

SPECIAL EVENT : THE 10TH ANNUAL VETTE SETTE HISTORIC PRESCOTT CORVETTE SHOW

Story and photos
by Randall Bohl

Every 'Vette Ever (just about) and each one with a story



(At right) Personalized plates rule the day. (Left and bottom right) Gary and Debbie Yale's 1963 C2 Split Window Sting Ray has its own license plate story.

The 10th Annual Historic Prescott Corvette Show, presented by the Prescott Vette Sette Corvette Club on September 24, surrounded Courthouse Square, closing off S Cortez Street and S Montezuma Street (famous Whiskey Row) between W Goodwin and Gurley Streets.

Registration began at 7 am, and by 8am entrants were lining the streets, with owners, family and friends visiting among themselves while setting out lawn chairs and coolers for the day.

The show has grown in 10 years to the point of being limited to 250 entrants—fully four rows of cars on Montezuma Street, three deep on Cortez. A casual walk through revealed the history of the Corvette from the 1950s C1s to the latest C7s.

Vanity license plates had first caught our eye on I-17 north, as a red Corvette passed us near dawn with a license plate that read: BLOWN. Upon our first walk through, it became evident that putting a message on your Corvette is important—and, of course, very entertaining.

We came across Gary and Debbie Yale's 1963 C2 Split Window, with a stock 1961 Arizona plate but a 1963 registration sticker—a curious plate and a beautiful car, so with Gary and Debbie sitting in their lawn chairs on the sidewalk behind, with lunch in the cooler, we visited for a bit.

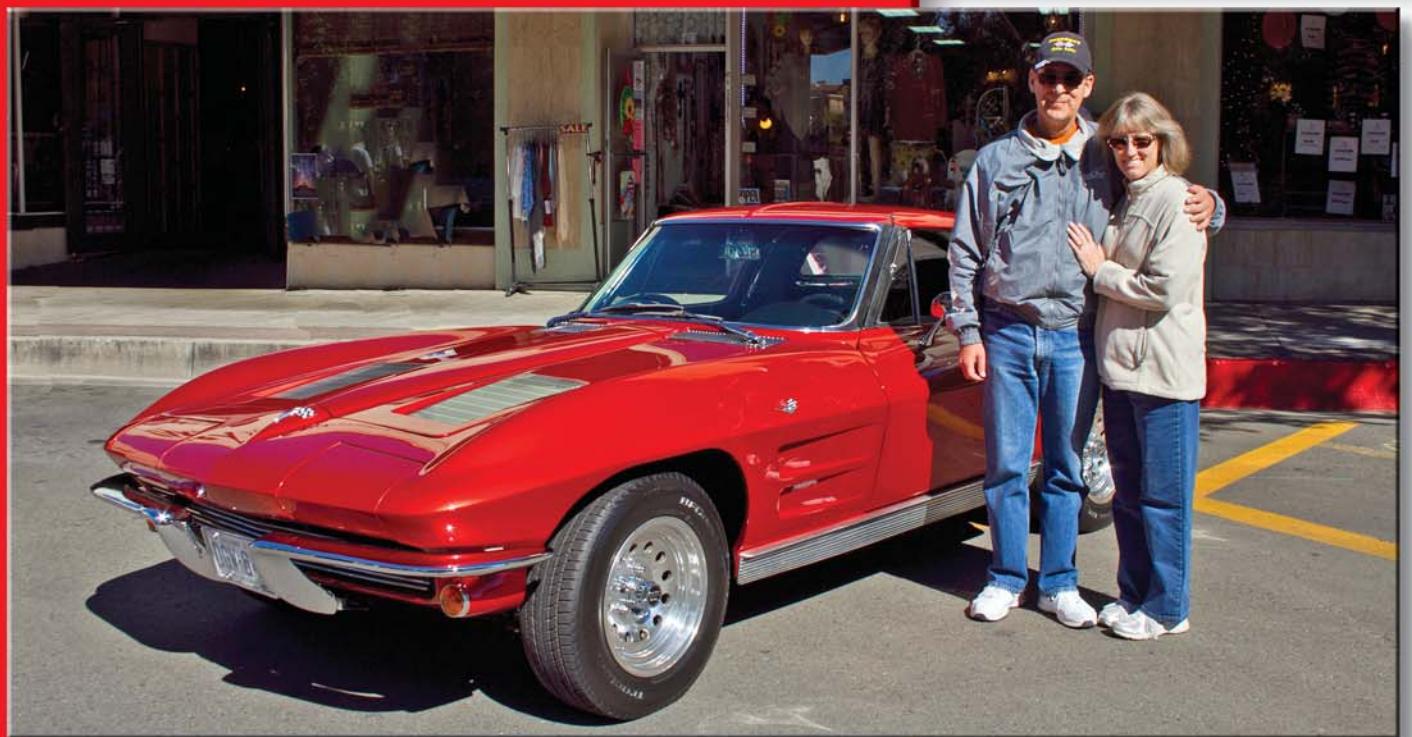
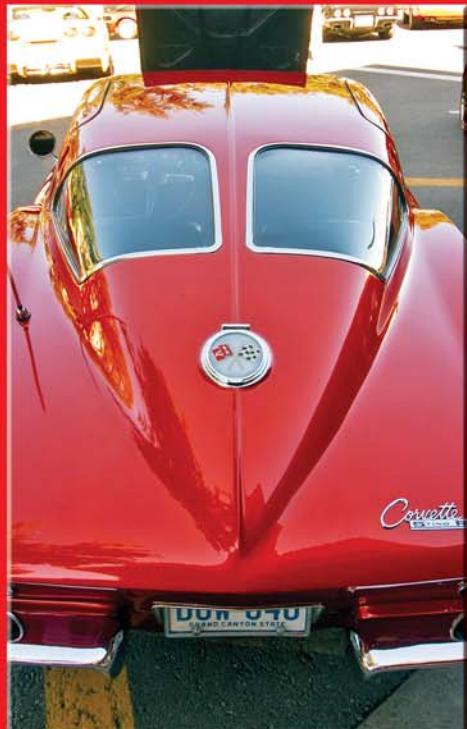
Gary clarified. "You can put year of manufacture plates on your car. Well, this is a '63, but Arizona didn't make license plates in '62 or '63. They sold you a pair of '61 plates and gave you a sticker to indicate the correct year. So I found a set of plates, and one of them has the '63 sticker on it. I put that on the front. If I put it on the back, I'd have to cover it up with the actual year of registration. So it's the correct plates for the year of the car, since they didn't stamp any in 1963."

Gary bought the car from a dealer in Northern California in December 1982, in driveable condition but needing a lot of work. "Six months later, I was moving to Massachusetts and didn't want it to winter there, because I would just be living in an apartment. So I put a hitch on the back and towed a '68 Volkswagen from California to Colorado with the Corvette. That turned a lot of heads on the interstate! Then I left the car in Colorado with my parents.

"The restoration was done in the early '90s, finished up in 1995. It was a frame-off restoration, so there's 12 years from when it got parked in the summer of '83 until I drove it in October of 1995. Those years helped build up the anticipation and made it that much more worthwhile. I've



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(Left) Gary and Debbie Yale with their 1963 C2 Split Window. (Right) Powertrains and interiors span the generations and options lists. Cars lined up on South Cortez Street, Courthouse Square, Prescott.

just had a grand old time with it, doing car shows and the occasional rally, but I don't do autocross—that's just too hard on the car."

The drivetrain is stock, a 327 with a 4-speed, but it's not a numbers-matching car. When Gary purchased the car in 1982 it had a stinger hood, indicating it had already had a bigger engine in it at some point. His uncle, who did a lot of the restoration, had rescued a 1959 Corvette from a farm in Nebraska. When he had pulled the motor from that '59, it was actually a 1963—and sitting in the garage when it came time to do Gary's car, a happy coincidence. So the car now has a true 1963 engine and aftermarket 1963 hood.

Wider wheels and tires were also suggested by his uncle, for both safety and a more comfortable ride. They do dress it up nicely. A couple of other less obvious upgrades include ceramic coating of the exhaust manifolds—very nice cosmetically—and aftermarket ignition shielding.

Debbie teases Gary a little about the paint, Laser Red, revealing it's not even a Corvette but rather a Mustang color. But, she adds, "his defense is that it looks better on a Corvette."

Debbie married into the car and Gary's story. Gary says, "occasionally someone will follow me into a parking lot. I do remember, one of those times, the guy got out of his car and pointed his finger right in my chest and said 'obviously YOU are NOT married!' And I said, 'naw, I am married, but I bought the car before I was married.' He accepted that as a suitable answer."

We headed back around Courthouse Square, where the show had gone from quiet to bustling, with people and their smartphones working overtime, flooding social media with Corvette photos. About noon we stopped in at the Lone Spur Café for lunch, with a view of the show traffic—both vehicular and pedestrian—on Gurley Street.

Gary and Debbie Yale's '63 split window had been parked on the shady side of the street that morning, so we went back to see its Laser Red paint in the afternoon sun. It was no longer in the shade of a building, but now half in shade, that of a strategically placed tree. We vowed to return.

We headed to the courthouse steps at 2 pm, where Prescott Mayor Harry Oberg was on hand as 24 award plaques were presented to owners from California to New Mexico—and plenty of Arizonans as well.

Finally, at end of show, we got to see Laser Red in the sunshine, and it was well worth the wait. Then again, it had hardly classified as a wait, with 249 other Corvettes to view. ■

