



You have been asked to find two mid-years for a collection—one small-block and one big-block car. Which year would you choose, which engine/transmission options, and what color? What would you pay and why?



David Burroughs

*CEO, Bloomington Gold
Normal, Illinois*

That's like asking me to tell someone how to paint his bedroom. What I would choose is not necessarily appropriate for what someone else has to live with. But if the collector followed my taste it would not be an easy search.

1. Both cars would be unrestored originals, with no more than 20% restored or refinished.

2. The small-block would be a Tuxedo Black/black 327/350 4-speed 1967 convertible.

3. The big-block would be a Rally Red/red 396/425 4-speed 1965 coupe. (Yes, you'll roast.)

The 350-hp convertible is a low-maintenance, fun driver, and black is always a classic color. The 396 is a rare and refreshing change from the ubiquitous '67 435. Red is a "power color" consistent with the horsepower, and the red interior makes it a very rare combination—adding to its value as a collector car. This would be a visually exciting pair. Price range for the small-block convertible would be about \$48k–\$85k, and the big-block coupe should set you back about \$70k–\$125k.



Colin Comer

*President, Colin's Classic Automobiles
Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

Since no budget or intended use was mentioned, I will keep in mind my intended use and the "big picture"—value.

Pick #1: 1963 Z06 Split-Window coupe, N03, 36-gallon "big tank" car, L84 327/360 fuelie, M20 4-speed. Concours restored with all real/original parts and its original drivetrain. Any color except red. For a real car with air-tight history, no stories, and the right awards, my target price is \$250k–\$350k.

I think these cars represent value at a not-crazy premium over a garden-variety 1963 Split-Window. I'd get just as much enjoyment as I would from a multi-million-dollar Grand Sport or a Z06 with great race history.

Pick #2: 1967 L88. Coupe preferred, but I'd make do with a convertible, of course. They made 20, and I'd look for the best example available. You can't choose your parents, and with 20 cars you can't choose your color, either. Since all L88s came with the M22 Rock Crusher 4-speed, F41 suspension, J56 brakes, etc., I don't even need to specify options. These are on (or just over) the ragged edge of streetability, but I don't care. This is the ultimate big-block Corvette engine, in arguably the best-looking Corvette of all. Sign me up. Target price: \$1.5–\$2m.

I can use and enjoy both on the street, and if history is any indication, they will appreciate at the head of the pack.



Kevin Mackay

*President, Corvette Repair Inc.
Valley Stream, New York*

When it comes to the best mid-year small-block Corvette, these are my considerations. The perfect small-block would be a 1967 327/350 with factory air and all options—leather, sidepipes, headrests, etc.

I personally prefer a coupe; there's more room and it's quieter. If I bought a convertible, it would have a hard top, since on a hot day most people want the a/c on. The hottest color combination is Tuxedo Black with red or blue interior.

Although you can't really enjoy driving an all-out show car, you can enjoy driving a nice survivor, purchased with good factory paperwork for under \$100k. An original drivetrain and a no-hit body would be additional perks.

If you have unlimited funds and want a good investment, consider a factory '67 L88 big-block. You probably can't buy one for under \$2m; they only made 20 and they rarely come up for sale. Black would be my first choice, red second. Black was the rarest color in '67 (815 of 22,940 built), and the most popular color was Goodwood Green (4,283 produced).

The ultimate option would be an L88 "tanker" (RPO NO3 36-gallon fuel tank). This type of Corvette has never been found, and whether it was ever produced is questionable. Regardless, this option could easily double the value of the car.



Terry Michaelis

*President, ProTeam Classic Corvettes
Napoleon, Ohio*

Number one: 1963 Corvette Split-Window coupe with factory fuel injection 327/360 and 4-speed.

Color: Tuxedo Black with red interior, although I'd settle for black interior. Trim tag and VIN tag original and never off the car.

Condition: A body-off restored car with few excuses, or a low-mile survivor in at least #2 condition.

Awards: Judged by NCRS or Bloomington Gold in the last five years.

Price range: I'd love to buy it for \$125k, but a "real deal" would be more like \$150k–\$175k.

Number two: 1967 427/435 or 427/400 convertible with factory air, 4-speed, and good options. Factory side exhaust preferred.

Color: One of 815 Tuxedo Black cars with red or black interior. Trim tag and VIN tag original and never off the car. Maybe Rally Red.

Condition: A body-off restored car with few excuses, or a low-mile survivor in at least #2 condition.

Awards: Judged by the NCRS or Bloomington Gold in the last five years.

Documentation: An original-motor car or an original unrestored car. If the car was restored with a restoration motor, as much factory/delivery dealer paperwork (documentation) as possible—at least a tank sticker, window sticker, warranty book/Protect-O-Plate, car shipper, or dealer invoice. Subject to scrutiny by Al Grenning.

Price range: I'd love to pay \$275k–\$300k, but a "real deal" car would be closer to \$350k. Rally Red would cost much less.



Roy Sinor

*NCRS National Judging Chairman,
1996 to present; Owner, Sinor Prestige
Automobiles, Inc.
Tulsa, Oklahoma*

Both cars must be well documented and unrestored, with the original drivetrain and preferably undamaged body. A well-restored example with authentic paperwork or excellent documentable judging history could be an alternative.

For the small-block, a 1965 Milano Maroon/maroon leather 327/365, 4-speed, convertible, two tops, with air conditioning; additional options are nice but not necessary. My estimate is \$100k, but be prepared to look long and hard.

For the big-block, a 1965 Milano Maroon/maroon leather 396/425, 4-speed, coupe, with power steering and factory side exhaust. Additional options are nice, but not necessary. My estimate is \$165k.

Some explanatory notes: Mid-year Corvettes with a solid color motif such as red/red, green/green, etc., are the rarest. Maroon/maroon is extremely rare and only available in 1965. The 365-hp with a/c was a two-year-only option on the solid-lifter engine in 1964 and 1965. These are extremely rare, particularly in a convertible, with production somewhere near 40 in 1965. Add the unique color combination, and there may be only one or two of them ever built.

The 425-hp car—a half-year-only option—is also rare, especially with power steering. Again maybe 40 were built. Add the maroon/maroon leather combination, and you may be looking for one or two vehicles.

My second choice would be the identical combination in opposite body configuration—a 365-hp coupe and a 425-hp convertible. You could settle for some other colors, but I'd stay with the 1965 365-hp air-conditioned convertible and the corresponding 1965 425-hp coupe.



Mike Thelin

*General Manager, The Chevy Store,
Portland, Oregon*

Most mid-year fanciers would choose a '67 small-block and big-block. In the small-block, I'd pick a coupe with as many options as possible—air-conditioning, power steering, power brakes, and the optional 350-hp motor. It's not necessary to get sidepipes; the standard exhaust is fine, and I'd want a 4-speed. I'm torn on color. I'm a fan of Tuxedo Black and black leather, and that may not be a great choice everywhere, but it works where I am in the Northwest. With only 815 made, it's the lowest-production color.

For the big-block convertible I'd want it heavily optioned, a Rally Red car with black leather. Both tops if possible, side exhaust and bolt-on wheels with redlines. I'd take a 427/435—no a/c of course—but a 4-speed. You can have a 427/400 with an automatic, but 435 hp with 4-speed would be the choice of most people. Marlboro Maroon is a popular color, but my first choice is black, and leather would be nice.

Low-mileage, original big-block cars are practically non-existent, but a restored real car that's not a clone can score high marks. Prices are a difficult question in this market, but I'd say the small-block coupe is probably \$60k–\$65k and a numbers-matching 427/435 would be about \$125k. Both cars have sold for more, but the market is undergoing a correction and is coming back to enthusiasts.