

“PEAKING” IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR

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CORVETTE COLORS, 1953-2023

Part 5 C5



The Most Popular Corvette Color of the C5 Generation (1997-2004): RED

Red continued its dominant run into the C5 generation, selling about 51,000 units. However, although the Torch Red Corvette (replacing Bright Red in 1993) would gain the most attention, it was but a small color change from Bright Red. Noting too that many buyers wanted a more “sedate” offering aside from red, Sebring Silver was continued and Quicksilver was added (in 2001).

1997: this model year was virtually all new (interior, exterior, suspension) and brought two new hues that didn’t fare well (but came into production late in the model year): Light Carmine Red (only 381 built) and Fairway Green (155 units). There were only five other (all previous) colors offered, with Torch Red being on 3,026 units and Sebring Silver, carried over from the previous year, selling 2,164 units. All 9,752 units produced this year were coupes. The six-speed manual transmission, previously free, added \$815 now and for many years into the future; a remote 12-disc CD changer optional (\$600).



1998: convertibles (11,849 units of 31,084 total) re-appeared after a one-year absence. And for the first time since 1962, an outside-entry trunk was added (convertibles only) with large storage room. First appearing were Light Pewter (3,276), Navy Blue, Aztec Gold, and Medium Purple Pearl (381; also called Majestic Amethyst). Indy 500 pace car replicas (1,163 built, all convertibles) were sold to the public for a \$5,039 premium. Torch Red (8,787 units) was the favored color, while Navy Blue (14) and Aztec Gold (15) did poorly.



1999: Magnetic Red was put into the mix – adding \$500 and selling 2,733 units of 33,270 total - along with just 7 other options. A number of the previous year's offerings were dropped: Pace Car Purple, Light Carmine Red, Aztec Gold, Fairway Green, and Medium Purple Pearl. Head Up Display (HUD) appeared (\$375 cost). Torch Red (8,361 units) led again, followed by Black (7,235) and Light Pewter (6,164). The two blues (Nassau and Navy) were the least favored, only about 2,500 in total. A fixed-roof hardtop model was added to coupe and convertible models.



2000: Millennium Yellow (3,578 built of 33,682 total units) and Dark Bowling Green (1,663) were added color options for this model year, with 10 total hues. Torch Red (6,700) led again; Millennium Yellow, like Magnetic Red, added \$500 to the base cost (increasing to \$600 next year) – said to be due to a new special process and equipment needed to add tinted clear coat for better visual depth.



2001: Quicksilver (4,822 units, of 35,767 total) and Speedway White (2,465, replacing Arctic White) appeared, making 9 total color offerings. Dropped were Sebring Silver and Nassau Blue. Torch Red (7,192) led, followed closely by Black (6,971) The Z06 package, not seen since 1963, was reintroduced for this first year of the C5 generation. National Corvette Museum delivery was initiated for \$490 extra: after vehicle build, it would be shipped to a local dealership for pre-delivery inspection, detailing, and fueling; it was then delivered to the Museum, across the street from the Corvette Assembly Plant, for driver orientation; buyers were given a VIP tour of the Museum (and usually the Assembly Plant as well). A special decal was placed on the car's door jamb along with a laser-engraved wood plaque commemorating the vehicle's VIN and delivery date.



2002: Electron Blue (5,407 units built of 35,767 total)) was added to a comparatively short listing of 7 previously offered options. Dark Bowling Green and Navy Blue were deleted, together selling about 1,800 units the year before. Favored colors from the previous year flip-flopped: Black (7,129) was favored, followed closely by Torch Red (6,862).



2003: Medium Spiral Gray (3,299 built) and Anniversary Red (11,632) came into play, the latter being used for this year's optional 50th Anniversary Edition package, available in both coupe (4,085) and convertible (7,547) (but not Z06) added \$5,000 to the base cost. Light Pewter and Magnetic Red were deleted, while Speedway White cars did not fare well (679 built). The Indy 500 race in May used a Corvette pace car – but a special pace car edition was not built; rather, a nearly stock 50th Anniversary coupe served. An Indy 500 graphics package added \$495.



2004: Machine Silver (2,514 units) and Magnetic Red II (1,948) were added to the stable, and an old color, LeMans Blue (first seen in 1968), wrapped this year's Commemorative Edition to honor Corvette's racing history (6,899 built, with special emblems and trim, and available in coupe, convertible, and Z06). Speedway White, replacing Arctic White for three years, went away so Arctic White could be brought

back; but it was declining in popularity (1,741), while Black was again the favored shade (6,212). Carbon fibers appeared in the Z06 hood, aligned in a single direction so as to improve the appearance of the paint.

