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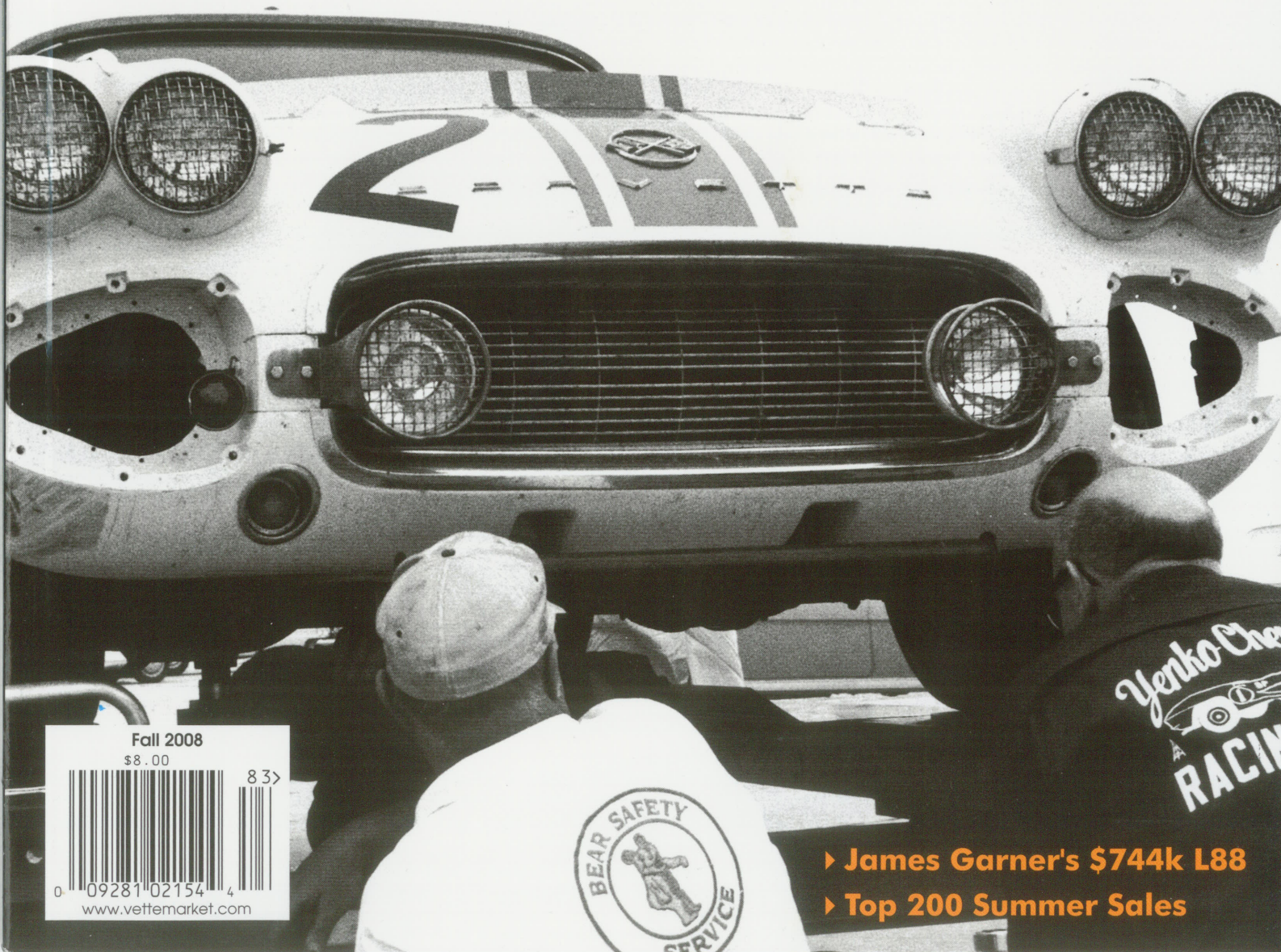
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In Ten Years, Which C4 Corvette Will be the Most Collectible?



Rod Egan

*Principal, The Worldwide Group,
Auburn, IN*

In 1990, Chevrolet produced the end result of one of the most radical projects ever done by the very conservative company—the LT5 ZR-1 32-valve DOHC “King of the Hill” Corvette. The ZR-1 is known for its top speed endurance record, where the car went at speeds over 175 mph, non-stop, for 24 hours. There are no stock American cars that can do this except the ZR-1 to date.

What the ZR-1 offers over any other Corvette I have encountered, including the Callaway and Lingenfelter versions, is its near indestructibility, packaged in such an aggressive and responsive driving car.

This is exactly as it came off of the assembly line from GM. We all know that unaltered cars from the factory tend to be the most desirable down the road, after the masses have been revised, revamped, or demolished.

It is precisely these attributes that in my opinion make the ZR-1 so collectible today and will, in my estimation, make it the most collectible of all the C4 Corvettes some ten years from now.



Craig Jackson

*Chairman/CEO, Barrett-Jackson
Auction Company, Scottsdale, AZ*

Hardcore enthusiasts already prize the Callaway C4 Twin Turbo Corvettes, but I believe that in ten years they will be highly revered by general collectors. Callaway Corvettes offer a rare blend of exclusivity, legitimacy, historical significance and reliability that make them very appealing.

When Callaway launched the C4 program in 1987, it was the first time in the ‘Vette’s long history that an outside manufacturer was given an opportunity by GM to create a high-performance RPO. This allowed real car guys to own an exclusive version of America’s favorite sports car. It also paved the way for other high-performance adaptations to be created, like the ZR-1.

The capabilities of the various versions of the C4 Twin Turbo cars, including the Sledgehammer, were well documented by the media. They combined world-class performance with the serviceability and reliability of a Chevy. The fact that Callaway produced around 500 Twin Turbo Corvettes through 1991 adds to its collectability, and the company did a marvelous job identifying their cars for documentation purposes.



Jim Jordan

*President, County Corvette,
Westchester, PA*

Limited production is the primary consideration when looking at potential values of C4s. Most C4s from 1984–96 are considered today to be of limited value, due in part to high production numbers, limited availability of parts, difficulty of repair, and outdated performance.

That said, a few C4s stand out. The 1988–90 Challenge cars are highly collectible. The 1990 R9G models were the rarest, with only 23 built. A non-raced example would be your best bet.

Tuner cars produced by Callaway and Lingenfelter were standard setters at the time, but only a few Callaway cars, specifically speedster models, have hope for long-term status.

Among 1990–95 ZR-1s, two models stand out: the 1993 40th Anniversary Edition and the 1995 models, of which only 500 were built. ZR-1s can be expensive to fix, so mileage and originality should be carefully considered.

And the 1996 Grand Sport; if you can find one, a red-interior convertible will be your best bet. After that, a red-interior coupe, followed by the others, which carry a certain charm to many Corvette enthusiasts.

The C4 era ushered in today’s supercar-level Corvettes, and any grand Corvette collection will contain at least one rare C4.



Kevin King

*President, Year One Corvettes,
Braselton, GA*

Predicting C4 collectibility is a little tough, simply because there were a number of special models built during the 13-year production run. Limited production and performance packages always make the most desirable models.

The ZR-1, the Grand Sport, the Anniversary models, and the Indy Pace Cars will always be collectible, but other specialty models, like the “factory blessed” Callaway cars, also have a strong following.

Callaway also benefits from very low production numbers and tremendous performance. The most collectible, though, will probably be those cars that combine special options. Here I’m thinking of 40th Anniversary Ruby Red ZR-1s, with only 220 made, or convertible Grand Sports with only 190 examples, particularly with the red interior, since just over 50 cars with that combination were built.

There are a few sleepers, too. The ’95 Pace Car is a good example—just over 500 of those cars were built. I think the best bet is going to be the Corvette Challenge race cars. These cars were built in ’88 and ’89 specifically for use in the SCCA Corvette Challenge Series. The rarity of these cars, along with the competition pedigree, should ensure their long-term collectibility.



Kevin Mackay

*President, Corvette Repair, Inc.,
Valley Stream, NY*

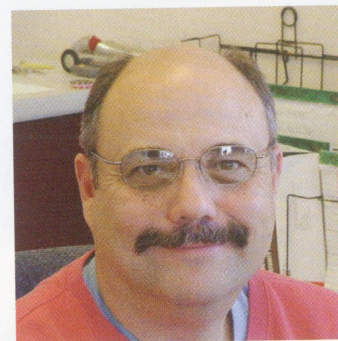
The number-one C4 would be one of the 60 Challenge cars from 1989. That would be the top C4, a factory car from the beginning, with special brake rotors and roll bars.

The second car would be a Callaway car. Probably the ultimate is the Sledgehammer, but there are a ton of Callaway cars.

After that, probably a Corvette Grand Sport convertible with red interior. With low mileage, I’ve seen them go as high as \$90,000. I love the color combo—the red interior knocks me out.

My next choice would be a ZR-1, but only 1995. That’s the last year, and all the bugs were out of them by then. Another ZR-1 would be the cars made in 1989. They only made 84 of the ’89s, and a couple in Europe have been brought back from the dead. They were press cars and supposed to go to the crusher, but they weren’t crushed enough and still had tags.

My fifth choice would be a Lingenfelter, and my last would be a Pace Car, purple and white from ’93.



Dana Mecum

*President, Mecum High Performance
Auctions, Marengo, IL*

This seems almost like a trick question; the answer depends on whether you’re talking about the most collectible Corvette for the broadest audience, or the most collectible Corvette for the most intellectual collector.

The most collectible to the broadest audience is a toss-up between the ZR-1 and the ’96 Grand Sport. The ZR-1 has a mystique that seemed short-lived. The Grand Sport has a great “club” following. I vote Grand Sport due to its “social” popularity—after all, one of the great things about owning a Corvette is being part of the Corvette community.

From the intellectual aspect, the Corvette Challenge cars of 1988–89 and the very limited R9G of ’90 win hands down—limited-production, factory-spec race cars. It’s hard to beat that combination in the world of a sports car.