

Median Marketplace

DAILY DRIVERS TAKE CENTER STAGE

FROM MINNESOTA IN THE MIDWEST TO HILTON HEAD, SOUTH CAROLINA, IN THE SOUTH, WITH STOPS IN MISSOURI, TENNESSEE AND PENNSYLVANIA ALONG THE WAY, WE HIT THE BEST AUCTIONS FOR SPECIAL INTEREST AND COLLECTOR CAR AUCTIONS.

Our report this month is especially interesting as 50 percent of the sold Corvettes were classified as being in average street-driven condition. Normally, this percentage is considerably lower—down to about 25 percent in some cases. At the other end of the spectrum were a few restored Corvettes that crossed the auction block at high-profile auctions. Needless to say, these were the big-ticket Corvettes. At the top of the list, way at the top we might add, was the sale of another 1953 Corvette, the sixth one we found sold during the 2007 calendar year. We don't recall this many 1953 Corvettes being sold in one year in at least the last decade.

The sale of the month, VIN #103, was found on a Pennsylvania estate in 2003 where it had been stored, un-restored and untouched, apparently since the deceased owner had purchased it in 1961. Prior to reaching the auction block, this early Vette received a 2,000-hour body-off restoration to meet NCRS Top Flight standards. All date codes and past numbers on the block, head, water pump, exhaust and intake manifolds, springs, transmission, rear axle, gauges, clock, carburetors, distributor, etc. are correct for the car, and again to NCRS standards.

Included with this sale was an extensive file of restoration and documentation photos showing the VIN # stamped on the frame and number 103 written in chalk on the inner door panels, underside of the body, rear trunk section and the headlight buckets. Photos of this 1953 Corvette coming out of its long-term storage location in 2003 were also included.

The final bid sale price: \$400,000

in addition to a 10 percent buyer commission. It sold at the Worldwide Group Auction at Hilton Head. As a side note, all of our reported sales reflect the final sale bid without any add-on commissions. Also of interest are the six 1953 Roadsters that sold: These had an average price of \$316,250 with a low price of \$225,000 and the high price of the mentioned \$400,000.

Only four Solid Axle Corvettes were registered as being sold at this month's auction coverage. Of course, the aforementioned 1953 Roadster was the highlight of these sales. The number two spot in sale dollars for this segment went to a restored 1957 Roadster, with the 283-270 motor, dual carburetors, three-speed manual transmission and both tops. It sold for \$83,000 at the Branson Auction in Missouri.

Next in line from a price perspective was a 1954 Red Roadster, one of only 100 built in this color. This one had recently been found in a Texas barn, last inspected in 1980. Its Red paint was exceptionally glossy for its age and long storage and was believed to be original. After it was found, some of the chrome trim was removed for evidence of a repaint or color change, however, nothing was found to indicate any changes or repaint. This one also sold at Hilton Head for \$70,000. It was termed in good condition and the sale price seemed low considering it was a rare original Red paint 1954.

The last one to sell in this segment was a 1961 Roadster in average condition selling at \$36,250, a low price for this Corvette. However, justifying the price was the fact that it had a 1971 350 motor.

The sales of Midyear Corvettes, 1963-1967, reflected the norm with the high sales dollar going to two restored 1966 Roadsters with high-performance motors. The first, at \$86,400, was a Sunfire Yellow Roadster powered by an original, numbers-matching, 427-425 motor along with original knock-off wheels and side exhaust.

The other, at \$85,000, was Ermine White in color with the correct 427-390 motor, side exhaust, power steering and brakes, knock-off wheels with goldline tires, teak steering wheel and the removable hardtop. In addition, it had NCRS Top Flight award documentation.

Two 1963 Roadsters, both Riverside Red in color, sold at two different auctions, but both had similar non-original 350 motors and four-speed manual transmissions. The first, selling at \$38,000, was classified as being in good condition and it had reproduction knock-off wheels and the removable hardtop. The other, at \$36,000, was termed in average street-driven condition with no special options.

Two 1966 Coupes sold, both in good condition with A/C, a rare option for the 1966 model year considering that only 12.7 percent Corvettes were delivered with this option. The first was Marine Blue in color had the correct 327-350 motor, an automatic transmission, power steering and brakes and knock-off wheels. It found a new home at \$50,000. The other, Milano Maroon in color, had a nonmatching 327-350 motor, four-speed manual transmission, original knock-off wheels and teak steering wheel. It changed owners at the Corvette Expo Auction in Knoxville, Tennessee, for \$46,000.

Closing out the Midyear sales was a 1967 Roadster, in good condition, with the correct 327-350 motor and four-speed manual transmission. It sold for \$55,500.