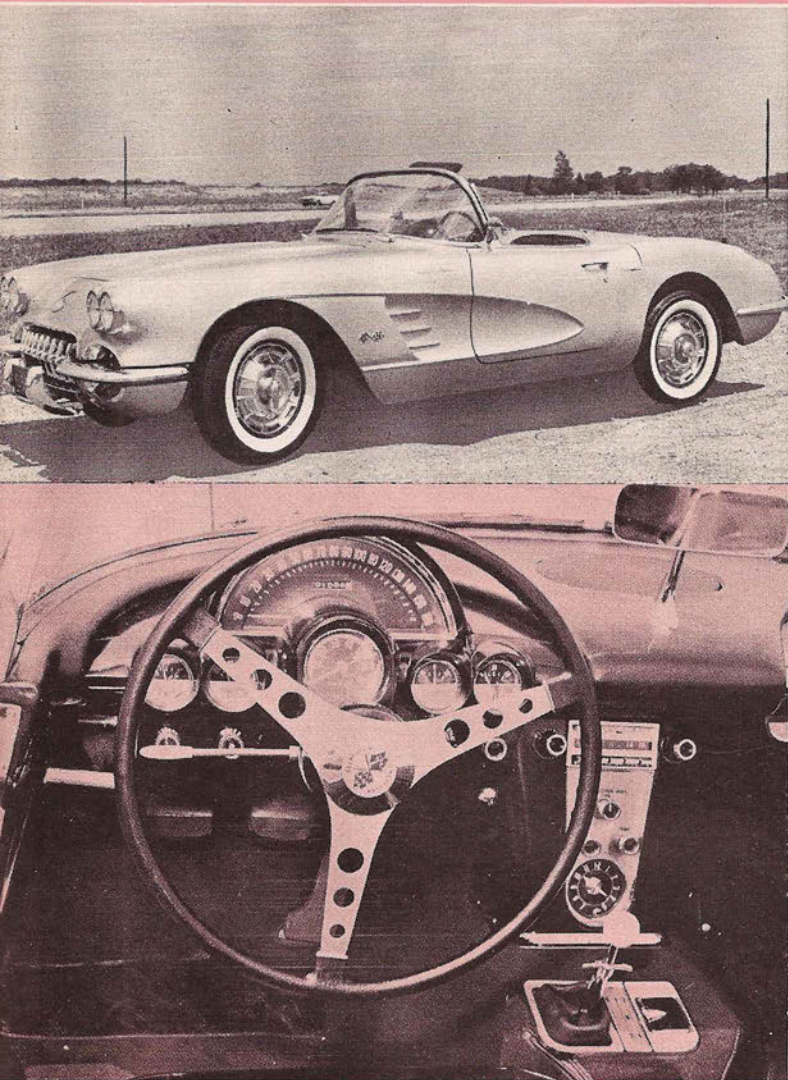


First Impressions

1960 CORVETTE

Below: Corvette cockpit and controls have not been changed for 1960. The body lines — as well as the fiberglass material — also remain the same. In consequence resale value of 1959 Corvettes will not plummet.



by *Karl Ludvigsen*

► 1960 will go down as the Year of Speculation for Corvette, SCI not being the only magazine that was caught well off base on predictions of radically changed styling and construction. New-type Corvettes along the lines theorized had actually been proposed, but the terrific engineering concentration on the Corvair project literally left no time for other developments. From the exterior and in all important respects, then, the 1960 Corvette is identical to last year's.

Major changes, and worthwhile ones, have however been made in the cylinder head design. On all Corvettes the valve chamber of the head has been widened to make room for a more efficient oil drainage system, incorporating a special drainage groove to lead oil away from the valve springs and guides. On fuel injection engines, moreover, the aluminum heads first developed for the SS Corvette have finally made an appearance, saving 53 pounds compared to the cast iron engine. This head has considerably different intake porting and intake valves enlarged from 1.72 to 1.94 inches in diameter. Correspondingly the plenum chamber of the injection unit has been enlarged to match the cylinder head improvements. With injection (available only with manual shift) also comes a special piston giving an as-yet-unspecified higher compression ratio.

If the Duntov camshaft is fitted, several other high-performance options can be applied. An all-aluminum cross-flow radiator can be installed, saving yet more weight, a cold-air tube adjacent to the radiator can be connected up, and the car in general converted to a raceable machine.

Optional within the standard scheme of things are asbestos-based or sintered iron brake linings, a third choice being the ceramic-metallic system available as a Regular Production Option (RPO). For 1960 there is no special handling kit,

Right above: A major change for '60 is the use of aluminum heads on the fuel injected engines. Heads were first developed for the ill-famed SS Corvette. They save 53 pounds over the cast iron units. Right below: Also added for '60 is this light rear anti-roll bar.

Zora Duntov feeling that some further mods to the standard chassis have made its handling good enough to do away with heavy-duty springs, etc. In addition to increasing rear suspension rebound travel by one inch, he has increased the diameter of the front anti-roll bar to 0.70 inch and has added a light-weight anti-roll bar to the rear suspension as well.

In action, this realignment of the Corvette's suspension reacts just about the way you'd expect. The Corvette has always been known as a strong understeerer that was fine for fast courses but less sprightly on slow ones and a shade wearying to handle in town. By increasing the roll resistance at the rear Duntov has brought the car closer to neutral steer feel on fast bends, where the Corvette now seems "lighter" on its feet and a shade more sensitive—not necessarily a good feel for racing use. The car can now be tossed around tight corners much more easily, but it must also be admitted that the larger rear roll couple tends to lift the inside rear wheel sooner than was the case before. A tentative conclusion might be that the new setup will be good for all-round use and for slower courses; with Positraction differential installed, but that many owners might usefully remove the rear anti-roll bar when trying for best results on fast tracks. During our Proving Ground trial we made no attempt to evaluate the performance of a fuel-injected Corvette, which obviously had acceleration on a par with its ancestors. Slight gains might be expected from the horsepower increase, now to approximately 305 bhp, and the weight reduction made both by the aluminum heads and the aluminum clutch bell housings used on all manual transmission cars. As before, the Corvette for 1960 is a formidable performer.

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