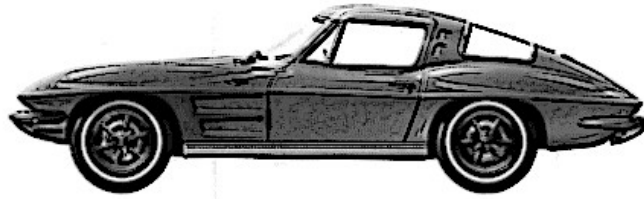


## 1963

1963 was a breakout year for Corvette. The impact the automobile had on the American motoring public in its first decade was monumental. Now, General Motors' Chevrolet Division unveiled a redesigned model...the Sting Ray.



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The chassis was new with independent rear suspension replacing solid axles. The body was lighter, tighter, lower, trimmer, shorter (wheel base was trimmed from 102 to 98 inches), more comfortable with a lower center of gravity, and more stylish than its predecessors.

And, for the first time, it was available in both convertible and in a fastback coupe model with hardtop roof.

A small center wind bar on the tapered roof carried on through to the back creating the model's unique "split screen" rear window. This split window feature lasted only one year because company officials felt it hampered rear visibility, but it made the 1963 the favorite Sting Ray model among Corvette collectors.

The X-frame chassis was replaced by a ladder-type frame with five crossmembers to improve chassis strength and rigidity. The new independent rear suspension meant better traction and handling and the shortened wheelbase enabled easier steering and maneuverability.

Engine size remained at 327 cubic inches with ratings of 300, 340 and 360 horsepower, the latter tied to a fuel injection system. A three-speed manual transmission was standard with automatic Powerglide as an option. The four-speed manual option was preferred by most drivers and over 17,500 were ordered.

Concealed headlights, offered for the first time, enhanced the lines of the softly-pointed new front design when not in use. Options included backup lights; air conditioning; leather seats; power brakes; power steering; AM-FM radio, and adjusting mechanisms for seat bottoms. "Knock-off" cast aluminum wheels were another option but were withdrawn when they were found to have casting problems. Wheel trim first carried two-bar and, later, three-bar spinners.

Inside, the redesigned chassis allowed passengers to ride comfortably inside the frame, rather than on top of it. The cockpit featured a "twin cowl" design that provided for a roomy glove compartment on the passenger side and all necessary dials and gauges were neatly displayed directly in front of the driver.

Acceptance of the two-model lineup was immediate and overwhelming. Demand exceeded supply. A total of 10,919 convertibles and 10,594 coupes were turned out with many buyers waiting months for delivery. Annual production grew 50 percent, surpassing 21,500 units...another first.

In competitive racing circles, Corvette temporarily lost its SCCA edge to the Ford-powered, Carroll Shelby-developed Cobra, thanks to the latter's higher power-to-weight ratio. But, the Corvette Grand Sport recorded its first victory at Watkins Glen that summer and in the fall, a trio specially-prepared Grand Sports handily beat the Cobras in a series of races in Nassau.