

# Kawasaki 454 LTD vs. Chevrolet 454 Corvette

*Stoplight-to-stoplight showdown.*





• Cruisers might be the dominant force in motorcycling sales these days, but their origin lies in the four-wheel world. Back in the days of 39-cent, 103-octane gas, the cruiser market was based in Detroit, headlined by monster vee-eights. And one of the biggest, baddest of the breed, the LS4 454, was stuffed under the hood of Chevrolet's 1973 Corvette. Nowadays, though, the hot 454 is Kawasaki's 454 LTD.

Yet despite the 12-year age difference, these two 454s aren't that far removed in their intent. The LTD, from the cut of its muffler to the bend of its handlebar, is built for the urban street scene. And the big-motor Corvette, although billed as an American sports car, was made more for the boulevard than the backroad. Both machines were born and bred for urban prowling, with the occasional stoplight-to-stoplight sortie thrown in for good measure.

A similar intent, however, is as close as these two get, at least in terms of performance. The Corvette's LS4 kicks out 275 horsepower and a tub-thumping 395 foot-pounds of torque, but the rat-motor Corvette is no match for the Mighty Mouse Kawasaki when the lights turn green. The LTD streaks through the quarter-mile in 13.642 seconds at 94.14 mph, quick enough to suck the headlights, windshield and grill smooth out of the Corvette, which could manage only a pitiful 14.980-second/94.73-mph pass.

There's far more to city living than just straightline acceleration and tire smoke, though, and anyone who's been around street racers knows they spend most of their time *bench* racing. And when the conversation turns to specifications, the Kawasaki again holds a big edge. Under that expansive fiberglass hood lies a painfully mundane powerplant: a cast iron, overhead-valve vee-eight that's spent more time powering trucks than it has in any sporting use. The LTD, however, bristles with hardware closer to that of purebred racing machinery: dual overhead cams, four valves per cylinder and a 10,000-rpm redline.

The advantages of the LTD's design show up even more clearly when comparing the relative power output of the two engines. Even the most potent 454, the 460-horsepower aluminum-block LS7, squeaks out only 62 horsepower per liter, whereas the LTD belts out 110 horsepower on a per-liter basis. So much for the old adage about "no substitute for cubic inches."

With a Corvette, you're dealing with cubic feet, too, because that sculpted, Coke-bottle shape takes up a sizable chunk of real estate. Its 15-foot length, coupled with the notorious, where-does-it-end nose, makes the Chevy a real heart-stopper in traffic. The LTD, in contrast, is right at home in heavy traffic, able to snuggle into spaces the

Corvette couldn't fit into after a 60-mph barrier crash. And despite the Corvette's gargantuan dimensions, it carries only two people—the same as the LTD.

Ultimately, though, in this comparison there is no comparison. In performance, specs and style, the LTD simply has it all over the Corvette. And what *that* means is that if you're looking for a quick way down the boulevard, the hot ticket is still a 454; nowadays, though, the name on that engine is "Kawasaki."

## KAWASAKI 454 LTD

Importer: Kawasaki Motors Corp.  
2009 East Edinger Ave.  
Santa Ana, California 92711

Category	street
Suggested retail price	\$1999
Engine type	liquid-cooled four-stroke transverse vertical twin
Valve arrangement	double overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke	72.5mm x 55.0mm
Displacement	454.1cc
Compression ratio	10.7:1
Carburetion	dual 34mm Keihin constant-vacuum
Gearbox	6-speed
Front fork/wheel travel	Showa air-spring, 36mm stanchion tube diameter/5.8 in. (147mm)
Rear shock/wheel travel	dual Showa shocks, 5-position adjustable spring preload/ 4.5 in. (115mm)
Wheelbase	59.1 to 59.1 in. (1476 to 1502mm)
Seat height	29.3 in. (745mm)
Weight	427 lbs. (193.7kg)
Steering head angle	31.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	5.47 in. (139mm)
Best 1/4-mile acceleration	13.642 sec., 94.14 mph (151 km/h)
Warranty	12 months, unlimited mileage
Available colors	Ebony or Candy Persimmon Red

## CHEVROLET 454 CORVETTE

Manufacturer: Chevrolet Motors Division  
General Motors Corp.  
30007 Van Dyke Ave.  
Warren, Michigan 48090

Category	street
Suggested retail price	\$6523
Engine type	liquid-cooled four-stroke 90-degree vee-eight
Valve arrangement	pushrod-operated overhead valves
Bore and stroke	108.0mm x 101.5mm
Displacement	7438.6cc
Compression ratio	8.3:1
Carburetion	one four-barrel Rochester Quadrajets
Gearbox	4-speed
Maximum horsepower	275 bhp @ 4400 rpm
Redline	5500 rpm
Front suspension	Unequal length control arms, coil springs, anti-sway bar
Rear suspension	Independent, trailing arm, transverse strut, fixed-length half shaft, transverse leaf spring, anti-sway bar
Wheelbase	98.0 in. (2489mm)
Weight	3585 lbs. (1626 kg)
Steering type	recirculating ball, linkage booster
Track, front/rear	58.7/59.5 in. (1491/1511mm)
Best 1/4-mile acceleration	14.980 sec., 94.73 mph (152 km/h)
Top Speed (calculated at redline)	122 mph (196 km/h)

All specifications and performance data are manufacturer's claims, not information compiled by CYCLE GUIDE staff.



CORVETTE COURTESY OF JIM STRAIN