

THE '73 CORVETTE

• While guys like Chuck Miller are concentrating on the Corvette's rear end, Chevy has been working 180° away for its 1973 Corvette. These pictures of the hand-formed pre-production prototype nearing completion at the Corvette assembly and detail engineering facility in St. Louis show that the 1973 Corvette will be very little changed from the A-pillar back. But up front there will be a new Plymouth Superbird-type nose piece concealing the Government-required 5-mph bumper hardware, plus a new cold air induction hood.

Despite its Pontiac Endura-like appearance, the new grille shroud is made of a very flexible plastic, behind which stands a strong steel bumper bar (complete with its own strip of rubber protective molding). Behind that lurks a massive (approximately 4-inch) tubular crossmember which also does double duty as a vacuum reserve tank for the concealed headlight apparatus. As an ancillary benefit, the new vacuum reservoir location eliminates much of the previous Vette underhood clutter, making the engine more accessible. Detail modifications to the front end include a full-width grille with vertical members only, and new, semi-concealed parking lights.

The new hood is reminiscent of the 454 Chevelle/Camaro cowl induction hoods of two years ago, and is the same for all Vettes regardless of the power plant underneath. Operation of the cold air induction system is via an electrically actuated valve mechanism and the complicated trap door for hiding the windshield wipers has been eliminated.

The Corvette engine line-up for 1973 remains the same (350 cu.in. or 454 cu.in. V-8s), with the big block engine sporting a new exhaust gas recirculation system to meet anti-pollution standards. There is also a possibility that steel-bellied radial-ply tires will be offered as standard equipment on the '73 versions. Overall the '73 Corvette looks cleaner and more purposeful thanks to its front end re-styling, but still a disappointment to those who expected an all-new body or, better yet, an all-new mid-engine design for this year.



'72 Corvette nose: the familiar shape, basically unchanged for five years



'73 Corvette nose: the prototype shows a resemblance, but in new materials

