

Update - 15 x 5K Kelly Hays Wheels

—Roy Braatz

Two welded wheel designs are known to be used on Corvettes.

In one, the center section has slots near the spot welding and the valve stem hole is large. In the other, the center section is smooth near the spot welding and the valve stem hole is small.

Both have the raised area around the outside where a small hubcap would be used and both used rubber dust fillers. In Volume 1, Number 4, page 8, I mentioned that "most" Corvette wheels were welded and that '55-'56 cars were riveted. I will take the heat and now say that "all" Corvettes from '56 up are truly welded. Owners may think otherwise because in the sixties, it was "in" to replace them using "mags" or S.S. wheels and hubcaps.

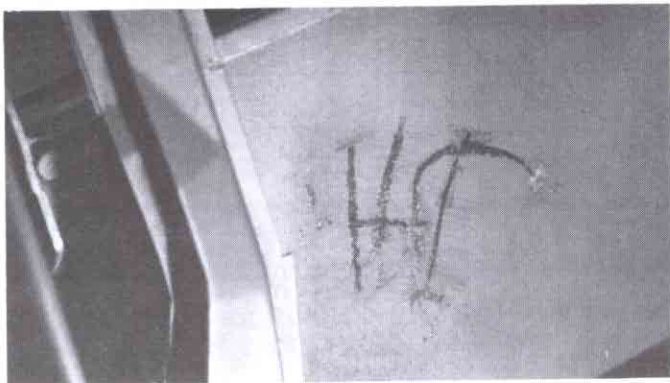
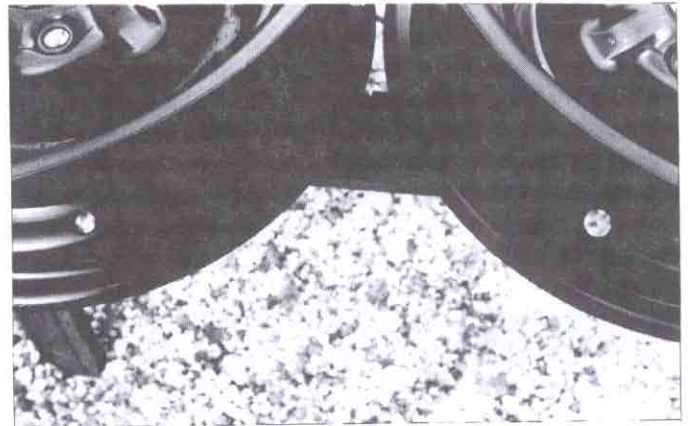
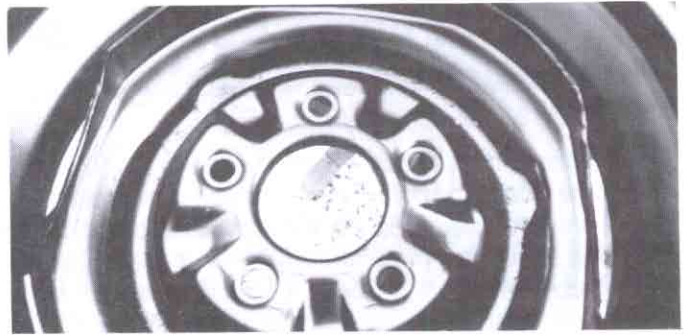
Remember that in 1956, the tubeless tire came out, causing the need to change from a riveted wheel to welded for a better, airtight construction.

Even now, cars are using welded wheels because of this, and the change to 14-inch is now standard on cars.

Today, owners are going original-looking for 15-inch wheels having the four bumps to hold the original hubcaps. Millions of '55-'56 cars were, and are still around, so what do you think many Corvettes use today? (Finding Corvette wheels around is like finding power windows).

I know people will say that G.M. continued a 15-inch riveted wheel, but as I mentioned before it was used on police cars because they felt that high speed chases involving cornering, potholes, etc., might cause the tubeless tire to lose its seal if abused. So, they may have thought that it was safer to continue using a stronger, riveted wheel, backed up with a tube in a tubeless tire to ensure a tight seal against the wheel. (See photos #1, 2 and 3).

All comments are welcome... Editor



HT found by scraping off paint over green crayon markings behind passenger seat on hard top ('59 only). Owned by Bill Eldridge.



Scraping of red 1960 #2628 owned by Bill Lepeman.