

1999 Corvette: The C5 Trilogy by David Hill - Corvette Chief Engineer

The C5 Trilogy

by David Hill, Corvette Chief Engineer
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With the 1999 model, Team Corvette has completed its three year roll out of the C5 program. In 1997, we premiered the Coupe model, which had more entirely new content than any Corvette ever, even the 1953. Its excellent body structure integrity enabled it to feel solid on any road surface, whether the roof was in place or stowed. And the lift off roof was quickly and easily detached and stored.

The convertible followed in 1998 demonstrating even more dramatic value from Corvette's revolutionary structure. It is four times stiffer and 115 lbs. lighter than its predecessor and has much improved top operation. The Convertible became a much more useful car with the addition of the first real trunk since 1962.

In 1998-1/2, Corvette introduced its Indy Pace Car and the new Active Handling System, which is now optional on all the Corvettes. It can automatically correct the car's response to driver steer inputs by instantaneous individual-wheel making. We think Active Handling sets the standard for sports car performance in a stability system.

The Corvette family is complete with the introduction of the Hardtop, so-called because its roof-line is reminiscent of the removable hardtop on the Stingray convertibles. Yet it is permanently bolted and bonded to the vehicle structure, making it the first fixed-roof coupe since 1967. It's a simpler, more fundamental Corvette with even more of the performance attributes that make Corvettes so desirable.

It's the stiffest: 12% greater body torsional rigidity. It's the lightest: 79 lbs. lighter than the base coupe. And it is also the quickest: because it's sold only with the 6-speed manual and the Z51 sport suspension.

It's one pure sports car, yet it will carry the lowest price of the Corvette family. You can learn all about the hardtop and other new 1999 Corvette features at seminars at the National Corvette Museum in Bowling Green during Labor Day weekend, 1998.

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