

CLASSIC DRIVER

The one-off Corvette Stingray ZL-1 Convertible could be a three million dollar car

Lead
Whenever we hear of an American Muscle car heading into seven-figure territory it's usually extremely special, and that's exactly the case with this 1969 Chevrolet Corvette Stingray ZL-1 Convertible coming up for auction at RM Sotheby's Arizona.



This [1969 Chevrolet Corvette Stingray ZL-1 Convertible](#) is about as rare as it gets when it comes to American muscle cars. This 560 horsepower monster was powered by a derivative of the CanAm racing engine, albeit in a street legal, factory-built production car. Only two cars ever left the factory equipped with the high performance motorsport engine - one coupe and one convertible - and they weren't certainly weren't destined for the garages of mere mortals, having been strictly developed as a homologation experiment. However, a man called John W. Maher had friends in high places at GM, and on cold December afternoon in 1969, Mr Maher traded in his already rare 1968 L88 Corvette Convertible for this slice of pure automotive unobtainium.





More than double the price of a standard Corvette, this ZL-1 Convertible's 427-cubic-inch engine featured an all-aluminium block, stouter connecting rods, a redesigned crankshaft, pistons, larger exhaust valves, and a high lift camshaft, resulting in the most powerful engine Chevrolet had yet created. Of course, the rest of the car was uprated to handle all that thrust, with factory upgrades including power-assisted, heavy-duty brakes, a heavy-duty suspension package, and a Positraction rear axle. Like all good motorsport specials, the ZL-1 was stripped of all non-essential equipment. The radio, heater, air conditioning, power windows, and power steering all got a one-way ticket to the tip. Even the fan shroud was omitted because it interrupted airflow; if it didn't make this 'Vette faster, Chevy wasn't interested.



Having benefitted from an award-winning restoration at the hands of the most highly regarded restorer of historically significant Corvettes, this Corvette's exceptional provenance is only matched by its incredible performance and unique specifications. As the first time the one-of-one ZL-1 Convertible has ever been publicly offered for sale, [RM Sotheby's Arizona sale on 26th January](#) represents an unmissable opportunity to add a true automotive unicorn to your collection.

Gallery

