

GM Press Release: February 7, 1997: 1997 Corvette - What's New

General Motors Media Press Release

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What's New

CHICAGO — The 1997 Corvette, introduced at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit last month, has already garnered two awards: AutoWeek magazine named the car “Best in Show” at Detroit, and American Woman Motorscene magazine named the Corvette its “Most Likely To Be Immortalized” car.

“A new Corvette comes along once in a generation, it seems,” said AutoWeek Editor Matt DeLorenzo, “and Chevrolet has done an outstanding job of preserving the Corvette tradition, while improving upon the breed. Best of all, the car’s improvements mean that the Corvette will appeal to a wider spectrum of sports car enthusiasts.” American Woman Motorscene Publisher Courtney Caldwell said the Corvette won her magazine’s award hands down. “Immortality does not make Corvette a leader in its class; It’s in a class all of its own,” she noted.

Corvette has been America’s best-selling sports car for decades. The new model combines beauty, performance and comfort in one sleekly styled, aerodynamic machine. The fifth-generation Corvette is designed to reach out to loyalists, as well as those who are not traditional Corvette buyers. It adds new materials, engineering and design to produce a vehicle worthy of its ground-breaking heritage. The 1997 Corvette is true to its reputation. Here’s how:

- The new engine is a 5.7-liter LS1 small-block, producing 345 hp and 350 lb.-ft. of torque — all from a more compact unit.
- The rear-mounted transaxle opens up a great

Buyer Profile

- Median household income — \$100,000
- Gender Mix: 74% men/26% women
- 66% college educated
- 63% married

Quick Facts

- Corvette is the highest selling nameplate in the high-sport segment, with 39% of current market share.
- 1997 Corvette prototypes covered more than 500,000 miles in tests, undergoing extreme speed, temperature, altitude, braking and endurance conditions. **BASE MSRP**
- The 1997 Corvette offers excellent value for \$38,060. The all-new sports car adds more than \$1,200 of premium standard equipment, yet is only \$270 more than the 1996 model. These features include an up-level radio with premium Bose speakers, a low pressure warning system for tires, driver’s power seat, speed sensitive steering and extended mobility (“run flat”) tires.

deal of interior space, especially in the footwell area, and helps maintain a near 50/50 distribution of weight from front to rear.

- The Electronic Throttle Control (ETC) allows engineers to tune the vehicle's throttle progression almost infinitely.
- There are three suspension choices (all are four-wheel independent short/long arm, double wishbone packages). The base suspension provides excellent ride and handling. Optional F45 is the high-tech choice, offering Selective Real-Time Damping. The optional Z51 package is designed for the owner who wants to compete in autocrosses.
- The stiffest underbody structure in the car's history consists of two full-length, hydroformed perimeter frame rails coupled to a stiff backbone tunnel. The rails consist of a single piece of tubular steel, replacing the 14 parts previously used.
- The structural changes allow more room for people and cargo, easier-to-access door openings and an improved angle of visibility through the windshield. The wheelbase is 8.3 inches longer, while overall length is up just 1.2 inches.
- In the event of a flat tire, the Goodyear Eagle F1 GS Extended Mobility Tires can run for up to 200 miles at 55 mph.
- The interior features almost twice the cargo space, thanks in part to twin mid-ship-mounted fuel tanks. The fuel tank design minimizes fuel load effects on weight distribution.
- Interior styling features the twin-pod cockpit, a style that originated with the first Corvette in 1953. The passenger side grab handle is also back, as is a dash-mounted ignition switch. The new instrument panel contains traditional analog gauges that are backlit and a digital Driver Information Center. This display provides 12 individual readouts in four languages (English, French, German and Spanish).
- Removable roof panel now has three latches to easily remove top without use of a tool.

- The tail section is quite different from past Corvettes. The vehicle's blunt rear end allows for smoother airflow.
- The result is a drag coefficient of 0.29, the second lowest of any mass-produced car in North America (GM's own EV1 is first).

INTERIOR SPACE SPECIFICATION CHART

Dimension Improvement

('97 vs. '96)

Headroom	+1.3 in.
Legroom	+0.7 in.
Shoulder room	+1.4 in.
Driver footwell width	+3.1 in.
Passenger footwell width	+6.3 in.
Seat Travel	+0.5 in.
Cargo capacity	+12.4 cu. ft.
Trunk area reach over distance	-13.8 in.
Door opening, top	+0.8 in.
Step-in height	-3.7 in.

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