

THE VOICE OF THE CORVETTE ENTHUSIAST

# WHEELS

© 02121

QUARTERLY

Fall 1977 \$1.95

GROUND-UP SPLIT-WINDOW FUELIE RESTORATION

'67 STING RAY PROJECT

THOSE FANTASTIC  
GRAND SPORTS!

RAT MOTOR  
EVOLUTION

'78  
VETTE!



# VETTE

QUARTERLY THE VOICE OF THE CORVETTE ENTHUSIAST

Fall 1977

Volume 2  
Number 2

EDITOR  
**MARTYN L. SCHORR**

ART DIRECTOR  
**MINO BUSI**

ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
**S. ROSINGER**

ASSISTANT ART DIRECTORS  
**BILL HILL**  
**WILSON WONG**

TECHNICAL EDITOR  
**ROGER HUNTINGTON**

HUMOR EDITOR  
**FRED MACKERODT**

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR  
**JOE OLDHAM**

ADVERTISING PROMOTION  
**BILL BALGLEY**

PRODUCTION  
**BOB SMREK**

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS  
**FRAN DALVA**  
**MYRA ROSENBERG**

TYPOGRAPHIC SUPERVISOR  
**STANLEY R. GOLDNER**

CIRCULATION  
**JOE MUCCIGROSSO**

POPULAR  
PUBLICATIONS, INC.

PUBLISHER  
**HARRY EGNER**

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER  
**BILL BALGLEY**

CORPORATE  
ADVERTISING  
DIRECTOR  
**ALEX BLANCHET**

CONTROLLER  
**STUART DUBOW**

ADVERTISING  
REPRESENTATIVES

EAST COAST:  
**STEVEN GELLER**  
**S GRANT MOSKOWITZ**  
390 MADISON AVENUE  
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017  
212-686-8842

DETROIT:  
**ROBERT D. BURTON**  
918 FISHER BLDG.,  
SUITE 918  
DETROIT, MICH. 48202  
313-871-7888

MID ATLANTIC:  
**BILL O'BRIEN**  
NEW YORK, NEW JERSEY  
420 LEXINGTON AVE.  
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017  
(212) 687-1234

MID WEST:  
**EDWARD LYNCH**  
333 N. MICHIGAN AVE.  
CHICAGO, ILL 60601  
(312) 372-5886

SOUTH:  
**RAY RICKLES**  
P.O. BOX 2008  
MIAMI BEACH, FLA 33140  
(305) 532-7301

WEST:  
**JACK CADDY ASSOCIATES**  
5900 WILSHIRE BLVD.  
LOS ANGELES, CALIF 90006  
(213) 534-1126



## NOSTALGIA

THE GRAND SPORT MYSTIQUE .....	23
THE GLASS MENAGERIE .....	30
THEY ALMOST BLEW IT (1958) .....	45



## STREET PERFORMANCE

LESS IS MORE .....	34
RAT POWER RULES .....	37
TILT COUPE .....	49
LITTLE THINGS THAT COUNT .....	68



## COMPETITION

A BLAST FROM THE PAST .....	19
GROUND'S FOR DIVORCE .....	54
THE JUNE SPRINTS .....	60



## SPECIAL FEATURES

PROJECT '67 .....	11
ASK THE MAN .....	16
WHO OWNS FIVE .....	27
THE LYONS .....	42
(1963) MANIFESTO .....	58
SMOKEY'S .....	
STINGRAY .....	
RED ALERT .....	

## COLUMNS

VIEW FROM THE TOP .....	5
VETTE TECH .....	6
VETTE COMMENTARY .....	8

**COVER:** Who says you have to be related to John Greenwood and spend megabucks to build a winning road racer? Not Lou D'Amico, Director of Operations at Aero Tec Labs, and builder/driver of the budget-built A/Production L-88 Stingray on our cover. Using lots of factory parts and road racing savvy, Lou has become the club racer to beat on the East Coast. And, would you believe, he just took it out of mothballs where it's been sitting for a couple of years! Kodachrome by Martyn L. Schorr.

VETTE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE is published quarterly by Popular Publications, Inc., at 420 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017. Harry Egner, Publisher. Copyright © 1977 by Popular Publications, Inc. Copyright under Universal International and Pan-American Copyright Convention. All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction in whole or part, in any form. Publisher can assume no responsibility for unsolicited letters, manuscripts, art work and/or photographs. Price: \$1.95 a copy.

"Vette" is used with the permission of the General Motors Corporation through a licensing agreement. There is no affiliation between Popular Publications and the General Motors Corporation.

Old race cars don't die,  
they just keep on winning!

BY TONY VENTURI

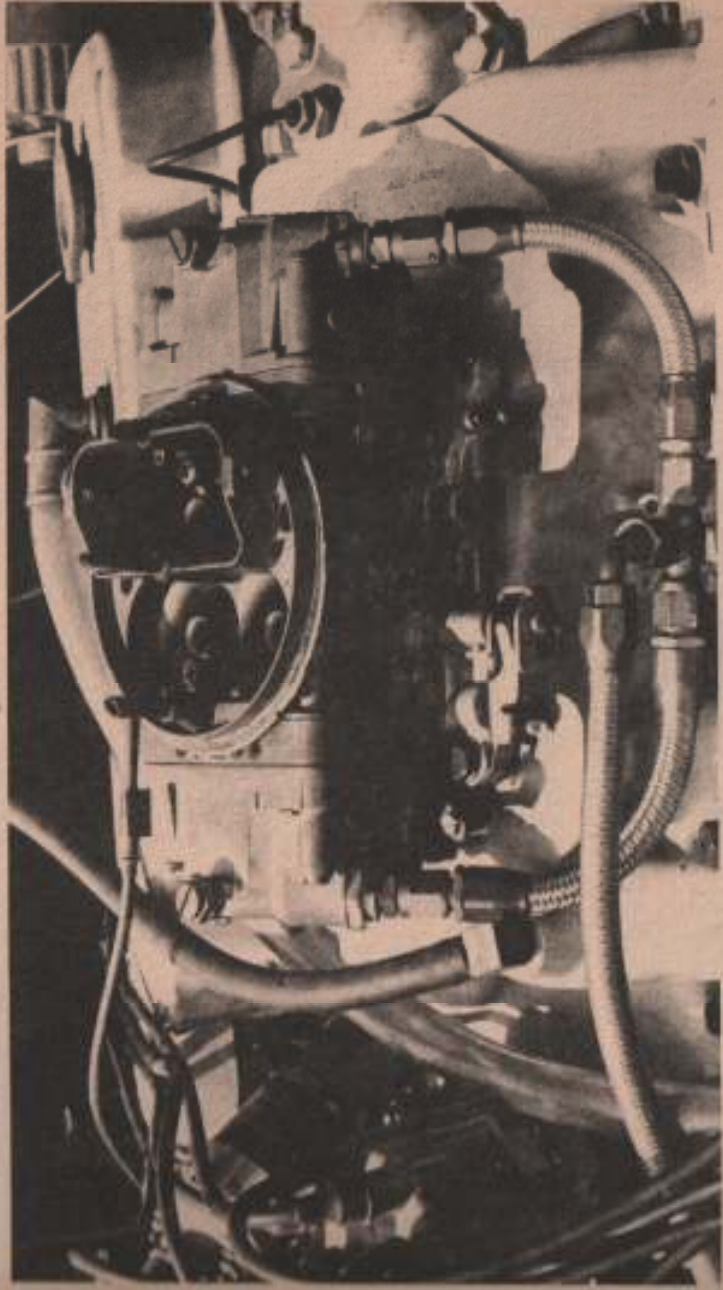
**C**AN A HOME-BREWED road race car built for the 1972 IMSA Camel GT circuit still be competitive in 1977? Normally the answer to this question would be an emphatic NO. Even if John Greenwood built the car the answer would still be no. However, Lou D'Amico, Director of Operations at Aero Tech Labs recently took his red and white '69 Corvette road racer out of mothballs and proceeded to blow a lot of minds by placing First at Pocono and Second at Bridgehampton. How's that for openers?

Back in 1971 Lou and his partner Tom Felton bought a gutted-out '69 Stingray roadster at auction with hopes of converting it into a competitive road racer. Lou and Tom ran Alto Automotive in Valley Stream,

## A BLAST FROM THE PAST

Immaculate '69 A-Production Stingray has been updated to '73 specs via the addition of Eckler body parts. Power comes from an open-chamber 427 L-88 engine with 11.5 pistons, Crower cam and an open-plenum-chamber manifold.





Lou competed in 1974-'75 with the hardtop in place. Today, it's run as a roadster. A Flame-Out extinguisher system is secured to the roll cage. An electric pump, below, works with a radiator to cool the differential.

Topping off the L-88 mill is an 850-cfm Holley double pumper. Plate under carb mates to fresh air induction hood. Steel bushings and Heim ball bearing fittings are used throughout. Factory J-55 brakes have fresh air cooling hoses, beveled hats, and short pistons with one-inch insulators. Front alloy ducts aid cooling and streamlining.





Bringing up the rear of this 2900-pound road racer is a one-piece model Eckler rear fitted with ZL-1 fender flares and a dry-break coupler for the ATL fuel cell.

New York, a shop specializing in both straight repair and performance work. Today the shop is owned by Tom, who himself was a top roundy-round racer driving earlier model Sting Rays. The race car was built at Alto using a combination of factory and aftermarket parts, with the emphasis placed on factory stuff.

Lou D'Amico's A/Production race car represents a \$13,500 investment, could be duplicated easily and is the epitome of the Club racer. In no way, shape or form could it be considered a National racer built to compete with the megabuck Greenwood cars. However, there is probably no cheaper route to take if you want to race and go really fast.

Let's take a close look at what goes into a very basic, very quick and mostly factory L-88 road racer. The car was built with the body off, so that the chassis could be braced and a full roll cage used to add structural rigidity. All rubber suspension bushings were dropped in favor of solid steel factory pieces, as Lou was not interested in a smooth road ride with lots of suspension cushioning. The shocks were dropped in favor of double-adjustable Koni shocks. Via four of these expensive shocks Lou was able to fine-tune the ride characteristics. While the stock A-frames were retained, Lou did install solid bushings, adjustable Moog ball joints and extensive Heim ball bearing ends. Both the front coil and the rear leaf springs were deep-sixed in favor of what the factory calls "Daytona springs."

These springs are available through Chevrolet dealers and were designed by factory race car engineers for use in A and B/Production race cars.

Brakes play a super important role in the building of a road race car. You can make minor suspension modifications like using solid aluminum pillar blocks to support



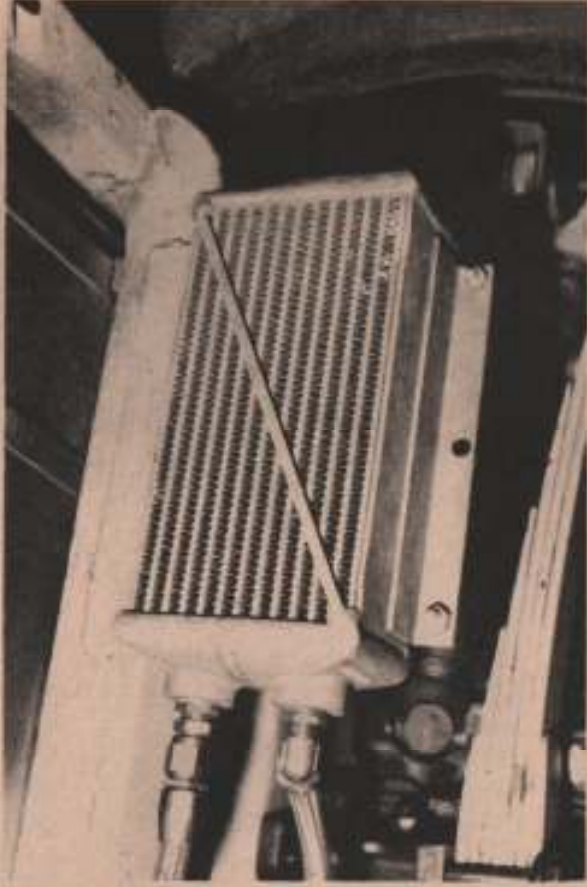
The dash of this screamer is typical race car, with a Moroso mechanical tach and matching white-lettered black gauges. All fuses mount on the dash so that shorts and electrical failures can be easily corrected. Wheel is taped.



Lou D'Amico, Director of Operations for Aero Tec Labs took his budget racer out of mothballs for the '77 season.



Outside race car headers flank the steel scattershield which houses the 10 1/2-inch L-88 clutch. The shifter is a Muncie M-22 rock-crusher. Custom deep-sump oil pan is used in conjunction with L-88 lube goodlies.



A lube-cooling radiator mounts on a crossmember under the ATL fuel cell. It's hooked to an electric pump via aircraft braided steel lines and is in charge of keeping the rear end cool. Gears range from 3.08 to 4.11.

the front sway bar, but when it comes to brakes you have to go all out.

National race cars like the Greenwood machines use trick and very expensive custom disc brake packages. This route was out of the question for Lou and Tom who were trying to build a low-budget machine.

When it came to doing the brakes Lou and Tom opted for the factory optional L-88 brake package (Option J-56) which boasts short pistons with 1-inch insulators, cooling vents, a special power booster and a trick proportioning valve. For additional braking power they bevel-edged the

"hats" for additional cooling.

Installed cool air ducts and really fine-tuned the system for maximum braking power at high speeds.

Lou tried running 454 Rat power but, like most racers, gave it up and went back to the old faithful L-88 mill which displaces 427 cubes. Over a period of five years Lou has lost only one engine and that was a 454. No one, not even John Greenwood has been able to make the 454 engines live. They're not bad for short races, but crank lifespan is usually good for just 12 hours. This rules out the use of 454 engines for 24-hour races.

The engine in Lou's red and white racer is a 427 built by Richie Deschner of RCD Racing Engines in Lindenhurst, New York. Like the car itself, it was built up using both aftermarket and factory speed equipment. They retained the stock forged steel rods and crankshaft, but swapped the high-compression factory slugs for 11.5-to-1 TRW road race pistons. Late-model open-chamber L-88 aluminum heads keep weight down and offer maximum breathing. The valves are controlled by a cam and kit made up

*continued on page 74*