

APPEARANCE GOES 14 CARAT

One of Corvette's more popular 1966 options is a set of tires with distinctive appearance that sets Corvette vehicles off from other cars. The official name for this set of skins is "gold-stripe." CORVETTE NEWS was interested in finding out what was behind that distinctive stripe, and thus trudged out to Chevrolet Product Engineering for a personal look-see.

As many enthusiasts already know, the specialty tire market is growing by leaps and bounds. The primary appeal seems to be in distinctive appearance. This of course, has been accomplished by use of various colors on the tire, multiple white stripes and even combinations of white and other color stripes on the tire's sidewall.

Corvette's original equipment tire is considered excellent because of its 7.75 x 15 size. In original equipment measure, the standard tire is capable of sustained speeds in the 100 mph range. Further, the tire has a balance of good ride, handling and traction.

Many Corvette buyers feel that they want something better on their cars. The question is not only "How much better?" but "How much better for what type of service?" Some owners want better handling; some say better traction; while still others want higher speed capability. The first two categories of owners may be thinking about gymkhanas or quarter-mile events. The latter group thinks about occasional bursts of higher speed but *not* racing. It's for this third group of owners that the TO-1 "gold-stripe" tire option has been designed.

Owners who wanted a tire with greater speed capability previously had to go all the way to a set of racing skins with their attendant harsh, rough ride and much higher cost. Further, as most off-road event devotees know, all-out tires specifically are designed for wet or dry applications, with losses in traction due to tire construction which must withstand lots of heat and abrasion.

However, now it's not necessary to buy all-out rubber for improved speed capability, unless the owner is going to enter competitive events. The TO-1 tire, dubbed "gold-stripe" on the option chart, has high-speed capability some 20-30 mph above the original equipment tire while preserving the standard tire's ride and traction.

The distinctive visual aspect of the new tire is satisfied with the addition of a 0.3"-wide gold stripe. No other manufacturer offers a similar tire for any other car.

Installed on a 1966 Corvette, the new gold-stripe tires have an authentic sports car appearance. This is especially true if the tires are ordered in combination with the genuine knock-off aluminum wheels. In the vernacular of the "in" set, they look "tough." For those who may wonder at terminology, "tough" means "great."

Corvette buyers who would rather forsake whitewall tires for something new, order the new gold-stripe tire. Their distinctive appearance alone likely is worth the additional fare, and the added benefits of the gold-stripe skins may be just what's wanted.

