CORVETTE TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

1958-62 Front Bumper Guard

In my travels to various Corvette shows, I have seen quite a few Corvettes with the wrong support brackets for their front (license plate) bumper guards. The problem stems from the fact there are two different pairs of supports that look almost exactly the same. They are almost two feet long and the difference is only an inch and one-quarter in overall length.

The earlier cars (1958-60) used longer supports (part numbers 3739331 & 332, left-hand & right-hand) to clear the grille teeth, which protrude from the grille area about an inch. The 1961-62 cars had a simple grille bar without the teeth, and therefore used shorter supports (#3782765 & 766, left hand & right-hand). Availability of the 1961-62 supports from Chevrolet began to dry-up about 1973; so many 1961-62 restorers substituted the earlier (longer) design supports. These 1958-60 supports are still available through your local Chevrolet dealer parts department (order #3739331 LH & 3739332 RH; current retail price is $10.80 each).
They say a picture is worth a thousand words, so I photographed two cars to demonstrate the difference in the use of the two support brackets on the 1962 Corvette. Photo #1 shows a car with the longer style brackets. As you can see, the license plate bumper guard assembly is noticeably ahead of where it should be. Photo #2 shows a car with the correct (shorter) brackets. The bumper guards are only about one-half inch ahead of the grille bar. Photo #3 shows two pair of brackets; the upper pair are the longer 1958-60 design. Photo #4 shows the different length brackets (both left-hand) side by side.

The longer (and still available 1958-60) supports can be cut to fit the 1961-62 cars properly. Photo #5 shows the proper place to cut each bracket.

Using an abrasive cut-off saw, cut out exactly a 1-1/4" section of the U-channel bracket (bracket shown secured to saw fixture following cut in photo #6), making sure the cuts are square and true. Photo #7 shows the bracket section cut out; photo #8 shows the two pieces welded back together to fit the 1961-62 Corvette.

Grinding the welds smooth and then filling the rough area with glazing putty is shown in photos #9 and 10. After some sanding with a rubber-sanding block, the support brackets look exactly like the originals, as shown in photo #11.