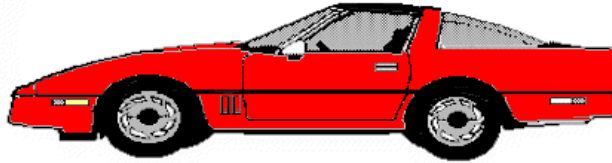


## 1984

1983 was an anomaly in Corvette's 30-year and industry history. The public eagerly anticipated a special 30th anniversary edition, but it was not to be. Corvette management had been aiming at a markedly revised model as early as the mid-70s, but a number of delays and obstacles intervened.



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been aiming at a markedly revised model as early as the mid-70s, but a number of delays and obstacles intervened. Actually, 43 pre-production models of the 1983 were built, but only one has endured and is on display at the National Corvette Museum in Bowling Green.

As a result of the holdup, the 1984 was able to meet all new federal safety, fuel economy and emissions regulations and benefit from an unusually long production run when it was eventually introduced. Consequently, the 51,547 units manufactured represented the second greatest volume in the sports car's history.

Development of the next generation of Corvette dates back to 1978 and represents a collaborative effort between designers at the parent General Motors and engineers at the Corvette Division. The 1984 can trace its legacy, in part, to Bill Mitchell who had since left Corvette; to Dave McLennan, Corvette's new engineering chief and to GM designer Jerry Palmer. They all agreed that a major redesign in virtually every aspect was warranted.

The result was a wider, smoother, aerodynamic body style; more spacious interior; lightweight chassis; integral stability, and even further weight reduction. It became the first, all-new Corvette since 1968's Mako Shark. Overall length was reduced over eight inches, thanks to less front and rear overhang, although the wheelbase was chopped less than two inches. The fenders, in concert with the nose, sloped gently forward and down while the rear fascia had a modestly angular concave design with the slightest hint of the '68's boattail.

Except for the lift-up hatch window and 350ci engine carried over from the 1982, the car underwent major redesign. The T-top roof was replaced by a single-unit, removable Targa-type roof; the wrapover front hood/fenders assembly opened forward like a clam shell to permit easier access to the engine compartment and the windshield assumed a more acute, rakish angle. Fog lights and turn signals were located low in the front bumper, where air intakes were previously situated.

Under the shell was unique "bird cage" rigid construction mated to a strengthened all-steel "uniframe" that integrated the drive train with the differential into a single component. Underneath was a double-wishbone suspension; a five-link independent rear suspension, and plastic single traverse leaf springs were used in front and back. Steering was power assisted or standard rack-and-pinion instead of the recirculating-ball variety. Larger four-wheel power disc brakes with aluminum calipers were mounted inside a wider cast-alloy

wheel matched to 16-inch, unidirectional Goodyear Eagle "Gatorback" radials -- all working in harmony to make Corvette one of the world's best cornering cars.

The 1984 was designed to have greater ground clearance, less overall height and more cockpit room. The exhaust system was reworked through a center tunnel. An optional "4+3" four-speed manual transmission had overdrive in the top three gear ranges for better fuel economy. The radiator used aluminum cooling fins and plastic reservoir and a thermostatically-controlled electric fan operated only when needed and at speeds under 35mph.

In the cockpit, electronic instrumentation became standard, including multi-color digital readouts and liquid-crystal displays to monitor a variety of functions and conditions. Multi-adjustable power seats were offered.

The launch of the fourth generation of Corvette was met with critical acclaim in all circles, even though list price for the base coupe was \$21,800, Corvette's first surge past the \$20,000 level.