

# Guide to 68-82 C3 Corvette T-Tops



By: Chris Wiehle / Melrose T-Top April 2017

The year of 1968 brought with it the debut of the Corvette T-Top. A standard option that became so popular it forced its lowly brother the convertible into retirement on all Corvettes between 1976 and 1986. 14 years of production however provided us with many variances consisting of; painted t-tops, glass t-tops, different types of glass, single latch, double latch, among other minor differences. The purpose of this document is to offer some clarity and answers to the many questions we receive regarding 68-82 Corvette T-Tops.

**1968- 1977** – Corvettes during this time period came with only two roof options Convertible or removable fiberglass T-Top coupe. The t-tops fastened with two latches per top until '78 when they switched to a single front latch that remained through '82 which operated a rod that traveled inside the t-top frame into the B-pillar locking the top in place. According to Corvette Black Book “ Early 1977 option listings contained CC1 glass roof panels (\$200), but these never became available due to a marketing and rights dispute between Chevrolet and the panel vendor. Chevrolet released its own glass panels in 1978 available again by purchasing the CC1 option for \$349; the aforementioned vendor sold their panels in the aftermarket under the trade name “Moon Roofs”.

**1978-1982-** All vehicles came standard with painted fiberglass panels. 1978 saw only 972 sales (excluding Pace Car option) of the CC1 glass option but sales boomed during following years (see chart below).

**Glass-** To date there have been 6 different glass types available from LOF and PPG for the 78-82 Corvette. 5 of those 6 were all loosely called mirrored tops yet no one glass will match the other. This created much confusion for the Corvette owner looking for a replacement T-Top. For those who can't differentiate the types by simply looking at the glass you must then turn to the “M” code. The “M” code or “Manufacturers Code” is located within the etched in stamp on the outside rear corner of the glass.

## Glass M Codes-

Vehicles produced with Glass T-Top (CC1) option-

Model Year	Vehicles w/CC1	Glass Type	Glass Code
1978	972	Laminated	M1131
1978 Pace car	6,502	Laminated	M1131
1979	14,480	Laminated	M1131
1980	19,695	Laminated	M1131*
1981	29,095	Tempered	M92A*

1982	14,763	Tempered	M92A
1982 collector edition	6,759	Tempered	M94A

**\*Glass tops on all 1978-1980s and those 1981 Corvettes assembled in St. Louis are laminated, while tops on 1981s assembled in Bowling Green**

**and all 1982s are solid tempered. (Corvette Restoration Guide by Richard Prince)**

Corvette T-Top Glass "M" Code Photos 1978-present

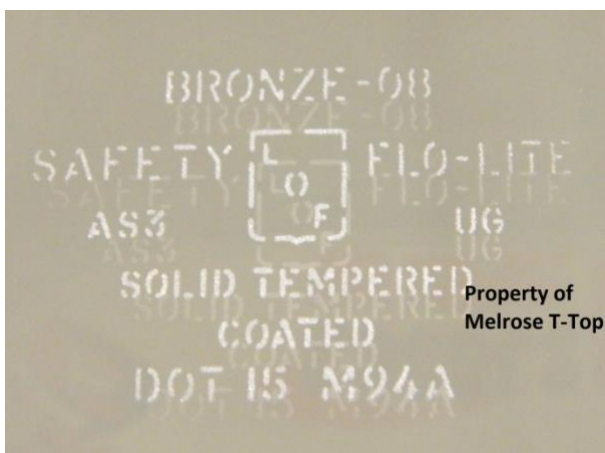


**M1131-** We receive many calls from Corvette owners seeking out M1131 coded glass tops, also known as, "blues" and "pace car tops". These mirrored laminated tops were manufactured like a windshield with a plastic film sandwiched between two thinner sheets of glass. The plastic film was tinted blue and not the glass, as most people assume. There were two drawbacks to this style of laminated glass. First, the film faded with age and UV exposure turning the deep blue film into various shades of green and in worst cases brown, making the tops difficult to match in later years. Second, they

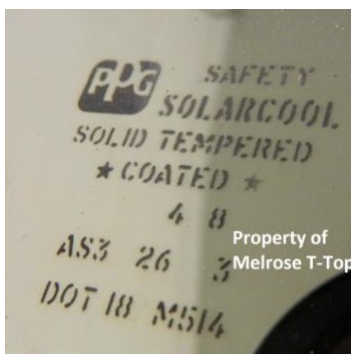
were extremely fragile, which is the main reason GM switched to tempered glass in later years. If you are searching for these tops I suggest you first and foremost decide if you want to deal with the care involved. A mint set can run upwards of \$3,000 with driver's sides being the more valuable of the two. Compile that price tag with the constant fear of these tops breaking and Corvette ownership becomes a thing of stress instead of fun.



**M92A-** Tempered Mirrored glass that replaced the M1131 blues. Due to the greater strength of tempered glass these tops are more prevalent in today's market place than the M1131's. These are less mirrored appearing from the outside than the blues since the mirrored finish was on the inside of the glass.



**M94A-** Often referred to as collector tops because they were only offered on the 1982 Collector edition cars. They have a unique bronz(ish) finish to them. Replacements are hard to locate.

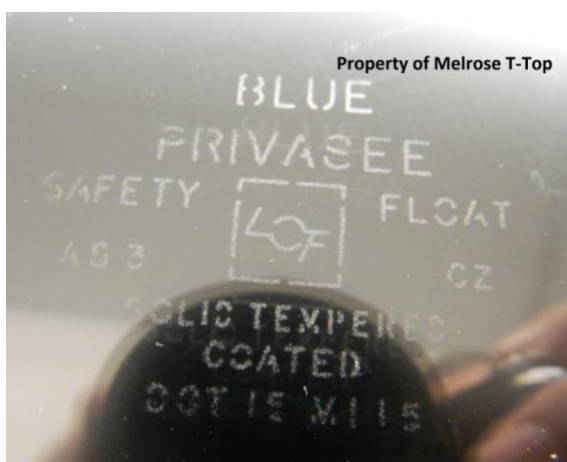


**M95C, M89.6, & M514**

The glass in the above three photos are all the same even though the logos and codes are different. This is the only glass that can be mixed and matched with no noticeable differences save for the etched in logos. The glass was originally formed by PPG then contracted to LOF where it is still currently made. It is mirrored and tempered and replaced the M1131 blues by the thousands as the blues continued to crack over the years. Currently available.



**M125-** Galaxsee™ glass - Dark smoked glass formed by LOF. Also known as “black glass”. Can also be seen as the dark privacy glass on many of the newer GM SUV’s and trucks. This glass boasts claims of blocking 95% of UV light according to Pilkington glass website. Currently Available.



**M115-** This was a short run glass produced by LOF. Don’t be fooled by the word “BLUE” these will not match the m1131 laminated blues and they are not as valuable.

**Installation-**As with all things car related if you’re unsure you can tackle the job, you probably can’t. That being said there’s nothing complicated about the install. Usually a little common sense and patience will get the job done. I have covered installation in a video here- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=djjosU5CigM>



# Painted Fiberglass T-T-ops



**1968-1976** - T-Tops remained unchanged during this 8 yr time period. They had two latches on either top with a separate front locating pin.



**68-76** The front locating pin on these tops were not attached to front latch



**68-77** Rear locating block that accepts the triangular pin located on B-pillar (see next photo). The weatherstrips are seated into a black steel channel that screws through the chrome trim and into the t-top



**68-77** B Pillar with triangular receiving pin. With some patience and the ability to adjust glass t-tops it is sometimes possible to simply unscrew the triangle pin and latch on a pair of 78-82 glass t-tops using the existing hole.

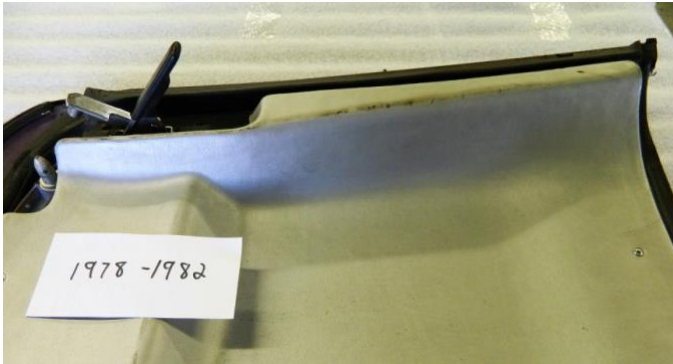


**68-76** double latch configuration. The latches were ambidextrous in an x pattern (left front fit right rear and right front fit left rear). All 68-76 t-tops used the same trim and hardware.



**1977** had two latches but used the upcoming 78-82 front latch with locating pin attached to the latch. Other changes included a steel reinforced weatherstrip and a trim plate with integrated cage nuts which allowed the weatherstrip to be fastened directly to the trim. This simplified the assembly by removing the weatherstrip channel.





**1978-1982** switched to a single latch design that operated a rod that inserted into a switch plate on the B-pillar (see next pic below) locking the t-top in place when latch is closed. 1978 was the last year for chrome trim and had a unique side trim identifiable by the single rear screw hole as seen on the chrome trim in the above right photo. Another identifiable trait is the notch cut out at the rear of the black 79-82 trim. All 79-82 had black trim.



**78-82** T-Top mounting plate aka switch plate

**Further reading-** Many folks feel GM invented the T-Top and fathered them to its prodigal son the Corvette. In fact, it was actually invented and patented by car designer Gordon Buehrig in 1948. Buehrig worked for and contributed his designs to Ford, GM, Packard, Duesenberg, Stutz, Auburn and Cord. It is safe to say that car culture would be greatly changed were it not for his influences and contributions. Mr. Buehrig debuted his aviation inspired T-Top in his 1948 TASCO Concept car. He patented this concept but it never really took hold in the automotive industry until 1968 when Chevrolet offered them as standard. Mr. Buehrig in turn sued GM on infringement and won, but as we all know GM continued on with its use of the T-Top until 1982.



\*If you have question or concern regarding any of the information here please feel free to contact me at [chris@melroset-tops.com](mailto:chris@melroset-tops.com) or [www.melrosecorvette.com](http://www.melrosecorvette.com)

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