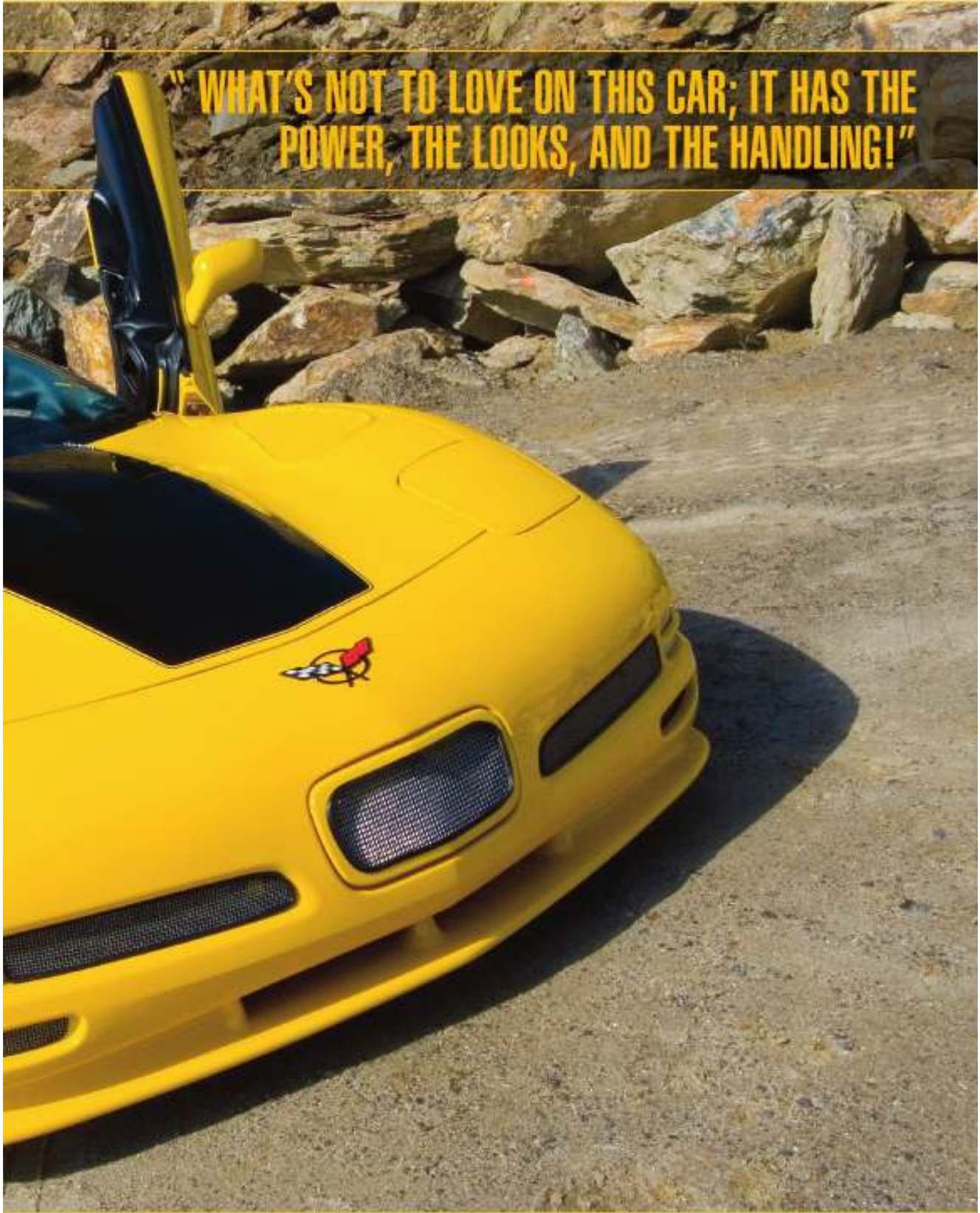


BY KEN WOODCOCK ■ PHOTOS JOHN MACHAGUEIRO

# SHE STARTED IT!

WHEN IT COMES TO MODS, A LITTLE NUDGE IS ALL WE NEED.





**IN 2004, I PURCHASED A BEAUTIFUL, LOW MILEAGE, MILLENNIUM YELLOW CORVETTE CONVERTIBLE. I'VE HAD A LOVE AFFAIR WITH CORVETTES FOR ALMOST 40 YEARS, STARTING WITH A '69 427. BUT, I HONESTLY HAVE TO SAY, I JUST CAN'T SEEM TO LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE. WITH THE PURCHASE OF MY YELLOW 'VERT, I WAS BOUND AND DETERMINED TO KEEP THIS ONE STOCK. I MEAN REALLY - WHAT'S NOT TO LOVE ON THIS CAR; IT HAS THE POWER, THE LOOKS, AND THE HANDLING!**

After bringing my baby home, I proudly showed it off to my wife. Much to my surprise, her comment was, "Well, it's nice, but you know it just doesn't sound like a 'Vette."

That was five years ago, and like a kid in a candy store paging through countless Corvette magazines, catalogs, websites and a trip to Carlisle each year, my "stock" Corvette transformed into a radical custom that has won well over 100 awards and countless hours of enjoyment.

The journey into "mod madness," now with the full support of my wife Jo and two children, Chris and Kim, started off innocently enough. A nice set of B&B bullets and a Vararam intake began the modifications. The stock wheels were replaced with a set of C5 motorsport wheels and C5 Z06 calipers, and then

a set of red fuel rails along with some chrome goodies completed the look for year one. After a full wish list of options and a trip to that Corvette oasis called Carlisle, my head was full of new ideas. Over the winter, my now slightly-modded C5 was in need of a few more ponies, so it was off to SLP with a trunk full of performance goodies. The purchase of their ZL7 package with 1.85 rockers, 85mm MAF sensor, cold air intake, Diablo II programmer and a set of long tube headers really made the Corvette growl. The wife no longer complained about how quiet the car sounded, and year two was complete. Well, I guess enough is never enough, so the third year saw a trip to East Coast Supercharging in Cream Ridge, New Jersey, where Chris and the boys put in a set of 4.10s and a case-hardened output shaft. A run on their dyno showed an impressive 362.5hp at the wheels or about 427hp at the crank.

The car sounded great, but

it now needed some eye candy to compete in the shows. Enter Holcomb Auto Body, of West Grove, Pennsylvania, who installed a set of LSD vertical doors, Caravaggio spoiler, ACI front splitter, ACP carbon fiber hood and the eye-catching black stripes. The car was really starting to stand out, but again, when the mod fever bug takes hold, enough is never enough. The engine bay needed a fresh infusion of ideas, so off to Autobuffs in Southhampton, New Jersey. There, Noel Mercado

**WELL, I GUESS ENOUGH IS NEVER ENOUGH, SO THE THIRD YEAR SAW A TRIP TO EAST COAST SUPERCHARGING**







and I went over ideas for the fuel rail covers and fender covers. Airbrushed over true carbon fiber, is a checkered flag theme that really stands out. This, along with some chrome "jewelry" from Creative Engine Covers finished off the custom look. Items that made a difference include their brake booster cover, master cylinder cover, power steering cover, cowl insert, alternator bracket, dipstick handle and chrome strikers for the hood and trunk. The car was really beginning to win the awards, but I wanted that one final high-performance option that really takes the Corvette into the big leagues, and that was a blower. In year four, ECS was again called

to the task. The install, along with custom chrome tubing, was flawless. With all that power on the dyno, it bumped performance up to 543.4hp at the wheels or around 640hp at the crank. Now, a new host of problems surfaced – how to get all the performance to hook up and stop.

The Textrallia dual-friction clutch helped to keep things together, and Scott Lewis flares helped to put some serious rubber to the rear. This, along with C6 Z06 brakes, helped to slow things down. Now I had a well-balanced functional machine that was not just all show and no go. My final (honest) year five mod was the interior. The mostly stock interior had a

major makeover with a full leather interior from Vette Essentials. This included leather seats, arm rests, pull handles, console, shift and boots and a custom-stitched shift ball. The interior was further enhanced with a full carbon fiber trim set from TKO. The chrome fire extinguisher between the seats was the final touch.

It's great to sit back and look at a project that has been a labor of love, one that a guy can really be proud of. I never would have guessed a simple phrase from my wife about the sound of the engine could have taken me down that path, but I guess in life, you never know where the journey is going to take you. ■

