



STYLE, SUBTERFUGE, AND SPEED

To bring the second-generation Corvette to life, designer Bill Mitchell fought motorsports bans, racing failures, and upper management. The result is one of the most famous sports cars ever.

“It was like I was in some futuristic spaceship that had just landed on earth,” said Chuck Jordan, Vice President of General Motors Design, the first time he drove the 1963 Corvette Sting Ray. “We’d built a Motorama show car that was suddenly obtainable by anyone!”

If that was the impact that the second-generation Corvette had upon GM’s top brass, imagine how the public felt when they first witnessed it on track at the Los Angeles Times Grand Prix at Riverside Raceway on the weekend of October 13, 1962. It exemplified a General Motors of a different mold, a sleek and low-slung sports car inspired by the best diminutive European styling efforts,

a car devoid of tailfins—hell, a proper sports car, with a race-bred chassis and bodywork honed by aerodynamic testing. It had survived against all the odds imposed by GM management and against a Euro-enamored public to survive into the next model year. Today it remains one of the most compelling automotive designs in history. And that weekend, in race-prepped Z-06 guise, with Doug Hopper behind the wheel, it won it all.

“For the first time,” said Zora Arkus-Duntov, the engineer who created the V8 Corvette nearly a decade earlier, and then honed it into what it was today, “I now have a Corvette I can be proud to drive in Europe.”

Inspired by the best of European styling, the Corvette appeared unlike anything America had yet produced (*opposite*).

The symmetrical, twin-cowl interior was a dramatic touch, launching a Corvette trademark (*above*).