

1955

One original member of was Zora Arkus-Duntov, and former European road determined to make marketing corner through main areas: handling and



the Corvette task force an automotive engineer racer. He was Corvette turn the improvements in two performance.

While outward appearances remained basically the same as the two previous years, the roadster began its evolution into true sports car performance with the introduction of Chevrolet's 265 cubic-inch, "Turbo-Fire" V-8 engine, coupled with an automatic choke, a 12-volt electrical system and, in later models, a three-speed manual transmission.

Performance improvement was manifest in the fact that the new V-8 could clock 0-60mph in just 8 1/2 seconds; the quarter mile in 16 1/2 seconds; reach a top speed of nearly 120 miles and improve mileage about 2 to 3 miles per gallon over the Blue Flame's in-line six.

Choice of exterior colors was expanded to include a Harvest Gold with complementary green trim and dark green top; Gypsy Red replacing Sportsman Red and a Metallic Copper. Interior colors were also broadened beyond the Sportsman Red to included Dark Beige, Light Beige and Yellow. An electric windshield wiper system replaced the vacuum operated one and a foot-operated windshield spray unit was available.

And, on the side of each fender, the Chevrolet script signature included a capital "V" (CheVrolet) to announce proudly that the car was powered by the new V-8 engine. Retail price for the basic six-cylinder roadster held at \$2,774 while the V-8 powered Corvette listed for \$2,909.

Despite these innovations and improvements, 1955 might be considered a make or break year for the Corvette. Disappointing sales-versus-forecast figures the preceding year led management to curtail production to only 700 units.

Meanwhile, Ford introduced its ballyhooed Thunderbird in direct competition to Chevrolet's Corvette.

Against this somber backdrop, Duntov entered a disguised 1956 prototype with V-8 engine in the Pike's Peak Hill Climb, setting a stock car record in the event. Corvette was literally "off to the races."