

1976-77 RPO ZJ1: CUSTOM TWO-TONE INTERIOR

Figure 1: 1976 ZJ1 in Firethorn/White

The automotive industry was challenged in the 1970s when performance, horsepower, and cubic inches were no longer available options. Despite the ablation of muscle-car options, vehicle sales continued as the menu of comfort, convenience, and power-assisted options expanded. Corvette buyers sought America's Sports Car for a leisure ride in a classic and ordered convenience options and cosmetic features in record numbers.

In 1976 and 1977, RPO ZJ1, a custom two-tone interior option, was offered. However, it will not be found among the Regular Production Options (RPO) listings in the *NCRS 1968-82 Corvette Specifications Guide* nor *Corvette Black Books*. The *1953-82 Parts and Illustration Catalog* listed the RPO with a brief description as Custom Interior – Two Tone. The Third edition of the *NCRS 1975-77 Technical Manual and Judging Guide* addresses ZJ1 and related codes that were printed on buildsheets (GMAD manifest) and the Monroney label glued to the window. This article expands that discussion and provides addi-

tional illustrations, describing the process in detail from the dealer's order to production and the documentation that confirms the final build for a ZJ1 interior.

WHAT MAKES A ZJ1 CUSTOM TWO-TONE INTERIOR?

The two-tone interior RPO ZJ1 is a curious option that piques Corvetters' interest when seen, studied, or judged. Until recently, it was virtually unknown except to those owners who enjoyed showing off the oddity to fellow enthusiasts. Corvette devotees are generally surprised to learn that GM Chevrolet built this interior-color combination and that it is referenced in GM Chevrolet Corvette Dealer Order Guides.

The recommended combinations varied between the two years as shown in Tables 1 and 2. The interior color selected by the buyer is the primary trim on the instrument panel, console, carpet, and seat belts. Selected interior components received the white accent. In 1976, seats and door panels were white, and in 1977 the headliner was also included.

In 1976 buyers had to fork out an additional \$164 for either the regular Custom Interior (one color) or special ZJ1 two-tone option. Leather seats became standard for the first time in 1977, but Corvette buyers could opt for a cloth-leather combination at no additional cost. The two-tone interior option meant that three seat/trim combinations were available to the buyer at no cost in 1977.

The dealer order guides included codes accompanied with a description for either leather, cloth, or the optional two-tone interior. Sales order codes were quite different from production or build codes, and the buildsheet called out build codes to direct factory workers with installation of the buyer's primary trim selection.

THE SALES ORDER: RPO ZP2 PROCESS OPTION

When ZJ1 was ordered, an additional RPO of ZP2 was called out and printed on the manifest. (See Figure 2) ZP2 is a process option or instruction to either a zone office or the factory. When the box option was checked for the two-tone interior, it needed an override (RPO ZP2) by the zone office requesting confirmation by the buyer's dealer before the factory would proceed with production for the ZJ1 order. The ZP2 process code was printed on the manifest in the RPO column. The 1977 Corvette Color & Trim Selection chart in the Dealer Order Guide included a note referring to recommended ideal combinations and dealer confirmation:

Please Note: The exterior and interior combinations shown in the chart below and designated as recommended, represent the ideal combinations. Those that are shown as acceptable (A) are attractive but less desirable than the recommended combinations. Orders for additional combinations may be submitted, provided the dealer initials the appropriate order form box (ZP2) as verification that the requested combination is definitely desired.

STD EMISSION	ZJ1	CUSTOM INTER	26L	LT BLUE-LWR
TILT STEERING	ZP2	PRGC OPTIM	26V	LT BLUE-UPR
GR70-158 WH/L	ZX2	CCNV PACK-GE	271	DK BLUE INT
HEADLAMP WARN	LGR	TIRE PRESS	272	DK BLUE TRIM
HD BATTERY			2AH	FRT SPRING-LH
LAMP-ENG COMP				FRT SPRING-RH
LOW FUEL INDI				
STEREO RADIO				
LIC PLATE MNT				
ALUM WHEELS				

Figure 2: 1977 buildsheet with ZJ1 and ZP2

The ZP2 Process Option is called out for non-recommended color combinations or other buyer requests that depart from routine ordering. This remains a common practice when buyers request special orders



Figure 3: 1977 ZJ1 with blue/white

or non-recommended color combinations.

Process Option codes were used throughout the GM system in the 1970s. In 1977, ZP2 was also called out for Corvette orders built and shipped to Canada. It instructed the zone office to follow up with the dealer and confirm that the order was intended for Canada. In 1978 K6 instructed the factory to ensure that Z78 Pace Cars were shipped with red-stripe RPO YJ8 aluminum wheels.

This practice is typical of Corvette to build the vehicle the customer orders and has continued into the twenty-first century. For example, when Millennium Yellow was introduced in 2000, and the buyer wanted the Torch Red interior, zone office would intervene and confirm with the dealer that indeed this was the buyer's preference.

BUILDING RPO ZJ1: PRODUCTION CODES

Tables 1 and 2 show the code sets, both sales (dealer order code on window sticker) and build (manifest) for the two-tone interior color options. The dealer order code (sales) designated either leather or cloth seats by color. The code was printed on the window sticker to the right of the trim RPO code on the description line. (See Figure 7) The color code called out the color for the trim package that included seats, carpet, headliner, steering column, console, steering wheel, seatbelts, etc. As noted earlier, when the zone office received a Corvette order from the dealer with RPO ZJ1, the process option ZP2 was called out with an instruction that directed the zone office to follow up with the dealer to confirm the buyer's wish before proceeding with scheduling the order with the factory for production.

The ZJ1 code called out a third trim option code associated with the two-tone interior or the WH2 preceded by the trim code. Box 77 of the manifest documents the

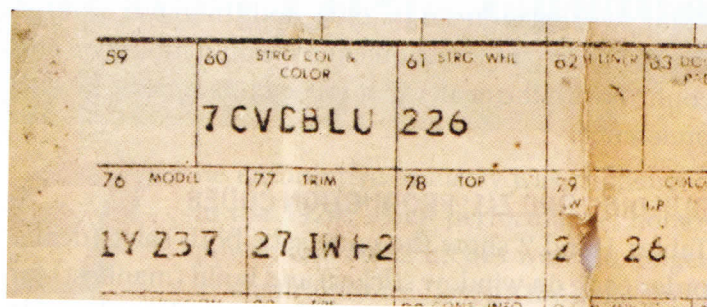
TABLE 1: 1976 RPO ZJ1 - INTERIOR COLOR AND TRIM CODES

DOCUMENTATION	ZJ1 RECOMMENDED INTERIOR COLOR OPTIONS				
	BLACK	BLUEGREEN	DARK BROWN	FIRETHORN	SMOKE GREY
MONRONEY LABEL (SALES)	AWB2	AWE2	AWH2	AWF2	AWM2
TRIM TAG COLOR CODE	192	322	692	712	152
MANIFEST TRIM CODE RPO	191	321	691	711	151
MANIFEST (BOX 77)	191WH2	321WH2	691WH2	711WH2	151WH2

TABLE 2: 1977 RPO ZJ1 - INTERIOR COLOR AND TRIM CODES

DOCUMENTATION	ZJ1 RECOMMENDED INTERIOR COLOR OPTIONS			
	BLUE	BUCKSKIN	RED	SMOKE GREY
MONRONEY LABEL (SALES)	AWD2	AWS2	AWF2	AWM2
TRIM TAG COLOR CODE	272	642	722	152
MANIFEST TRIM CODE RPO	271	641	721	151
MANIFEST (BOX 77)	271WH2	641WH2	721WH2	151WH2

color trim code and a color fabric code. But when ZJ1 was ordered, the fabric code WH2 was called out for the white accent pieces. For example in Figure 4, Box 77, blue is interior color code and normally would print 271272 (blue leather). If cloth was ordered, Box 77 code called out 27127C (blue cloth). However, when ZJ1 was called out, in place of the 272(C), the 271WH2 is called out in Box 77 (See Table 2).

**Figure 4: ZJ1 manifest, Box 77 271WH2 code**

In 1976, color options were Black/White, Blue Green/White, Dark Brown/White, Firethorn/White, and Smoke Grey/White. 1977 color options included Red/White, Blue/White, Smoke Grey/White, and Buckskin/White, with red appearing to be the most common color choice.

THE RPO ZJ1 TRIM TAG

1977 Corvettes built with ZJ1 are easier to document than those built in 1976 because the trim tag was stamped with ZJ1 for Corvettes with two-tone interiors. This practice appears confined to the 1977 model year. No evidence has been found where 1976 trim tags with a two-tone interior had the ZJ1 stamp on the tag. Note ZJ1 in the upper left-hand corner in Figure 5.

DOCUMENTING THE ZJ1 BUILD OPTION

Confirming a factory-built ZJ1 custom two-tone interior requires several documents and differs by model year. For both years, the window sticker lists the AWxx code while the buildsheet references the trim codes and the WH2 code. In 1977, the trim tag and window sticker along with the manifest all reconcile and confirm the ZJ1 option.

RETAIL AND DEALER INVOICES

An owner, especially a second or third one, can be confused when depending solely on either the retail (window sticker) or the dealer invoice to confirm ZJ1. This is especially true in 1976 as ZJ1 was not printed on either sales document. Rather the interior code and the ZJ1 custom

**Figure 5: RPO ZJ1 152 trim tag**

This 1977 was built with white paint (10L) and the Smoke Grey interior (152) and white accent features.



Figure 6: The trim tag for a 1977 with yellow paint and non-recommended white on Buckskin interior

two-tone dealer code were listed on the window sticker as shown in Figure 7.

Look closely at RPO 712 and compare the trim description to its right: **AWF2 WHITE LEATHER BKT/DR FIRE ACC** where **AWF2** refers to the white leather bucket seats (Table 1) and **DR FIRE ACC** refers to the interior trim or Firethorn in 1976.

SUMMARY

Chevrolet teased buyers by offering ZJ1 to those who sought a Corvette for its comfort, convenience, and cosmetic features. In fact, the rationale for Corvette Restomods is the addition of convenience options combined with style and the power teams of C4 and C5 model years or the best of old and new. Mid-1970s Corvettes represent

the transition from high-performance of the earlier years to leisure-seeking owners of later years. Corvette buffs love their horsepower, but the early-C3 era was accompanied by noise, cabin heat, and lead-scented emissions. Despite low horsepower, enthusiasts learned to appreciate late-C3s for the quiet ride, climate-controlled cabin, and reduced emissions, both scent and discharge.

Chevrolet Corvette model year 1978, as is well known, expanded the offering of special cosmetic schemes (paint and decals) with the B2Z Anniversary Paint option and the Z78 Limited-Edition Pace Car. With a last gasp final salute to the C3 era, 1982 offered the Collector Edition with its ever-so-popular hatchback and hood decal.

The intent of this article is to instigate a discussion among 1976-77 Corvette two-tone interior owners. While considerable study has produced what is known to this point, much remains to be confirmed by owners of this limited interior color option. Hopefully, this discussion inspires owners that the time has come to show Corvette admirers these special builds.

Note: The author and *The Corvette Restorer* thank the many owners who have shown their ZJ1 Corvettes and shared documentation to better understand this option. Special appreciation goes to Bob Beck who was the first NCRS member to stir this author's interest with what at the time was a relatively-unknown build option. **TCR**

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CHEVROLET		GM
Division of General Motors Corporation		
MAKE: CHEVROLET	MODEL: 1YZ37 CORVETTE COUPE - V8	
VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 1Z37X6S436943	FINAL ASSEMBLY POINT: ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI	
DEALER TO WHOM DELIVERED: FRANKLIN CHEVROLET-OLDS-BUICK, INC.	S 48-154 GHK964	
PULASKI, NY	44-540 ST	
DELIVERED TO DEALER AT (IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE): DEARBORN, MI		
THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE STANDARD ON THIS MODEL AT NO EXTRA CHARGE	MANUFACTURER'S SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE OF THIS MODEL INCLUDING DEALER PREPARATION	7,814.85
	Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Delivered Price for Options and Accessories installed on this Vehicle by Manufacturer	
• 350-4 V8 ENGINE	C60 FOUR-SEASON AIR CONDITIONING	523.00
• HIGH ENERGY IGNITION SYSTEM	FE7 GYMKHANA SUSPENSION	35.00
• POSITRACTION REAR AXLE	J50 POWER BRAKES	.00
• 4-WHEEL DISC BRAKE SYSTEM	L82 SPECIAL 350-4 BBL V-8 ENGINE	481.00
• TAPERED HIGH-BACK BUCKET SEATS	M20 FOUR SPEED WIDE-RANGE TRANS	.00
	N40 POWER STEERING	.00
	QRM GR70-15/B S/B RADIAL W/STRIPE	37.00
	UA1 HEAVY DUTY BATTERY	16.00
	UF1 MAP LIGHT	10.00
	U58 AM/FM STEREO RADIO	281.00
	37L MAHOGANY METALLIC	.00
	712 AWF2 WHT LEATHER BKT/DK FIRE ACC	164.00

Figure 7: Trim code RPO 712 with the dealer code AWF2 for white leather bucket seats and Firethorn interior