

How Chevy Could Justify Building an All-Electric "E-Ray" Corvette

Spy photographer Chris Doane stumbled across Chevrolet's patent for the name "Corvette E-Ray," and that set our minds racing as to what it could possibly be.

The idea of an electrified 'Vette isn't as far-fetched as it sounded even five years ago. Dodge's 707-horsepower Hellcat twins may rule the production car roost in 2015, but the all-electric Tesla P90D is right on its heels with its 691 horses. Porsche has also just given its Mission-E the green light, and that should be good for 600 horsepower and a zero to 60 sprint of around 3 seconds. The Tesla and the Porsche may be sedans, but the benefits of instant torque, massive amounts of power, and zero emissions could soon prove to be too tantalizing for sports car builders to ignore — just ask Audi and its all-electric (and sadly, Europe-only) R8 E-Tron Quattro.

There's also been some evidence that the Corvette as we know it may be due for some big changes. The C7 is categorically the most well-rounded 'Vette of all-time, so it's unlikely Chevy will be messing with its winning formula anytime soon. But despite falling under the Bowtie Brand lineup, the Corvette is practically a standalone model already, and as such, it's recently been the subject of rumors that Corvette could be spun off into its own sub-brand.

In January, the decades-old rumors of a mid-engine Corvette were reignited when photographers spotted a mid-engined test mule being put through its paces at GM's proving grounds. According to GM insiders, if such an exotic 'Vette were to see production over the next few years, it would be a separate model, slotting above the C7. The car is likely to be called Zora, after '50s-era GM engineer and Corvette savior Zora Arkus-Duntov. And with the C7 (or next-generation C8) keeping the front-engine Corvette flame alive, and the Zora taking on mid-engined exotics, an all-electric high-horsepower E-Ray in a three-car stable suddenly begins to make a lot of sense.

So if the idea of an all-electric Corvette raises your hackles, don't worry. If Chevy won't move the Corvette's V8 behind the seats, it's even less likely to ditch its iconic powertrain for a few electric motors and some batteries. But if Corvette does become a sub-brand, and the Zora sees the light of day (though again, that's a big if), then a high-horsepower gas-free torque monster begins to sound pretty good to us. In fact, the more we think about it, the name E-Ray is beginning to grow on us.

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