



MIKE'S CORVETTE CORNER

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Here's a great article I came across.....

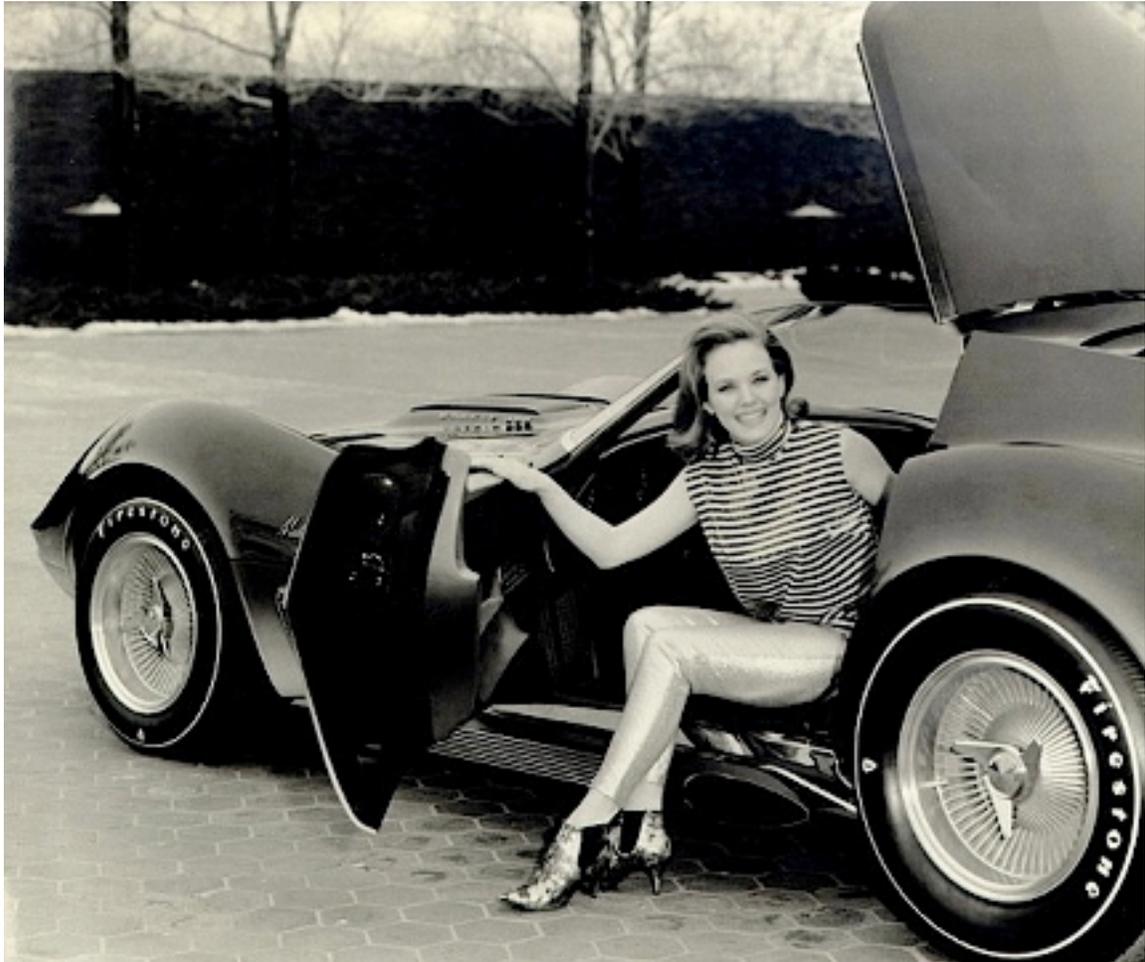


The 1965 GM Mako Shark II concept vehicle

In 1965, some of the best minds in the General Motors design studio collaborated to create a concept vehicle that is still making waves among automotive enthusiasts today - the Mako Shark II. This uniquely styled sports car served as a design concept for future GM Corvette models, including the famed Stingray; both the Mako Shark and the Stingray models can be attributed to one man, Mr. Larry Shinoda.

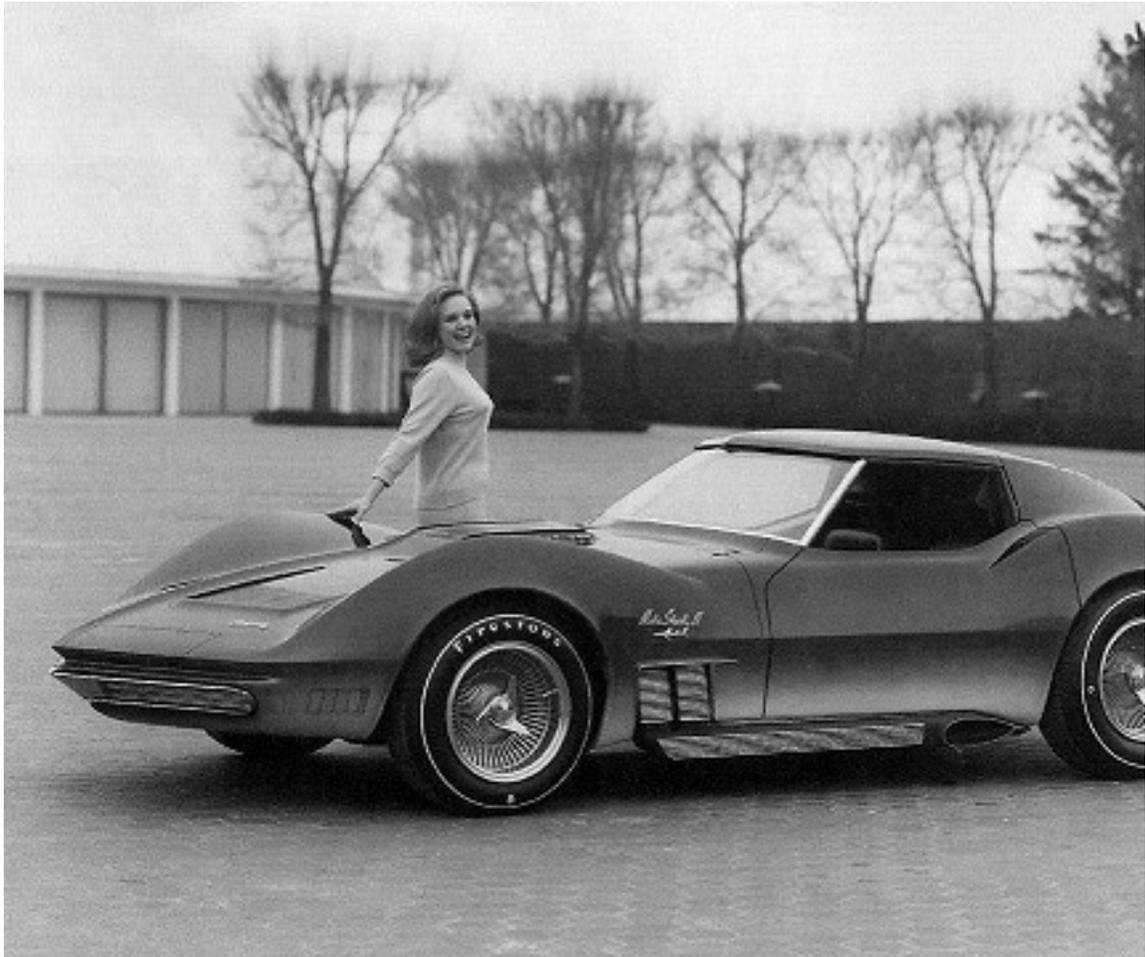
Shinoda worked with other GM engineering executives and designers under the direction of the iconic Bill Mitchell to model the new and greatly anticipated concept car. Along with Shinoda, other collaborators as the time included Ken Eschebach, Art Carpenter, David Holls and Henry Haga.

The model made its introduction in April 1965 at the New York International Automobile Show. GM manufactured two of the Mako Shark II, otherwise known as XP-755, but only one of the models was fully functional.



The innovative and fresh-looking concept car created a major splash among the automotive elite, and was deemed one of the best looking show cars from the 1960s. Many individuals loved the model's great looking design which offered a retractable stabilizing flap on the rear deck.

During the early stages within the design studio, this concept model became a personal favorite for Bill Mitchell. The show car was painted that light and dark color scheme to resemble the long -snouted fish that is usually found off the shores of Australia. Over the years, some automotive historians have said that Mitchell had an actual Mako Shark mounted on the wall in his office, and had ordered his team to paint the car to match the distinctive blue-gray upper surface gently blending into the white underside of the fish.



After numerous attempts to match the fish's color had failed, the team decided upon the idea of taking the fish off the wall one night and painting it to match their best efforts on the car, and slyly returning it to the office the next day. The story goes that Bill Mitchell never realized the difference, and pronounced himself pleased with the results. Some automotive historians have said that anecdote greatly crystalizes Bill Mitchell's devotion to perfection.

Later, the great looking Mako Shark II concept model received much positive feedback from the auto show circuit and many of the other automotive shows as well. The spectators loved both show cars and Motor magazine of London stated, "The car makes its impact through pure form, without applied decoration." On an historical note, the Mako Shark II had influenced the great looking design of the 1968 C3 Corvette production model.



The first Mako Shark II was later replaced with an operational version in October of 1965. This experimental sports car introduced a new shape for the Corvette based on advancements in automotive aerodynamics.

Capturing both the vibrant coloring and lean, powerful lines of its undersea namesake, the two-passenger, fastback coupe featured a flip-top roof for easy passenger access. Consumers also really liked the new hide-away headlamps. This Mako Shark II was powered by a 425 horsepower version of Chevrolet's turbo-Jet 396 V-8 engine which would later become available on production Corvettes.



Bill Mitchell with the Mako Shark II

In conclusion, the Mako Shark II was anything but an inanimate object being trucked from one show to another. In Italy, for example, special arrangements were made for Giovanni Agnelli of Fiat to drive the car at an airport near Turin. It was then registered for road use. The model became so popular that Mitchell had to bring it back to GM headquarters where, rumor had it, he took it as a personal driver.

Around the time when the great looking 1968 production Corvettes were being introduced to the consumer market, the Mako Shark II saw its end back where it started, in the GM design and engineering studio where it was refabricated into a new concept car called the Manta Ray. The Mako Shark II will always be a part of our automotive concept car history as one of the best-looking models from General Motors during the 1960s.



I hope you liked this article, I found it interesting.

Also at this time, I'd like to wish all the ACC members a Happy Thanksgiving.

Regards
Mike