

My 1969 GTO Story!

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In high school in the mid-seventies, a fellow student was selling his black 1969 Pontiac LeMans with white interior, which had a 350 engine and 2 speed automatic transmission drive ready, great condition for \$500.00. My dad (who worked for the GM plant when it was in St. Louis) purchased it for me and I drove it for a couple years, then sold it and bought a 1973 Pontiac Grand Prix! That is how my interest in Pontiac muscle cars began!

In 1995 I decided I wanted another Pontiac and set my sights on the 1969 GTO! I looked for several months back when classifieds were in the newspaper and finally found one I was interested in. The car was located in Florissant, MO, owned by a college student. I drove it, put a deposit on it and a week later after he located the title (!), I bought it for \$2,500.00 as a restoration project for my daughter and I. It's condition was fair - rust spots, needed paint job, had 350 engine with 3 speed manual tranny, no air conditioning and manual drum brakes!

In 1996 I joined the GTO club after talking with my friend Don Bright who was also a member. Then, I began looking for a period-correct 400 engine. I found one in a junkyard out of a 1968 Bonneville wagon, and bought it for \$500. From there, after bringing the engine home, I began the process of getting it rebuilt. I contacted Summit racing and told them my story and that my end goal was to be able to be at a stop light next to a Mustang GT 5.0 - and be able to blow his doors off!! They sent me all the parts needed to make it happen!

After I got the engine installed, I began on the body work. Knowing nothing about this, I went to the library and checked out a couple of books on the subject. Then I went to Lowes



and bought a welder! I knew nothing about welding, but after reading - I bought some scrap metal home from work and started practicing. I ended up doing most of the body work myself with the exception of the 2 rear quarter panels - which I took to a body shop to do for me. Then I started sanding and priming the body for paint. After that was done in 1998, a friend painted it for me in his garage - the classic Carousel Red you see today, which actually looks orange!

Then, I decided it was too hard to stop this muscle machine! So, I bought new power disc brakes and installed them. And at the same time, I added air conditioning to the car, I did these things myself as winter projects. That was around 2010. Then a few years later I found a 4 speed transmission to replace the 3 speed and installed it myself!

I started working seriously on the interior about 2015, replacing the headliner, front seat covers and door panels. It made a big difference!

I don't think I would trade my 69 GTO for anything else. It's fun to drive and I'm still amazed when I stop in town for gas or just out driving, the compliments and looks that this 50 year old Goat gets makes it all worth it.

