

### Bowtie Bomber

Enthusiasts' wait for the Z/28's return ends this spring when the first of the 3,000 cars lands in dealerships wearing a \$75,000 price tag, making it the most expensive Camaro to date. Horsepower-centric folks might be disappointed: The less-expensive, supercharged ZL1 packs 580 hp, while the Z/28 "only" has 505. But they're missing the point. The Z/28's main goal is conquering road courses, and all its purposeful hardware adds up to one mission: shaving lap times.

An LS7 V8 powers the Z/28 and is almost 64 pounds lighter than the ZL1's LSA, improving front-to-rear balance and connecting to a six-speed manual gearbox. A Torsen limited-slip differential distributes power between the rear wheels; the diff works with an upgraded performance traction-management system featuring "flying car logic." In other words, it doesn't cut power when the car gets airborne around, say, the Nürburgring; Chevy test

drivers say the system saved them roughly five seconds a lap on the Nordschleife.

Suspension revisions include stiffer springs, bushings and racing-style spool-valve shocks, allowing the engineers to tune the setup more precisely. Chevy says the changes yield a 1.29-inch lower center of gravity than the Camaro SS and up to 1.08 g of cornering acceleration. Supremely sticky 305/30 ZR19 Pirelli P Zero Trofeo R tires wrapped around forged aluminum wheels also help in corners. Brembo carbon-ceramic brakes get the most from the tires under deceleration.

The Z/28 gains an exclusive front splitter, hood vents, Gurney-lip fender flares, rockers and a rear spoiler to help produce 150 pounds of downforce at 150 mph. A dealer-installed wickerbill is available for even greater downforce. Recaro sport seats and a flat-bottom steering wheel come standard.

While the engine, brakes and wheels yielded good weight savings, engineers

whacked even more: Air conditioning is an option; there is no sound-deadening material—or floor mats, trunk trim or tire-inflator kit; redundant wiring in the harness is gone. There is a lighter rear seat, smaller battery and thinner rear glass. The result? The base Z weighs 3,820 pounds, 55 pounds lighter than a 1LE. Our test car has air conditioning and a six-speaker sound system, bringing it to 3,851 pounds.

Pilgrim is impressed after just a few laps. "It's extremely stable and predictable at the limit," he says, removing his trademark cartoon-covered helmet, this one adorned with "South Park" and "Squidbillies" characters. "The balance, mechanical grip and chassis setup let you carry good mid-corner speeds. It's sticking; recovery is good and it doesn't feel like a 3,800-pound car with those Trofeos trying hard to keep you on rails. Brakes are excellent with no hint of fade. Mode 5 [race mode] on the performance traction system is fantastic; I didn't feel it come in at all."

