

The Preventive Maintenance Series

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Corvair Trivia

- Early model Corvairs have holes in the underside of front and rear bumpers that were to accommodate a bumper jack which had a lifting arm that fit into the hole. That idea was revised to the final design of a scissor jack but the holes were continued. The 1960 New Product Information booklet had a description and drawings of the bumper jack procedure.
- Beginning in 1966 the Corvair shop manual recommended that cars with wire wheel covers be balanced with the wheel covers in place.
- The Spyder dashboard introduced in the spring of 1962 was also originally designed to be installed in all Monza models, including the wagon. Non-turbo dashboards would have had a clock instead of a tachometer and an oil pressure gage (sic) instead of a vacuum gage. Look at the back of any Spyder dash and you will see the casting block outs for the Powerglide shifter and if you check the assembly manual in the accessory section, it lists the clock and pressure gage. The Monza application was officially dropped in December of 1961.
- Despite what many of us thought over the years, all Corvair manual transmissions were built at the GM Saginaw Michigan plant. There was no “Muncie” assembled 4-speed.
- The Corvair utilized a Dana Positraction unit while other GM Cars were equipped with Eaton Positraction units.
- In May of 1965 Chevrolet Service news noted that the 110 engine supplied for air conditioned cars would have a new timing tab that provided for initial advance of 24 degrees vs 14 degrees for the first design '65 110 engine. This was due to the use of lower compression (95) heads on air conditioned cars late in 1965 production. The timing tab looks like the turbo tab and is riveted on top of the original timing tab casting.
- The 1966 140 Powerglide air conditioned models utilized a thicker head gasket to revise the compression ratio to 8.75:1 and the initial timing was revised from 18 degrees back to 14 degrees.
- In March of 1966 the refrigerant capacity of the Corvair system was revised from 5 lbs to 4 lbs. However, the label data continued to state “5 lbs”
- When the 164 CI engine was introduced in 1964, the re-designed camshaft necessitated changing the lifter bore angle and spacing in the crankcase. Chevrolet

Service News ran a review of the changes (9/63). Corvair owners have modified the early design crankcases, with the obvious exception of the lifter bores, to accommodate the 164 CI components but as far as I know, there have been no major problems with the lifter/camshaft operation.

- In 1965 Corvair service technicians were warned that inverting carburetors to drain gas out of them could displace the power enrichment valve and it could cock in the bore, causing flooding or poor gas mileage. This only applied to the '65-'67 models that were fitted with a power valve.
- Many times over the years I have heard folks say that the muffler on a turbo was necessary (and specifically calibrated) to give the turbo maximum boost. That is really not the case - as anybody who has run an autocross with no air cleaner or muffler knows. I quote from SAE Paper 531A, page 8: "if the muffler and air cleaner were removed to put the engine in the 'gross power' condition, the induction and exhaust systems no longer would be matched. The controlling effect of the matched system would be lost, and output would increase excessively, possibly beyond the structural limitations of the engine." Pretty good engineering, no waste gate needed.
- Corvair Powerglide transmissions were required to survive "100 W.O.T. low to reverse shifts on dry pavement." SAE Paper 140C, page 35. More good engineering.
- The cylinder head temperature snap switch in the right cylinder head will turn the dash board warning light on at 575 degrees (SAE Papers). Sounds a little too hot to suit me – check for rodent nests, de-flash heads, check thermostat door operation and inspect your belt regularly.