

GTO of the Month

Terry and Gail Schott's 67 GTO

By Terry Schott



You might say that I was born with Pontiac in my blood. My grandfather started selling Pontiacs in 1926, the first year that they were available. The dealership was known as Fox Creek Garage, on what was then old U.S. Route 66 in Fox Creek, Missouri. It had a one car showroom, wooden floors, and two work/service bays. My father and my 3 uncles all worked for my grandfather in the business. Uncle Harold and Uncle Bud were the salesmen and my dad and Uncle Gil were the service mechanics. Over the years, the business had several names, but as I was growing up it was known as Schott's Pontiac. I grew up in the house next door to the garage. Every morning before school while waiting for the bus I would sweep the showroom floor and help carry out the trash. Around new car announcement in mid September, we would throw away all the old Pontiac brochures and posters. (You know, the stuff we all pay good money for now!) After school my time was spent scraping carbon from piston heads and helping disassemble and clean heads for valve jobs. After all, isn't that what all guys did after school? So my love for Pontiacs runs deep.

My first car, (at the age of 14) was a 1949 Chevrolet with a 3 speed on the column. At weekend gatherings, my cousins and I would drive our cars in the fields close to home. The cars would be driven like little old ladies in front of the parents, but as soon as we were out of their sight...the dust would fly! We worked at putting the cars into skids versus trying to recover from them!

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When I turned 16, I paid \$50 for a flat-head straight 8, 1951 Pontiac. It had fat rounded fenders, a fat sun visor over the windshield and a prism on the dash in order to see the traffic signals from under the visor. (You know; a real chick magnet.)



My longings for a GTO were just that, longings. There was no way I could afford one, much less pay for the insurance. So instead, my next car when I was 17 was an Aquamarine, 1966, 2-door Catalina with a 3 speed on the column and bench seats. Although it was only a 2-barrel single exhaust it did beat a 352 Ford 4-barrel, twice! My buddy Steve whined after the first run, so we did it again. He didn't even stop after the second one...

With cars in my blood, in my junior year of high school I transferred to South County Technical School for their auto mechanics course. Within one week of gradua-

tion, my friend Tom and I decided to join the Army. We spent 3 years in the Construction Engineers and discharged in 1975. Gail and I got engaged and we married in 1976.

In 1983, after 7 years of marriage we built our home and then in 1986 started our family. We have 2 wonderful daughters, Kelly and Jennifer. Along with starting our family I joined the Gateway GTO Club and started going to a few car shows even though we did not own a GTO yet. In March of 1988, I found a 1970 GTO locally. It was advertised as a Judge and had the stripes and spoiler and it had the correct motor, a 400 automatic. When I went to look at the car and checked the numbers it *was* a GTO, but not a Judge. I think I hurt the owner's feelings



when I told him that his car was not really a Judge, because he insisted that it was. The car was priced fair and after a little more talking, I was the owner of a black/black 70 GTO "joker" Judge. Not really what I was looking for, but I couldn't wait



any longer to own a goat. In my haste to buy it, I didn't look as closely as I should have underneath. I learned more about that later.

My one Ford buddy, Dave, had just bought a 1988, 5.0 Mustang and every day he was challenging me to race. In September of 88, we drove them both to Gateway to find out how they ran. We couldn't get paired up side by side so we just had to go by our time slips. I ran my best ET of 15.52 at 93.808 mph. The car had more, but it had no posi and only street tires. It took a lot of brake torque to get that good of a run. I beat Dave on mph, but with his posi-traction and new tires he bested me with 15.50 on his best run. (Fast forward Benton Dragway, 2008; I beat him 2 out of 2! J But it was a close race both times and worth the wait!)

The next day when I got home from work and opened the garage, gasoline was all over the floor. I had flexed the rusty frame enough that it cracked the gas line. After a repair and lot of careful inspection, I decided to sell this car in October of 88.

During the Judge ownership, I was still looking for my dream 67. While looking through the paper, I found a Verdoro Green, 68 GTO in Maryville, IL. It only had 65,000 miles, was

exceptionally clean, and even though it wasn't my 67, I had to have this one. This was May of 88. I still own the car and drive it occasionally but it has an exhaust manifold leak and the radiator is leaking, so it sits.

Still I was looking for my 67. Spring was just around the corner! I got a copy of Hemmings and decided to start looking "away" from the salt belt. I tried a phone inquiry out of Scottsdale, AZ. After several calls and photos, I just wasn't satisfied. The next inquiry, I headed east. I found a 67 that looked promising close to Erie, PA. Road trip! Gail and I left after work on a Friday night and tried to stay in Dayton, OH, but all the rooms were booked at 1 AM and we ended up in Columbus at about 4 AM. A couple hours of sleep and we were on the road again. I met the guy around noon. The car wasn't bad, but it wasn't near what I thought it should have been. It had rust repairs, but they weren't very good. We waved goodbye to that one also and headed back home to work on Monday morning, tired and disgusted.

Our next trip took us South. May of 89, I had seen a 67 red advertised in Hemmings and called on it. It sounded promising. This one was located in Atlanta, GA. We left on a Saturday morning and met up with the guy selling



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the car at noon Sunday. After a careful examination and a test drive, I was SOLD! The car was a 400, 3 speed on the floor, red/red. The carpets were shot and the interior was fair, but overall the car was straight and not a rust bucket. There was no rust on the frame either; I looked this time! Now came the fun part; driving it home.

We left Sunday afternoon heading for home. I was driving the GTO, Gail followed in our car complaining about the blue smoke she had to deal with coming from my new goat. We drove just north of Chattanooga, TN and stopped for the night. The area didn't look the best. I made sure that we parked so that we could see the car from our room. In order to make sure no one else took my new goat, I pulled out the battery and took it to our room. The next morning we got gas and another quart of oil for the main run home. Going up I-24 by Monteagle thru the mountains, I lost sight of Gail at times because of the smoke. Before I made it home I was down to 7 cylinders due to fouling one of the sparkplugs. With an AM radio that didn't work; it made for a long trip.

I drove the car around a little bit over the next few months, but the original motor was tired, so in Dec. of 1990 I pulled the motor. While looking for parts in July of 91, I ran across a 67 parts car in Ware, MO, which I still have,

but that's a whole other story. In April of 1992, I started building a motor for the red 67. It was a 400 bored .030 over with #16 GTO heads and a Ram Air III cam. A special word of thanks to Dan Whitmore and Tony Bezzole; Tony was very helpful in advising me of what to build from his previous experience and was always there to answer any questions I might have. After assembly, Dan Whitmore of Whitmore Engines in Wisconsin helped me work through cooling problems and other issues. Once the bugs were worked out the car made 2 trips to Gateway and 2 trips to MAR in Wentzville that summer. Its best time was at MAR with a 14.17 ET at 97.67 mph.

It was running decent, but now it was time to work on her looks. I pulled the motor, stripped the car out and took it to my buddy's body shop in the spring of 1993. The car was stripped to bare metal and was pretty straight. The rear tail panel was replaced, it got primed and painted and I picked it back up in late summer 1993. While the motor was out of the car, I decided that it would be better to build a motor to run on premium unleaded gas if I wanted to drive it around town. Not wanting to let this motor just sit, in April of 1994 I put it in the 67 parts car previously mentioned. In Oct. of 1994 I ran the parts car in the GTO vs. Corvette drag event at MAR. In the lighter parts car, I lost first round because I broke out,





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but was not too dissatisfied because the car ran a 13.49 ET vs. the Corvette's 14.54.

As you can see I always get side-tracked with other projects but finally in November of 1995, I started putting the red 67 back together. I stayed at it and by October of 1996 it was time for the 2nd motor assembly for this car. I chose another 400 bored .030 over, using small chamber 6X heads. Dan Whitmore did the valve job and installed the guides. This one has a Ram Air IV cam but a compression ratio of 9 to 1, so that I can run premium unleaded gas. In May of 1997 I got to drive it for the first time with the new motor and paint. I finally completed the rest of the car, interior and wheels, in June of 1998; a mere 7 ½ years after starting the project.

