



ABOVE LEFT: The rear of the Waldorf Nomad had several distinct cues that needed to be represented in the re-creation. The chrome strips down the back, the protruding tail lamps and the side exit exhaust were all incorporated into the modern design. An AAT-modified Borla exhaust directs the spent fumes out the side panels of the car. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Under the surface, the car is still entirely C5, lending to its reliability and drivability.





THIS COMMEMORATIVE EDITION SPORT WAGON HERALDS A CLASSIC DESIGN THAT COMES STRAIGHT FROM THE MOTORAMA

• BY ANDY BOLIG •

In 1953, GM was holding their own car show, called the Motorama. Eight Motorama events were held between 1949 and 1961. The Motorama was an extravaganza where the newest offerings from GM were laid out before millions who couldn't get enough.

New Original Modern Artistic Design



The fervor for new cars at the '53 show laid the stage as the Corvette was dangled in front of thousands at a time. The enthusiasm that met Corvette at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel propelled the car forward with enough pressure to force it into production just a few months down the road. The little two-seater went on to fame and the rest, as they say, is history. Viewed by over 300,000 oglers during the seven-day affair, the numbers of Corvette faithful have continually increased exponentially to where Corvette is now a household

name, whether enthusiasts of the marque or not.

A little lesser-known sibling of the Corvette was a concept that GM titled the Nomad. It was introduced a year after the first Corvette captivated the crowds. During the 1954 Motorama, this little wonder with the long roof was part of GM's Dream Cars showcase and traveled all over the country. According to Noland Adams' book, "Corvette: American Legend, Book 2," the Nomad roof style had already been ordered into production on a standard Corvette station

wagon body. Somewhere along the way, the Nomad did see the light of day, except that it wasn't on a Corvette chassis, but the larger passenger car frame and wheelbase. The original Nomad, often referred to as the Waldorf Nomad since that was where it was originally debuted, has been the subject of speculation for years. Many concede that it was crushed by GM like many other forward-thinking concept cars of the era. In a 1986 interview with Noland Adams, Norm Brown, former GM employee, tells of his first day of work at GM on July 8, 1955, where he was given the task of dismantling the Nomad in preparation for crushing. While he doesn't remember seeing the Nomad crushed, he believes that it was.

The loss of such style with so much nostalgia, often prods more contemporary artists to recreate or emulate the original. Over the years, many have sought to bring back the classic styling and feel of the original Waldorf Nomad. Recently,

LEFT: Even with many of the panels already created, the entire roofline and rear fascia were new moldings. Here is the Waller's Corvette getting a mold made of the completed rear fascia. Photo: Advanced Auto Technologies



we were speaking to the Pasteiners (Steve Jr. and Sr.) of Advanced Auto Technologies (www.aatcars.com) in Rochester Hills, Michigan, and they informed us they were taking on a project that would herald back to the original Nomad. Unlike the Nomad that GM produced, theirs was going to be on a Corvette chassis.

They started with a stock 1998 Corvette coupe and proceeded to alter the body, wrapping around this modern drivetrain all the flair and feel of a '50s favorite. You may recall the name AAT as the company that brought out the Commemorative Edition C5 back in 2003, when Corvette was enjoying its 50th Anniversary. The Commemorative Edition's body styling echoed cues of the first fiberglass flyer with faux screens covering large headlamps and bullet-style taillights flowing out from rounded quarters. Chrome was once again on the front and rear of Corvette. Many enthusiasts were drawn to the styling, enticed by the nostalgic appearance and assured by the modern amenities. Maureen and Rich Waller of Sterling Heights, Michigan, are two such enthusiasts. They ordered

a '53 Commemorative Corvette from AAT and enjoy taking it to shows and events. When they heard about AAT wanting to do a sport-wagon design with a Corvette, they decided immediately that they wanted one. And they had just the car to do it with.

The Waller's Corvette was originally Light Carmine Red Metallic, a predecessor of what would become Mag Red the following year. They had received the car new through the National Corvette Museum's R8C delivery program. Also, they drove the car on the NCM's 5th Anniversary Caravan as the event's National Coordinators.

Maureen and Rich were debating on what to do with their car since it had a lot of history, but they have several other cars to focus their attention on. AAT had several owners of their Commemorative Editions state that they would love to see a wagon version, much like the original Waldorf Nomad, and they were currently storing this particular car for the Wallers. They asked if it would be possible to put their car on the surface plate and take a couple of dimensions to see if a wagon configuration would

be feasible. The Wallers agreed to it and decided that if it WAS feasible, they wanted one.

In the end, it was feasible to put together a "Sport-Wagon" as the folks at AAT call it. After the dust had settled and the paint was dry, the Waller's once-red coupe now sported a clean, new Silver paintjob. Only this time, the roofline went all the way to the back of the car. AAT modeled the upper portion of the roof using the inner structure of the stock C5 hatch so all the seals, hinging and latches remained stock. The car also still uses the stock quarter panels, but the rear fascia has been totally redesigned with the cues of the original car that was shown so many years ago, molded into the lines of the C5. The original Waldorf Nomad had bullet taillights protruding from the rear of the car, much like the production '54s, but it also incorporated chrome strips lining the rear, along with a special license plate box enclosed in the panel. AAT included these cues into the '98 along with the front treatment enjoyed by their Commemorative Editions they already produce.

The task became a labor of love,

BELOW: Inside the car, the entire interior has been retouched. The AAT team dipped the striking interior in Torch Red.





ABOVE: Originally part of AAT's Commemorative Edition C5, it simply needed to be installed onto the modified body of the C5 to give the car a completed appearance. The Waldorf Nomad utilized a production '54 Corvette's front end – the very style that the Commemorative Editions emulate.

RIGHT: More than just cosmetic, the panel fit and finish on the Commemorative Editions and the Sport Wagon are exceptional. Entirely new panels are created instead of trying to make parts of the originals work.

BOTTOM RIGHT: The steering wheel and shifter/brake boots came from Vette Essentials.

driving the team at AAT to work late into the night to get the work done for unveiling at last year's Corvettes at Carlisle show in August. In fact, they completed the car at 6 p.m. on the Thursday night before Carlisle and drove all evening from their Michigan shop so they could arrive at their Carlisle, Pennsylvania hotel room at 1:30 in the morning. With only a few hours of sleep, they were soon awakened so they could

head out to the showfield at 6 a.m. to get the car cleaned and situated in their booth, ready for display.

In the end, it was all worth it. Fans of the '53 Commemorative Edition cars savored the creative work of merging a historic design with a modern creation – enthusiasts all over can relive, if not remember, a time when the Nomad once rode on a more nimble Corvette chassis. ■

