

Drivers Can Choose Seat in 2014 Corvette

The difference between the feeling of an athlete's compression apparel and the comfort of a well-tailored suit – that's basically the difference between a standard GT seat and the Competition Sport seat offered in the 2014 Chevrolet Corvette, said GM spokesman Monte Doran.

"Better seats topped our list for interior improvements, and we knew offering just one style would not cut it," said Tadge Juechter, Corvette chief engineer. "Some Corvette drivers use the car for commutes, others as a grand tourer, and some drive it competitively. With two supportive seat options to choose from, drivers can pick the style that best suits their driving habits."

Digital pressure-mapping – which is technology used to scan people's backsides when seated – played a pivotal role in the development of the Corvette's new Competition Sport seat, available as an option in December, Doran said. Different seats last were offered in Corvette's fourth generation – 1984-1996.

For the Competition Sport seat, the Corvette team took pressure-mapping technology to the test track to accurately measure driver bottom and back pressures during high-velocity maneuvers, Doran said. On most vehicle development programs, pressure-mapping is only used for static impressions.

The technology involves taking a digital snapshot of a person's back and rear-end pressure distribution over the seat surface, creating a map with more than

4,600 data points per second, Doran said. The information is transferred to a computer that generates graphics illustrating how occupants are supported by the seat.

The new Corvette also was the first Chevrolet to use a new process for judging seat performance in addition to comfort, based on the subjective evaluations of test drivers of varying sizes, from large males to petite females, Doran said.

For the new seats, the Corvette team used the advanced materials, including an all-new lightweight cast magnesium frame for greater strength, Doran said. The frame's rigidity and the seat's hard back panel contribute to an enhanced feeling of support during performance driving.

The Sport seat was track-tested and modified to provide the

kind of bolster support needed for high-velocity maneuvers, Doran said. The development team hand-modeled extreme bolsters out of duct tape and foam until they were satisfied with the seat's track performance.

Back bolsters are approximately 35 percent deeper for more lateral support when making hairpin turns, Doran said. The Corvette team also re-engineered the seat's side airbag, moving it outside of the seat bolster to an attached but separate pod so that the seat could be slimmer, stiffer and more supportive.

While improving seat performance was a paramount concern, the team also boosted seat comfort by introducing Stingray's first dual heating and cooling ventilation system for seats. The new engineering overcame packaging challenges



Competition Sport seat, left, and standard GT seat for new Corvette.

in the process, Doran said. "While most Corvette drivers will find the GT seat perfectly comfortable and supportive, those who go to a track will appreciate the extra support offered by the Sport seat," said

Ryan Vaughan, design manager, Performance Car Interiors.

"They're both a testament to the enormous amount of work that went into them. These are the best seats Corvette has ever had."

Ford is Floating New Boat Engine Partnership

Ford Motor Company will re-enter the marine market in an agreement with Indmar Marine Engines, the world's largest privately held manufacturer of gasoline inboard marine engines, said company spokesman William Mattiace.

Ford and Indmar Marine Engines made the announcement at the recent Specialty Equipment Market Association premier event – the 2013 SEMA show.

"Ford is pleased to be working with Indmar Marine as it plans to re-enter the marine market," said Jamy Hall, president and CEO for Ford Component Sales.

"Ford has a long history of bringing power to the marine industry and views this effort as a strategic opportunity for the company."

Ford's 6.2-liter V8 engine, which is offered in F-150 SVT Raptor and F-Series Super Duty trucks, should give watersport enthusiasts the power and torque necessary to meet the increased workload demanded of today's watercraft, allowing them to go further with Ford out on the water, Mattiace said.

Indmar Marine Engines will offer three models of varying horsepower and torque that will have plenty of power to pull the most avid water skiers and wake boarders.

Indmar Marine Engines has been in business for 43 years and operates multiple advanced manufacturing facilities in the United States, with distribution centers in Tennessee and California.

"The 6.2-liter engine was specifically built for a truck, providing the torque needed to tow heavy weight – which is exactly what today's high-performance watercraft need," said Chuck Rowe, president of Indmar Marine Engines.

"Our sport has evolved, and with heavier boats, bigger wakes and larger ballast and passenger capacity, the demand on the engine is even greater."

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