



# PROJECT: King Ray

BY ANDY BOLIG

OUR NEXT PROJECT CORVETTE GOES UNDER THE KNIFE

**Fresh off the heels of a successful Corvettes at Carlisle show, where we introduced P-57 to Corvettedom, there was only one thing to do – start preparing for next year!**

This year, we've jumped a generation, and a mid-year will be the object of our affection for the next few months. Succumbing to the new national pastime, we hit the Internet, where a search on eBay gave up exactly what we were looking for – a complete 1967 Corvette convertible that we could use as a starting point. The bids were set, the auction was won and the only thing left to do was handle the shipping and name the project. Of course, the emphasis will be on making the car driveable and enjoyable while not straying too far from the styling and beauty that make these cars such classics. When finished, King Ray will still be an

easily recognizable dish, but with a few modern seasonings added in for a little additional flavor.

King Ray started life as a 300-hp, Powerglide-equipped '67 Corvette. It had some desirable add-ons, like factory A/C and a drop-top. Also, the car was complete. We even took King Ray for a spin around the block before we took him apart. It was a nice driver, but the two-speed transmission and only a half-stable full of horses wasn't exactly what we were going for, so the wrenches started flying. For that, the car went to Jerry's Vette Service in Spring Hill, Florida. Jerry makes a habit of churning out NCRS Top Flight-winning Corvettes. He offered that King

Ray is a little off the beaten path of his usual fare, but he was up to the task. As usual, we'll be covering King Ray as he undergoes this transformation in the pages of *Corvette Enthusiast*, and we're planning on having him at the 2006 Corvettes at Carlisle show in August.

We've got some interesting things planned for King Ray (just wait till you see what engine we're putting in him) and while we're doing the entire car, there will be pieces and ideas that you might consider picking up for your personal ride. When it's all said and done, King Ray will be an awesome ride – but we have to get there first, and that means we've got to get started.



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9 The frame went to Van Steel in Clearwater, Florida. Once dipped, cleaned and powder coated, Van Steel will rebuild the chassis.

10 Van Steel will modify the transmission cross member into a removable style like the sharks had later on.

11 You want to do any modification before you powder coat the frame. Here, Van Steel has already cut out the original member and inserted a factory bolt-in style. They take exhaustive measurements to ensure that the new unit is in the same place as the original. This will make transmission removal or installation MUCH easier, especially if you use a transmission other than stock.

12 Once the frame mods were completed, it was hauled over to DPS Powdercoating in Clearwater. They will thoroughly clean the frame and any pieces going to be powder coated before spraying on the material.

## We're focused on performance.

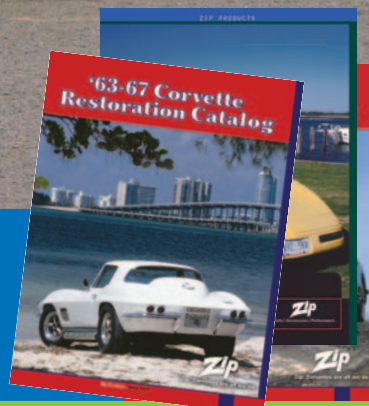
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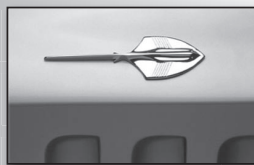


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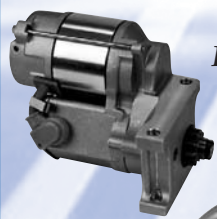


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6 It was obvious that the front end had been replaced, and whoever did it created his own bonding seams. You'll notice the line just above the gills where they cut it to run to the original body seam and retain the original gill section.

7 Many of the mid-year's floorboards sag. This metal brace is a major contributor to that situation. It rivets to the rear compartment of the floor and serves as a structural unit for the floor and the rear door jambs. The rivets pull through or rust out and the floor starts to sag. We'll repair that before the body gets painted.

8 Underneath the body are some areas that must be addressed. These globs appear to be an attempt to clear up some cracking in the body. They will be addressed.



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1 With a few years on the odometer, the term King Ray doesn't quite roll off the tongue, but just wait.

2 Under the hood isn't awe inspiring yet, either, but this car is much more complete than the other cars we've done. Items like the A/C unit will be almost priceless when it's time to install them again. Don't let the finned valve covers fool you; only 300 horses ever resided under this small-block hood,

and some of them are already out to pasture.

3 The PRNDL stick has got to go. We'll be rebuilding the car the way WE want it, not the way someone else wanted it almost 40 years ago. But most of the modifications that we do to the car will be unobtrusive so we could theoretically put the car back to original if we desired. If 300-hp, Powerglide-tranny cars ever start breaking the bank.

4 Within a week of receiving the car, Jerry's Vette Service had already separated the body from the chassis and it was sent to J&M Corvette Auto Body for evaluation.

5 With the interior removed, we could easily see that there was minimal rusting for a car of this age, considering that it was originally from the North.



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13 The frame was then run into the oven and sprayed black. The ovens heat up to 400 degrees and literally bake the colored material onto the frames. You can obtain different finishes by handling the process differently. We opted for an original-style finish as compared to a glossy finish.



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14 The oven at DPS is 30'x 12'x 12' so it can accommodate a Corvette frame quite nicely. Several of them, actually. Once they are done, they'll be rolled out of the oven and allowed to cool with their new finish gleaming in the sun. Much better than the rusty, undercoated parts we started with, and a perfect starting point for King Ray. ■

## SOURCES:

**JERRY'S VETTE SERVICE**  
(352) 666-9966

**VAN STEEL INC.**  
(727) 561-9199  
www.vansteel.com

**DPS POWDERCOATING**  
(727) 573-2797

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