

SOME CARS ARE FUN and exciting year after year. Like the Corvette—we always look forward to testing it. And this year, we purposely left it until this late date so we could savor it as a sort of dessert topping off our road test program.

We ordered our Sting Ray sport coupe with the 375-hp, fuel-injected V-8; Chevy's beautifully smooth four-speed; a 4.11 rear axle; and the special racing brake package. These options combined make the Corvette an out-and-out sports car in no uncertain terms.

Sports cars and road-racing courses naturally go together, so we loaded up test gear and photographer and headed for Riverside International Raceway. Each year the Corvette seems to come through a little faster, more powerful, and more comfortable—and our test car was no exception.

After a few trial runs to find the best shift points (just under 6000 rpm), we clocked times of 3.0, 4.4, and 5.6 seconds to 30, 45, and 60 mph respectively. The Corvette blasted through the quarter-mile trap in a scant 14.2 seconds, hitting an honest 100 mph as we crossed the line. Super Sport tires that put more rubber on the track could improve times as well as handling, but we found breaking the tires loose coming off the line helped keep the engine from bogging down. We then turned her loose on the straightaway to see what she'd do. Charging out of Turn Eight and down Riverside's long back straight, our black coupe whistled right up to 134 mph as the tachometer needle touched the 6700-rpm red line.

Acceleration in all speed ranges was, to say the least, fierce—of the smash-you-into-your-seat variety. The engine proved smooth and willing and pulled strongly right up to 6700 rpm and beyond in every gear. Our passing tests, in which we accelerate from 40 to 60 mph and from 50 to 70, took a bare 2.5 seconds each (in second gear).

This means that the Corvette gives the driver a tremendous safety factor. He's in the left lane for the shortest possible time.

Four versions of this well known 327-cubic-inch V-8 are available. They can be matched to the standard three-speed manual transmission, Powerglide automatic, or one of two Chevrolet-made four-speed gearboxes. The standard engine is rated at 250 hp, with the next step up a 300-hp unit. Both use four-barrel carbs and hydraulic valve lifters. Next up the line is a 365-hp V-8 without fuel injection, but it does share the injected engine's other features. These special items include a high-performance cam, solid lifters, 11-to-1 compression, domed pistons, and five-quart oil capacity (one quart more than the 250- or 300-hp engines). Top performer is the fuel-injected engine with its 375-hp output.

Matched to this powerful engine in our test car was Chevrolet's close-ratio version of their four-speed gearbox. It's a beauty. First boasts a 2.20 ratio, with second and third sporting 1.64 and 1.28 cogs. Fourth is 1 to 1. The lever's short, properly located, precise in action. A big, round shift knob gives a good grip, and a lock-out lever prevents unwanted shifts into reverse. It'd be impossible for someone unfamiliar with the box to come from third back into second instead of fourth unless he gave it a slight amount of pressure toward the right. All things considered, this transmission is one of the best we've ever used. It gives lightning-fast shifts, up or down, without ever hanging up. Also, it has short, positive throws between gears. It's one of the best we've tested.

Next in the line of performance options on our test car, let's take a look at Corvette's stopping setup. Remember that this is a car capable of well over 150 mph. Listed as a special performance option, our Corvette's brakes had 11-inch drums with big, cast-iron fins and sintered metallic linings; 12 segments front, 10 segments rear. The front brakes are cooled by special built-in fans and aircoops. The



Sting Ray lifts its nose under power and charges out of turns with excellent stability and control. Street tires limit traction.



Quick stops were Corvette's forte when equipped with special brake option. Some nose dive was evident, but car kept all four wheels on the ground, held down swerve and fade to a minimum.



Winding roads invite spirited driving, and our Corvette was well up to challenge of tight, fast, sweeping curves. Big engine offers gobs of power, giving precise, predictable, steady control.

system includes dual master-cylinder circuits and is power assisted.

The Vet's stopping power was amazing and, when properly adjusted, adequate for the car's red-hot performance. We put it through stop after grueling stop from speeds of 100 mph up to 134 mph, and the brakes never faded completely. They smelled terrible and they'd pull slightly when hot, but they cooled down quickly and kept working no matter how much we asked of them. But even a slight pull at near 140 mph can be a big problem, so keeping the brakes properly adjusted is a must.

One look at the requirements for buying this option will certainly open some eyes. Detroit sometimes has very strange and expensive ways of offering options. You can order these brakes only on a Corvette that has fuel injection (\$538), a four-speed gearbox (\$188), and Positraction rear axle (\$43.05). The brakes themselves sell for a whopping \$629 extra! Somehow, we can't help feeling that four-wheel discs would be more practical, and we hear they're slated for '65. Regardless of price, though, we're impressed. The brakes stopped us time after time in a straight line—from any speed and without fail. That's about all you can expect from any braking system.

An additional item that deserves mention is the cast-aluminum wheel option with knock-off hubs. Being very light (we could pick up wheel and tire easily with one hand), they reduce weight, and their finning helps cool the brakes. They sell for \$322.80 and add a distinctive look to any Corvette.

Now that we've looked closely at the various parts that go into this very special Sting Ray, let's see how they work together. On the road or on the twisty Riverside road-race course, the Corvette was an extremely responsive and controllable sports car. Body lean was at a minimum, stability proved very good with the car's almost perfect weight distribution, and power turned out to be abundant and smooth coming out of corners. The brakes let us go deep

into turns, and the car would hold a steady line at top cornering speeds and come blasting out with its nose held high. The fuel-injection system never missed a beat, even when heeled over hard in a fast bend. The limiting factor was the car's street tires—racing tires should make it even better. Handling felt almost perfectly neutral, with the rear end the first to break away. But this was easy to control with the throttle.

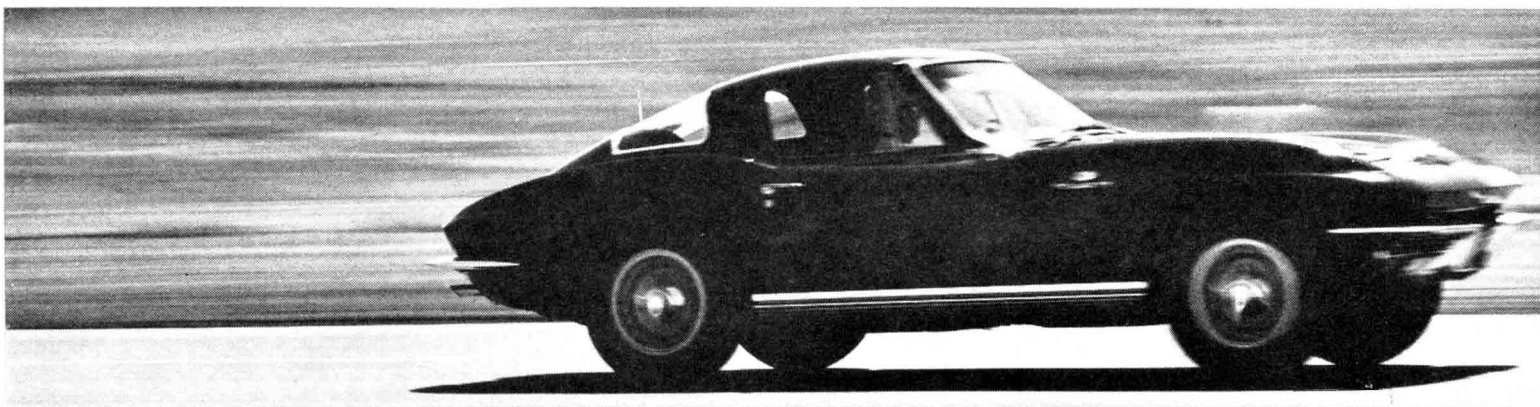
To sum it up, the Corvette's handling is on a par with anything we've tested this year. Only one other test car, also a two-seater with a big, powerful V-8, could hope to match it on a road course in street trim. These two continue to slug it out at sports car races across the country.

Not only was the Sting Ray a fine-handling automobile on the race course, it also proved a very comfortable and refined sports tourer. We took it through the mountains, the desert, and on long weekend trips and found it one of the most comfortable and quietest sports cars we've driven in ages. Naturally, it's happier when covering ground rapidly, especially if the road's an interesting one, but it'd put up with traffic as long as we kept it above 2000 rpm and in the right gear. It pulled strongly from as low as 1500 rpm under throttle and could be docile or ferocious, depending on the weight of the driver's right foot.

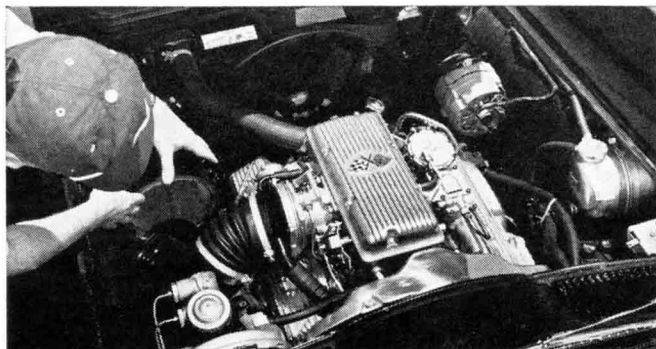
The Corvette sport coupe has a huge luggage area for a sports car. Loading is a chore, because everything has to go in through the doors (convertibles have conventional trunks). The rear compartment will hold lots of things, and it's well carpeted to prevent scratches.

Twin vents provide the interior with fresh air when the side windows are up, and a new centrifugal exhaust fan, located at the left side of the car, sucks out stale inside air through a vent (the right vent is a dummy, as are the air scoops on the hood). Putting the side windows down at speed causes a very unpleasant wind buffeting, but opening the windwings takes care of it.

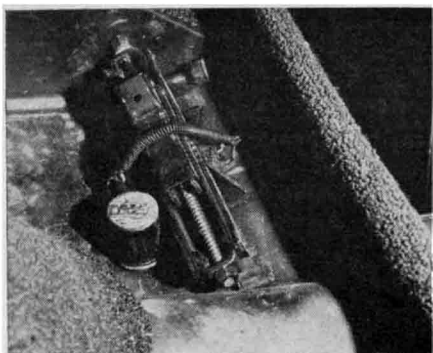
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As in any well planned sports car interior, everything proved easy to reach, read, and see. Comfortable buckets give good support, adjust for rake. Sturdy shift lever is well located.



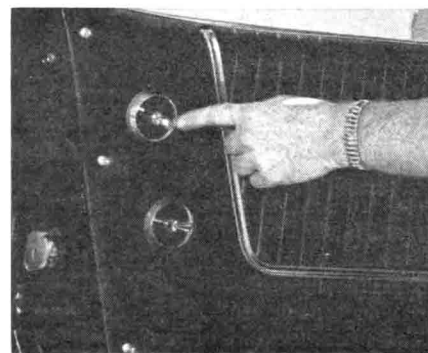
Huge air-intake tube gives the fuel-injected V-8 plenty of breath. With a weight/hp ratio of 8.5 to 1, Corvette's top-performance charger offers fierce acceleration throughout its speed range.



Tire-changing tools hide in small compartment under luggage area behind front seats.



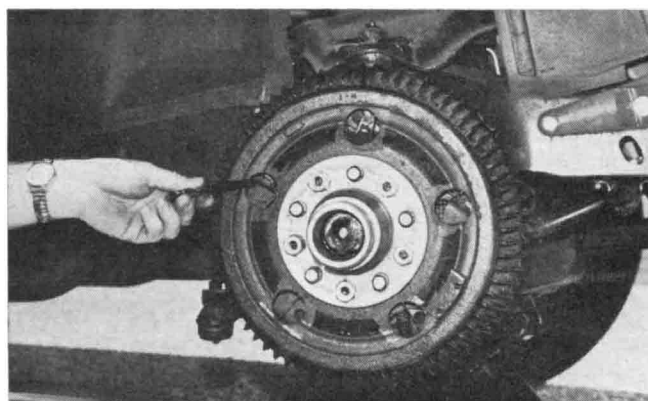
Ventilation blower exhausts stale inside air through left vents for greater comfort.



Dual-purpose door lock also serves as a reflector, guards against night accidents.

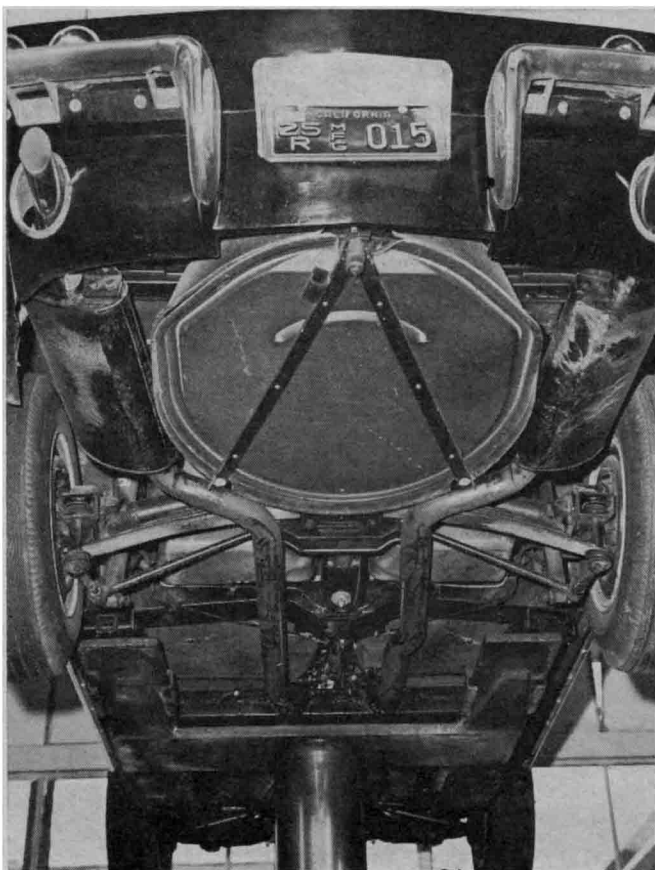


Test car's real aluminum knock-off wheels (\$322.80 extra) plus efficient scissor jack make changing tires quick and painless.

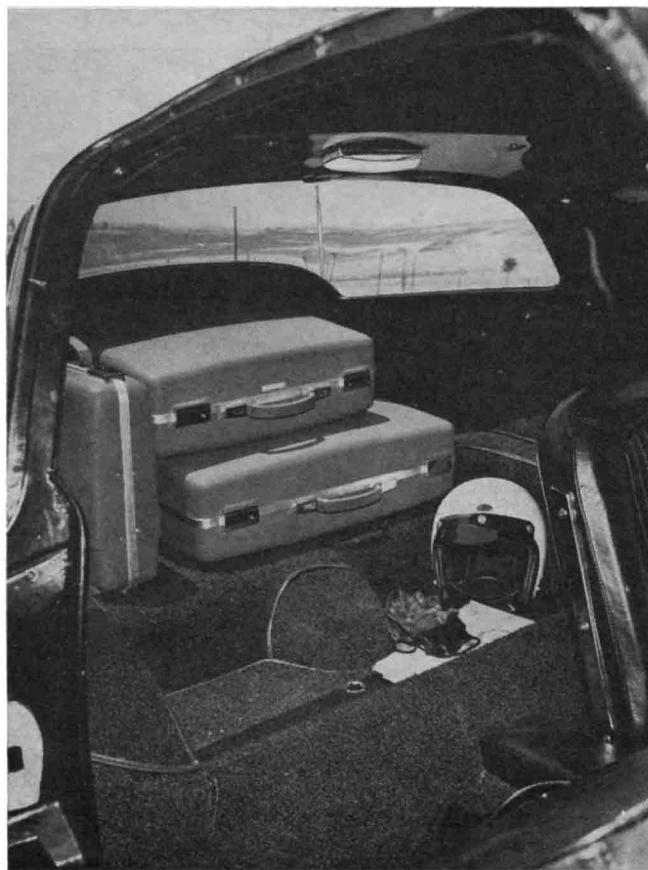


Interior cooling fans, airscoops, and cast-in fins work to keep Corvette Sting Ray's brakes cool for high-speed driving.

PHOTOS BY PAT BROLIER, DARRYL NORENBURG



Worm's-eye view shows spare location, independent rear suspension. Revised exhaust system is tuned to reduce interior noise.



Surprising amount of luggage can be carried in fastback's rear compartment. Since there's no lid, it has to go in through doors.



FAST SWEEPERS FOUND THE REAR END BREAKING LOOSE FIRST, BUT CAR WAS EASY TO CONTROL; FEW CAN BEAT CORVETTE BETWEEN POINTS.

CORVETTE STING RAY *continued*

Seats are roomy, comfortable, and adjustable for rake. The simulated wooden steering wheel, actually made of plastic, has an adjustable steering column. Gauges serve for all engine functions. The huge, round dials for speed and engine revs are easy to read. But the dash does pick up all sorts of glare and reflections, making the instruments hard to see at times. The dash is padded, and a handhold gives the passenger something to cling to during spirited maneuvers.

Although previous Corvettes had some noise problems with their fiberglass bodies, we're happy to report that ours

was as quiet as a sedan—no squeaks, no rattles, no resonance. Additional sound-deadening material and new rubber body mounts, plus a different mounting system for the exhaust pipes, has rid the Corvette of interior noises.

Corvettes come in seven solid colors in either the sport coupe or convertible (with or without hard top). Five vinyl interiors and even a choice of genuine leather are available.

Seeing out is still the biggest problem, and getting in and out (especially for the fairer sex) is easier in other vehicles. But the man who likes to drive something with spirit, dash, and class will fall in love with the Sting Ray, just as we did.

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CORVETTE STING RAY

2-door, 2-passenger sport coupe

OPTIONS ON CAR TESTED: Fuel injection, 4-speed manual transmission, special brake package, Positraction, AM-FM radio, cast-aluminum wheels with knock-off hubs, power windows, tinted glass

BASE PRICE: \$4393.75

PRICE AS TESTED: \$6367.27 (plus tax and license)

ODOMETER READING AT START OF TEST: 2075 miles

RECOMMENDED ENGINE RED LINE: 6700 rpm

PERFORMANCE

ACCELERATION (2 aboard)

0-30 mph	3.0 secs.
0-45 mph	4.4 secs.
0-60 mph	5.6 secs.

PASSING TIMES AND DISTANCES

40-60 mph	2.5 secs.	183 ft.
50-70 mph	2.5 secs.	220 ft.

Standing start 1/4-mile 14.2 secs. and 100 mph

Speeds in gears @ 6700 rpm

1st	65 mph	3rd	102 mph
2nd	87 mph	4th	134 (observed)

Speedometer Error on Test Car

Car's speedometer reading	31	46	52	62	72	83
Weston electric speedometer	30	45	50	60	70	80

Observed mph per 1000 rpm in top gear 19.6 mph

Stopping Distances — from 30 mph, 36.5 ft.; from 60 mph, 144 ft.

SPECIFICATIONS FROM MANUFACTURER

Engine

Ohv V-8
Bore: 4.00 ins.
Stroke: 3.25 ins.
Displacement: 327 cu. ins.
Compression ratio: 11.0:1
Horsepower: 375 @ 6200 rpm
Torque: 350 lbs.-ft. @ 4800 rpm
Horsepower per cubic inch: 1.14
Fuel injection
Ignition: 12-volt coil

Gearbox

Close-ratio, 4-speed manual, all synchro; floorshift

Driveshaft

1-piece, open tube

Differential

Hypoid, semi-floating (Positraction)
Standard ratio: 4.11:1

Suspension

Front: Independent, with coil springs, unequal-length upper and lower control arms, direct-acting tubular shocks, and anti-roll bar
Rear: Independent, with fixed differential, transverse, 9-leaf spring, lateral struts and universally jointed axle shafts, radius arms, and direct-acting tubular shocks

Steering

Recirculating ball nut
Turning diameter: 39.4 ft.
Turns lock to lock: 3.4 or 2.92

Wheels and Tires

Integral ribbed cast-aluminum wheels with knock-off hubs
6.70 x 15 tubeless nylon blackwall tires

Brakes

Hydraulic, duo-servo, self-adjusting, with finned drums, built-in cooling fans, and front airscops. Integral power assist, with dual-circuit master cylinders
Front: 11-in. dia. x 2.74 ins. wide (12 segments — 6 per shoe)
Rear: 11-in. dia. x 2.00 ins. wide (10 segments — 5 per shoe)
Effective lining area: 134.9 sq. ins.

Body and Frame

Fiberglass body. Welded ladder-type frame, with 5 crossmembers
Wheelbase: 98.0 ins.
Track: front, 56.3 ins.; rear, 57.0 ins.
Overall length: 175.3 ins.
Overall width: 49.8 ins.
Curb weight: 3180 lbs.