

## 1968

1968 marked a awaited evolution in the end product of improving, testing and marked the 15 years development.



dramatic, long-Corvette design; experimenting, tweaking that of the Corvette's

Legend has it that Bill Mitchell, GM's styling chief went deep-sea fishing in the Bahamas in 1960 and, upon landing a shark, dreamed up the concept of a new body shape for the company's sports car. Over the ensuing years, that dream bore fruit in the experimental "Shark" series that culminated in the Larry Shinoda-designed Mako Shark II test show car unveiled at the New York International Auto Show and the General Motors Pavilion at the World's Fair in 1965.

Unofficially dubbed the "Shark," the 1968 Corvette embodied modern, clean, aerodynamic lines complementing its powerful small and big block engines.

Gone were the boattail rear deck styling, humped fenders and sleek hood of the Sting Ray generation. In their place was a long pointed nose; bulges over the wheels; a slimmed-down waist or midsection, and a somewhat concave, notchback rear deck treatment. Coupes featured flying buttress panels flanking an upright, removable flat rear window, and removable two-panel T-roofs. Four louvers or "gills" were added to the fenders behind the wheel well to help reduce underhood air pressure.

Overall, the 1968's were seven inches longer and two inches lower in height giving them a bold, sleek, lusty appearance.

Other innovations included vacuum-operated hidden headlights that popped into position, rather than rotated as in previous versions; side vent windows were eliminated; windshield wipers were hidden under a vacuum-operated panel, and the battery was moved to a compartment behind the seats for better weight distribution. A three-speed Turbo Hydra-Matic transmission replaced the two-speed Powerglide and an aluminum head on the 427ci displacement engine was offered as an option. In one speed test, a 427-equipped coupe notched 0-60 in 5.7 seconds and a quarter mile in 14.1 seconds.

Despite initial trade media criticism, the public embraced the 1968 and new sale records were set. Over 9,900 coupes and 18,600 convertibles were produced, better than 5,600 over the preceding year. Sticker prices for the basic car increased nominally.