

## Chevrolet's Experimental V8 Corvair

Posted on May 13, 2022 by MCG (Motor City Garage)

In the 1960s, a Corvair with a V8 engine swap was a dream combination for car enthusiasts. At one point even the factory got into the act with this nifty 1965 prototype.



a four-barrel carb (the 250 hp version we presume, but we don't know that). As we can see in the photos, it was a tight squeeze but they got it all into the original flat six location, partly with the help of a fiberglass deck lid with a generous clearance blister.

Built in late 1964 on a new 1965 Corvair Sport Coupe platform, Chevrolet's prototype departed from the other Chevy/V8 swaps of the day in one obvious way. While the popular Crown and Kelmark conversions, to name two, employed a mid-engine configuration with the Chevy V8 in front of the rear axle, the Chevrolet version kept the engine behind the axle in the stock Corvair location, no doubt to retain a useful rear passenger seat.



The rear quarter were extended 6". A pair of radiators, one in each louverized rear quarter panel, handled the cooling duties.



The transaxle (above) was a completely novel setup with no production Corvair parts. A Muncie four-speed gear-box was coupled to a Corvette IRS center section, with an elevated intermediate shaft that raised the engine in the chassis to provide oil pan clearance. While they're not shown here, the axle shafts were evidently Corvette pieces modified to fit the Cor-

vair.

Chevrolet R&D engineer Frank Winchell reportedly directed the installation, which featured a 327 CID small block V8 with



## TUCSON CORVAIR ASSOCIATION

Established 1975

The **Corvairsation** is a quarterly publication of the Tucson Corvair Association, which is dedicated to the preservation of the Corvair model of the Chevrolet Motor Division of General Motors. The Tucson Corvair Association is a chartered member of the Corvair Society of America (CORSA) as Chapter 357.

**Membership dues** are \$25 per year for individuals. Make checks payable to the Tucson Corvair Association and mail to the TCA Treasurer.

**Change of Address:** Report any change of address or phone number to the Membership Chair or email changes to [tucsoncorvairs@yahoo.com](mailto:tucsoncorvairs@yahoo.com)

**CORSA membership** dues are \$45 per year (\$90 for 26 months) and include a subscription to the CORSA Communiqué, a monthly publication. Rates are \$37 per year and \$74 for 26 months for a "virtual" membership. CORSA memberships is not required for membership in the Tucson Corvair Association, but is highly recommended. See any TCA officer for more information.

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# TCA 2022 Events at a Glance

**4th Tues of  
each month**

**Monthly Meetings:** 7:00pm, Franklin Auto Museum, 1405 E Kleindale Tucson, Arizona

**Sat, Jul 23  
2022**

**TCA Lunch Outing.** Rudy's BBQ, 2130 E. Ajo Way near Kino Sports Park

**Jul 12-16,  
2022**

**CORSA International Convention,** Atlanta, Georgia. See CORSA website

**Sat, Oct 15  
2022**

**Tucson Classic Car Show,** The Gregory School Campus, 3231 N Craycroft, Tucson

**Oct 28-30  
2022**

**Great Western Fan Belt Toss & Swap Meet,** Palm Spring, California

**Sat, Nov 5  
2022**

**Cops and Rodders Car Show**

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## Experiment V8 Corvair

*continued from page 1*

vair trailing arm system.

The cockpit, below, featured elaborate bolsters on both sides of the driver's seat, no doubt to aid in tearing around the Milford Proving Ground at maximum speed. With 500+ lbs of all-iron Chevy V8 hung out over the rear axle, questions about the prototype's weight distribution and handling are inevitable, but it was probably fun in any event. The prototype was presented to Chevrolet general manager Bunkie Knudsen for evaluation but he gave the project a thumbs down—which may be no reflection at all on the vehicle or its handling. By the spring of 1965, the car that became the Chevrolet Camaro was on track for production.—*Detail photos courtesy of Corsa Communiqué Nov/Dec 2017.*



# Corvair Sebring Spyder XP-737 Concept, 1961

Car and Driver November 1961



The XP-737 Sebring Spyder roadster was built in three basic versions by GM Styling, all based on the same car, and all with a wheelbase shortened 15" from the stock 108". This is the second version, which is the first one shown to the public. It debuted at the Chicago Auto Show on February 18, 1961.

Its engine was boosted by a Paxton supercharger, like the unit still on the Super Spyder. The rear wheels were very noticeably de-cambered since the car didn't have to cope with rear passenger weight. Dayton wire wheels were used on it and other Corvair show cars, before the stock Corvair Kelsey-Hayes wheels came about in 1962.

The Sebring Spyder bumperettes inspired Cal Custom to produce similar aftermarket bumper kits, which are very rare today. The instrument cluster was the prototype for the production Spyder unit. And the entire rear deck was one fiberglass piece that hinged directly behind the seats. This was later replaced by a stock deck lid and a rear-hinged tonneau that hid a real folding top, in the car's last version.

GM Styling Archives state that the Sebring Spyder was scrapped in 1966, but one never really knows for sure... so far it hasn't surfaced!



# Great Breakfast

On Saturday morning, June 11, twelve fearless TCA members joined together for breakfast at the Old Time Kafe on west Price Road. It was a delightful time with plenty of time for meaningful (mostly) conversation and good food!



# Tony's got a "new" car!!

Tony Warren has been member of the Club for quite a while now and has been longing to actually be a Corvair owner. Well, it finally happened. He got his hands on a beautifully *almost* totally restored 1961 Lakewood! He's in the process of making a few change things to make even more beautiful and most of us are hoping that he doesn't decided to get rid of the stunning swan hood ornament.



# A Proper Motorcycle



.....or is it a 3-wheeled car??

