

All New Seventh Generation C7 Takes Design Features from Corvette Racing

by Irena Granaas

For the all-new 2014 Chevrolet Corvette, designers and engineers are promising a precisely sculpted design to turn heads at its January reveal during the 2013 North American International Auto Show in Detroit.

But the changes are more than an attempt to stun car enthusiasts with the car's good looks. Engineers promise that every line, surface and vent have been tweaked for optimum performance.

Chevrolet spokesman Monte Doran said that the new C7 boasts a sleek new shape created from years of performance data from the Corvette Racing program.

"The all-new Corvette integrates more high-performance aerodynamic features than ever before, many taken directly from Corvette Racing," said Tadge Juechter, Corvette chief engineer.

"For example, the front grill and radiator flow paths reduce lift, improving vehicle stability at high speeds by keeping the car pressed to the pavement. In addition, functional vents increase track capability by channeling air to the brakes, as well as heat exchangers for the transmission and differential."

Doran noted the 'Vette truly is all new, with only two parts carrying over from the C6 to the C7.

"We're going to show the C7 for the first time on January 13 in Detroit, so that will be the world reveal . . . That's a big deal for us, because that means that literally every part of the car, with the exception of the interior cabin air filter and the rear roof latch for the removable roof panel are new," he said.

The C7's sculpted looks are "a big part of the story," Doran stated.

"The exterior is 'functionally elegant' because it is both a really beautiful, sculptured design, but it also serves a purpose, and a lot of that has to do with aerodynamics. We spent a ton of time working on the car to improve its high-speed stability and its track capability, and a lot of what we did was taken right off the Corvette Racing race car called the C6R that we used to compete in the ALMS (American Le Mans) Series," he explained.

At this year's final race in the ALMS Series, the C6R swept the driver, team and manufacturer championships for 2012.

"That's a really big deal for us, because that means that Corvette is the most successful team in ALMS history," Doran commented, "and we call it technology transfer."

"We take a lot of what we learn on the track and apply it to the production car, and then we take the production car and turn it in-

to a race car, so there's kind of this virtuous circle of improvement. We use racing to make a better production car, and then we take a production car and go racing so you've got a better race car, and it just keeps on improving itself, and I think our track record at ALMS shows that it's working."

The Corvette made its initial bow in 1953, and in January, Chevrolet will be introducing the seventh generation of the iconic performance car. The newcomer joins a proud bloodline of other significantly upgraded Corvettes, including the Z06 in 2007; and the ZR1 in 2009.

"Both of those really had significant aerodynamic improvements for track use, which again comes

back to the whole technology transfer between Corvette and Corvette Racing. We took what we learned on the track and applied it to the Z06 and then the ZR1 to make those phenomenally capable cars.

"The Corvette ZR1 is the fastest car that General Motors has ever produced, capable of 205 miles an hour, and a lot of that is due to the aerodynamics applied to that car, which we learned from racing."

Like its predecessors, the 2014 Corvette will be manufactured at GM's Bowling Green, Ky., assembly plant, which exclusively makes Corvettes using the 'Vette's unique platform - which does not share architecture with any other GM vehicle product.

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