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# VETTETTES

# '12 Z06

**CENTENNIAL EDITION**



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CUSTOM-FIT A/C FOR  
MIDYEAR VETTES

**LS7 ALFRESCO**  
INSIDE THE 60TH  
ANNIVERSARY 427 'VERT

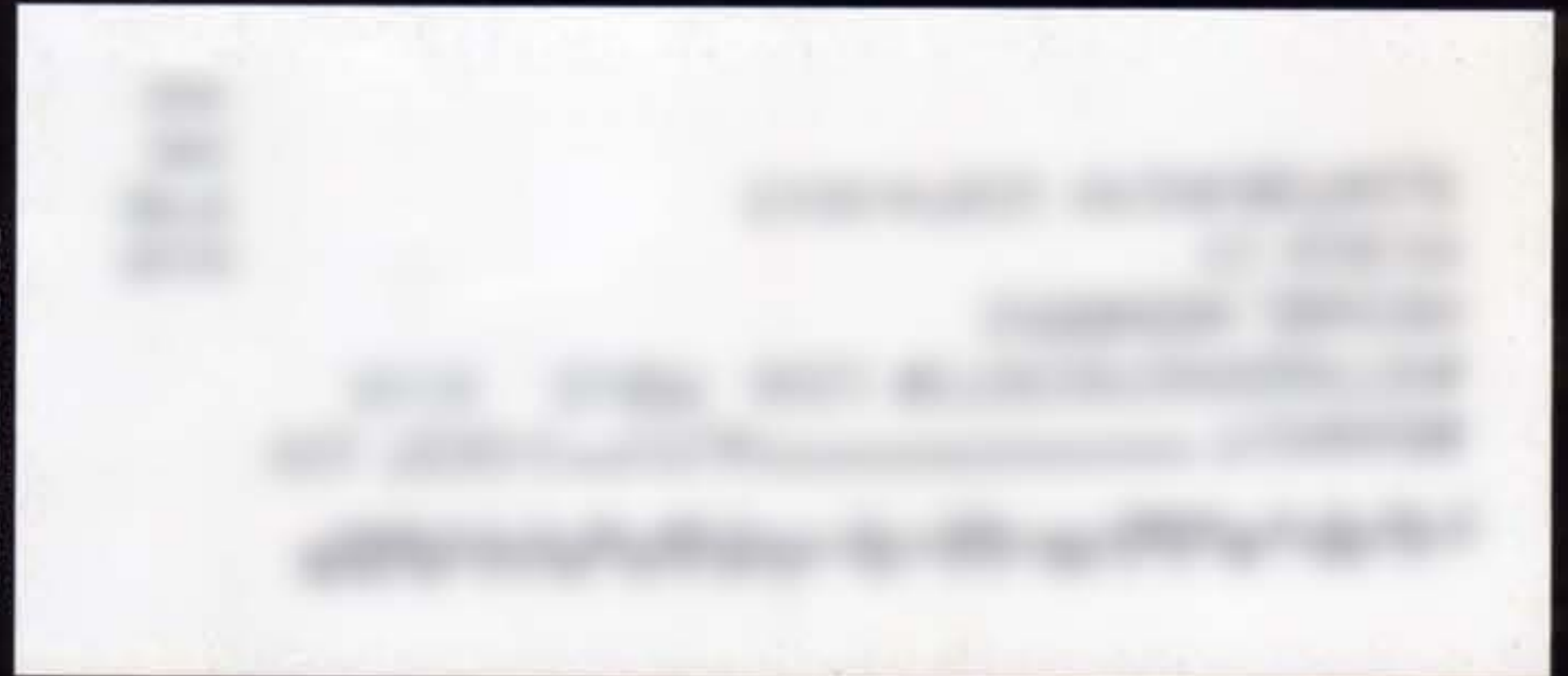
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EXPLOSIVE: **700HP**  
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(SPEED READING) ZERO TO HERO (IN 10.77 SECONDS)

# ZERO TO **HERO**

(IN 10.77 SECONDS)



**[SPEED READING]** ZERO TO HERO (IN 10.77 SECONDS)



02



03



04



**01** → Cleary's '67 is a genuine ZR1 killer on the strip, having run a best of 10.78 at 132 mph on hard street radials.

## JEFF CLEARY'S LS7 MIDYEAR WAS BUILT TO BE DRIVEN—HARD

**TOMMY LEE BYRD** WORDS | PHOTOS

**W**hen it comes to making horsepower, if you throw enough money at an engine, it's going to produce the numbers you want. If you look at any form of professional drag racing, the big-money teams are the consistent winners, but if you *really* pay attention, it isn't just about making power. Putting that power to the ground is an equally important part of the equation, and it's traditionally been a challenge for high-horsepower street cars. Jeff Cleary wanted a car that proved its performance on the race-track, instead of a dyno sheet. And with 600 hp at the rear wheels and elapsed times in the 10.70s on regular street tires, it's apparent he succeeded.

Cleary bought the car as a bare hull, so before the purists gripe about heavily modifying a '67 Sting Ray convertible, understand that he started with a mere skeleton and built it into the machine shown on these pages. He received lots of help along the way, but his vision was carried through the entire process, and it resulted in a wickedly fast midyear that retains excellent street manners. First on the list of contributors is Mike Stockdale, owner and operator of SR111 Motorsports, a shop dedicated to making old Corvettes handle as well as (or better than) new ones. SR111 built the chassis-and-suspension setup for Cleary's car, using a round-tube frame that features double main

rails and lots of additional supports and bracing.

For suspension, Cleary's car uses C5 Z06 front equipment, with the stock cast-aluminum control arms working in conjunction with a pair of adjustable QA1 coilover shocks. Braking power comes in the form of Baer Extreme binders, featuring massive slotted and drilled rotors along with a set of forged six-piston calipers. Bolted to those rotors are C6 Z06 wheels, measuring 18x9.5 inches at each corner and sporting Nitto 555 rubber, sized at 275/35R18 up front and 285/35R18 out back. The stance is just right, and the tire-and-wheel combination nicely complements the car's style.

Putting horsepower to the ground is left to the rear suspension, which features C4-spec equipment, including a stock-style Dana 44 center section that's been prepped for serious abuse by Mark Williams. Cryo'd C4 axle stubs send power to the aluminum halfshafts, while a host of tubular goodies from Vette Brakes and Products provide rigidity and adjustability. The short rearend ratio of 3.90:1 works well in combination with the highly modified T56 six-speed manual transmission. Inside the gearbox are a Viper-spec main shaft, carbon synchronizers and steel shifting forks, all assembled by Rockland Standard Gear in Sloatsburg, New York.

Neatly tucked under the '67 big-block hood is a very potent LS7 engine, built by John Walsh of J2 Race Engines in Chesapeake, Virginia. Cleary retained the stock rotating assembly and dry-sump oiling system, while adding a

custom Peterson Fluid Systems tank. The LS7 heads are mostly original, but J2 updated the valvetrain with a set of PSI springs and Katech titanium retainers. A Katech Torquer camshaft moves the valves in an efficient manner, thanks to its 220- and 244-degree duration at 0.050-inch lift, and 0.615- and 0.648-inch lift. Up top is a custom Marcella sheetmetal intake manifold, which added a considerable amount of power over the stock composite piece. A steady flow of 93-octane pump gas comes from a Rock Valley stainless-steel tank, which features an in-tank Walbro pump.

The stock fuel injectors get the job done, as does the original LS7 ignition system, but it was up to Ed Hutchings to tune the engine to its maximum capability on a chassis dyno. The results of his efforts were 596 hp and 522 lb-ft of torque at the rear wheels, meaning Cleary's LS7 is making more than 700 hp at the flywheel—with no power adder! Incredibly, this potent combination is good for as much as 27 mpg on the highway, though Cleary admits the figure is dependent on the amount of throttle input provided. At any speed, the '67 has a surprisingly mellow exhaust note, even though it features a set of stainless-steel headers with equal-length 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch primaries. These lead to a length of 3-inch piping capped with stainless Flowmaster 50 Series mufflers. The LS7 stays cool with a DeWitts custom aluminum radiator fitted with dual Spal electric fans.

Cleary's Corvette definitely makes massive power and handles like a new Vette, but let's not forget about the flawless aesthetics found both inside and out. The car started with very little of the body intact, so K&L Enterprises in Martinsburg, West Virginia, had its hands full. The crew at K&L installed the Sermersheim jig-assembled nose and fabricated a radiator support to make room for the carbon-fiber intake ductwork. They also designed and built a new hood-hinge system, so the hood would lift up and out, instead of down and inside the engine bay. From there, it was a matter of straightening and aligning the body panels in preparation for a coating of black paint with a titanium stinger stripe. After the Dupont basecoat/clearcoat materials were allowed to cure, the guys at K&L sanded and buffed the fresh finish to perfection.

Inside is a stylish interior by David Wells Custom Upholstery, using C5 sport seats and stock-type door panels. The dash is mostly OEM by design, but the original gauges have been tossed in favor of Auto Meter Pro-Comp units, which are the perfect size for the C2 dash insert. Auxiliary gauges and warning

## '67 CONVERTIBLE

<b>OWNER</b>	Jeff Cleary; Chesapeake, VA
<b>BLOCK</b>	Stock aluminum
<b>DISPLACEMENT</b>	427 ci
<b>COMPRESSION RATIO</b>	11.0:1
<b>HEADS</b>	Stock with PSI valve-springs
<b>VALVES</b>	Stock 2.200 titanium/1.610 sodium filled
<b>CAMSHAFT</b>	Katech Torquer
<b>ROCKER ARMS</b>	Stock 1.8 ratio
<b>PISTONS</b>	Stock hypereutectic aluminum
<b>CRANKSHAFT</b>	Stock forged steel
<b>RODS</b>	Stock forged titanium
<b>INTAKE MANIFOLD</b>	Custom Marcella sheetmetal
<b>FUEL PUMP</b>	Walbro in-tank
<b>IGNITION</b>	Stock coil-on-plug
<b>EXHAUST SYSTEM</b>	Stainless 1½-in headers with 3-in piping and Flowmaster mufflers
<b>TRANSMISSION</b>	Rockland Standard Gear T56
<b>CLUTCH</b>	Exedy Twin Disc
<b>DRIVESHAFT</b>	Denny's 3-in chrome-moly
<b>FRONT SUSPENSION</b>	C5 with QA1 coilovers
<b>REAR SUSPENSION</b>	C4 with VBP adjustable links
<b>REAR END</b>	Dana 44 with 3.90 gears
<b>FRONT BRAKES</b>	Baer Extreme 6s
<b>REAR BRAKES</b>	Baer Extreme 6s
<b>WHEELS</b>	C6 Z06, 18x9.5 front and rear
<b>FRONT TIRES</b>	Nitto 555, 275/35R18
<b>REAR TIRES</b>	Nitto 555, 285/35R18
<b>FUEL OCTANE</b>	93
<b>WEIGHT</b>	3,060 lbs

**02** → We spotted the car at the 2011 Holley LS Fest, where it ripped up the track at historic Beech Bend Raceway Park. No, those numbers on the windows aren't just for show. **03** → J2 Race Engines retained many of the LS7's original components, as it's a fairly strong platform to begin with. With a little head work, a Katech cam, and a sheetmetal Marcella intake, the engine now cranks out nearly 600 hp at the rear wheels. **04** → SRIII Motorsports tubular chassis incorporates VBP adjustable links and a C4-spec Dana 44 diff. QA1 coilovers reside at each corner. **05** → The car is equally at home in the autocross, where its handling prowess rivals that of a modern Corvette. **06** → With two-tone C5 buckets, a steering wheel from a C3, and Auto Meter gauges, the interior exhibits a whole new take on the classic midyear look. Hurst shifter (topped with a C6 knob) stirs a Rockland Standard Gear T56 trans.

lights reside in the center of the dash, where the heater controls and radio once lived. The controls for the Vintage Air A/C and stereo system are hidden from plain sight, but it's still easy for Cleary to adjust the creature comforts to his liking.

Overall, the car doesn't skimp in any aspect; it simply does everything well. It handles corners with ease, it blazes a trail down the quarter-mile, and it offers plenty of comfort. So far, Cleary has been very successful on the dragstrip, posting a best of 10.77 seconds at 132 mph on hard street radials at the 2011 Holley LS Fest, held in Bowling Green, Kentucky. That's where we met Cleary, and that's where he put his flawlessly assembled Corvette to the test in a number of activities. Perhaps not surprisingly, it handled each task with aplomb and lived through all the abuse. Great looks and big-time power with performance to back it up—what more could a Corvette lover ask for? **VETTE**

