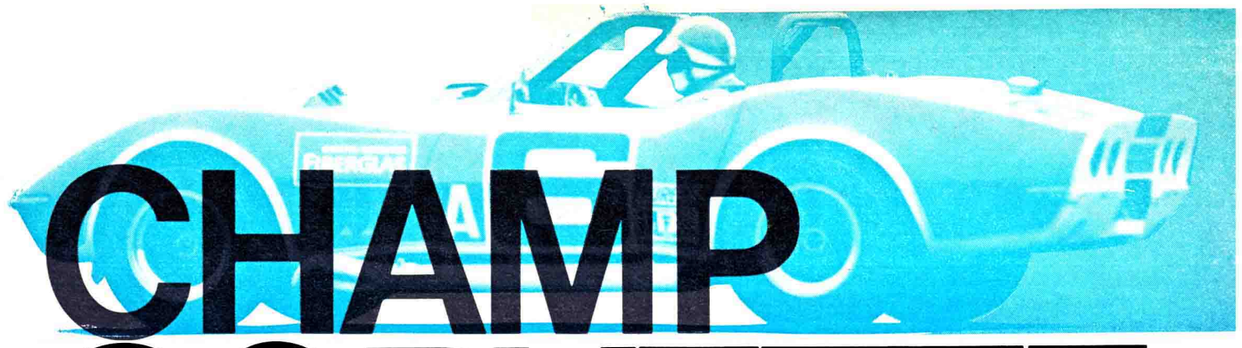


CHAMP CORVETTE

TO DOMINATE A PRODUCTION CLASS

of SCCA racing the way the OCF team has this past season requires more than a casual approach. Anyone can purchase a car which is almost identical in all respects to the cars raced by Tony DeLorenzo and Jerry Thompson. Attention to detail and expert preparation are what set the OCF team L-88 Corvettes apart.

The SCCA rule structure is very explicit regarding the modifications that may and may not be made to a car prepared for production class racing. Engine components such as pistons, cam and pushrods can be exchanged for others, carbs and heads cannot. Removing metal from the engine is okay. Lightening the rods or pistons to reduce reciprocating weight is legal, as is porting and polishing to increase breathing capacity. Adding material, however, is a no-no. If your engine only has two-bolt main caps, don't try adding two more for a stronger lower end or you'll get kicked in the seat of your Nomex.

Rules sound confusing? In some cases, yes! But despair not! Chevrolet had the foresight to produce (read homologate) the L-88 Corvette with most of the goodies a racer would need. (Wonder how Chevy knew a few L-88s might be raced?)

The L-88 designation on a Chevy dealer's order sheet is the buyer's pass key to a complete package which is tailored almost exclusively for racing. Included is the potent 427-cid engine with an aluminum intake manifold and Holley 850-CFM four-barrel carburetor, dual coil valve springs, valve spring caps and oil seals, heat-treated rocker arm balls, 12:1 compression ratio pistons, heavy-duty clutch, smaller flywheel and a heavy-duty aluminum cross-flow radiator. A major change from the regular 427 engine option are aluminum cylinder heads instead of the standard cast iron. These heads are lighter and dissipate heat better from the combustion chamber. Intake and exhaust passages and ports are designed to provide as little restriction as possible in taking in and exhausting the air/gas mixture charge. In addition, the L-88 manifold partition, which usually separates left and right side flow from the carburetor, is removed. This forms a plenum to improve cylinder charging at very high rpm.

When the L-88 is ordered, several options are required. These include J-56 heavy-duty power disc brakes with semi-metallic linings and special proportioning valve that adjusts braking effort between front and rear brakes; stiffer front and rear suspension, which includes a rear sway bar along with a thicker front bar; the K-66 full transistor ignition featuring breakerless distributor, ignition pulse amplifier and a special coil; M-22 "rock crusher" close-ratio fully synchronized four-speed transmission; G-80 Positraction rear axle; and the C-48 heater-defroster deletion to cut down on weight. (This is part of GM's plan to discourage the cars use on the street.)

Why, you say, with all the goodies listed here, all I need to go racing is an L-88, a roll bar, a scattershield and racing treads. Yes and no. You might be competitive in local club racing, depending upon your talent as a driver, but to win in the highly competitive world of SCCA National racing requires more. And this *more* has been added in large dosages.

The engines are torn down and blueprinted. Why bother, you ask, when Chevy has already gone to the trouble of supplying all the good pieces? For two reasons: Simply reliability and durability.

As Tom Collins, the team's dyno man says, "A good blueprint job is the most important step we take. Even an engine as good as the L-88 is subject to production tolerances which could cause severe stresses in a racing engine and lead to early failure. Careful attention in the areas of clearance and assembly are more important than any engine science we could use."

Careful attention consists of the following: The stock connecting rods are carefully checked for burrs, then polished, and finally shot peened to relieve stresses. The crank is Magnafluxed (an X-ray type process used to detect cracks) by OCF and the journals polished. Magnafluxing the L-88 rods is not required since Chevrolet does this at the factory.

Stock valves and springs are used, though, according to engine builder Harry Lambert, "A competition valve job is essential in any blueprint. You've got to have the valves seated in the head right or you lose horsepower by reducing the flow of the incoming air/gas mixture around the valve."

The aluminum L-88 heads are milled just enough to clean up any production flaws. The stock compression ratio, 12:1, is retained. "We've found," says Lambert, "that anything higher leads to blown head gaskets."

SCCA requires that stock rocker arms be used. "This is a problem," said chief mechanic, Art Jerome. "The stock units are subject to fatigue and must be checked regularly. If possible, we install a used rocker arm as a replacement if one breaks. New rocker arms experience considerable valve lash change during run-in and lash should be checked and corrected frequently until it stabilizes."

What about a redline? Although figures of 8000 to 8500 rpm are often

BY JOHN DINKEL

Here's how the Owens-Corning Team built road racing's fastest Corvette.

thrown around, Art just grinned and said, "A lot of engines are also thrown around. We stick closely to 6500 to 6800 for durability and reliability. Running the engine higher gives no measureable gain in performance and decreases engine life drastically. Other teams we've raced against have found this out the hard way."

Chevy recommends rod and main bearing clearances between 0.002 and 0.003. While Chevy bearings are employed, the OCF team has found that tighter clearances (0.0015 to 0.002) pay off in higher oil pressure (40-70; hot-co!d) and increased engine life.

The stock L-88 cooling system, which includes a heavy-duty radiator, has been found adequate for racing. One modification that typifies the care which OCF takes in the preparation of their cars is a drilled and tapped hole in the thermostat housing at the highest point of the cooling system. The bolt, which normally closes the hole, is removed when water is added to the system. This allows any air trapped in the coolant to escape.

The stock 5-qt. lubrication system has been modified by the addition of extra baffling in the pan and the use of a Yenko 360° swinging pickup to prevent the loss of pressure during hard cornering.

The oil is cooled by a Harrison oil cooler which requires the installation of an oil cooler bypass valve (PN 5575416) in the block.

The engine breathes through the stock 850-cfm, four-barrel Holley carburetor, rejetted to give a slightly richer mixture. Due to the open plenum intake manifold, the tendency of some cylinders to run richer than others—present in all multi-cylinder engines—is exaggerated. To obtain better distribution, the OCF team staggered the carb jetting between the primary and secondary barrels in a manner similar to the following:

Left front No. 78 Right front No. 74
Left rear No. 74 Right rear No. 76

The OCF team uses these jet sizes as a starting point. If a richer or leaner mixture is required, all jets are changed up or down in size.

The fuel is stored in a 42-gal. foam bladder fuel cell and is fed to the carb by twin Stewart-Warner electric fuel pumps.

The engines are assembled with tender loving care by Harry Lambert and Tom Collins who, except for bearing clearances, follow Chevy's recommendations on assembling procedure and torque specs. One warning they give is: "If you want your head gaskets to seal properly, don't forget to hot torque all the cylinder head bolts to 85 ft.-lb."

Not having the influence of a Penske requires the OCF team take delivery of a complete car rather than a basket of parts. The cars are driven from the factory in St. Louis to the surburban Detroit garage where they are prepared for racing. When a car arrives, it is torn down to the frame. All seams in the frame are rewelded, as are the suspension and engine mounting points. Reinforcements are added in several areas. A gusset plate for stiffening is welded to the K-frame at the lower control arm forward attaching point. Stiffening plates are also added on either side of the rear engine mount where it attaches to the crossmember.

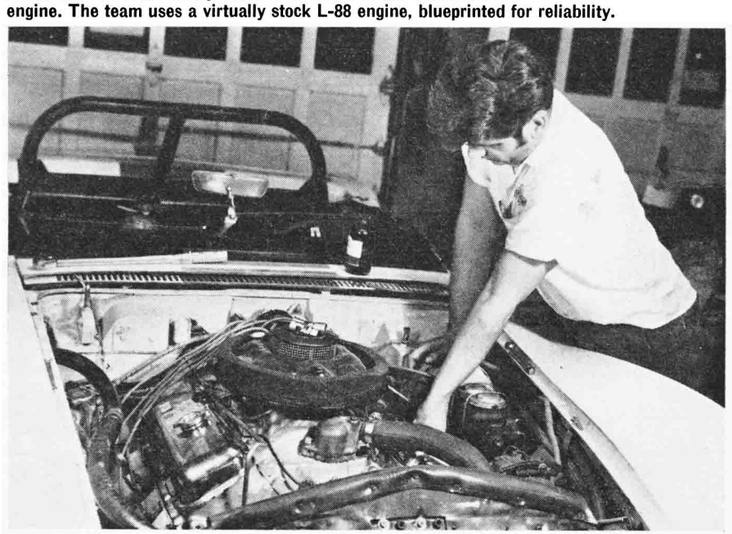
The hollow rear cross member is split into its two halves and a 0.125-in. steel plate is welded to the bottom portion where the differential attaches to the crossmember. This plate effectively prevents distortion of the bolt holes due to twisting of the carrier left-to-right in a horizontal plane.

The roll bar (2.25 in. rod, 0.125 in. wall, seamless mild steel) attaches to the frame at five locations. The forward brace is welded to a crossmember in the passenger's compartment, and rearward braces run to the frame rails above the rear wheels.

The suspension parts and modifications work so well and have created such a demand from other racers and slalomists that the team has formed a company to produce and sell the equipment. It's Troy Promotions, Inc., 2284 Coolidge, #208, Troy, Mich. 48084.

Since the SCCA allows the use of alternate suspension bushings, the OCF team systematically eliminated many of the rubber bushings used to ▶

ENGINE BUILDER Harry Lambert at work on the Corvette's engine. The team uses a virtually stock L-88 engine, blueprinted for reliability.



CORVETTE
continued

isolate suspension components from their mounting points on the frame. The result is a more tuneable chassis because suspension geometry changes due to the compression of the rubber bushings are eliminated.

At the front of the car, the stock link connecting the sway bar to the lower control arm is replaced by a link consisting of two No. 6 (0.375-in. bore) Heim joints.

A Heim joint is a link with a swivel at the end which allows any component connected to it to move in many directions. The stock rubber bushings accomplish this by means of compression but this compression allows changes in suspension geometry to occur. Heim joints prevent these geometry changes.

The ends of the sway bar are drilled and tapped to accept the new link. The normal attachment point on the lower control arm is removed and a triangular section is welded to the arm for locating the bar.

At the rear a similar arrangement is used. The stamped steel link is again replaced by two No. 6 Heim joints. The rear bar is bent to accept the slightly different geometry of the Heim joint link and also to provide tire clearance. Because of this bend, the brake lines are re-routed underneath the torque arm (control arm) to prevent pinching.

In order to provide additional tire clearance at the rear, the torque arms are cut and rewelded. Bracing in the form of a half circular steel section is welded to the inner side of the arm to compensate for the metal removed.

The SCCA allows any kind of springs. A six-leaf rear spring replaces the stock seven-leaf L-88 spring on all OCF cars. The total thickness of the spring is the same as stock, but the rate is increased to 1500 lb./in.

The axle is partially located by strut rods mounted laterally from the spindle support to a bracket bolted to the lower surface of the axle carrier. The strut rod connection at this inner point is with an eccentric cam arrangement and provides for rear wheel camber adjustment. This rod has been replaced by a solid steel bar drilled and tapped at the end to accept Heim joints. It was found that the nut which controls camber adjustment on the stock rod would loosen during the rigors of racing and cause the suspen- ▶

ENGINE

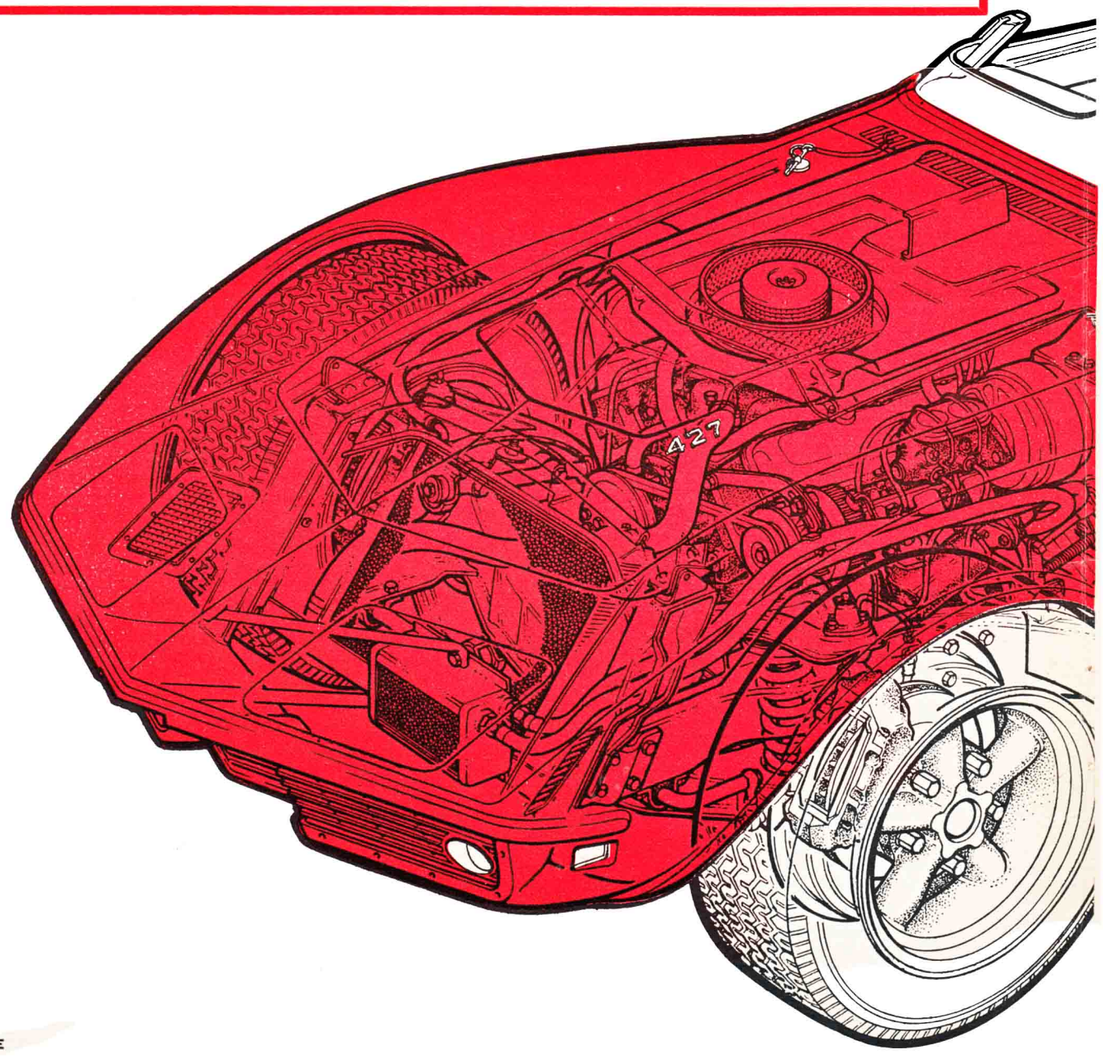
Type.....ohv V-8
Bore x stroke, in.....4.25 x 3.76
Displacement, cu. in.....427
Compression ratio.....12:1
Valves, int./exh., dia., in.....2.19/1.84
Tappets.....mechanical
Camshaft.....PN 3928911
lift, in.....0.540 int./0.560 exh.
duration, deg.....354 int./360 exh.
overlap, deg.....133
Carburetion.....Holley 4-bbl, 850 cfm, PN 4150
Exhaust system.....Kustom headers, 4-branch, equal length, 2.125 in. dia. tube
Horsepower @ rpm.....580-600 bhp @ 6800 rpm
Fuel required.....Sunoco 260 super premium (103 octane)
Oil cooler.....Harrison, PN 3157804
Fuel tank.....42-gal. rubber bladder, foam filled fuel cell

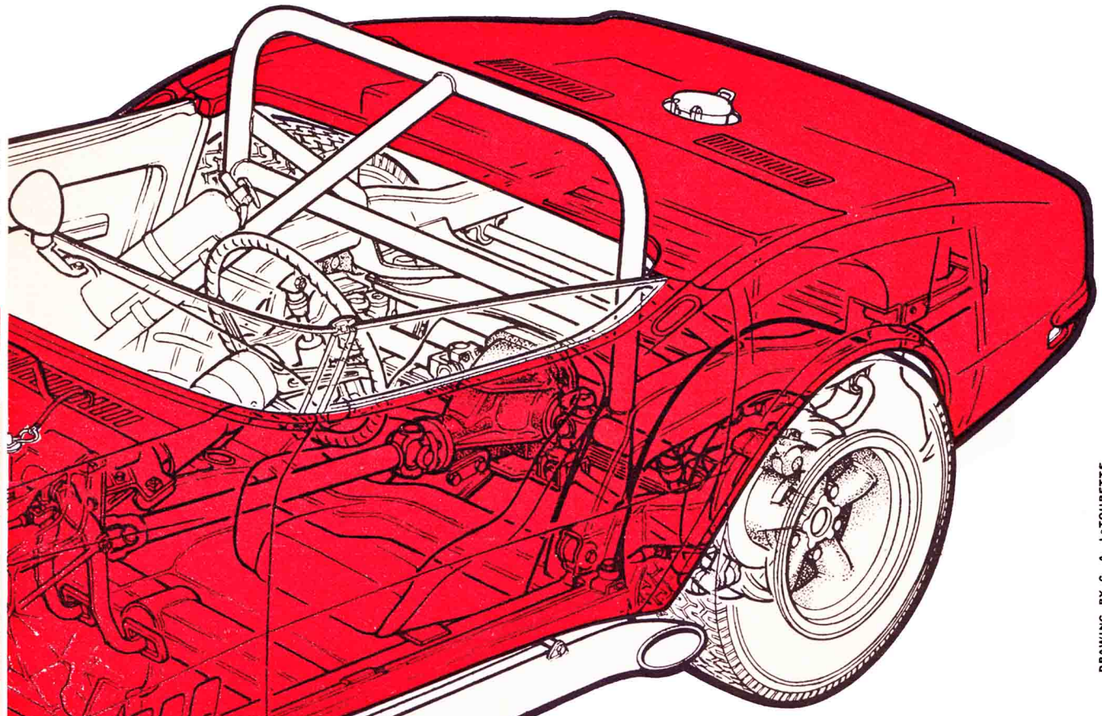
DRIVE TRAIN

Transmission: Four-speed, all synchro, close ratio.
Gear ratio 1st.....2.20
2nd.....1.64
3rd.....1.27
4th.....1.00
Flywheel & clutch: Nodular iron flywheel, PN 3866735, heavy-duty 10.5-in. pressure plate, PN 3886066, clutch disc, PN 3886059.
Clutch free play: 1.5 to 2.5 in., adjusted to give disengagement at floor.

ELECTRICAL

Ignition system: Breakerless distributor, ignition pulse amplifier and special coil, total advance deg. 38-40.
Alternator.....62 amps
Battery.....12 v, 62 amp/hr.
Fuel pump.....dual Stewart Warner electric
Plug wires.....copper solid wire
Wiring harness.....OCF design
External lighting.....quartz-iodide Cibie
Side number panels.....Sylvania light panels, 0.02 in. thick

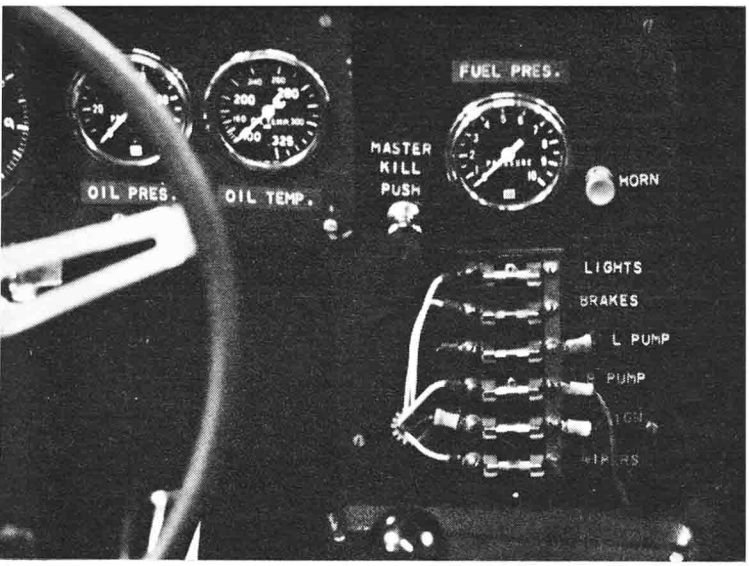




DRAWING BY C. A. LaTOURETTE

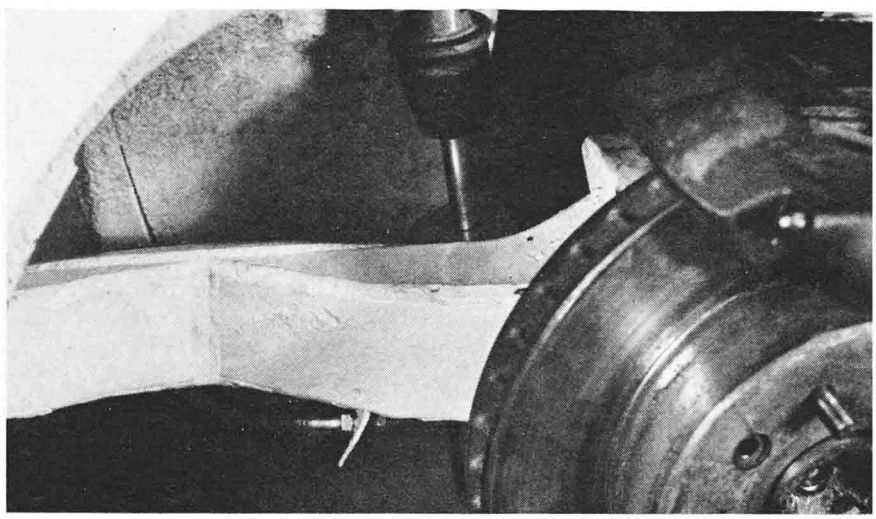
CHASSIS & SUSPENSION

Body-frame construction: Full length ladder-type frame with 5 crossmembers. Structural network steel body frame. Fiberglas reinforced plastic body panels.
Front suspension: Independent, unequal-length wishbones (short/long arm type) with coil springs.
Rear suspension: Independent, 3-link type with fixed differential, transverse 6-leaf spring (1500 lb./in.), single trailing arms, fixed-length halfshafts and lateral links.
Shocks: Koni double adjustable, front, PN 1036 SP1/rear, PN 1037 SP1.
Stabilizer: Link type steel, front: 0.9375 in. dia., rear, 0.562 in. dia.
Steering: Recirculating ball, 17.6:1 overall ratio.
Brakes: 11.75 in. vented discs f/r with power assist.
brake pads.....special factory order Delco
brake fluid.....Delco PN 550
Wheels: American mags 9.5 x 15, PN 21595; 1-in. positive offset.
Tires: Firestone.
dry weather, f/r.5.20-10.20 x 15/6.00-11.50 x 15
rain, f/r.....5.25-10.40 x 15/5.75-10.60 x 15
R106 tread compound; R125 tread pattern
Geometry (avg. setting, driver & full tank)
front camber, deg.....1 neg.
front caster, deg.....1.5 to 1.75 pos.
front toe in.....0.0625/wheel; 0.125 total
rear camber, deg.....1.25 to 1.50 neg.
rear toe in.....0.0625 in./wheel; 0.125 in. total
Ball joints.....TRW or Moog, permanently adjustable type
Wheel bearings, f/r.....Timken
Differential: Hypoid with Positraction limited slip; axle ratios from 2.73:1 to 4.11:1 used. Carrier pinion bumper mounted to frame by alum. bushing.
ring gear dia., in.....8.875 in.
dif. oil cooler.....Harrison PN 3157804
Roll bar: 2.25 in. OD, 0.125 in. wall mild seamless steel welded to frame at five points.

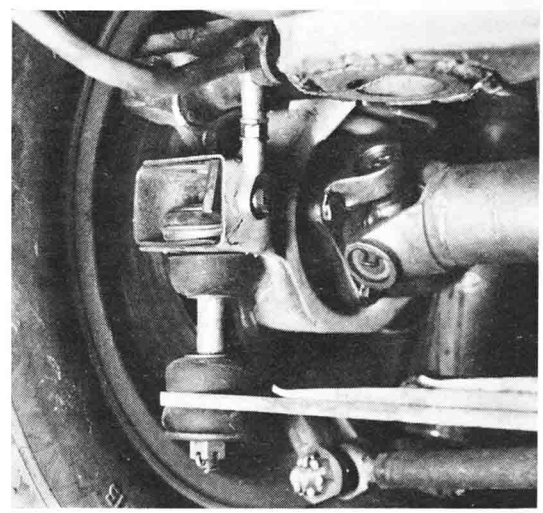


WIRING is all new, with the fuses exposed for easy replacement, and switches labelled. Note master kill switch.

EXTRA lights and flared fenders are added for long-distance races, and not permitted in SCCA competition.



TORQUE ARM locating rear wheel has been notched to clear bigger tires and reinforced in back. Rules allow as big a tire as will fit inside fender.



RUBBER bushings and spacer keep spring from bottoming on torque arm.

CORVETTE
continued

sion to go to full negative camber. This is prevented with the present arrangement.

The new rod acts as a turnbuckle —once a set amount of camber is screwed in, the setting cannot change without unbolting one end of the rod and screwing or unscrewing one of the Heim joints. The rubber bushings of the stock rod are also eliminated. The new strut rod requires a different bolt and shim pack to make up the width of the original strut.

"The only weak link in an otherwise strong drive train," said Art Jerome, "is the differential. It's plenty strong, but subject to overheating. To aid cooling, we attach an aluminum scoop underneath the differential. A temperature gauge for the differential gives Tony and Jerry advance warning of trouble. It reads up to a temperature of 325° with 275° being the danger point. For long distance races we hook up a cooler identical to the one we use to cool the engine oil."

Rubber bushings are used in the rear crossmember to isolate the differential from the frame. The OCF team has replaced the bottom portion of the bushing by a steel plate to give a solid mount between the frame and the crossmember. The rubber bushing on the differential carrier pinion bumper, which isolates the differential from the frame at its forward locating point, is replaced by a solid mount made of aluminum.

In front, the steering is adjusted to give the fastest available ratio. This is accomplished by moving the tie rod end to the forward hole in the steering arm. The "U" shaped shims used to adjust front camber are replaced by washers. Shims sometimes fall off, washers can't! Chevy ball joints are replaced by either TRW or Moog units which compensate for wear.

One of the problems encountered with the stock suspension is a lack of suspension travel. When the suspension at a wheel bottoms out it acts as a solid member and produces extremely high roll stiffness rates.

If the bottoming is at a front wheel, the car will plow off the road front first (understeer). If the bottoming occurs at a rear wheel, the rear end of the car is likely to spin towards the front of the car (oversteer).

ROAD RACING fans who would like to read more about the SCCA's national championships and about this year's events and winners, will find a complete account of the race and the racers in the March issue of *Road & Track*.

To reduce the possibility of this happening, Jerome and his crew trimmed the bump stops at the front and rear of the car to 6/10ths in.

The rear spring attachment to the torque arm is modified for the same reason. The stock rear spring/torgue arm link will allow the spring to move up the connecting bolt during hard cornering. If the spring bottoms on the torque arm, it becomes ineffective. To prevent this a metal spacer, separated by two rubber bushings, is added to the bolt between the spring and the torque arm.

Koni shocks are used all around, adjustable for both jounce and rebound control, Konis permit the chassis to be tuned to any track. At the rear, the team trimmed the jounce stop a quarter-inch to allow more travel.

Brakes are the standard power assist system. The OCF team threw out the brake booster filter. Its only purpose was to eliminate various sucking noises from the ears of the driver, but who could hear the brakes over the roar of that L-88? The benefit from removing it is faster pedal response. Factory special order Delco pads and Delco 550 brake fluid complete the brake package. In the short sprint races, brake pad changes are generally not needed. But in the long Daytona and Sebring events, pad changes are vital. Anyone who has struggled to remove a red hot pad from a red hot disc will appreciate the "trick" vacuum can which OCF uses to retract the pads away from the disc. The vacuum can is attached to a fitting hidden in the fender gills, which is in turn connected by a tube to a fitting on the master cylinder (one each for the front and rear brakes). All they have to do is hook up the can, turn on the vacuum, and—ZAP—the pads move away from the disc.

Clutch adjustment is set so that disengagement occurs at the floor. This is to prevent the driver from pushing the diaphram clutch over-center and breaking clutch fingers, an event which could easily occur during the heat of battle.

The SCCA allows the use of any wheels of the same diameter with a rim width no more than 1.5 in. wider than the standard wheel listed by SCCA for the car. Such wheels cannot result in a track increase of more than 2 in.

For SCCA races, the cars run 9.5-in. wide American mags, the maximum allowable. For FIA events, bodymen John Harcourt and Steve Hendrix add flared fenders to accommodate 9.5-in. wide wheels with more positive offset to widen the track.

The instrumentation layout illustrates the care with which the OCF team prepares their cars. The usual gauges are present, but in addition, the fuses are placed on the console—in case replacement is required. In addition, OCF added a master kill switch which requires only a simple "push" to disconnect all the electrics including the battery.

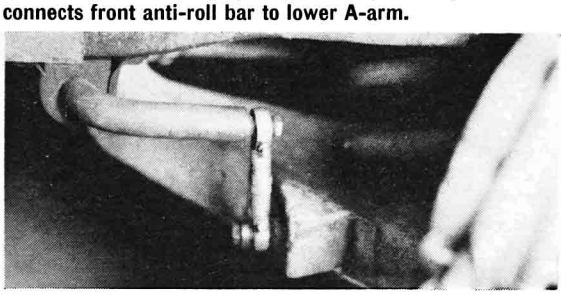
Les Talcott, the team electrician adds simplicity. "I completely rewired the cars and made a new harness with just the connections we needed. Hunting for a bad connection is bad enough when there are only four or five wires to check out. When I think of having to check 40 or 50, I almost go bananas."

External lighting other than brake and tail lights is not required for SCCA races, but for long distance night racing Cibie quartz iodine road lamps are installed in the stock sockets beneath aerodynamic, non-retractable head light covers. Illumination of the numbers on the sides of the car is provided by Sylvania "light panels" which are only 0.020-in. thick.

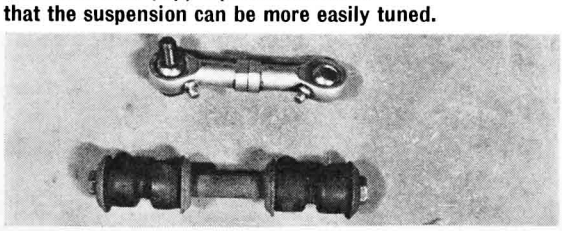
Credit for the striking paint scheme goes to Randy Wattine, a car designer by trade. "I figured that since we had a sponsor, we owed it to him to use his trademark colors," Randy said. "We developed a 'block' theme which emphasizes the lines of the cars. Our hesitation stripe on the dome hoods is our way of breaking away from the traditional stripe design."

1970? "We're committed to run at least six SCCA Nationals next season," DeLorenzo said. "See those engines over there (Tony pointed to six engines covered with plastic and occupying one corner of their garage)—302s (350s which will be destroked to 302 cubes). We'll be fielding a two-car team of Camaros for Owens Corning in next year's Trans-Am series. We realize we're underdogs. People say that SCCA Nationals are just amateur events, that we'll get our doors blown off by the real pros like Penske. I hope they keep thinking that way because we think they'll be surprised." ■

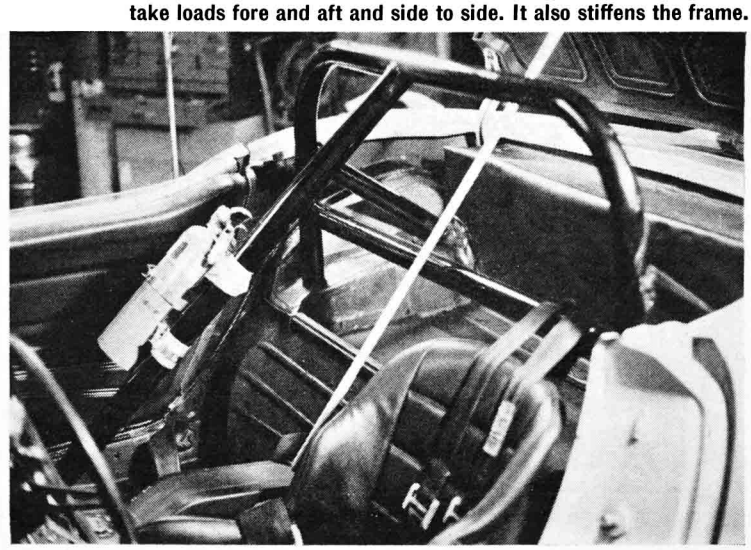
NEW LINK, with Heim joints replacing bushings, connects front anti-roll bar to lower A-arm.



PRECISE link (top) replaces rubber so that the suspension can be more easily tuned.



ROLL BAR is welded to the frame at five points, and braced to take loads fore and aft and side to side. It also stiffens the frame.



THE ONE-TWO PUNCH

Behind the success of the Owens-Corning team are two talented guys who just wanted to drive race cars.

BY WALLY WYSS

CORVETTES ARE America's favorite dream car. Owens-Corning, the world's largest producer of Fiberglas, knows this. Every Corvette since Eden has a body made of their stuff.

But until 1968 the public *out there* didn't know about Owens-Corning's role with the Corvette. Even worse, those wing-tipped biggies in Detroit's auto kingdom weren't really aware of the significance of OCF either.

One thing changed all that—Owens-Corning's entrance into auto racing.

That's right. Hang your sign on a couple of cars that go and tell the world that, yes, folks, those plastic cars not only go, but they hang together.

But first you got to find a team. An invincible team. A team with consistency and determination that'll convince even the toughest cost accountant at the home office to loosen the purse strings. After all, racing costs money.

The team found them instead. Jerry Thompson and Tony DeLorenzo, a Chevrolet engineer and a public relations executive, met up with Owens-Corning and convinced OCF that racing was the way to get its name known. "Tell the world and Detroit will listen," was their pitch. They got the contract.

Who are these guys who swept the A/Production calendar clean with 12 victories out of 12 races and won the SCCA Championship run-off going away?

Thompson hails from Iowa, the corn state. Tall and gaunt, he still has a little bit of the corn about him, but in the wheeler-dealer atmosphere of auto racing, he comes on with refreshing candor.

This is despite his appearance.

For, at the race track Thompson plays the role. When not in his Beta-cloth flame suit, he sports a stunning combo of white-on-white jacket and pants with red socks and white tennies. Little boys chase him for autographs. But Thompson's not trying to snow anybody. He just believes in looking professional. Besides, red and white are the client's colors.

While Tony DeLorenzo off the track is an extrovert—roaring about Detroit in a jet black L-88 Corvette roadster customized to look like his racer, with wheel well flares, humped hood, chromed competition exhaust and Indy treads, Jerry is content to drive a modest Corvair or pick one of the company-owned cars to drive sedately between office and home.

At home, in the white-collar factory town of Warren, Mich., Thompson melts into the suburbanite role easily. Split-level. Four pre-school tykes. Maybe even a dog. But on weekends he might jet a thousand miles to get behind the wheel of his red and white roadster and wail around a strip of asphalt at 180 mph in the rain.

At work, Thompson again melts into the background. His current assignment: Make the engine in Chevrolet's XP-887 a winner. Officially, that's all he does.

He's not a part of that numberless *in* group which, by some process of osmosis unknown to biologists, transmits vital data to illuminaries the likes of Jim Hall and Roger Penske. But Thompson is able to do what even the *in* group wishes it could do—go racing.

Professionalism is Thompson's *modus operandi*. You can see it at the race track as well as when he is at work.

Although being one of the team's two drivers frees him from the task of wrenchwork, Thompson continually appraises potentially critical factors such as heat build-up at the differential, high frequency vibrations or the heat ranges of the spark plugs needed at different cylinders. He always has his slide rule ready.

The rest of the team might be kicking the tools around, or foaming at the rules changes they weren't informed of, but when Thompson's laser-beam mind is focused on the problem, it suddenly ceases to be a problem and instead becomes a series of steps leading to a solution.

Jerry's driving career began almost a decade ago in 1961, when he enrolled in a SCCA-sponsored driver's school at Waterford Hills, Mich., north of Detroit. Two years later, Thompson was breaking the track's lap record.

By 1964, Thompson finished third nationally in his class. Switching to a Corvair, he made SCCA Central Division Champion in '65.

When racer Don Yenko brought out his super-hot Yenko Stinger version of the Corvair in '66, Thompson was one of his first customers, driving the car to another Central Division Championship in D/Production and finishing fifth with it in the '66 Daytona American Road Race of Champions.

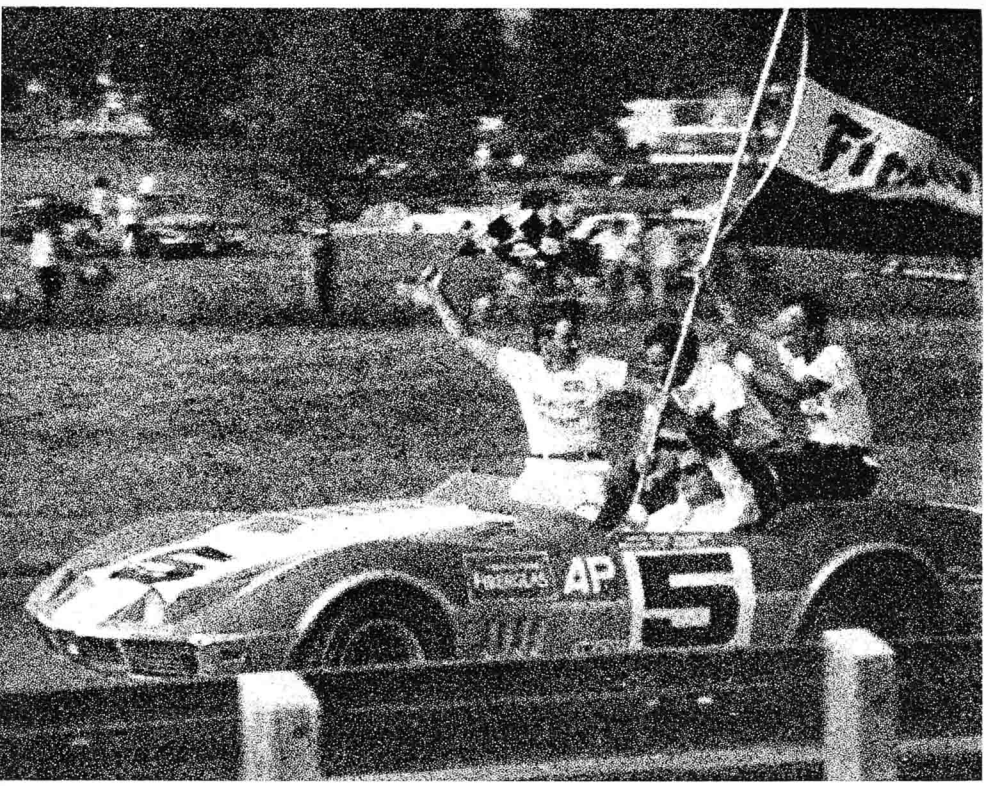
It was while racing Corvairs that Thompson first met DeLorenzo, whose first race car was a Corvair. A couple of years after their first meeting at a race, the two met again when DeLorenzo was looking for a small engineering shop to modify his '67 Vette and happened upon a firm which had Thompson as a consultant. DeLorenzo ended up asking Thompson to go racing with him and the result was one of the strongest racing teams in SCCA history.

The '69 season was Thompson's finest to date. Taking first at Donnybrooke, Milwaukee, Michigan International, Blackhawk Farms and Gratton Speedway, he capped off the season November 30th by walking away with first place against the fastest Corvette drivers in the country, with a half hour cruise at a steady 106 mph at the national ARRC held at Daytona this year.

Tony DeLorenzo, as everybody knows, is the son of Anthony DeLorenzo, Sr., a veep at General Motors. You would think that Tony Sr. would be waving the flag for Tony's team, being that it *is* GM and all. But sometimes Anthony Sr. wishes it all were not happening.

He liked it better when it wasn't Tony, the Race Car Driver, but Tony, ▶

ONE-TWO continued



HAPPINESS IS a victory lap. DeLorenzo takes OCF team's first victory lap at Mid-Ohio, '68.

the graduate of Notre Dame or Tony, the Master's Degree candidate at Boston University.

Or even *Mr.* DeLorenzo, the business executive, with a corner office, a three-tab phone and a secretary.

But that's not the way it is. It's Tony, the race car driver, whose name appears (often misspelled) in *Autocar* and *Motor* and other Continental magazines or domestic race reports.

Tony, wailing around some rain-smacked race track at 185 mph in a plastic race car when he could be home bouncing his new baby off of his knee or mowing the grass of a suburban home under the direction of his pretty wife, Kathy.

If you think he does it for money, you're wrong. Any guy with two college degrees and business experience can knock down 15 Gs anytime at all without risking his life.

If you think he does it for glory, you're wrong there, too. Tony, even though he's got a degree in public relations, never toots his own horn. At race tracks, he turns introvert—tromping around in a shabby black corduroy coat and an old felt Afrikaner hat. Not one of the beautiful people.

Why does Tony do it? Because Tony likes to drive.

Tony got hooked on cars while he was still an undergrad at Notre Dame. He and a few other students got together on a fund raising project called, "Sports Car Spectacular." A phone call to Dad got cars like the mysterious Corvette Grand Sport for display. The show soon developed into an annual major auto show, getting ink in the national sports car press.

On reaching his 21st birthday, the legal minimum for SCCA drivers, Tony drove through the gate at Watkins Glen, N.Y., ready to learn in driver's school what there was to know about race car driving.

He was a good student. By 1966, Tony posted a third place in the SCCA's Central Division point standings in his Corvair. In '67, he switched to a 427 Vette, finished second in SCCA's Central Division A/Production class and second in the American Road Race of Champions.

After teaming up with Jerry, Tony's name continued to rise in the point standings. It became evident that the talent was there. The only thing holding the team back was money. DeLorenzo had been making ends meet with sponsorship from Chevrolet dealers in Detroit and Chicago. But the ties were always tenuous, lasting only as long as the next race or the race after that. Thompson had only his wallet, with his family having first dibs.

What about General Motors? Uh-uh. Thompson, with ten years on the engineering staff, could have as much free advice as he wanted. He could even use their dyno (you didn't think they carried one in their tool kit, did you?). And maybe Tony could even have a discount on the Vettes. But a GM Racing Team, no.

OCF's sponsorship made the difference. With OCF's bankroll behind them to buy parts and support a full crew, the team could concentrate on driving. In '68, the team racked up eight victories out of 11 races.

The year 1968 was Tony's year, with DeLorenzo copping the SCCA's Central Division A/Production Championship and Thompson finishing in the runner-up's spot.

DeLorenzo knows what it's like to be runner-up. In both '67 and '68, he finished the American Road Race of Champions in second place.

On the international racing scene, Tony was leading the race with Dick Lang as co-driver at the Six Hours of Watkins Glen in '69 when the team took the Grand Touring class, finishing seventh overall. Thompson, co-driving with Bill Morrison in the team's second car, totaled out his mount on the fifth lap, nixing the chances for the team's usual 1-2 finish.

At the '69 American Road Race of Champions, held at Daytona Beach, Florida, DeLorenzo was again charging hard behind Thompson when Yenko spun in the fifth lap in front of him, littering the track with enough debris to flatten Tony's tire. Tony's long walk to the pits cost him the race.

For a couple of years, Tony played both ends against the middle, racing on weekends all over the country and then dragging home on the late flight while his crew trucked the cars home. On Monday morning he would be at his desk.

But, a few months ago, Tony decided to take the leap after six years of driving. You can't be a part-time race driver and win big-time races. *No Way.* So he quit his job. Left the office and the secretary and the phone with three tabs.

For '70, DeLorenzo has his work cut out for him. Next season, there'll be a new brace of Vettes—both 454s to be especially prepared for the Internationals *only.*

And there'll be the Trans-Am cars —two de-stroked Camaro Z/28s, carrying the brilliant Owens-Corning color scheme.

Thompson has Trans-Am experience under his belt—at St. Jovite and Sebring in '67. DeLorenzo has to catch up on this type of racing. He's in it full time now, for better or for worse. And things are looking better all the time. ■