

# fast takes



## Vive la Vette!

**LE MANS VICTORIES** in this country are usually well-kept secrets, buried amid the agate type in the back of the newspaper sports section. But this time, GM and primary sponsor Compuware celebrated Corvette's third straight Le Mans victory in high profile. They did so amid the crackle of exhausts and raw horsepower filling the air on downtown Detroit's Woodward Avenue in July as the Le Mans-winning Corvette C6.R race car roared up Woodward Avenue from Compuware's headquarters and lit up the tires in a smoky burnout in front of GM HQ at the Renaissance Center. It was followed by a host of other 2007 Corvettes carrying all six team drivers, as well as GM and Compuware executives. Two local Corvette clubs, Corvettes America and the Corvette Club of Michigan, also took part.

"This is a big day for all of us because we're celebrating another huge win for the Corvette Racing team — their fifth victory in the biggest, most prestigious and most important road racing event in the world," said Chevrolet general manager Ed Peper. "We're very proud that Corvette competes and wins on that global stage. Today we applaud the accomplishments of the men and women of Corvette Racing, and we salute the team that works behind the scenes at General Motors and our affiliated sponsors and suppliers to make this a world-class racing team."

Compuware CEO Peter Karmanos — who also won the National Hockey League's Stanley Cup as owner of the Carolina Hurricanes — was presented with the Le Mans trophy by Peper.

"We feel honored to be able to help with the Corvette racing program," said Karmanos. "I want to congratulate the team for their third victory in a row and fifth overall at Le Mans; that's quite an achievement."

The evening before the parade, GM hosted a dinner for the team at the Rattlesnake Club in Detroit. There, the team was toasted by GM vice president Brent Dewar and Ed Peper, along with GM racing director Mark Kent.

Drivers Ron Fellows, Olivier Beretta, Johnny O'Connell, Jan Magnussen and Oliver Gavin (Max Papis flew in for the parade the next day) were honored, as were Gary Pratt and Jim Miller of Pratt & Miller Racing and Corvette Racing program manager Doug Fehan. They were joined by Corvette vehicle line executive Tom Wallace and Corvette chief engineer Tadge Juechter, as well as Corvette marketing manager Gary Claudio and Corvette product manager Harlan Charles.

The team was also reunited with their chef at Le Mans, the internationally renowned Jimmy Schmidt, who is a diehard racing fan as well as head chef at the Rattlesnake Club. Schmidt, who has been preparing his fine cuisine for the team in France for several years now, personally presented the team with a celebratory cake decked out in Corvette Racing regalia. Like the Corvette C6.R, it went quickly. — *Jerry Burton*



GM MEDIA

THOMAS DREW (4)

Clockwise from upper left: C6.R drivers sign autographs at GM headquarters; Victory flags and the winning C6.R in the atrium at GM HQ; Compuware CEO Peter Karmanos (left) accepts the Le Mans trophy from Chevy general manager Ed Peper; Ron Fellows and Johnny O'Connell soak in the accolades.