

2008 Chevrolet Corvette Coupe - Silver Scorcher

You Can Run In It, But You Can't Hide In It

Scott Ross Feb 20, 2009

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Every Corvette is a car to see and be seen in. This one will get you seen by everyone. Specter Werkes/Sports of Troy, Michigan, has performed its GTR styling-and-performance magic to the sixth-generation Vette. What you see here is the first production example of it-the C6 Corvette GTR.

What was it that first caught your eye? Was it the BASF Liquid Silver finish? Likely it was the distinctive bodywork underneath it that wears that color so well. There's a reason it doesn't just look like another well-intended aftermarket conversion-it looks like a successor to such Vettes as the Corvette SS of 1957, the original Sting Ray of a couple years later, as well as the CERV experimental vehicles. "I used to work at GM Design," says Jeff Nowicki, Specter Werkes' founder and president, who designed the C6 GTR's bodywork. "We wanted something that looked like the OEM could have done, instead of making it look like an aftermarket package."

But there's more to the GTR than a fresh set of body panels. Those wheels-ForgeLine 19-inchers in front and 20-inchers in back, wrapped in Michelin Pilot Sport ZP rubber-front a set of StopTech disc brakes that can haul this car down to zero from the big numbers in a retina-stretching hurry. At each corner is a suspension system built around aluminum upper and lower control arms, monotube shocks, and Hotchkis stabilizer bars-to keep it stable no matter the number on the 0- to 200-mph speedometer.



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Then there's that engine. If a production Corvette LS3 powerplant is good, Specter's Matrix II version of it is beyond incredible. The light-alloy block now houses a set of Mahle forged pistons and Manley forged rods atop a Callies 4340 stroker crankshaft that bumps the displacement up to 418 ci. Add in hardware like a Specter-developed camshaft (produced by Comp Cams) with its own unique grind, larger combustion chambers, stainless-steel long-tube headers, and a low-restriction Corsa exhaust system, and you've got an engine that twists the dyno dials to 535 hp and 530 lb-ft of torque at the back wheels-or more, depending on camshaft selection. "There's a lot more available in that engine, but because it went to Colorado, we had to tone it down quite a bit," Jeff says of the work that went into making the first C6 GTR a good runner in Colorado's mile-high-plus altitude while keeping it emissions-legal. "We had to put a lot smaller cam in there," he adds about one of the biggest changes he made from its previous lower-altitude configuration.

Even so, that's a lot of power, and it takes some getting used to. "It actually kind of scared me the first few times I drove it, with the power and handling," says owner Mike Cowan of Longmont, Colorado. "I wasn't used to that kind of performance out of it." Mike also has an '05 Corvette that he's had a few upgrades added to, but nothing like what Specter designed for his GTR.

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car's the only one around with the style that it has. It's a head-turner, that's for sure.



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Command Chair::: Other than Spinneybeck leather trim, the GTR's cabin utilizes stock C6 componentry. The 0- to 200-mph speedometer isn't too optimistic, is it?

And, unless you're in the Witness Protection program, that's a good thing. "That's what it's for, and that's the whole point," says Jeff. "To have something a little more unique, that keeps the brand character of Corvette and takes it to the next level."



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Functional Style, Inside And Out Two-tone leather buckets complement the C6 GTR's exterior color while holding driver and passenger firmly in place.

Mike's GTR is traveling to the '08 SEMA show as this article is written, to a spot in one of the featured-vehicle displays around the Las Vegas Convention Center. It's bound to get as much attention there as it did when we caught up to it at Vettes Across the Rockies in Breckenridge, Colorado, this summer, or when Mike was at the Mid America Funfest a short time later. "I was helping promote it there," he says. "People were asking me about it, and I said, 'You need to call Jeff-he'll hook you up with one.'"

As we go to press, Specter's C6 Corvette GTR No. 2 is under construction at its shop, located just a few miles from the GM Tech Center. "It's another coupe," Jeff says, "and we've got a couple more scheduled after that, and hopefully a couple more after that."

Last we heard, none of those are destined for anybody in the Witness Protection program.

For more info on the GTR, contact Specter Werkes/Sports at 248/583-9559 or www.spectergtr.com.

Data File '08 Specter C6 Corvette GTR coupe

Owned by Mike Cowan, Longmont, Colorado; Built by Specter Werkes/Sports, Troy, Michigan

BODY

Modified production '08 Corvette Coupe

MODIFICATIONS Front and rear fascias, carbon-fiber splitter, air-extractor hood, front fenders, doors, rocker panels, rear fenders, taillights and center brake light, carbon-fiber rear diffuser and mirror caps, custom headlamp bezels with exposed-carbon-fiber appearance

BODYWORK Specter Werkes, Troy, Michigan

PAINT

BASF Liquid Silver basecoat/clearcoat; Paint preparation and applied by Specter Werkes, Troy, Michigan



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Form Follows Function, While Filling the Fenderwells::: As with the rest of the car, if stock C6 components are good, the C6 GTR upgrades are even better. Michelin Pilot Sport ZP rubber graces either HRE or Forgieline (seen here) alloy wheels, which bolt onto massive Stop Tech discs.

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