

My First GOAT



Around 1974 (when I was 9 years old) my brother, who was 10 years older, owned a string of muscle cars. One day he rolled up to our house in a 1970 Atoll blue GTO. I was completely amazed with the way it looked and the way it sounded. It was the first time I had ever seen a hood mounted tachometer. After riding in it I was of course convinced it was the fastest car on the planet! He later sold the car for another, but I always remembered it as my favorite. By the time I purchased my first car 10 years later, I gave in to more practical forms of transportation, but always remembered that GTO. I always loved all muscle cars but owning one would have to wait.

In 2006, when I turned 41, I had decided it was now or never and began looking around for a late 60's/early 70's muscle car. It didn't take long before I was only

researching GTOs. After looking at several, I really liked the look of the hidden headlights which narrowed my search to 1968 and 1969 models. I came across a 1969 GTO (a 242 serial) with hidden headlights rear spoiler and of course a hood mounted tachometer. Of all places it was listed on eBay. I had never purchased anything on eBay and was not going to begin with the purchase of a car. Instead of entering a bid, I called the owner whose number was listed on the eBay ad. The car was located in Kansas – 350 miles away. After speaking with the owner several times, I made an offer that he found acceptable. My wife and I headed to Kansas with a certified check for the agreed amount in hand to check it out. I found the car to be as advertised, and it actually ran stronger than I had expected. I drove the car home without incident with my wife following behind.

We enjoyed the car for 2 or 3 years then decided to make some upgrades. The car was far from original (Spectramaster Blue paint, non-original motor, trans, etc.) so I decided that custom modifications were not out of the question, and I wanted to enhance performance and drivability. The motor was a Pontiac 400 and ran very strong (and still does today) so I concentrated on other areas for improvement. It already had PS and PB with discs on the front. The overall gearing was pretty low, and it tached around 3800 when running 70 mph. I swapped the TH400 transmission with a 4-speed overdrive California Transmission 200-R. I also replaced the rear axle with a custom Moser 9" Ford (373 gears, narrowed 2") and disc brakes all set up for a GM A-body. Since the rear brakes were now disc, I replaced the proportioning valve with an adjustable one and swapped out the booster and master cylinder. Doing this caused me to custom hand bend all new brake lines, so I went a head and added a Hurst roll control solenoid for a little tire smoking fun. When the axle went in, I upgraded all of the rear control arms with a Dick Miller adjustable four link set up that included QA-1 adjustable shocks. To improve handling up front, I replaced the front A-arms with Global West tubulars set up for coil over shocks and installed QA-1 coil overs. I did all of the work utilizing only a floor jack and 4 jack stands in my home garage. It was quite a challenge but very enjoyable. The results were awesome, and the car now handles great. I can roll down the interstate at 75 mph at a much more reasonable 3200 rpm.



This car really gave me the GTO fever and lead us to join the Gateway GTO Association and GTOAA. We have added a 1967 coupe (mostly original) and a newer generation 2006 GTO to the Goat Barn. My wife and I truly enjoy the club and joining in on the cruises and other club activities.