

CAR TALK

THE NEW GRAND SPORT:

We talked a little bit last month about the new 2017 Corvette Grand Sport. Our club president also mentioned (and I have since read confirmation) that Corvette Z06 production has been halted while these new Grand Sports are being cranked out. Basically a Z06 without the monster engine, but with an incredible list of option choices for a lot less money. This should be the perfect choice for many Corvette lovers.

The unique offerings for this car are so voluminous that the best I can do is encourage you to read about it in any of the current Corvette magazines or websites. These are truly the best of times for anyone wanting to step into a new Corvette.

Now if you're one of those folks who are waiting for a mid-engine Corvette, well you've got a couple more years to wait. Looks like there will be one in maybe the 2019 model year. I'm sure Dennis has more detail on that, if he's allowed to share it.

STINGRAY ISSUE:

One of the few problems we've heard concerning the Stingray is with overheating. Owners of new C7 Z06s who push their cars to the limit on race tracks have experienced some overheating problems. Chevrolet has addressed this issue and they say the new models won't suffer these problems. It's also expected that the new components fixing the issue should be available soon to retrofit to the current models, should owners wish to do so. Non-Z06 Stingray owners may also find that they have a problem with overheated oil, in some cases to the point that the car will go into limp mode with reduced power.

Apparently the engine oil cooler and oil filter are located in close proximity to the driver-side catalytic converter and the engine oil can overheat, signaling the ECM to reduce power to protect the engine. If you find you have this problem, there is a fix available.

A company called Design Engineering (DEI) now offers a C7 Catalytic Converter Heat Shield. The Heat Shield is custom-designed to prevent oil temperature from rising in the C7 by blocking heat transfer at the source. (Does this remind you of the old starter heat shields we used to install to keep the starter from being overheated by the exhaust

pipes?) The shield is a quick, easy and cost-effective solution to prevent a loss of power. You can contact Design Engineering at their website (www.designengineering.com).

2017 SALES PROJECTIONS:

Have you seen the sales forecast for vehicle sales in the U. S. for 2017? 18.2M

General Motors	17.6%
Ford Motor Co.	14.6%
Toyota	14.0%
Fiat-Chrysler	11.4%
Honda	9.3%
Hyundai	8.4%

NEW TECHNOLOGY:

Do you own a car with the Start/Stop feature? Have you driven one? How do you like it?

I had the opportunity back in June to drive a new Chevy Malibu on our annual Northern California trek to Sonoma Raceway for the NASCAR Sprint Cup race. Since it was a rental car, it was saddled with the little 2.5 liter 4-cylinder engine. I was a bit startled the first time I pulled up to a stop light and the engine quit. Being the intelligent fellow that I am and somewhat versed in automotive technology, after my first reaction of panic I guessed correctly that the Malibu was equipped with the new start/stop feature.

Over the next seven days I grew accustomed to the engine shutting off almost every time I stopped at a light or stop sign, or traffic congestion, but I never grew to like it.

If you're not familiar with this technology, the Start/Stop feature is being built into more and more models to reduce both fuel consumption and emissions by shutting off the car's engine while it is stopped, when it normally would be needlessly idling and wasting fuel.

The engine will conveniently kick back into life in 337 milliseconds, which Chevy says is as fast as the blink of an eye, once the driver lifts their foot off the brake pedal.

August 2016

Fortunately, the engine did restart every time it was supposed to and it did so quickly, although I don't know about the blink of an eye comparison.

At Disneyland, we ask anyone who chooses to kick their shoes off to please put them back on. We tell them it's for their safety. We don't mention that we also don't like people cutting their foot on a piece of glass or metal and trying to sue us. Likewise, the car makers aren't really pointing out that in order to meet government's ridiculously-high fuel mileage requirements they are virtually forced to implement fuel-saving technologies such as this. Most experts agree you can expect to save about 3% on your fuel bill, or about 2 mpg on a four-cylinder engine, if you do a fair amount of city driving. But what are the trade-offs?

I can tell you that staring at traffic moving along at 65 miles an hour and looking for an opening you can jump into with a car that isn't even running at the moment is downright SCAREY! They claim you get used to it, but I doubt you ever truly would. Also there's the fact that the car makers are installing super heavy duty starters in these cars so that the starter won't die before the warranty runs out. You can imagine how much extra work the starter has to do. And then there's the battery. Sitting at a long stop light with your air conditioning running on a hot day is really tough on a car battery. And, again, I can tell you from experience that the air coming out of those vents gets warmer and warmer the longer you sit still.

Car makers know that the battery is one of the weak links in this system. Several years ago they started switching to new deep-cycling battery designs. But even then they found that a battery in a matter of weeks begins to lose its power. Even better batteries must be made available. And what will they cost? There's also concern about added wear to the engine's internals, with all the stopping and starting. Only time will answer that. But good luck trying to sell your just-out-of-warranty used car with the Start/Stop feature; you may find it hard to locate someone willing to pay you top dollar for it.

So, while the auto makers need to use Start/Stop technology to help meet their fuel economy demands, is it worth it for us to save 3% on our fuel bills? Maybe I'm too old-school, but I'm sure not sold on it.

(Side Note): I found that if you rev the engine a little every couple of seconds or lift your foot off the brake slightly every couple of seconds, you can keep the engine from shutting down. Just sayin'.

IN MEMORIAM:

August 2016

I don't like to let the passing of notable car guys (or gals) go by without mentioning their contributions to our hobby. Recently we lost another member of our high performance automotive fraternity. If you followed Indy-Car racing at all, then you know the name Carl Haas. He was the cigar-chewing half of the Newman/Haas racing team ownership. Together with Mario Andretti, Michael Andretti, Nigel Mansell and a couple other drivers the Newman/Haas team won 107 races; second only to team Penske in the period 1983 to 2011.

Carl is a great example of the American Dream come true. He grew up in Chicago, where he began selling gearbox parts out of his parents' home. He used the proceeds to fund his racing career, starting with SCCA in 1952. Later he became an SCCA board member and subsequently its chairman. He founded Carl Haas Automotive Imports in 1960 and owned a Can-Am team in the '70s.

In the early 1980's, Mario Andretti was not happy with his CART ride with Patrick Racing, so he got the brilliant idea of pulling Paul Newman and Carl Haas together to form a new team for open-wheel racing. Being the slick-tongued devil that he is, Mario managed to convince these two very different men to start the new venture. And the rest is history.

Carl Haas died June 29 of this year at the age of 86.

TRIVIA QUESTION:

Who or what was Hyundai named after?

- A. Dr. Lideo Hyundai, founder of Hyundai Motor Company
 - B. South Korea's Hyundai province, where Hyundai's shipyard is located
 - C. The Korean word for modernity
-

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF THIS?

A fellow Corvette owner in New Hampshire tells this story:

Some years ago I bought a used 1985 Corvette as a hobby car. Of course it needed some things taken care of. One being an annoying oil leak that would see oil pool up on the cross member near the radiator. I was determined to find this leak as I hate leaks, and so did the people whose driveways I would use when I visited.

August 2016

With that, I tore off the valve covers, timing chain cover and the oil pan and installed all new gaskets. Finished, I buttoned it up and drove to work. Confident I had fixed the leak, I went out during lunch, popped the hood and.....rrrrrrr! There was a puddle of oil! I could not believe it.

Later that night, I browsed the internet forums and found a clue. The V8 block Chevy used for the new C4 Corvette retained the hole for the mechanical fuel pump. Since this engine did not have a mechanical fuel pump, they simply put a bolt in the mounting hole at the factory. Evidently, mine must have worked its way out at some point.

Long story short, once I discovered this, I had it fixed in less than three minutes with a bolt I had lying around. Lesson learned - always look for the simple answers first.