

# GARAGES FOR COLLECTOR CORVETTES



## A RETIREMENT GARAGE WITH SERIOUS FUNCTIONALITY

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**A**s a fan of great garages and one who is always trying to improve my garage's function, I am fascinated by how other Corvette owners design and organize their own garages. To this end, these ongoing articles will feature garages with emphasis on how their owners improved function, solved problems, and so on. Whether you are planning your dream garage or improving your current Corvette's abode, our goal is that what we discuss will inspire you and give you solutions.



**You would never guess by looking at this home that a 2,500 square-foot garage is part of the house.**



*Side view of garage.*



*Rear view of garage.*



*Looking into garage.*



## BIO OF JOHN HINCKLEY

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John Hinckley is well known in the enthusiast world. He spent his working years at GM and Chrysler in manufacturing engineering in the plants and in process development. After nineteen years at GM, he was recruited by Chrysler to work on processes to build large and small car platforms. His final five years at the company were spent as plant manager of the Viper/Prowler assembly plant in Detroit.

John is current Chairman of the NCRS Michigan Chapter, veteran Bloomington Gold Corvette Restoration workshop instructor, a core member of the Camaro Research Group, and a member of the Solid Axle Corvette Club and the Eastern Michigan Camaro Club. He has written numerous SAE publications and articles published in the NCRS *Corvette Restorer* magazine. He continues to write articles for various magazines.



*This office has been well thought out and is as functional as any we have seen.*



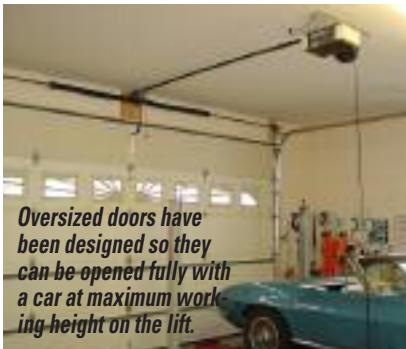


*This garage has lots of automobilia, including a real Sunoco gas pump.*

When most of us think of that time in life when we can retire and do those many things that were put off due to work and family, we dream of a retirement home at the lake or in warmer climates. So what does a Corvette restorer, NCRS chapter chairman, and Bloomington Gold judge do when he retires? He builds his "dream" garage. And in the process, he gives those of us who are into garages, hints on how to make our garages more functional as well as attractive.

This story begins when John and Linda Hinckley decided to build their retirement home and garage. Linda was in charge of the house design, and the garage was John's responsibility. One of the things that makes John's garage so unique is the fact that it is attached to his house. Most garages this large are separate structures from the main house. With the creative use of outside windows, you would never guess the 2,552 square-foot garage is almost as large as the home.

Having already completed six body-off restorations and construction of a tube-frame Grand Sport replica, John wanted space to actually work on and build cars, plus space to store the required tools and equipment. John's garage houses two daily drivers, as well as his Top Flight '67 Corvette convertible and award-winning, unrestored '69 Z/28 Camaro. He is also aware of the need to store other nonautomotive things, such as lawnmowers. He just didn't want these items cluttering up his new play area. He solved this situation by building a hidden area away from his work area and behind



his office for the storage of these items.

As far as the garage is concerned, he has a centrally placed lift with space on all four sides for access to the car with transmission and engine lifts and other necessities. Next, he has provided an abundance of electrical outlets on several circuits so power is easily available. He even added outlets in the ceiling for cord reels and drop lights to make the use of power tools convenient and safe without having cords across the floor. Of course, there are 220-volt outlets for his welder and air compressor, both of which are conveniently located out of the way. There is even a wall-mounted hose reel for his compressor.

John also thought of ordinary car

maintenance by installing an industrial spigot with hot and cold water and another wall-mounted hose reel for washing cars and the garage even in the severe Michigan winters.

Speaking of inclement weather, John is acutely aware of the extremes experienced in Michigan.



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He started his garage planning with concerns for adequate insulation, including an insulating moisture barrier beneath the concrete. The concrete has a light gray epoxy resin coating imbedded with fine silica sand for a nonslip surface. All walls and ceiling are heavily insulated. John did not stop there and installed thick steel/foam/steel sandwich construction doors. The higher door openings allow John to move his lift out into the driveway. The door above the lift hugs the ceiling so John can work under a car comfortably with the doors open. To further control the garage's environment, it is heated and cooled independent of the home.

If you are going to work on your cars, you need tools and places to store them. John solved this with numerous storage cabinets. There are large work benches with storage and, most notable, smaller roll-away chests housing the most frequently used tools that can be moved close to the car. He has one for tune-ups, another for basic tools, and so on. These roll-aways are just the right height to be easily reached when working on the car.

Finally, since John is an active NCRS member, judge, and writer, he has an enclosed 256 square-foot office within his garage. This office houses his computer and communications equipment, and also includes a refrigerator and sink. There is also cable TV in this office, as well as above his work bench so he doesn't miss a race or auction.

So what are some key suggestions

***Having your tools organized like this can save tons of time during a restoration.***





## BY THE NUMBERS GARAGE SPECS



**SIZE** :: 44x58x12 attached garage; 2,552 square feet, less 256 square feet for 16x16 corner office, net garage floor space is 2,296 square feet.

**CONSTRUCTION** :: 2x6 framing for maximum insulation (R-26 walls, R-58 ceiling), custom-built 62 foot-long 12/12-pitch trusses for 58 foot inside clear span (no columns or walls). Fully-finished walls and ceiling painted off-white, five 6x6 Andersen casement windows for plenty of daytime natural light.

**DOORS** :: Openings framed with laminated headers for custom-built oversize 18x8 Taylor sectional insulated overhead doors, 1½-inch-thick steel/foam/steel sandwich construction with tubular seals between sections and vinyl perimeter seals for maximum insulation. Windows in top section of each door for additional natural light. Door in lift bay installed as a "high-lift" with horizontal tracks only 9 inches from the ceiling so the door can be opened fully with a car at maximum working height on the lift. The 8-foot-high opening allows rolling the lift outside on its caster kit when needed. Lift-Master electric door openers.

**FLOOR** :: 10-mil poly moisture barrier on tamped soil, covered with ½-inch-thick 4x8 sheets of high-density closed-cell foam with heavy foil on both sides for insulation and a secondary moisture barrier. Steel mesh on wire stands over that, with a 4-inch-thick concrete slab that provides a fully-insulated, dry, and moisture migration-proof floor. The step area at the front of the garage was poured 60-inches wide instead of the usual 30 inches to provide plenty of space for the main workbenches

and stools.

**FLOOR COATING** :: HomePro Floors steel shot-blasted the floor to clean it and open up the pores in the "skin" to provide the "tooth" for bonding epoxy resin. Two coats, 24 hours apart, of two-part industrial epoxy resin, with the second coat tinted light gray and lightly-sprinkled with fine silica sand for anti-slip when wet. Classic Floor System is absolutely indestructible, hot tires won't mark it or lift it, impervious to all automotive chemicals including brake fluid, very easy to keep clean. The light color and reflectivity just about doubles lighting effectiveness.

**LIGHTING** :: Seven 8-foot twin-tube fluorescent ceiling-mounted fixtures, bank-switched in groups so only the ones needed in a given area need to be on.

**LIFT** :: Cytech DoublePark four-post 7,000-pound capacity lift with 110V offset power unit, caster kit, drip trays, jack bridge, aluminum ramps, and drive-thru capability.

**ELECTRICAL** :: Separate 100-amp service and breaker box, including 220V for compressor and welder, ten 120V circuits for lighting and outlets. Wall outlets everywhere, extras in the ceiling in the work area for cord reels and drop lights to keep cords off the floor. Phone and cable in main workbench area, with wall-mounted TV/VCR.

**STANDBY POWER** :: 18,000-watt Generac fully-automatic natural gas-powered standby generator system (shared with the house).

**HEATING** :: Reznor 125,000-BTU power-vented forced-air gas ceiling-mounted unit heater with electronic

ignition (no pilot flame); could have gone much smaller due to the effectiveness of the total garage insulation system.

**AIR CONDITIONING** :: Mitsubishi 42,000-BTU, high-wall-mounted ductless split system, only requires one 3-inch hole in the wall for refrigerant and condensate drain lines from the inside evaporator/air-handler unit to the outdoor compressor/condensing unit. All functions operated by a hand-held remote.

**WATER** :: Hot/cold water with industrial spigot and 50-foot wall-mounted retracting hose reel in work area, also in wash-up sink in the office.

**FLOOR DRAIN** :: None, prohibited by local codes; floor slab is pitched toward the doors.

**COMPRESSOR** :: DeVilbiss 6.5hp 220V belt-driven oiled compressor, vertical 60-gallon tank, 10.5 SCFM at 90 psi; mounted on rubber body mount cushions for reduced noise/vibration. FRL unit feeds a wall-mounted 50-foot retracting hose reel.

**TOOL STORAGE** :: Craftsman ball-bearing rollaways, main bench area is ball-bearing service carts with casters removed, spanned by a custom-built Formica top. Additional Craftsman and wire-rack storage cabinets and shelves.

**WALL STORAGE** :: White ½-inch pegboard on 1x2-inch framing.

**DECORATION** :: Restored Sunoco 260 gas pump, Eco TireFlator station, drive-in speakers, framed photos and Corvette/Viper/Ferrari automobilia on the walls.

**OFFICE** :: 16x16 fully-enclosed office in the front corner of the garage, with casement windows overlooking the garage area and outdoors. Bank-switched recessed lighting, ceiling fan, built-in computer desk area, custom cabinets and Formica countertops, 16-foot workbench with Masonite top, wash-up sink, under-counter refrigerator, phone and TV/Ethernet cable, wall-mounted TV/VCR, mirrored curio cabinets for die-cast collection.

from a review of John's garage? I am partial to the high opening doors, centrally located lift with room on all sides, and his industrial spigot with a hose reel. Viewing this garage from

any angle, most will agree that it is a winner.

Do you know of a killer garage you would like to see featured here in *Corvette Fever*? You can nominate

that garage by sending an e-mail to [corvettefever.features@primedia.com](mailto:corvettefever.features@primedia.com). The only requirement is that the owner has to own at least one Corvette. **CF**