

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## 1963 Chevrolet Corvette

- Lot sold

- USD 0
- GBP 0 (listed)
- Year of manufacture** 1963
- **Gearbox** Manual
- **Chassis number** 30867S109486
- **Lot number** 408
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- **Drive** RHD
- **Condition** Used
- **Location** 
- **Exterior colour** Other
- **Car type** Other
- **Exterior brand colour** Saddle Tan
- **Interior brand colour** Saddle Tan
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## Description

Now in its sixth generation, the Corvette began life in 1953 with the C1 - a model that inspired a generation of young Americans and gave the Ford empire a nine-year headache. However it was the C2, the immortal Sting Ray produced between 1963 and 1967, that really set Chevrolet's cash registers ringing and left us with the most desired and collectible Corvette to date. Designed by Larry Shinoda under the guidance of the legendary Bill Mitchell, influences on the Sting Ray's unique and unforgettable form are said to include: the E-type Jaguar, a Mako shark once caught by Mitchell, the 'Q Corvette' concept car of 1957 and the 'Mitchell Sting Ray'. By the autumn of 1959 elements of the two unique Corvettes had been built into XP-720 - the design programme that led to the production of the Sting Ray as we know it.

The aims for the new car included: improved passenger accommodation, more luggage space and superior ride and handling and with this in mind a new ladder chassis was created for the car by Zora Arkus-Duntov, the most important element of which was the move away from a live axle to independent rear suspension, courtesy of lateral struts, radius rods and transverse leaf spring. The independent front suspension was much as before, as were the recirculating ball steering and there were a number of drivetrain options available including four small block V8 engines, three transmissions and six axle ratios. One major innovation was that the C2 was available in both Convertible and Fastback Coupé form. The latter initially featured a dramatic split rear window, but this led to poor rear vision and was discontinued a year into production. Detailed changes were made through the years, with the first of the big block engine options occurring in 1965 (the same year four-wheeled disc brakes became standard); the big-engined cars are notable for their pronounced power bulge on the bonnet. By 1966, the output of the optional 427ci (7-litre) engine had risen to around 425bhp and a stump pulling 460lbft of torque. By now sales volumes had climbed to 27,720 units.

This particular left-hand drive example was manufactured at Chevrolet's St Louis, Missouri factory in early 1963. Originally finished in Saddle Tan metallic with Saddle leather upholstery (the same livery it sports today), the 'Vette is powered by a 340bhp, 5.4 litre 'small block' V8. Arriving in the UK in early 1989 it was first registered on 7/04/1989 and was enjoyed by five owners until being acquired by Keith Wilcox from Peterborough on 23/04/08. The Corvette had grown a little tired at that point and he decided that it was about time that it was returned to full health, so immediately commenced a full restoration.

The work was carried out over a period of time and is too extensive to list here but the key points are below;

At some point, the car had been painted Red but the decision was taken to return it to its original colour of Saddle Tan. This work was carried out in 2008/09 and involved a professional respray and even today the car is almost as good underneath as it is on top. The interior was re-trimmed in Saddle Tan leather which was a rare option in period and fitted with new leather seat covers, new door cards and panels, new carpets and seat belts. The engine was fully rebuilt and there are lots of invoices for the relevant parts (mostly shipped from the States) and the brakes, suspension and running gear naturally received the same sort of attention with new bushes and bearings throughout. The gearbox was overhauled and an expensive straight-through exhaust was fitted. It would appear from the invoices that over the following years the car was used lightly but any tiny mechanical problem that arose was dealt with. The engine rebuild and various other works were carried out by Corvette specialist Tom Newman from Colchester.

Purchased last year by our vendor, a respected Aston Martin restorer, the Vette has continued to be fettled and detailed. He has paid careful attention to door and panel fit, the trim has been tweaked, the lovely white soft top now fits well, the very rare original wheel trims have been restored and the even rarer 'hardtop' has just been painted body colour to Aston Martin standards.

This is a very special 1963 Corvette in a rare original colour with correct VIN and trim tags. It looks amazing, sounds even more amazing, and goes really well with a smooth gearchange and excellent brakes.

This may not be everyone's choice of Sixties Classic and it definitely wouldn't suit a 'shrinking violet'. This is an iconic and powerful sports car that does everything that Italian exotics do but at a third of the price. Things don't fall off, you won't need a trickle charger, a cambelt change every three days, or a bloke with a B.Sc. to change the plugs, and when you 'woofle' down the High Street on a sunny afternoon, people will look at you and think California and Fonzie and "Happy Days" and they'll smile !

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