

“PEAKING” IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR

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CORVETTE COLORS, 1953-2023

Part 4: C4



The Most Popular Corvette Color of the C4 Generation (1984-1996): Red

By the time the C4 1984 model arrived in March 1983, consumers' tastes and style preferences had changed. In addition to a major structural redesign, the popular white hue of yore began to seem drab; it became the third most popular hue overall for this generation. However, the newly introduced Bright Red quickly became a favorite of many Corvette owners, with a record 60,922 orders during this generation, beating out the other popular color, black.

1984's model was introduced in March 1983; because it met all federal requirements, GM decided to skip the 1983 model year and have a long 1984 model-year run. There were 13 total color combinations offered, with four new names: Bright Red (the most popular, with 12,942 of 51,547 Sport Coupes built), Bright Silver (3,109), Medium Gray (3,147), and Light Bronze (2,452). Two-tone paint was again priced at \$428. All models had a one-piece, lift-off roof panel.



1985: there were no new color offerings for this year. Of 39,729 Sport Coupes produced in 13 color options, 10,424 were in Bright Red, once again the most popular hue; Black made a significant comeback, with 7,603 units produced. Two-tone cars added \$428.

1986: Medium Brown became available for this year but fared poorly (488 units of 35,109 built). The first convertible since the 1975 model was again put into production, as well as an Indy 500 pace car. ALL convertibles produced this year – 7,315 – were designated as pace car replicas and came with decal packages for either the dealer or customer to install. Bright Red again led in popularity (9,466), followed by Black (5,464) and Dark Red (5,002). Yellow (1,464) returned.



1987: no new colors were offered. In addition to the traditional colors (i.e., White, 3,097; Black, 5,101; and Bright Red – the leader, at 8,285 units), the “metallic” versions were again prominent, with 8 such varieties – although several of them did not fare well, such as Silver Metallic (767 units), Gold Metallic (397), Silver Beige Metallic (950), Copper Metallic (87), and Medium Brown Metallic (245). 20,007 Sport Coupes and 10,625 convertibles left the assembly line, or 32,632 total.

1988: again, no new color schemes; 10 options were available, and several “Metallic” offerings were dropped: Gold, Silver Beige, Medium Gray, Copper, and Medium Brown. A 35th Anniversary Edition coupe was available (\$4,795 extra) with a two-tone exterior and special badging; 2,050 were sold of 22,789 total units produced. Bright Red led in popularity, at 5,340.



1989: no new color options, 8 options available; Silver Metallic and Yellow were dropped (selling only 385 and 578 units the previous year, respectively); 26,412 total units were produced, with Bright Red again the most popular, at 7,663, while Gray Metallic only sold 225 (it was formally dropped in November 1988).

1990: Turquoise Metallic (589), Competition Yellow (278), Quasar Blue (474), and Polo Green (1,674) were added, but the numbers show that none brought much success. Competition Yellow was discontinued after a few months due to color sensitivity that made it darken in the sun. Total production dropped to 23,646 units during this year.



1991: Colors were unchanged, with 10 offerings similar to those of recent years. Most popular were Bright Red (5,318 sold), White (4,305), and Black (3,909). This would be the last year for Charcoal Metallic (only 417 of 20,639 units). The Callaway Twin-turbo engine package, introduced in 1987, now added \$33,000 to base cost.

1992: Bright Aqua (1,953), Polo Green II (1,995), and Black Rose (1,886) were new options for this year. Again, Bright Red led the way, at 4,466, followed again by White (4,101) and Black (3,209). The one-millionth Corvette (photo) - a white convertible built on July 2d, would later be one of the eight rare Corvettes that fell into a 30' sinkhole at the National Corvette Museum in February 2014, being badly damaged but restored and displayed again in September 2015.



1,000,000th



1993: among 10 colors available for this year, two new versions of red appeared—Ruby Red, which was actually the 40th Anniversary Package; this would become the most popular hue/model of the year, selling 6,749 units of 21,590 produced. And Torch Red (to become extremely popular in future years but only selling 3,172 units during this initial year), supplanted Bright Red. Competition Yellow (only selling 53 units) was re-introduced after being dropped in early 1990.



1994: Admiral Blue (1,564 built) was the sole new hue for this model year, with 10 total options available. Torch Red began its run of most popular, 5,073 of 23,330 total units. Copper Metallic only brought 116 orders. The National Corvette Museum opened in Bowling Green, KY in September. New York emission requirements joined California's, adding \$100 in cost.



1995: Dark Purple (1,049 units) was the sole new option for this year, among 10 offerings. Again, Torch Red was the most popular (4,531, of 20,742 total units) followed by Black (3,959). The Indy 500 pace car for this year wore a similar color but was white on the bottom (527 replicas were built, 415 to go to dealers). Copper and Black Rose were deleted. “Run flat” tires were introduced.



1996: the last year of the C4 generation, only nine colors were offered - all but one returning from prior years; Dark Red was dropped. For \$1,250 buyers got the Collector's Edition wrapped in the old Sebring Silver (from 1963; 5,412 ordered – the most for this year). The Z16 package was also an option in both coupe and convertible, with Admiral Blue, a red left fender hash mark, and a white stripe; 1,000 of these units were built. There were 21,536 total units built this year.