

My GTO

By

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When I was growing up, my Dad was fishing and hunting buddy with the local Pontiac dealer. Before it was popular to lease a car, my dad had an arrangement with the dealer that he would purchase a car and trade often. This would give the dealer the option of having a low millage vehicle for resale and Dad would get the latest model to drive for a year. If I recall correctly, we had almost every Grand Prix from 1962 to 1969. This is where my love affair with Pontiacs began. I have been the owner of a number of GTO's dating back as 1964 when I purchased my first one. Since then I have owned a '64, '65, '66, two '67's and a '70.

Obviously, I was very excited when I heard that Pontiac was bringing back the GTO in 2004. Honestly, I was underwhelmed by its styling, as were many others. I always thought Pontiac could have gone a little more retro with its styling and advertising to give more of a tribute to its heritage. Ford and Chrysler did a much better job with their tribute to the past styling, performance and advertising. Even though the styling was not my favorite, I was impressed with its performance even though it had the corporate (Chevy) motor. Pontiac did however pickup the styling and performance in 2005 and 2006. At least the hood scoops and spoiler were back!

After selling my 1966 Corvette coupe, I started giving consideration to purchasing one of the "new" GTO's. St. Louis had been experiencing several really hot summers and I thought it would be great to have a GTO with comfort, handling, performance six speeds and most of all, ice cold AC!



I was aware that Pontiac offered the SAP or Sport Appearance Package installed through its dealers and started looking for more information on the package. There was a brief mention in the basic GTO brochure for 2005. It is described as follows:

“The opposite of stealth: Sport Appearance Package”

“With a car that makes 400 horsepower and has hood scoops standard, “accessories” takes on a special meaning. From the school of automotive design that brought ground effects to motor racing, the GTO Sport Appearance package includes a front fascia with a new lower valance and recessed grille insert, rocker extensions, a custom high spoiler, a rear facial extension, and a deep-sounding mufflers with dual/dual chrome exhaust outlets. In extending GTO’s lines and sonic profile to even sportier dimensions, these items will attract a certain amount of attention. On the other hand, a 400 – horsepower car is not for sneaking up on people. The GTO Sport Appearance Package comes either in Red, Black, Silver or primed, it is available through your local Pontiac dealer ship parts department and is covered under the car’s GM New-Vehicle Limited Warranty.”

I decided that if I were going to start looking for a new GTO, it had to be one with extra styling cues. In January of 2013, I found a silver 2005 with the full SAP package located in Louisville with just 38k miles. It was one of those few nice sunny days early in the year and



Donna and I decided to make a road trip. I knew from discussions with the owner that he had made a few modifications including a ripper shifter, ram air intake, dash mounted gage package, aluminum skid plate and heavy duty stabilizer bar between the strut towers. The owner had retained and included the original parts to put back to stock. After a little negotiation on price we were ready for the trip home.

Because the SAP package was a rare option, information was hard to come by. I started my research by looking through back issues of the "Legend" until I found a Silver SAP GTO on the cover. It was owned by Vic Schreck, President of the SVGTO chapter. I contacted him and he was very helpful by providing additional information on the SAP package. I learned there was actually a small (difficult to locate) separate brochure on the SAP package. Fortunately, I was able to locate one on eBay.



Vic Schreck had purchased the complete package from the dealer when he ordered his 2005 GTO. He said that individual pieces of the package could be purchased separately and that the complete package listed for about \$3,500! He also stated the exhaust system in the package is a MAGNAFLOW by Walker. The package was discontinued by Pontiac in early 2006, making SAP parts very difficult to locate. (However, the recessed grille inserts are now being reproduced, due to their popularity, and are being added by owners to their standard GTO's).

Interestingly, Vic mentioned that, in 2005, there were major delays with the GTO deliveries from Australia and problems at the dock. As a result, the SAP package arrived ahead of the car at the dealerships. He actually became so tired of waiting he had the dealer find another GTO that was already in the States.

Overall, I am very pleased with the car and have put about 6k miles on it without any issues. It is great for those club events during the hot St. Louis summers.

