

desert-motors

M A G A Z I N E





ATTENTION DESERT-MOTORS READERS:

Give your vehicle, home and business the protection they deserve
...and enjoy our **SPECIAL OFFER** below.



Paint Protection Film
(aka Clear Bra or Invisible Bra)

1. Preserves vehicle value, looks
2. Protects paint against rock chips, road debris, bug stains
3. Virtually invisible

Coverage types available:

Standard – Partial hood, fender tips, bumper, backs of mirrors

Full – Full hood and fenders, bumper, backs of mirrors

Custom – For older vehicles, race cars

Extra – Door edges, headlights, more



Auto Window Tint

1. Keeps you cooler in our stifling heat
2. Protects occupants and vehicle interior from heat, UV rays
3. Many 3M tints recommended by Skin Cancer Foundation

Tints available:

3M Crystalline – Blocks the most heat, lets in the most natural light; reduces glare

3M Color-Stable – Light/medium/dark films block the most light; block heat



Flat-Glass Window Film
(for homes and businesses)

1. Reduces heat, sun damage
2. Lowers energy bills
3. Improves aesthetics

Films available:

Sun Control* – Rejects considerable heat; slows fading of furnishings

Safety & Security* – Deters theft; reduces damage/injury from glass; blocks heat/UV

Decorative – Adds design and privacy; less expensive than etched glass

*Available in **3M Prestige**, a non-reflective, virtually clear film!

**Mention this ad — receive 5% off any single service or
10% off any two or more services.**

Maximum \$300 off on flat-glass window film installation. Not to be combined with any other PFS offers.

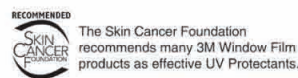
480. 609. 3787

ProtectiveFilmSolutions.biz

(Located in Scottsdale Airpark, southwest of Acoma & Hayden: 14425 N. 79th St., Suite A, Scottsdale 85260)



Authorized Window Film Dealer
Prestige Dealer Network



The Skin Cancer Foundation
recommends many 3M Window Film
products as effective UV protectants.

Get to know your all new...

2009 DESERT-MOTORS MAGAZINE



Thank you for selecting Desert-Motors Magazine.

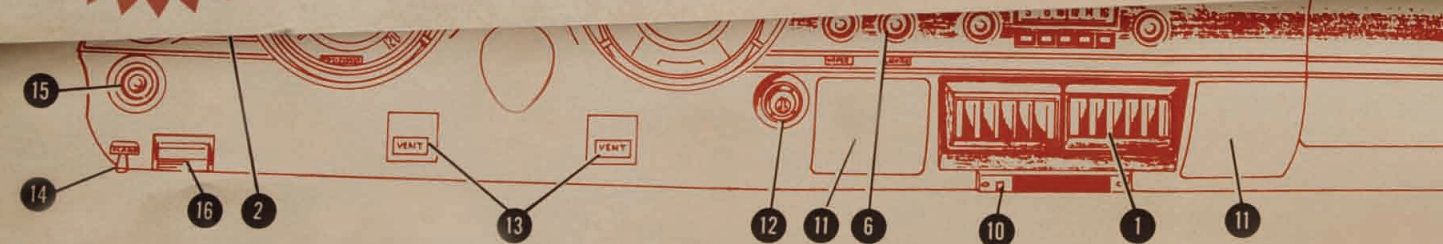
This Owner's Manual is intended to acquaint you with Desert-Motors Magazine and website. We urge you to read the Manual fully so you will be familiar with the features engineered into this new magazine to assure that you obtain the most economical and efficient operation.

Unlike most automotive magazines and websites, which are focused primarily on one type of automobile, make or model across the nation or even world, Desert-Motors is focused on the regional automotive community; from Italian supercars to custom motorcycles to Japanese compacts. And it's not solely about the vehicles and events, but about building an online community where regional automotive enthusiasts of all types can come together to discuss and debate their passion, plan and promote events, buy and sell parts, find event and local business information and more. Desert-Motors can be enjoyed by people of all ages and walks of life! But we can't do this without you, the reader. We need your contributions! So please, read the magazine, spread the word, visit the site, sign up, participate and help us make this something special.



8

Patrick Erzen
Patrick Erzen
Editor in Chief
Desert-Motors



DRIVER-CENTERED DOCUMENTATION

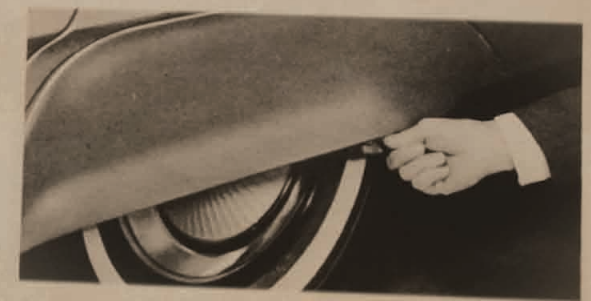
1. Own a car you'd like to see in the magazine?
2. Hosting an event you'd like covered?
3. Comments/questions for the editor?
4. Ideas for potential magazine/site features?
5. Want to be part of the Desert-Motors team?

Contact us and let us know! We need vehicles, we need content and we need your feedback!

ADVERTISING WITH DESERT-MOTORS

Packages available for Desert-Motors Magazine and Desert-Motors.com.

Contact Patrick for more information!





Contents

Featured Autos

- 6 **Straight Six, Round Top**
1954 Chevrolet Corvette
- 16 **The Lone Gun**
Grabercars LaBala Prototype
- 28 **Heatstroke**
1968 Dodge Charger
- 34 **Red Devil**
Vivid Racing's 2009 Nissan GT-R
- 44 **First Look**
2010 Ferrari California

Events

- 12 **Cars & Coffee**
SSW & SECC's Monthly Gathering
- 40 **Cubed**
Scottsdale Play Host to the Nissan Cube

D-M Features

- 15 **Photo Shoot Contest**
- 26 **Featured User Photos**
- 38 **Snapshot**
- 52 **Guess the Car**
- 54 **Backtrack**

Special thanks to Nick and everyone else who helped with this project in any way.





Straight Six Round Top

Photos and Words: Patrick Erzen



1954 Sports Illustrated publishes its first issue, Bill Haley and the Comets top the record charts, Grace Kelly and Marlon Brando take home Oscars, Marilyn Monroe weds Joe DiMaggio, gas tops more 20 cents a gallon and the Chevrolet Corvette enters its second year of production. It's almost hard to fathom given the more than half century lifespan and now iconic status of the Corvette, but its second of production year was dangerously close to also being its final year of production.

The first Corvettes were hand assembled and thus, limited to a production run of just 300 cars, all Polo White over Sportsman Red interiors. In December of 1953, production was moved from Flint, Michigan to a dedicated assembly plant in St. Louis, Missouri, capable of rolling out 10,000 cars a year. With the move to the new plant, Chevrolet ramped up production more 10 fold, with a final production number of 3,640 cars for 1954. Unfortunately

for Chevrolet and its dealerships, demand didn't meet supply. It's said that at the start of 1955, more than one-third of the '54 Corvettes hadn't left showroom floors and that a number of those that had were let go below cost.

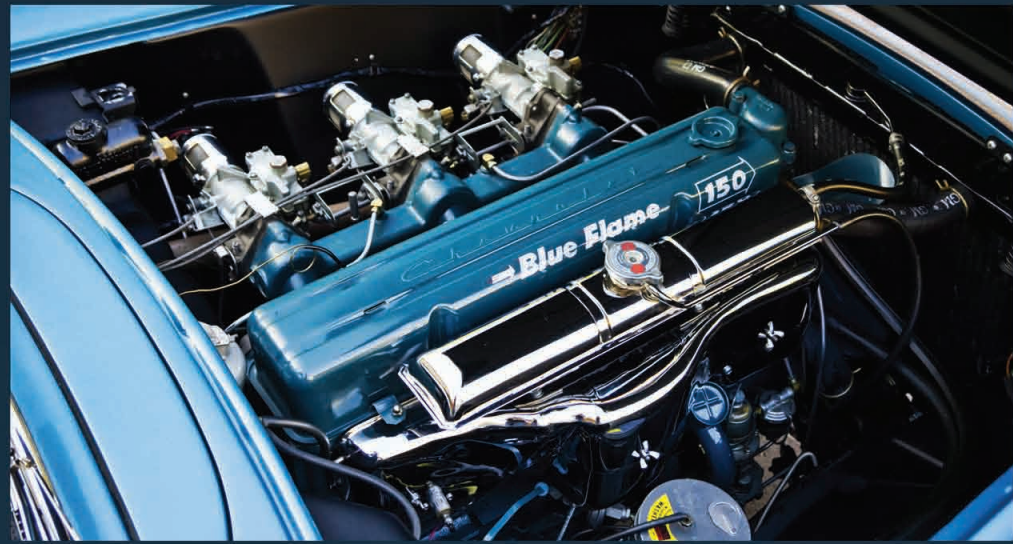
While billed as "The First All-American Sports Car", the Corvette suffered from a bit of an identity crisis. Its rear-wheel drive, two-seat, open top layout is the definition of a sports car and its fiberglass body and lean proportions created a low curb weight of just 2,886lbs. However, the Blue Flame Six power plant lacked the sophistication and output many of the Corvette's competitors and was mated to a two-speed automatic that is more at home in a plush cruiser than a svelte sports car. On top of that, its base price sat at \$2,774; a number that eclipsed V8 Cadillacs and approached the more refined and powerful Jaguar XK120.

The '54 Corvette's Blue Flame Six, a 235ci inline six with three sidedraft Carter carburetors, produced 150hp



(upped by 5hp mid-year by way of a revised camshaft) and 223lb-ft of torque. 1954 was the final year for the Blue Flame as 1955 saw the introduction of what is now considered a cornerstone of the modern Corvette, the small-block V8. While the straight-six may lack the grunt of the larger displacement V8 (an increase of about 40hp and 35ft-lb of torque), it's unique characteristics and limited run are part of what make the very earliest Corvettes most desirable to many collectors. Other interesting features include the optional AM radio with its antenna coming in the form of a wire mesh sandwiched into the fiberglass of the trunk lid and lack of exterior door handles as the doors are opened with inside release levers, a feature possible due to the lack of traditional side windows. Like many European sports cars of the era, side windows came in the form of plastic side curtains which are stored in a bag in the trunk.

However, without question, the standout feature of this stunning Pennant Blue example is its green-tinted acrylic bubbletop. During the '50s, Model Builders, Inc of Chicago was contacted by Eugene Kettering, Chief of GM's Electro-Motive Division, for one of his personal cars. Supposedly Chevrolet actually fitted one for testing, entertaining the idea of making it a factory option. With a production of only 15-20 (only five being green-tinted, the remainder being clear) at a price of \$500 each,



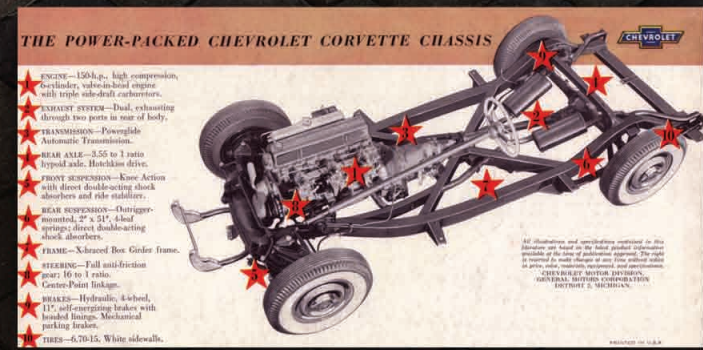
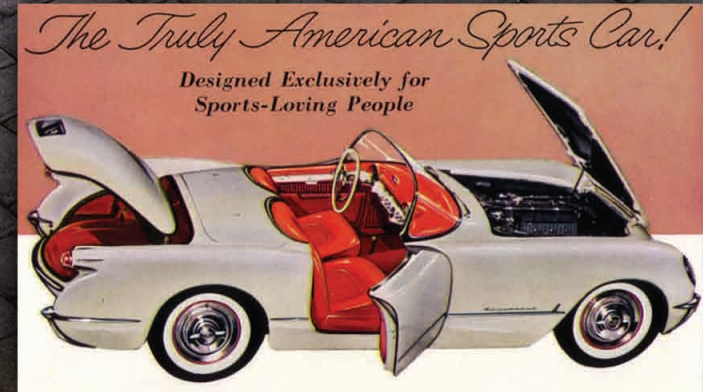
➤ The 235ci, 150hp, Blue Flame Six with its Carter sidedraft carburetors.

originals are a very, very rare sight. And as is the case with virtually everything on the car, this is one of the five original green-tinted tops.

That being said, this beautiful bubbletop wasn't always so beautiful. In fact, when the current owners picked it up in St. Louis two years ago, the car was literally in boxes. And not clearly labeled, organized boxes. Bolts and screws were randomly thrown in with other random parts and, while nearly every original piece was there (including the 55-year-old, original windshield), many of them needed more than a little TLC. For example, the show-stopping bubbletop had been painted silver and, given the nature of the top, required an extremely careful and even more time consuming sanding process that took

six months alone. The meticulous, exhaustive restoration took more than two years to complete and the work speaks for itself.

Many of the car's features and "shortcomings" that caused such poor sales for Chevrolet and the Corvette in 1954 seem minor and trivial today. In fact, some of these particulars are what actually make the car as interesting and unique as it is. Regardless of whether aspects like the Blue Flame Six are viewed as a negative or positive, one thing is undeniable: while the earliest Corvettes may not be the powerful, dynamic driving machines that the Corvettes of today are, they are some of the most interesting cars in the model's rich history and are true American classics.



➤ The interior "waterfall", a design feature carried over to modern Corvette convertibles. Optional AM radio trunk lid antenna connection and storage bag for plastic side curtain windows.



Photos and Story : Patrick Ernzen

Across the nation, there's a shift happening in automotive events. While there are still a large number of annual events that draw huge numbers, smaller, more casual events are increasing in popularity drastically. The appeal of such events is clear. Most occur with much more regularity (typically weekly or monthly), are completely free for both participants and spectators and allow everyone to come and go as they please, not having to worry about getting there before a specific time or having to stay for the entirety of the event.

Not surprisingly, given the significant automotive community in the valley and across the state, this is the case in Arizona as well. In fact, the Scottsdale Pavilions car show is actually the longest running weekly show in the nation. But it's not the only such event in the area. On the first Thursday night of every month, Evolution Motorsports hosts a monthly gathering at their shop in Tempe. Scuderia Southwest (SSW) and the Scottsdale Exotic Car Club (SECC) host a monthly get together on the first Saturday morning of each month at the Gainey Village in Scottsdale.

Nearly two years ago, the SECC

kicked off their very first Cars & Coffee followed by a short car cruise, and, a few months later, Scuderia Southwest started their own event, one coming on the first Saturday of the month and the other on the last. Both events were an immediate success with great turnouts initially and quickly increased in popularity and quality. Now, years later, the two gatherings have merged and, considering the nature of the event, feature an unparalleled number of quality cars. A recent Cars & Coffee saw upwards of 125 cars, including such gems as a Ferrari 575 Superamerica (one of 599), a Ferrari 365 Daytona, lime green Lamborghini Miura, Porsche Carrera GT, C6 Corvette ZR1, Mercedes-McLaren SLR and a myriad of other Ferraris, Lamborghinis, Porsches, exotics and classics. A large part of what makes events like these great is the variety. In addition to the usual exotics and classics, cars like Ford Model As, Saleen S7s, Rolls-Royces, Alfas, hot rods, muscle cars and more aren't uncommon sights.

Over the years, the event has seen a handful of particularly special cars drop by. One of the most substantial being a beautiful blue 1962 Ferrari

250 GTO, the second GTO produced and one of very few factory team cars. The event was also host to, what was at the time, the largest gathering of Ferrari 360 Challenge Stradales in North America, with seven red Stradales in attendance in May, 2008.

If you enjoy seeing and hearing great cars (particularly Italian), great weather and talking with genuine enthusiasts, the Scuderia Southwest and Scottsdale Exotic Car Club's monthly Cars & Coffee is certainly the place to be.

➤ **Who**
Scottsdale Exotic Car Club
 scottsdaleexoticcarclub.com
Scuderia Southwest
 scuderiasw.com

➤ **When**
 June 6th, 2009 - 7:30am
 July 4th, 2009 - 7:00am

➤ **Where**
 8989 N Scottsdale Rd
 Paradise Valley, AZ 85253



➤ Ferraris typically make up a significant portion of the attending cars with stunning rarities like this Phil Hill driven and Le Mans competing 250 GTO, black on black Enzo (one of only five) and 360 Challenge Stradales (the largest gathering of Chalange Stradales in North America at the time) are an almost regular sight.





> While attendance is predominately modern or European, American muscle and customs are right at home as well.



> A pristine Porsche 959 Sport, one of just 66.



> Zagato designed Aston Martin DB AR1, one of 99.



> From the iconic Miura and Countach to the lesser known Jarama, Lamborghinis always make a great addition.



Win a free, full photo shoot of your vehicle!

Up to two locations
Static and dynamic photos
35+ processed, polished photos

Visit Desert-Motors.com for more information.





THE LONE GUN

The Grabercars La Bala Prototype

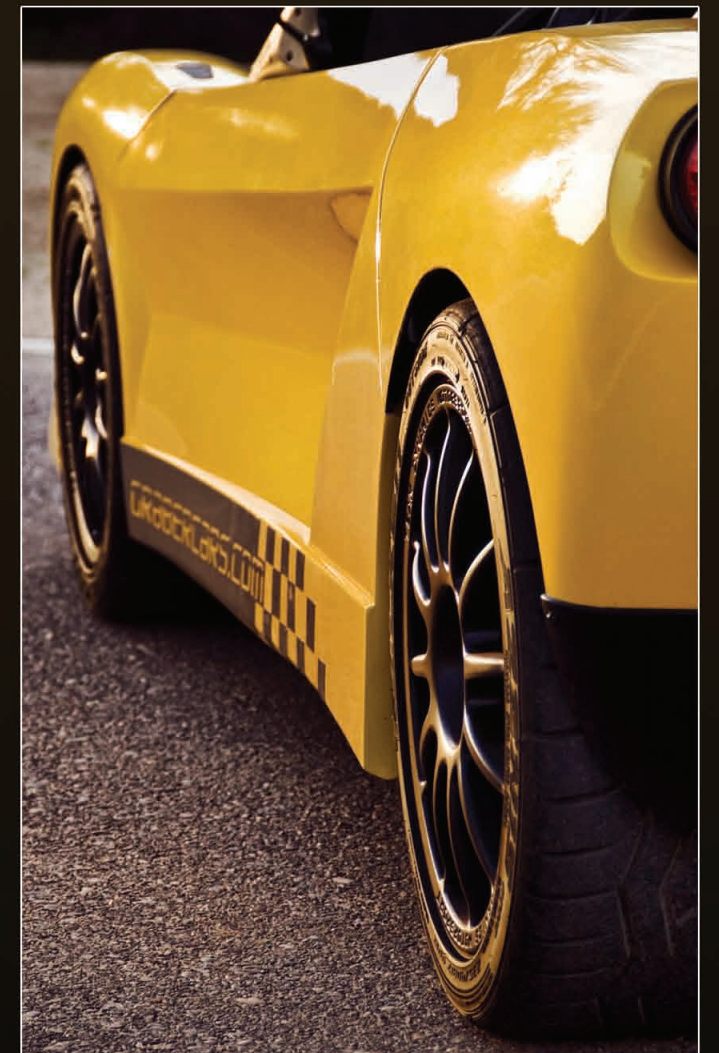
Photos and Words: Patrick Erzen



Ask people what they think about the term "kit car" and they usually conjure up images of rebodied Fieros with their ill proportioned, poorly fitted replica body panels, and anemic engines shrouded under a plastic cover with "V12" stamped onto it. They're little more than phony show pieces, and even then they're not going to be winning many shows anytime soon. This is certainly not the case with ALL kit cars, but there are plenty. With such stigma surrounding the term I hesitate to call the Grabercars La Bala a "kit car" despite it currently being on the market in both turnkey and kit form. Maybe we should call it a "Component" car. No matter the wording, building a component car wasn't the original intent of Cave Creek local Steve Graber back in fall of 2000 when this project began.

Steve had built several replicas in the past, of which one received a number of accolades, including First in Class at Knott's Berry Farm AHA Concourse and a cover feature in the April '99 Kit Car Builder magazine. However, he was acutely aware that such cars were riddled with compromises; compromises that weren't his. So, he set out to find a car that had everything he wanted: high performance, low weight and good looks, all at a reasonable price. That was easier said than done. Steve is a fairly tall guy and many of the cars he tried were simply too small for him to fit comfortably. Instead of giving up and making more compromises, he decided to do what many have dreamt of but few have done; he built a car of his own design from the ground up. Fast forward six years later and witness the result.

The La Bala prototype seen here has undergone a number of significant revisions and improvements over the 10,000 miles since it first saw the road in 2007, but the core has remained the same. The shapely lightweight fiberglass body rests over a triangulated tubular steel space frame that also supports its transverse mounted mid-engine Toyota inline four power plant. Steve's prototype uses a high output 20 valve JDM engine, however the chassis is designed to accept virtually any FWD drivetrain, so if Toyota isn't your flavor of choice, that isn't an issue. A majority of the mechanical components are sourced from various production donor cars, ranging from the Toyota MR2 to AMC Eagle, but the bodywork, the chassis, suspension, body interior and other special components were all built from scratch by Steve in his home garage with little more than the tools you'd find in any garage on your block. All of those original parts Steve built by hand for the prototype are now being manufactured right here in the Valley of the Sun by experts in fiberglass, machining and steel fabrication. Steve and his team do the final assembly of the turnkey version.



“I'm really just your average guy, and I think I have pretty average skills. However, I have a strong desire to create and tinker, and I never ever quit or give up. That can be a strength and a weakness.”

Steve Graber





Climbing into the cockpit (and I do mean "climbing") it is immediately apparent what this car was built to do. Everything has a purpose and anything that isn't completely necessary simply isn't there. Entering the car involves a process of sitting on the windowsill, swinging your legs into the foot well and then lowering yourself into the deep Sparco buckets. Doors and a removable 3-piece targa top are currently in the works; something the less limber are sure to appreciate. Once positioned snugly into the seats, the view across the dash and onto the road is yet another reminder of this machine's intent. The tiny, contoured MOMO steering wheel nicely frames the AIM digital race dash with datalogging and track timing features. The front fenders jut up into view at the front corners, as if the car is ready to pounce and devour whatever you throw in front of it.

With a flip of the ignition switch and a push of the starter button, the motor springs to life mere inches behind your head. With little to no sound deadening, a short wheelbase (just 98") and a free breathing, high strung engine, the sound is more than you'd expect from only 1.6 liters of displacement.

Everything, from steering to the shifting is firm and direct. There are no electronic assists, hydraulic steering or even power-assisted brakes, and that's a good thing. With many of today's cars, even high-end sports cars, there's a constant feeling of disconnect. These cars may perform beautifully and react to your every move with great precision, but there's still a feeling that you're telling the car what to do, then after a moment it does something close to what you asked of it. With the La Bala, there's no middleman. The steering is direct and it feels like your brain is connected directly to the road. A press of the brake pedal isn't a whole lot different than sticking your foot out like Fred Flintstone. The results, on the other hand, are significantly different. With its sticky Azenis RT-615s and 1,500lb curb weight, it sheds speed in a hurry, going from 60-0 in just 110ft.





The same elements are key factors to it doing just the opposite just as well. The car reaches 60 in around 4.2 seconds and then goes on to a top speed of nearly 155 mph. But the La Bala certainly isn't just about the numbers. The entire driving experience is visceral.

With most lightweight sports cars, handling is one of the primary areas of focus and the La Bala is no exception. With computer designed unequal length A-arms with pull-rod actuated coil-over dampers in the front and a deDion axle, pushrod actuated setup in the rear, the design is meant to strike an important balance between precise tire articulation and straight line grip. And it works. It may not have the scalpel like precision of a modern Ferrari, but with its manual rack and low curb weight, the line between you and the car starts to fade, and putting the car exactly where you want it comes naturally. The suspension is also fully adjustable, including camber, caster, toe, ride height, bump and rebound, and even the more esoteric KPI, allowing the driver an even more tailored feel.



As of the writing of this article, there are more than six La Balas currently at various stages of construction. Steve has begun construction on a second track-prepped car, which will feature the aforementioned doors and targa top and a race-only 220Hp naturally aspirated Honda B16 engine. Other La Balas in the works include a 1.6L Toyota 4AGZE Supercharged and a 2.0L Ecotec Supercharged (245HP stock with 300HP easily attainable) powered car, one of several La Balas near completion. In addition to doors and a targa top, full roll bar protection for track use and an EV option are just some of the options and improvements in the works.

“ It's been so much fun driving a car that literally nobody else in this part of the world has. I've been stopped, honked at, given thumbs up, had camera phones thrust out windows, people hanging out of windows...”

Steve Graber



A very wise man once said, "Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication." A phrase I feel rings true when talking about sports cars. While modern electronics and driving aides may impress the masses, shave a few tenths of a second off a quarter mile, add a couple tenths of a g around a skid pad or allow a car to reach speeds you'll never see on a track, let alone the street, those things aren't what makes driving a sports car a thrilling experience. As this and that get tacked on, and the pounds pile up, the connection between the driver and car becomes blurred. Numbed. With cars like La Bala, you get exactly what you should and nothing more. A pure driving experience.



Grabercars La Bala Prototype

Engine: Toyota 4AGE
Displacement: 1600 cc
Aspiration: Natural
Valvetrain: DOHC 5 valves per cyl
Posiition: Mid transverse
Horsepower: 180hp @ 7500rpm
Torque: 130lb ft @ 5200rpm
Redline: 8000rpm

F Suspension: Unequal length A-arms
R Suspension: deDion axle
F Wheels: 16x7.5"
R Wheels: 17x8.0"
F Tires: 215/45R16 (Falken Azenis)
R Tires: 235/45R17 (Falken Azenis)
Steering: Unassisted rack and pinion

Layout: Midengine RWD
Body: Fiberglass
Chassis: Triangulated tubular steel spaceframe

Height: 38in
Length: 156in
Width: 67in
Wheelbase: 98in
Track: 57in
Weight: 1500lbs

Website: www.Grabercars.com
Email: Info@Grabercars.com
Contact: Steve Graber - 602.373.4605



Otis Blank, DryHeatPanzer



Register at Desert-Motors.com for Your Own Free User Gallery



Blake McEuen, Blk



Jameson Apodaca, Hunters



HEATSTROKE

DODGE FEVER IN THE SONORAN DESERT
1968 DODGE CHARGER R/T

To many people, the term “muscle car” and the Dodge Charger are synonymous and in particular, the late ‘60s models. At its Chicago unveiling, the ‘68 Charger was labeled as having “jet-age aerodynamic styling” by then Dodge GM Robert B. McCurry and was a dramatic styling departure from the proceeding model years which had seen dismal sales. With its Coke-bottle profile, flying buttress c-pillars and rectangular front grill, it walks a fine line of being simultaneously elegant and aggressive.

This particular ‘68 Charger began life as a 318 car and was painstakingly converted to this stunning 440 Magnum following a complete rotisserie restoration. During the restoration the owner performed a number of both mechanical and cosmetic customizations, including bodywork lowered over smoothed and tubbed rear wheel wells to make room for its massive 20x15” Budnik Spark wheels and 29x15” Mickey Thompson R/S radials giving it a substantially more imposing stance.

While the power and performance are almost always important and a big part of what makes a muscle car a muscle car, these cars are primitive, heavy, soft and aren’t going to keep up with modern sports cars without an enormous amount of reworking. That’s part of the reason that to me, muscle cars are all about presence. And this is where the Charger really excels. With its clean visual changes, this R/T has presence in spades and it’s clear why the Charger quickly became an icon of American muscle. ♣

Photos/Words: Patrick Erzen







1968 Dodge Charger R/T

Body

Filled and smoothed firewall and inner fenders
Radiator moved forward and area smoothed
Overflow and PS reservoir sunk into fender wells
Hand formed and fabricated steel wheel tubs

Interior

Vintage Air Gen VI air conditioning unit
Hidden remote wiper system
Power windows
Flaming River stainless tilt steering column
Billet Specialties GTX series steering wheel
Classic Instruments American Series gauges
Glide Engineering seats
Rear seat modified to clear wheel tubs
B&M Street Bandit shifter with magnum grip

Wheels/Tires

Budnik Driver Series Spark wheels
18x8" front
20x15" rear
BFG 245-45-18 front
M/T 29x15-20 SR Radials rear

Motor

496 Stroker big block
4340 crank
H-Beam rods
Ross pistons
Edelbrock heads and six pack intake
Holley six pack carbs
MSD ignition system
Indy valve covers, engraved and chrome plated
Ron Davis double pass crossflow radiator
Dual 14" radiator fans
Stainless steel fuel lines

Transmission

727
TCI 3800 stall
Billet cooler and deep pan
Shift kit

Rear End

8 3/4" - 3.23 Posi
Moser axles
3" heavy wall driveshaft

Exhaust

TTI 2" coated headers
TTI 3" exhaust with Dynamax mufflers

Brakes

ABS electric power brakes
Billet master cylinder
All stainless brake lines
Wilwood 4pot Dynalite calipers front and rear
Brake pedal drilled and chrome plated

Accessories

Dynamatted floor, firewall, doors, quarters, roof
Powder coated gas tank
All wiring, brake lines, AC hoses hidden
Custom billet AC condenser mounts
All polished stainless bolts
Chrome hood hinge springs
Custom air cleaner base, K&N filter

赤惡魔



While Vivid Racing has had their hands on just about everything from Lamborghinis to Vipers to Maybachs, they're probably best known for their heavily modified and show-stopping Japanese cars. They've built some of North America's most recognized Mitsubishi Evos, Subaru WRXs and other Japanese favorites which have graced the pages of countless magazines and websites not only throughout the nation, but internationally as well. But articles and photos aren't the only way Vivid Racing's cars have been breaking out of our borders. A number of Vivid Racing's cars have been shipped out to international buyers after receiving exposure in international publications. This is the case with their most recently finished project, a striking matte red 2009 Nissan GT-R. Just weeks after its completion, it was shipped halfway around the world to its new owner in Romania.

And striking it is. The love-it-or-hate-it red paint with black accents is carried over onto the factory-sized three-piece Capitol Forged Athens wheels and creates a look that is as unique as it is

undeniably bold. Though you'd never know by looking at it, the GT-R's custom "Wald Style" front end treatment was created by hacking up a Rieger Ford Focus RS bumper and seamlessly blending it with the stock piece. The side skirts were fabricated with the same process using Rieger E60 BMW parts and the stock wing sits on a set of custom risers to give the rear end a more aggressive touch that rounds out the whole look. Vivid Racing is no stranger to this type of custom body work, having used similar processes on some of their previous cars, such as their 2008 VR WRX. They consistently rework cars so new that aftermarket parts, both cosmetic and mechanical, simply aren't available and have to be prototyped in house.

The engine bay houses a number of these parts, with the downpipes, blow-off valves and girthy three-inch intake and intercooler piping all being prototype Agency Power parts which are now available for purchase. Those parts, in addition to a Meisterschaft titanium exhaust system with stainless steel mid-pipes and ECU tuning via a COBB Accessport, bring the already impressive 3.8l twin-turbo

V6 to a staggering 600 all-wheel horsepower. Take drivetrain loss into account and we're talking more than 700hp at the crank, an increase of more than 200 over Nissan's claimed numbers. Most of that power comes by simply letting the engine breath. The Agency Power downpipes alone increase the power by an astonishing 23awhp and 32lbs-ft of torque.

The same red and black color scheme is in play in the GT-R's interior, with custom red suede inserts, stitching and rails integrated into the stock seats and door panels. Status Racing FIA-approved 3" four-point harnesses ensure the occupants stay in place when all that power hits. Carbon fiber inserts throughout the interior spice up things all around, giving it a more track inspired look.

When Nissan first began to release information regarding the GT-R, there was talk of it being "untuneable". As various shops started to get their hands on the car, it quickly became apparent that wasn't the case. With relatively few engine modifications, Vivid Racing has released some of the GT-R's hidden potential, turning this Japanese monster into a Red Devil. 🇯🇵



2010 Vivid Racing Nissan GT-R

Body

Custom "Wald Style" front end
Custom side skirts made
Custom 2" wing risers

Interior

OEM seats with red suede inserts, stitching, and red rails
Vivid Racing and GTR logo stitched into seats
Rear seats reupholstered to match front seats
Status Racing 3" 4-point harnesses
Door panels include red suede inserts, red stitching and carbon fiber overlays
Carbon fiber center console and control panel surround

Stereo

2 10" Diamond Audio shallow mount subwoofers in trunk
1 Diamond Audio 2 channel amplifier
Custom installtion with matching interior red suede

Wheels/Tires

20" 3-piece Capital Forged Athens Wheels
Pirelli PZero Nero OEM fitment tires

Motor

Meisterschaft titanium exhaust muffler with stainless steel midpipes
Agency Power downpipes
Agency Power intakes with new intake pipes and blow off valves
Agency Power 3" intercooler piping
ECU tuning with COBB Accessport
Carbon fiber engine cover

Suspension

Eibach Pro Kit lowering springs
Cobb Tuning front and rear sway bars

Brakes

Factory Brembo calipers with matching red paint and Vivid Racing logo





CUBED

Scottsdale Plays Host to the Nissan Cube

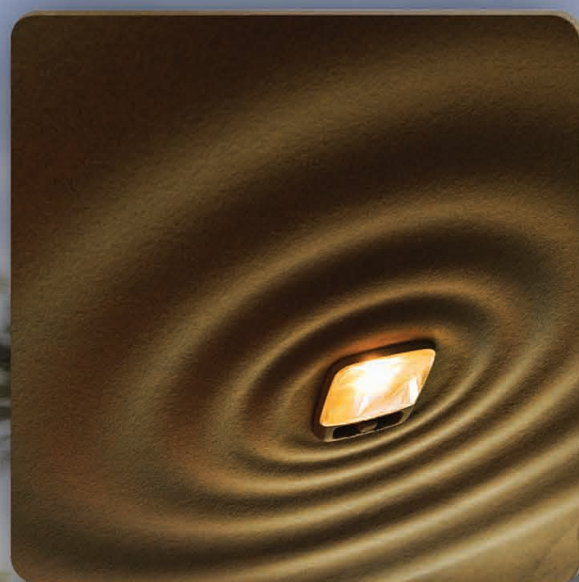
The Scottsdale Pavilions car show is no stranger to pre-production and fresh-off-the-assembly-line cars. Press Corvette ZR1s and a preproduction 2009 CTS-V were both spotted at Pavilions being driven by GM employees well before they were common sights around the country. Pavilions is always a great place to get a first glimpse at the latest and greatest.

It isn't too surprising, then, that on May 2nd Nissan would bring its press car Cubes out to Pavilions for the public to check out before sending them off across the nation. Ten of the asymmetrical Cubes in various trim, options and colors were on hand for visitors to poke and prod, with Nissan representatives on hand to answer any questions that pop up.

The proudly "quirky" cars include features such as a rippled headliner, multiple grill designs, optional aero kit,

shag dash topper and door straps, interior trim pieces and interior lighting that can be swapped out with different colors. The standard drivetrain is 122hp 1.8l inline four with a six-speed manual transmission (with a CVT optional).

While the Cube has been in production since 1998 (this actually being the third generation), this is the first time it will be available in North America. Pricing starts at \$13,990 and the Cube has already started appearing at Nissan dealerships around the valley.



Photos and Words: Patrick Ernzen



"QUICKNESS THROUGH LIGHTNESS"



2010 LA BALA

1,600LBS - 260HP - 40+MPG

SNAPS NECKS...
BOTH IN AND OUT OF THE CAR.

UNBELIEVABLY AFFORDABLE

WWW.GRABERCARS.COM

602-373-4605

First Look

2010 Ferrari California

Photos & Words: Patrick Erzen





exclusive preview of the car. Having finally seen the California in person, my feelings haven't changed drastically. They are more enforced than anything. Various portions and details are fantastic, but it all seems somewhat disjointed and overly busy as a whole. The rear end is fairly bulbous from certain angles, largely due to retractable top requirements. There has been criticism of the styling being very Asian, and I do see some similarities. I've overheard it compared to Mitsubishi's Eclipse and I see a little Honda S2000 around the eyes. The exhaust layout is also very similar to that of the Lexus IS-F. While this California and the original are drastically different looking cars, it's not a complete departure. There are a number of styling cues that hearken back to the original, most noticeably the center hood scoop and fender vents.

While the opinions of those on hand were very split (with the detractors being a bit more passionate and vocal) most people appeared to appreciate it more after getting a good look at the actual car. The prevailing opinion was that it is significantly more appealing with the top up, as the car's lines become well defined and more attractive. In fact, I overheard a number of people say that they'd actually like the car more if it wasn't a convertible at all and simply came in a coupe form. And with the top up it is surprisingly slippery as well, with a drag coefficient of just .32 (10% lower than the rest of Ferrari's lineup).

With its rich heritage of racing success, breathtaking designs and benchmark setting performance and driving dynamics, new Ferraris are always held to a higher standard, even when compared to other exotics. By labeling their latest offering the "California", Ferrari sets the bar even higher than normal. And that bar was already pretty damn high.

The 250 GT California is one of Ferrari's most iconic, recognized and sought-after models of all time. With auction prices soaring to previously record highs of nearly \$11 million, there's no question that the 250 GT California is in the upper echelon of not only Ferraris, but of all cars. And it's not hard to see why. Its SWB covered headlight form is nearly perfect visually. Couple that with the model's rarity and substantial racing history and you have renown that carries a lot of weight in the automotive world.

Nearly a year ago, when the first

photos of the 2010 California began to surface in May of 2008, the reception was mixed to say the least. With its love it or hate it styling and a format and market that treads new ground for Ferrari, most people seemed to lean more towards "hate". That didn't change much following its official launch by Ferrari at the 2008 Paris Motor Show five months later. However, as is the case with many designs, people seem to have warmed up to the California since then. At least, they're starting too.

While the name and many aspects of the California may be familiar to Ferrari enthusiasts, it also brings a number of Ferrari firsts to the table. Its 460hp V8 is the first to be placed in the front of a Ferrari and that V8 is their first with a direct fuel injection system. Power from the V8 gets to the ground by way of a rear-mounted 7-speed dual clutch transmission with paddle shifters, another first and something that's sure to be an integral part of future Ferrari road cars. This configuration gives the

car a near perfect 47/53 front-to-rear weight ratio, despite the engine placement. Unlike most paddle shifter equipped Ferraris, the traditional gated manual transmission isn't even an option. The multi-link rear suspension replaces the usual unequal length a-arms and is another first for Ferrari. Of course the most notable new feature, and the car's signature feature, is the retractable hard top. Made of aluminum panels and cast aluminum, it weighs in at a remarkable 14lbs (lighter than the F430 Spider's soft top), has an opening/closing cycle of just 14 seconds and doesn't interfere with trunk space.

To celebrate the California's launch in North America and Arizona, Scottsdale Ferrari invited the Ferrari Club of America – Desert Region out to the Penske Racing Museum for an



Photo Courtesy: RM Auctions



The interior on the other hand received nothing but praise and is executed very well. It's clean, well laid out and, while relatively simple, there are enough curves and details to keep it interesting. For example, despite having an engine start button, Manettino dial (allowing adjustment to various systems on the fly, though more limited than the F430's setup) and paddle shifters, the steering wheel remains elegant yet racy and frames the instrument cluster nicely. That cluster is one of the highlights of the interior. The entire dash has a very futuristic, techno feel, but without overdoing it and without the design taking priority over functionality. It's 10k rpm tachometer is large, clear and exactly where it should be: dead center. A digital speed readout and gear indicator is also inset into the bottom right of the tachometer. Just to the right lies its analog speedometer, a nod to the California of yesteryear with its radial speed markings. Opposite the speedometer is a large, multi-function LCD that displays information including fuel level, oil temperature and pressure, time, date, weather and the current radio station.

Having driven the car briefly, my feelings on the car as a whole are very mixed. It certainly performs wonderfully and makes some exquisite noises (the retractable top allowing full appreciation of all the growls and



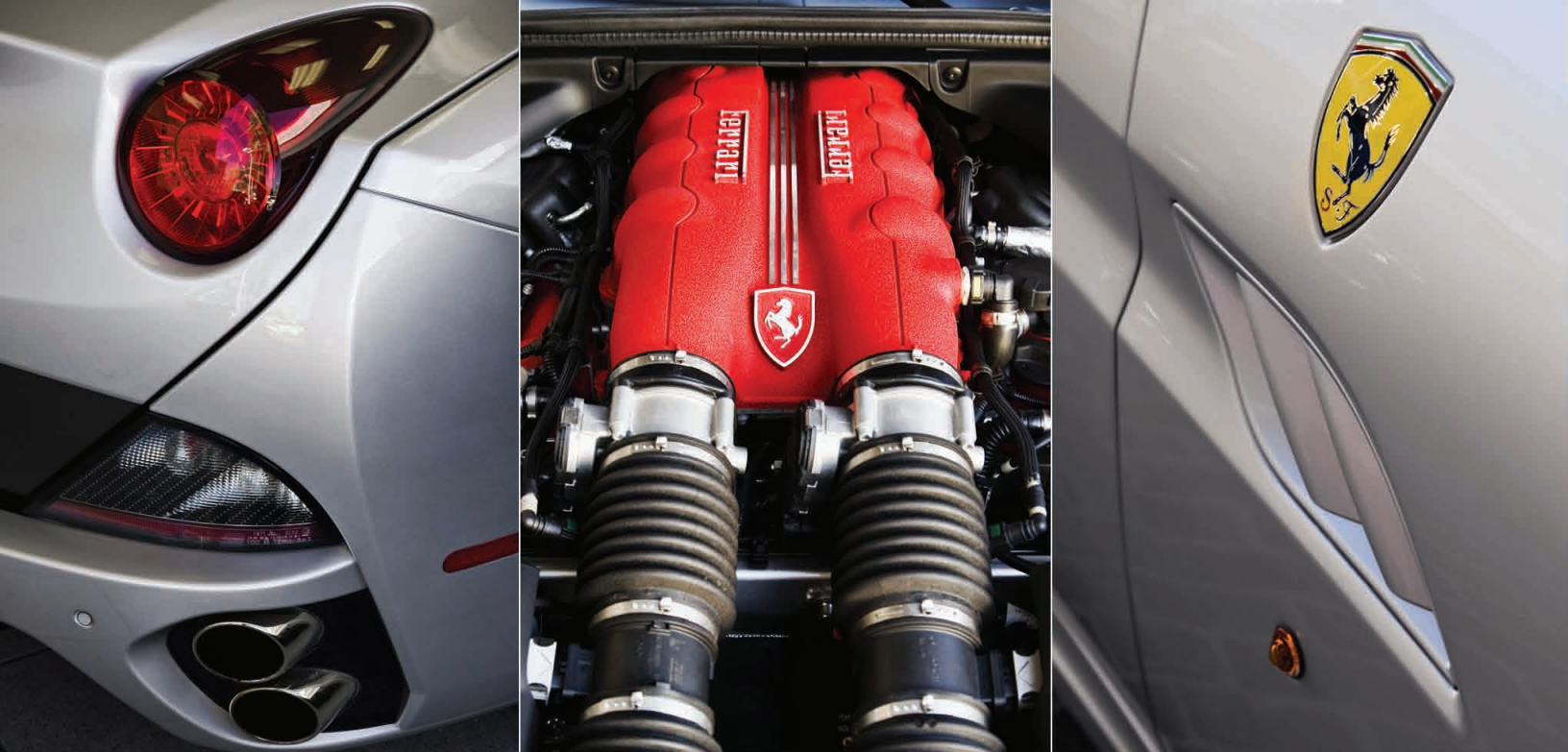
snarls). Acceleration is very brisk and the cornering and braking are exactly what you'd expect from a Ferrari. It's all very precise and planted and driving the car is effortless. The steering is extraordinarily light and, in automatic and comfort mode, it's no more difficult to handle than a new Camry... maybe easier to manage. Maybe that's part of what turns me off a bit. While I realize it's not the car's aim or intention, I want a car of this caliber and power to demand something from me. I want it to fight back a little and let me know that, if I don't treat it right, it'll take my head off in an instant. I want it to let everyone else know the same. In exotics like Lamborghinis and other Ferraris, I'm used to people hanging out of car windows with camera phones, thumbs up aplenty and heads spinning like Linda Blair. While there wasn't a lot of foot or road traffic in the area, the car seemed to fly completely under the radar.

Without question, though, the feature that stood out during my short time behind the wheel is the new dual-clutch gearbox, a truly remarkable piece of engineering. It shifts so smoothly in automatic and comfort mode under light acceleration, that if it wasn't for the gear indicator display and drop in revs, you wouldn't even know it had shifted. Even in manual and sport mode, I almost have difficulty believing

“It's beautiful, you drive it open, you drive it closed and you use it every day if you want to. It has all the characters that you wish to have from a Ferrari...”

Michael Schumacher






that the click of the paddle has just switched to a higher gear, despite what the display tells me. Under heavy throttle the changes are blazingly fast, providing seamless acceleration through all the gears.

With all that being said, if I had the money and was in the market for a car of this class, would I choose the California? Probably not, but then, I don't and I'm not. Without significant seat time behind the wheel of the California and all of its competitors it is hard to truly get a feel for everything the car is and how it measures up to its rivals, but the California just doesn't send a chill up my spine the way I hoped it would. That's not to say that it isn't a beautifully built

machine, I'm just not sure it's the beautifully built machine for me. And, again, I don't think it's meant to be.

Ferrari enthusiasts tend to lean more towards purist views in general and are almost always initially skeptical of Maranello's latest. Even more so when that offering breaks new ground and marks a new era for the company as is the case with the California. Some have called the California the "soccer mom Ferrari" and have implied that it's essentially just a Mercedes SL with a cavallino rampart. Many Ferraristi seem to think it signals the beginning of the end... the end of Enzo's vision of what Ferrari is meant to be. I can sympathize with this view. Manufacturers with focus and

dedication to the things that have always made them what they are have become increasingly scarce and no company has a richer history than Ferrari. Many people felt the introduction of the Porsche Cayenne would make Ferdinand roll in his grave, but the Stuttgart SUV also saved the company. Even if viewed as a blemish on the Ferrari lineup, the California is a necessary "evil". But I don't view it as a blemish. It isn't an SUV, CUV or grocery-getter and it's far from the first Ferrari to have more than two seats (which are actually optional in the California). It's still a performance oriented, high-powered V8 exotic and, as long as they continue to produce their iconic mid-engined supercars and V12 GTs, purists be damned. 

“I don't want to sound rude, but it has the backside of J.Lo after a visit to the pie shop ... Amazingly, it's on these twisty roads where the California doesn't feel overweight at all, but does lack the intensity and the feedback that you'll get from a thoroughbred supercar.”


Vicki Butler-Henderson

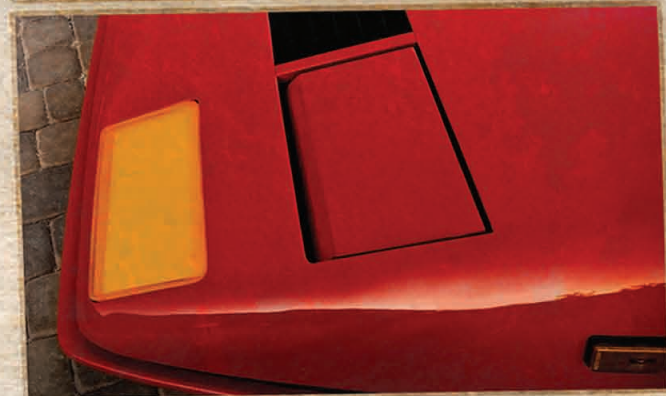


> **What do *you* think of the new California?**
Love it? Hate it? We want to know what you think!
Logon to the **Desert-Motors.com** forum and let us know!



Guess The Car

Think you know your cars? Even the old, rare and obscure?
Visit Desert-Motors.com to find out and for the full photos. 



BACKTRACK



Private Track Day - Firebird Raceway - November 30th, 2007

EUROPEAN SPORTS, AMERICAN MUSCLE, HOT RODS AND CUSTOMS

RUSSO AND STEELE

COLLECTOR AUTOMOBILE AUCTIONS™

1960 FERRARI 250GT
PF SERIES II CABRIOLET

S/N 1911 - MULTIPLE
CONCOURS PARTICIPANT -
FCA PLATINUM AWARD



Monterey
RUSSO AND STEELE

AUGUST 13-15, 2009

2 DAYS 150 CARS
CONSIGNMENTS INVITED
ALL RESERVE

For additional information or to consign your vehicle:

602.252.2697 WWW.RUSSOANDSTEELE.COM



mag.desert-motors.com