

# Our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition Convertible Corvette

By Frank & Theresa Ventresca

CCND MEMBER OF THE MONTH

Our dream to someday own a new Corvette convertible finally came true on January 24, 2003. After having owned 2 Pontiac Trans Am WS-6's (1998 & 2000), we both agreed it was time for an upgrade in ride comfort, body style and overall performance. Our research started on the Internet pondering the many colors,



body styles and equipment packages available for the C-5. We loved the T-tops on our 2 previous Pontiacs and thought a convertible would be even more fun!!!

The field was eventually narrowed down to a fully loaded '02 Magnetic Red convertible 6-speed but, we couldn't find our exact configuration reasonably priced on a dealer lot. We test drove lots of used Vettes ('01's & '02's), but soon realized the ultimate way to buy a Vette was to order it directly from the factory.



When the '03 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition info came out, our search finally ended. The 50<sup>th</sup> AE package had everything we wanted and then some...it included: all factory options, special anniversary red metallic paint, unique champagne wheels, unique shale interior and dash with upgraded stitching & padding, special exterior badging, unique shale rag top and GM's newest & best suspension Magnetic Selective Ride Control. In Sept.'02, we placed our order at a local dealership (Porter) and then began the anxious long wait. Our Target

Production Week (TPW) was estimated to be in early January '03 (22 weeks), which is much longer than normal, due to high demand and limited dealer allocations for the AE. In fact, for the first 1/2 of the '03 production year, each of the 3600 Chevy dealers were only given allocations for 2 AE's to ensure fair distribution between large and small dealerships.

After 4 months of patiently waiting and tactfully bugging the dealer (Porter), I got the call we had been waiting for. The vehicle was scheduled for production on January 14<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am sharp!! The Customer Contact Rep at the



Bowling Green, KY Assembly Plant provided us our VIN # and Job Sequence # using the 6 digit order # from the original vehicle paperwork. With that



info, one could easily locate your exact car on the production line, if you wanted to go to Bowling Green, KY and see it come to life. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity so it was time for a Road Trip!! Theresa couldn't go, so I recruited my best buddy for the 1600-mile (roundtrip) adventure. The 12-hour ride down in the mini-van was a blur of endless rolling hills, horse farms and dualies.

One special perk was being able to actually participate in the vehicle assembly process. I was invited to put the first gas in the tank, first start of the LS1 engine, diagnostic check and even installed the drivers headlight assembly. How cool is that!!! Finally, the vehicle was water tested and then went on a 1/2 mile road test and passed with flying colors. Nothing beats watching your very own car come down the assembly line. I highly recommend the Assembly Plant Tour to anyone, and get this, it's Free!!! After the Assembly Plant we immediately went across the street to the National Corvette Museum (NCM) for a look around. That place is the Disney Land for Vette enthusiasts. The ride back to

Delaware was much less exciting and took us 2 days because of snow and bad road conditions. We didn't opt for the Corvette Museum Delivery (R8C) since it would



require a second trip back to Kentucky and an additional \$490. All new Corvettes are now shipped via Allied Trucking to the Dealerships (no more rail cars). You can track your vehicle with Allied just like a Fed-Ex package, if you know the Vin #. Our AE vert was delivered to Porter Chevrolet, 10 days later unscathed with exactly 1 mile on the odometer. We now have 3800 miles on the car and can't believe how fast and fun this thing is to drive!

