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MORE FOR LS

CORVETTE PERFORMANCE ABOUNDS AT THE HOLLEY LS FEST

JAY HEATH WORDS | PHOTOS

Let's get a potentially delicate bit of information out of the way right up front: We drove a Chevy Volt to the Holley LS Fest. For the record, piloting a lozenge-shaped gas/electric hybrid deep into Corvette country to attend one of the nation's premier high-performance driving events was not our original intention. Rather, we'd hoped to follow the same basic approach taken in our 2011 Fest trip, smashingly surmounted from behind the wheel of a then-new Grand Sport convertible ("Paddling Faster," Feb. '12). But when GM's regional press fleet proved depressingly Corvette-free in the days leading up to our most recent multistate jaunt, adjustments, as they say, had to be made.

On a positive note, our little bimodal brougham completed the approximately 1,700-mile round trip without incident, its battery pack evincing zero inclination to recreate a Hindenburgian conflagration along the way. The car also achieved a respectable combined fuel-economy average of 33 mpg, this despite not once being recharged during its time in our care.

But enough about that. Considerably more electrifying than our battery-assisted conveyance were the goings-on at Beech Bend Raceway in Bowling Green, Kentucky, site of the Fest since its inception in 2010. The wider economy

01 → Veteran Vette racer Danny Popp performs a max-g decel in his '72 coupe during the 3S Challenge. The car is powered by a de-stroked, 388-cube LS7 that revs to more than 8,000 and sounds like the end of the world. For the rest of the autocross and 3S competitors in Beech Bend, it was. **02** → We're going to have to devise a separate category of competition for Mark Carlyle. The Ohioan's twin-turbo '07 Z06 once again ran away from the rest of the Corvette field on the dragstrip, this time with a 7.35-second pass. Carlyle's best e.t. to date is a shocking 6.58, recorded at Maryland International Raceway. **03** → Cars needn't be originally LS powered to compete; any Gen III- or IV-powered vehicle will suffice. Tyler Powell's Mongoose Motorsports Grand Sport replica was a top contender in the autocross and 3S, thanks mostly to its 445rwhp LS2 engine and Powell's skill behind the wheel. **04** → Eric Lancaster set the new C6 ZR1 e.t. record during the Fest, recording a 9.12-second pass at an alarming 159 mph. In addition to its obvious quarter-mile cred, the street-driven Z boasts a polished supercharger and a luxe-enhanced cabin.





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[LIFESTYLE] MORE FOR LS



05 & 06 → You never know what you might happen upon at LS Fest. This red midyear looks innocuous enough...until you spot the turbo-fed LS1 jammed under the stock hood. Old-school slotted mags and skinny BFG radials complete the sleeper look. **07** → For those who prefer a slightly more relaxed form of competition, the Fest includes a car show open to—you guessed it—LS-powered cars and trucks. We've spotted everything from Fox-body Mustangs to vintage musclecars and even a Pontiac Fiero among the mix here. **08** → This sentiment appeared to be widespread in Bowling Green, even among the show-car owners. We saw more than a few of them shuttling back and forth between the grassy display area and the various performance events. **09** → With a captive audience of enthusiasts on hand, it only made sense for Holley to show off its extensive line of LS performance parts. As this display shows, the company now offers just about everything one might need to build, enhance, or even swap one of these modern performance mills into an earlier vehicle. **10 & 11** → Shawn Abner's silver '99 looked like any other C5—until we saw it launch like this. Upon further investigation, we learned that the 90K-mile coupe relies on an aftermarket cam; 90/10 shocks; a Yank 4,000-rpm-stall torque converter; a manual-spec differential; and nitrous oxide to log consistent mid-10-second passes.

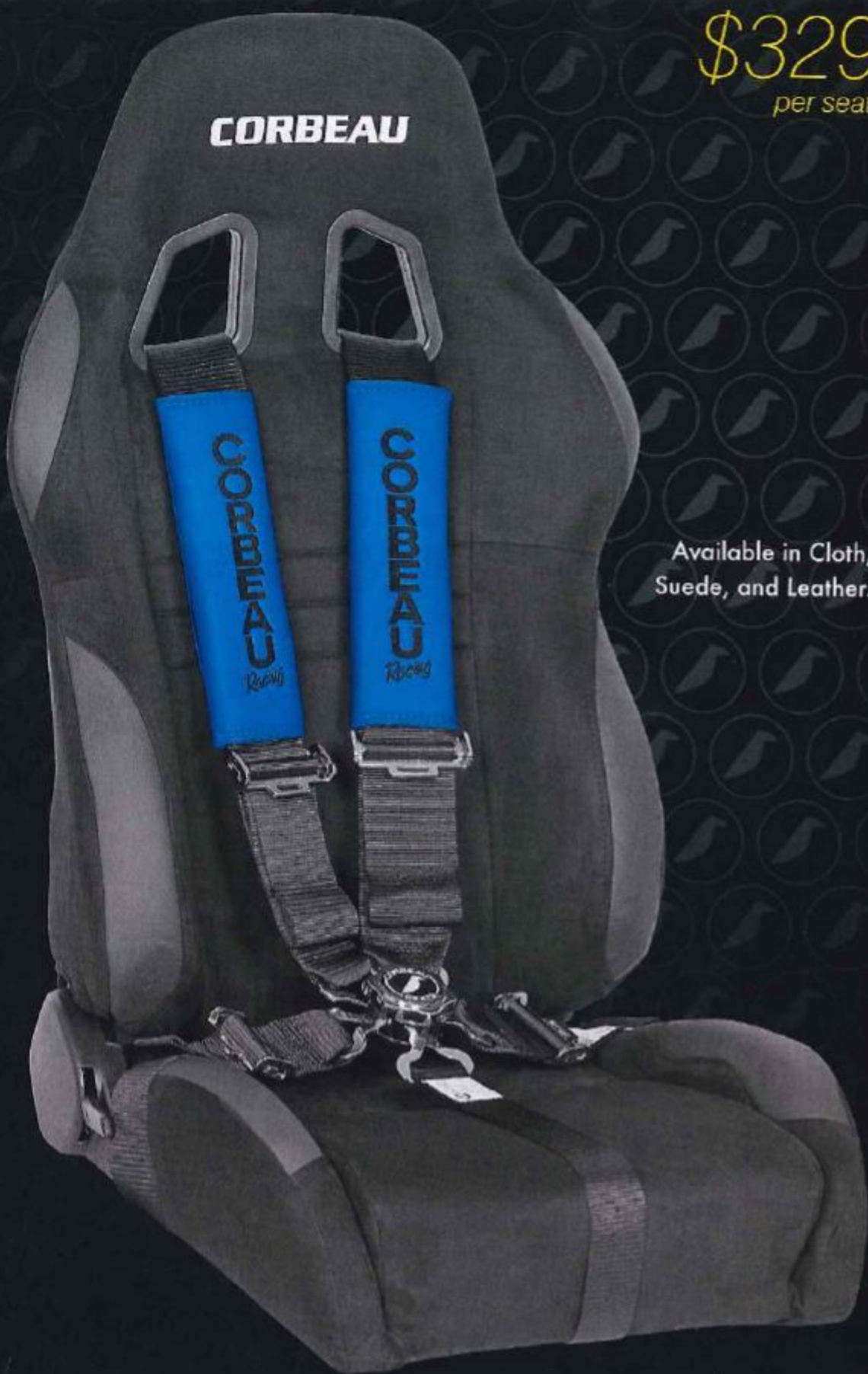
may still be drifting along in the doldrums, but based on the number and quality of the cars we saw in BG, the market for Gen III and IV engine hardware continues to charge full speed ahead.

In addition to the typical drag-racing and autocross events, this year's Fest featured a "3S Challenge" in place of the previous Speed Stop competition. In 3S—whose name reflects an emphasis on "speed, stopping, and steering"—competitors accelerated flat out across a large parking lot, negotiated a 180-degree hairpin, and charged back in the opposite direction before coming to a halt in a short "stopping box" delineated by cones. Over-shoot the box, and your run is DQ'd.

While our Volt's lack of an LS engine naturally rendered it ineligible for 3S and the rest of the Fest-ivities, we were content to enjoy the on-track action vicariously and from a safe remove, while documenting it for inclusion here. Corvette representation was once again strong, and with C7 production now in full swing, performance-tuned examples of Chevy's flagship two-seater should prove top contenders at the next Fest, to take place later this year.

Note to GM: This time, we're got dibs on a Stingray. LT Fest, anyone?

For more information on Holley LS Fest '14, visit www.holley.com/lstfest.



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[LIFESTYLE] MORE FOR LS

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AUTOCROSS	Danny Popp	Cincinnati, OH
3S CHALLENGE	Danny Popp	Cincinnati, OH

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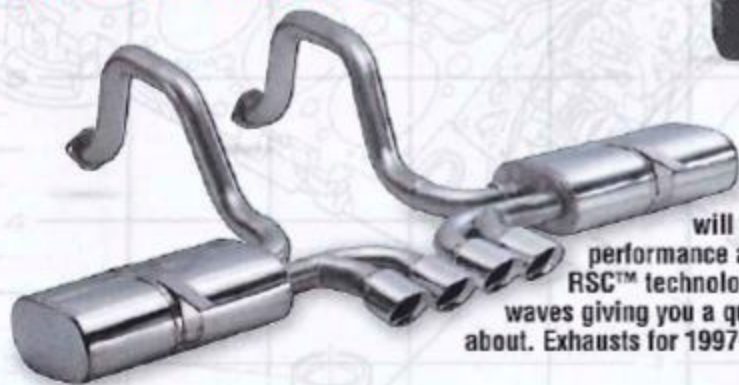
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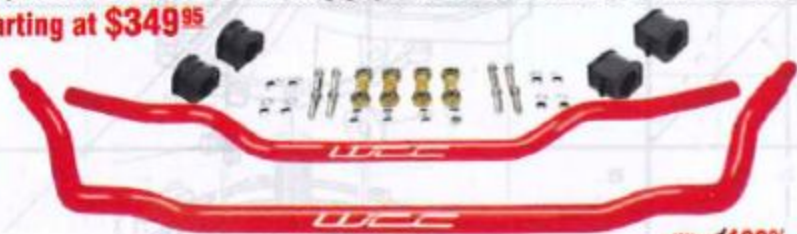
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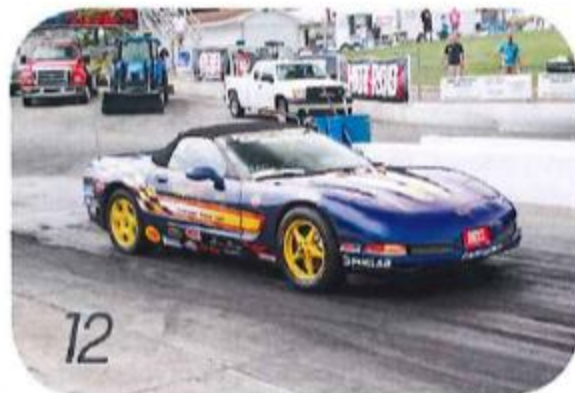
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12 → New Jersey's Rob Farley certainly gets around in his '98 Pace Car. In addition to being a regular entrant at LS Fest, Farley and the 11-second 'vert have numerous Corvette Challenge and LSX Shootout honors to their credit. **13** → Tire smoke was present in abundance during the autocross, and we saw at least one Corvette driver (though not this one) lose it completely in the cones. As the door decal on this C5 indicates, the Fest serves as a qualifying event for the Optima Ultimate Street Car Challenge, held each year after the SEMA show. **14** → If you've wondered what a 6-second turbocharged Z06 looks like under the skin, wonder no more.



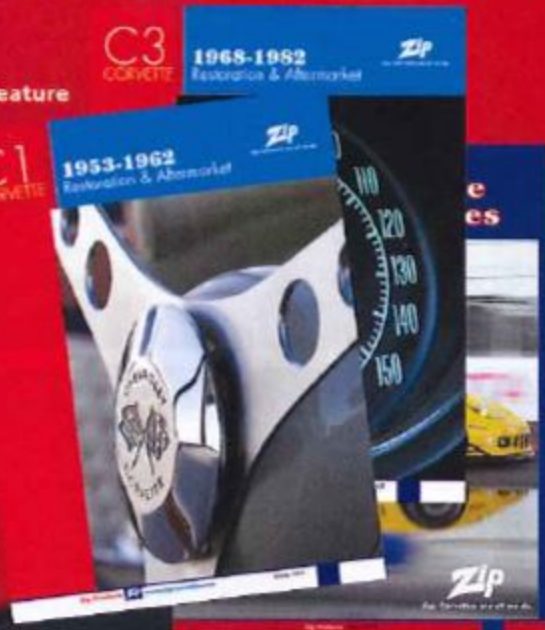
So confident are Carlyle and the rest of the IPS Motorsports team, that they show off the Sunset Orange '07, sans front end, between rounds. Of note: Unlike many other ultra-fast drag Corvettes, this one still runs an independent rear-suspension setup. **15** → One of the more impressive naturally aspirated Vettes in attendance was Danny Nicely's '00, which relies on a 418 to propel it through the quarter in the mid-8s. Nicely's C5 is another car with a batch of racing accomplishments under its proverbial belt. **16** → Popp's Vette suffered a drivetrain-part failure late in the day Saturday, though not before laying down what would stand as the quickest

AX pass of the event. After effecting repairs, he returned Sunday to edge out Powell's Grand Sport in 3S. Cool factoid: Popp's father bought this originally LT-1-powered car new, and it's been in the family ever since. **17** → Winner of the "Least Likely to Succeed at LS Fest" Award was our '13 Chevy Volt. While it clearly wasn't designed with speed in mind, the Volt would nevertheless make a fine around-town schlepper, especially for short commutes that allowed for regular recharging. **VETTE**



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