

Introduction

Who is this book for? The *Corvette Buildsheet Book* is for the third generation Corvette (C3) owner, collector, hobbyist or prospective Corvette buyer who wishes to understand and correctly interpret Corvette assembly production broadcast codes, how those codes were used to tag parts and how the buildsheet documented this process.

Late model C3 buildsheets were first described in *The Corvette Restorer* Winter 2006. That article described the use of Corvette manifests, known to hobbyists as tank stickers or buildsheets, from 1967 through 1982 and how they were used for Corvette assembly. The article distinguished the Corvette Order Copy used as tank sticker for 1967-1972 model years from the production manifest copy used from 1973 through 1982. The Corvette Order Copy was a sales document printed in portrait format, while the manifest was a production document printed in landscape format. The standard factory practice was to glue a copy to each gas tank, but the article also described several other locations where owners had success in discovering a discarded copy of the much coveted buildsheet.

This *Corvette Buildsheet Book* is a study guide that builds on a persistent collection and study of 1973-82 Corvette buildsheets. In collecting those buildsheets, I have had much correspondence with Corvette owners willing to share their Corvette history and so through this guide, we are able to provide anecdotal data never published before on late-model C3 buildsheets. It describes the process of how Corvette buildsheets were used for Corvette assembly. It introduces distinguishing characteristics among buildsheets used from 1973 through 1982, while exploring how the use of data increased from 1973 through 1982. It also shows how a buildsheet documents the broadcast codes associated with factory options installed on a St. Louis- or Bowling Green-manufactured Corvette. We find with these documents the increased dependence on data processing for assembly, the increased reliance on the manifest in production to document regular production options (RPOs) and specifically, producing pre-assigned vehicle identification numbers prior to Corvette assembly.

What is a buildsheet? Briefly, it is a factory build record that was used to pull, or call out, option equipment replacing base equipment. Each sheet is a collection of data sets displayed in a matrix of boxes organized more by rows than by columns: It includes sales-order data (RPOs), production data (broadcast codes), and destination data (dealer of origin). In terms of buildsheet format, row formats changed over the model years to accommodate the increased need to display data. Columns lost their vertical orientation in favor of horizontal, all of which suggests that the box arrangement by production year revealed little consistency from one model year to the next. The intent was to display multiple, complex data sets.

The search for build records to underscore originality of highly-optioned, highly-valued Corvettes models has led to extensive study and publication of findings for 1963-72 models, much of which has been published in *The Corvette Restorer* or is available through the NCRS Authentication Library. As a result, Corvette has attracted much attention and study targeting the early years of C3 assembly. Due to this fascination, too often the balance of C3 production is assumed to have been like the 1968-72 period with little written to distinguish the unique contributions of the 1973-82 period. This guide sheds light on assembly methods and the integration of data processing during the waning years of C3 production.

The *Corvette Buildsheet Book* begins with a brief review of what the hobby has learned about Corvette sales and production documents, followed by major milestones for 1973-82 buildsheets. Chapters that follow provide an overview of what is found on buildsheets, such as RPOs (regular production options), related broadcast codes, and printed data versus typed data. Finally, buildsheets are discussed, based on the evolution of data formats by model years of production. The study guide concludes with a discussion of the availability of build records and where copies of buildsheets can be retrieved by Corvette enthusiasts' intent to learn, understand and document the origins of their unique copy of America's Sports Car.