



# Michigan

“Where it all began”

## Corvette Museum update: Blue Devil heads to GM for restoration in September

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*The 2009 Corvette Blue Devil prototype, as discovered in the sinkhole.*

*Photos courtesy National Corvette Museum.*

The day after a [sinkhole swallowed eight cars at the National Corvette Museum](#) in Bowling

Green, Kentucky, General Motors held a press conference on-site to declare it would oversee the restoration of the Corvettes buried in the hole. In the months since, all eight have been recovered and [placed on temporary display at the museum](#), but GM has been silent on its role in the restoration process. Now, according to the National Corvette Museum, the 2009 Blue Devil prototype will be returning to GM for restoration following the museum's Labor Day [20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration](#).



*2009 Blue Devil prototype.*

GM has sent crews to inspect the eight cars retrieved from the hole, but the fate of the remaining seven remains something of a mystery. We've reached out to GM for comment on several occasions, but the automaker's only response has been that it's in discussion with the museum and no date for a decision on the remaining cars has been set. Of the eight cars damaged, the Blue Devil and the 1993 ZR-1 Spyder were on loan from GM, and remain the property of the automaker. It makes sense that GM is covering the repair of the Blue Devil prototype, as the car was among the least damaged in the collapse. Once repaired, it's uncertain whether the car will be returned to the Corvette museum for display or retained by General Motors.



*1993 ZR-1 Spyder prototype.*

The fate of the 1993 ZR-1 Spyder prototype, pulled from the ground on April 1, remains far less certain. Though significant to Corvette history as a design study (and signed by the workers at the Bowling Green Plant involved in its construction), the car never entered production. Damage to the car (the sixth Corvette pulled from the sinkhole) is extensive, and probably beyond an acceptable cost of repair, leaving its future entirely in the hands of General Motors.



*1962 Corvette.*

Of the remaining cars, the 1962 Corvette is among the least damaged, and the museum has stated it will be restored under GM's supervision. That's not to say it will be returned to GM for the work, as several groups with expertise in restoring vintage Corvettes have already offered their services. Though no timeline has been identified, the first-generation Corvette will certainly resume its display role, in pristine form, at the museum.



*1992 Corvette convertible, the millionth example built.*

Another candidate for restoration could be the millionth Corvette produced, a white 1992 convertible built on July 2, 1992. Though badly damaged in the collapse, the car is likely not beyond saving, and given its role in history could prove to be significant enough that the cost (above the insurance company payout) is justifiable to the museum (or, perhaps, to General Motors).



*1993 Corvette, with the 40th Anniversary package.*

The 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary 1993 Corvette, pulled from the ground on March 3, is in a similar state of damage. Unlike the millionth Corvette built, however, this example has no unique historical significance, as it was one of 6,749 Corvettes built with the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Package (including Ruby Red paint, a Ruby Red interior, headrest embroidery and polished 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary emblems), and a replacement 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Package Corvette (a convertible this time) has already been donated to the museum.



*1984 PPG Pace Car.*

That leaves three cars with question marks regarding their future, including the 1984 PPG Pace Car, retrieved on March 5 with its rear section sheared off by a large slab of concrete. Any

restoration would require extensive fabrication, raising the question of when does a car transform from “restored original” to “recreation of the original?”



***2009 Corvette convertible the 1.5 millionth Corvette built.***

The 1.5 millionth Corvette, a white 2009 convertible unearthed on April 3, is also extensively damaged. Purchased by the museum for its historical significance, the car was finished in the same white with red interior livery as the original 300 Corvettes constructed in 1953. Though only one 1.5 millionth Corvette will ever exist, the same can be said for automobiles of any build sequence; whether the cost of its restoration can be justified likely remains a topic of discussion for all parties involved.



***2001 Corvette with the Mallet Hammer conversion.***

The 2001 Mallett Hammer, freed from the hole on April 9, was the [last of the Great Eight Corvettes retrieved](#). Buried the deepest in the collapse, the car was recovered with far more damage than any of the other Corvettes, making its chances for rebirth slim, at best. As an aftermarket-tuned Corvette, it represents something of a sidebar to marque history, and may

prove to be more of an attraction in a permanent (or semi-permanent) sinkhole display than in restored form.

Ultimately, however, the fate of all eight cars is in the hands of insurance companies, General Motors and the Corvette Museum. At least [a portion of the sinkhole will remain](#), and in unrestored form, the Corvettes have proven to be at least as big a draw as their pristine relatives. Just as in show business, the key to success in the museum world is this: Give the people what they want

- See more at: <http://blog.hemmings.com/index.php/2014/07/21/corvette-museum-update-blue-devil-heads-to-gm-for-restoration-in-september/?refer=news#sthash.witzqVFm.dpuf>