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2005 Corvette Convertible: Sixth-Generation Roadster Adds Performance and Refinement

It all started with a roadster. The thrill of open-air motoring was a part of the original allure when the Chevrolet Corvette was born in 1953. Now the sixth-generation 2005 Corvette Convertible arrives, bringing serious performance and thoughtful refinement to the fun of driving a roadster.

The sixth-generation of the Corvette legacy begins with the 2005 edition, available in Coupe and Convertible models. Featuring dramatic upgrades throughout, a new 400-horsepower, 6.0-liter V-8 engine, and dynamic new styling, the sixth-generation Corvette brings more power, passion and precision to America's performance icon.

Production of the 2005 Corvette Convertible begins in fall 2004, slightly after the Coupe begins production in late summer. The 2005 Corvette will be available for sale in the U.S. in late summer, with sales in Europe scheduled to begin in October.

"We designed the Corvette from the outset as an open car, so there's no compromise in ride, handling and performance for the Convertible compared to the Coupe," said Dave Hill, chief engineer for the Corvette and vehicle line executive for GM Performance Cars. "This sixth-generation Convertible is a large step forward, featuring greatly improved function, appearance and quietness."

The sixth-generation Corvette Convertible features an optional power-operated soft top, a feature that last appeared on the car in 1962. The power top features a single-button control and completes its cycle in 18 seconds. The top is designed and manufactured in partnership between GM and Car Top Systems, GmbH, experts who've contributed to some of the world's most celebrated open cars. An easy-to-operate manual top remains standard.

The convertible top for the sixth-generation Corvette reflects great attention to detail to net improvements in aesthetics, aerodynamics and utility. In both its manual and power versions, the canvas soft top is available in three colors: Black, Beige and Grey. In its closed position, the canvas top has a smoother, more contoured appearance that conceals the underlying structure better than traditional soft tops. In addition to being more pleasing to the eye, this also helps preserve the outstanding aerodynamic characteristics designed into the sixth-generation Corvette.

"We sweated the details to ensure that the Convertible driver has all the performance of the Coupe, with surprising quietness and excellent storage capability for a roadster, top-up or top-down," Hill said.

Indexing side glass, a feature normally reserved for higher-priced luxury cars, helps better seal the cabin from wind noise. The Corvette's new structure, including a new aluminum windshield frame, was designed using extensive computer airflow models to improve top-down quietness – especially for noise frequencies in the range of passenger conversations. The top material itself is made of a thick fabric called Twillfast, constructed in five layers for strong durability and insulation.

In addition to the new power top, several more details combine to make the convertible much more pleasing to drive, especially for long trips. A bulkhead has been added to better contain small items in the trunk and enable the addition of a new storage area behind each seat. The power top occupies no more space than the manual version, preserving maximum trunk space in both versions. Rear visibility is improved with a glass backlight that is 18.5 percent larger than the 2004 version. Like its predecessor, the backlight has a standard rear defogger.

In an era in which most vehicles seem to grow ever more bulky, the sixth-generation Corvette achieves lower vehicle weight, even with the addition of numerous features new to the marque. The Convertible is no exception, with a base curb weight of 3,199 pounds (1,451 kg), 49 pounds (22 kg) less than the 2004 model. The manual top mechanism utilizes thin-wall castings for a weight savings of 8.6 pounds (3.9 kg.) The optional power top mechanism adds just 14 pounds (6.4 kg.) to the car's weight.

Every option available on the Coupe can be had on the Convertible, including features new to the Corvette such as OnStar, XM Satellite Radio and DVD-Navigation. Likewise, all three suspension choices – Corvette Standard Suspension, Magnetic Selective Ride Control, and the new Z51 Performance Package – are available on the Convertible.

Passionate performance

The sixth-generation Corvette not only replaces the outgoing C5 Corvette (1997-2004), but also creates a 21st century Corvette that thrills the legions of traditional loyalists and captures the imagination of a new generation of performance enthusiasts. The formula from the C5 era remains: Extremely high performance capabilities in a car that offers great style, value and quality, with surprising comfort for daily driving. The new Corvette takes that foundation and reaches beyond with dramatic increases in performance and refinement, wrapped in a passionate new design.

Thanks to an all-new chassis, strong and lightweight body structure and the new 400-horsepower LS2 engine, the 2005 Corvette again raises the bar for performance, with outstanding handling and surprising ride quality. Equipped with the new Z51 Performance Package, the 2005 Corvette (in both Coupe and Convertible body styles) nearly matches the track performance of today's widely respected Corvette Z06 model.

The sixth-generation Corvette blends its technical sophistication with expressive style. Five inches shorter than the C5, the 2005 Corvette cuts a tighter, more taut profile – with virtually no loss of usable space. More than just visual, the new dimensions make the car more agile and “toss-able,” with upgrades in handling, acceleration and braking. At 0.28 coefficient of drag, the sixth-generation car is the most aerodynamically efficient Corvette ever and has enhanced anti-lift characteristics that enable improved high-speed stability and confidence.

General Motors Corp. (NYSE: GM), the world's largest vehicle manufacturer, employs 342,000 people globally in its core automotive business and subsidiaries. Founded in 1908, GM has been the global automotive sales leader since 1931. GM today has manufacturing operations in 32 countries and its vehicles are sold in more than 190 countries. In 2002, GM sold more than 8.6 million cars and trucks, nearly 15 percent of the global vehicle market. GM's global headquarters is at the GM Renaissance Center in Detroit. More information on GM and its products can be found on the company's consumer website at www.gm.com.

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