

Hand Signals Greetings

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and Other

(The Yankee Lady)
Barbara Spear
in Keepin Track of Vettes

Driving a Corvette is a very social experience. It's important to know the correct rules of greeting etiquette so that you can properly communicate with other Vette drivers you meet on the road. When I first began driving my Corvette, I was ignorant of the standard etiquette and undoubtedly behaved like an effete impudent snob. My apologies to the other Vette owners who passed me during this period. Eventually, I learned that it is considered polite and proper to acknowledge and greet other Vette owners. I also learned that there are a number of unwritten rules which apply to such greetings -- and that most Vette owners develop a personal style for complying with these social niceties. In general, when two Vettes pass one another on a roadway, the two drivers acknowledge each other. This not only signals that the two drivers are alert and able to distinguish the Corvette from the milieu of common cars on the road, but also reminds each driver that he or she belongs to a select group of individuals who have excellent taste in automobiles.

Jeep CJ owners participate in a similar social practice by flashing their lights to greet one another. Since the design of the Corvette doesn't lend itself to this type of greeting, Vette drivers employ more unique salutations. In most cases, Vette drivers wave to one another. At first, I employed a nice hearty wave. But I soon learned that this was considered gauche. To show refinement, most drivers simply grasp the steering wheel with one hand near the top and casually raise the fingers of that hand to wave. Very cool! Summer driving means open windows and tops down. Many Vette drivers rest their left arm on the top of the door, or hold onto the roof. In either case, a very classy, subtle wave can be executed by simply flexing the fingers of the exposed hand. This gesture probably goes unnoticed by the majority of common car drivers, but is quickly spotted by eagle-eyed Vette drivers. A few drivers who like audio reinforcement toot their horns to say hello to other Vettes they pass. This is acceptable, but risky. After all, when I'm driving along, my radio is usually cranked up to such a volume that I usually can't hear the horn beep. I could feel snubbed by a driver who only toots. If you enjoy tooting your horn, it's a good idea to couple that with a slight wave -- and be sure of recognition.

Convertible drivers are generally an enthusiastic group. I've passed other convertibles on the highway and seen both the driver and passenger flailing their arms to catch my attention across six lanes. A little dangerous at highway speeds, but nonetheless, the greeting was appreciated and returned in kind. (I never said I wasn't a little dangerous -- after all, I drive a Corvette!) Many Vette owners selectively greet others. Since I drive a 70's vintage Vette, I've been snubbed by 60's drivers as well as 80's drivers. At first I was deeply hurt and offended. Later I saw a practical

reason for some selectivity my own. After a couple of embarrassing waves at Fieros and Camaros, I decided to wait for a hand signal from an 80's vintage driver before responding in kind. It has saved me from countless strange looks. Now if I could just remember not to wave at Vettes when I'm driving my Cherokee, I'd probably eliminate the rest of the strange looks I get. One final note. Non-Corvette drivers occasionally signal a greeting when a Corvette passes them. The unusual hand signal they employ is definitely not one of the acceptable standards. It should not be acknowledged -- let alone returned in kind.