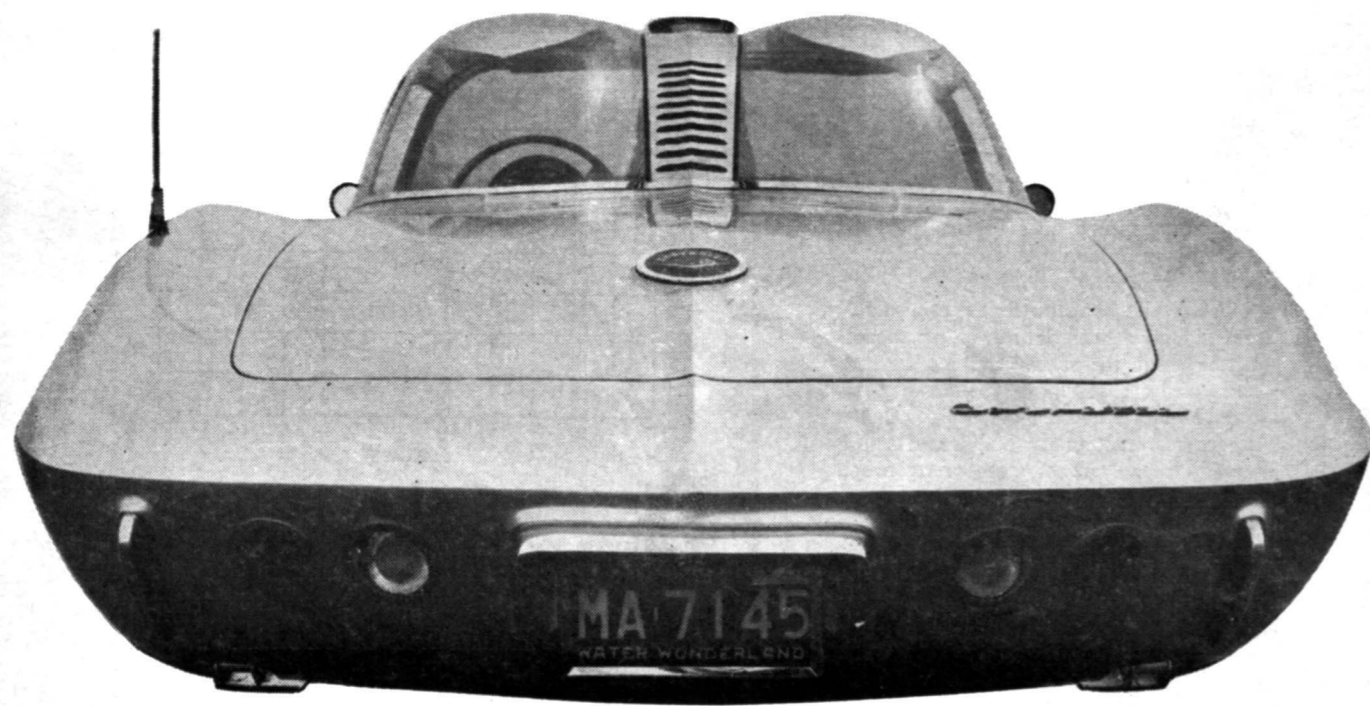


XP-700



AUTOMOTIVE STYLISTS must in the main be practical men. But there is a necessary stage early in the development of any vehicle when the stylist is offered the opportunity to execute his wildest dreams. Too often these collected dreams (or nightmares) are revealed as the sportscar of tomorrow.

That is why it is refreshing to see Chevrolet's XP-700—a legitimate sportscar with way-out styling ideas combined with advanced functional innovations. Based on a standard Corvette chassis, the XP does something that many idea cars do not—it runs. The fuel injection engine is a production item prettied up with chrome and crackle finish.

It is in the area of styling that the XP makes many of its points. Take a good head-on look without wheels, as in our opening illustration, and the car's missile-like appearance becomes strikingly obvious. From the tail, surmounted by its transparent twin-bubble passenger canopy, the XP-700 appears as though it should be orbiting the earth. The long fiberglass silhouette is only 48 inches high, four inches lower than the production body, and it looks even lower.

Chief General Motors stylist William L. Mitchell takes credit for the car's design but he has been influenced, however subtly,

by customizers. Witness the floating grille—a technique developed over the years by MT's Custom Car Editor, George Barris. Also, the clear glass headlights that resemble Lucas driving lights—much in favor by Barris in his recent customs.

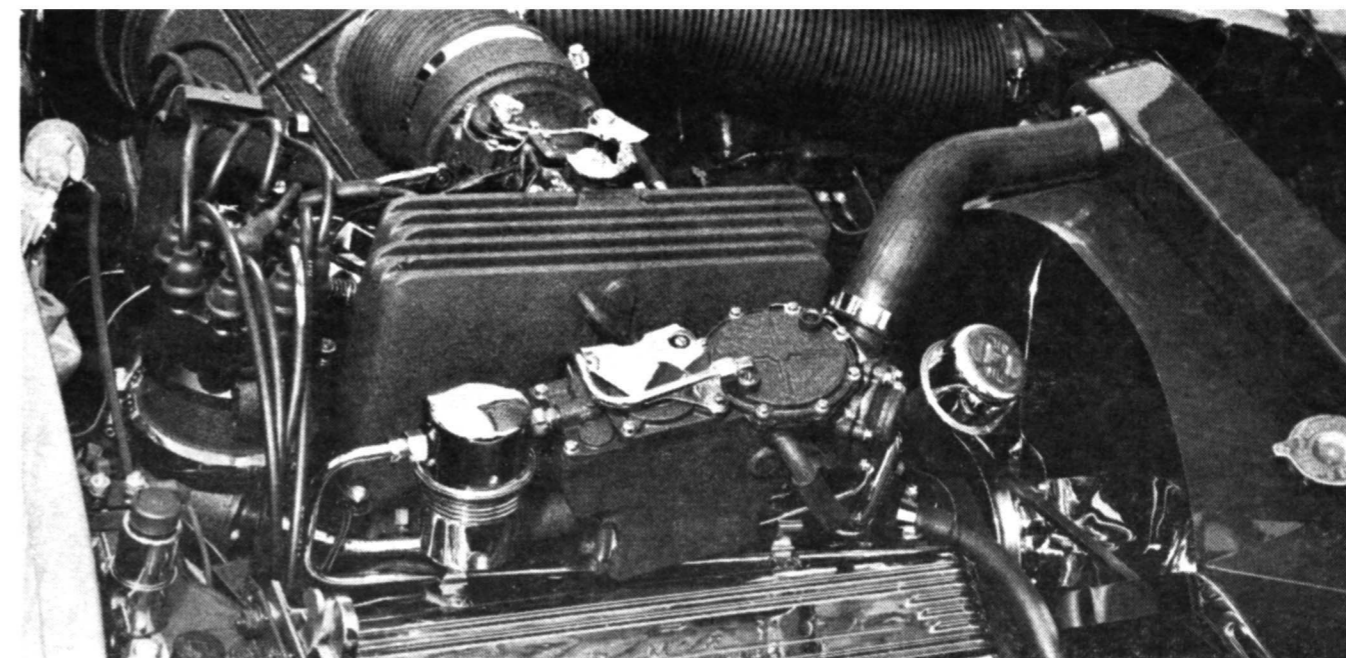
The transparent canopy has been silvered in the manner of a one-way mirror. Occupants can look up but outsiders will see only their own reflection from the top. This is primarily to cut down interior heat. Mounted at the top center of the windshield is a periscope rear-view mirror that is said to give an unobstructed view of the road behind. This is one accessory that will shortly find its way from idea cars to production. On the driver's door is a racing-type mirror that is cleverly molded as part of the body. Fender louvers are, for a change, functional and aid in brake cooling.

The entire car, inside and out, is finished in pearlescent silver, a color blend largely developed and made popular by customizers.

Why does Chevrolet build such a one-off? The publicity value is tremendous, but in this case it appears that virtually all of the ideas utilized are so practical that they could go into early production. That is, if the public likes what it sees.

continued

TOMORROW'S CORVETTE?



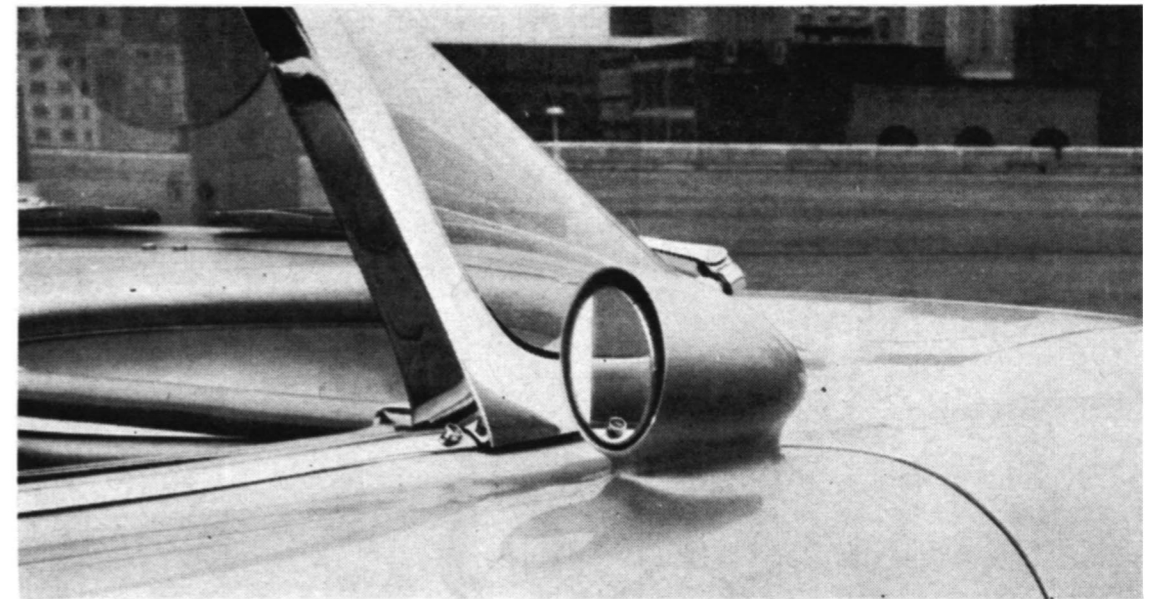
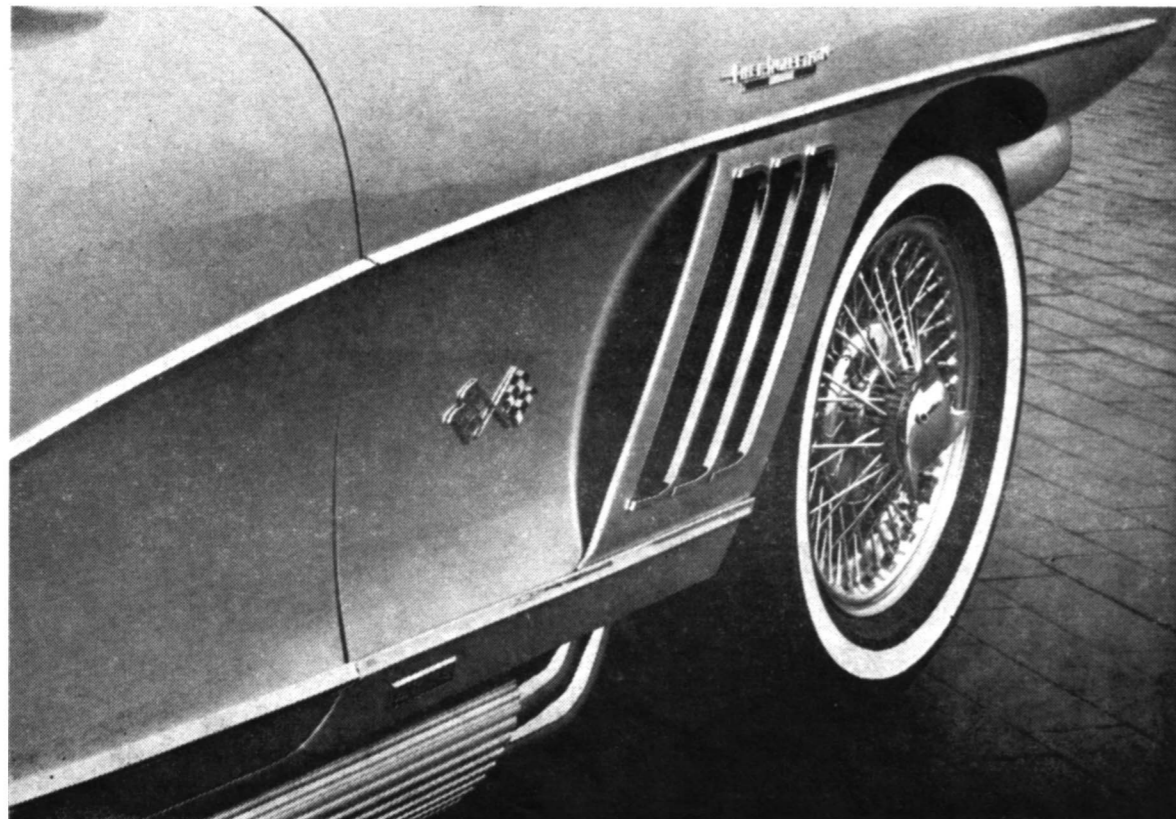
Standard Corvette fuel-injection engine has had every exposed part either chromed or finished in crackle paint. Many of Detroit's dream cars are not even powered; the XP Corvette is functional.



Pretty model adjusts periscope rear-view mirror in bubble canopy. It gives clear view of road behind.

XP-700 continued

Louvers are functional, extract air for brake cooling. Decorative chrome covers mufflers and tailpipe.



Streamlined, racing-type rear-view mirrors are mounted on doors; molded directly to fiberglass body.

