

## Car of the Month

My 1964 GTO convertible

by John Novelli

I found my 64 GTO convertible scanning Ebay, about four years ago, it was an original car with PHS documents and the number matching motor! The car was at Kentucky Lake the owner stated he purchased the car in 1978 and stored it in his boathouse for 20 years. In 1998 he sent the car out for a paint job. WOW! An original motor 64 GTO convertible SUNFIRE RED white interior!! This is about the rarest of all the GTO colors and very beautiful when done with the modern paint materials. Pontiac had paint problems mid year and canceled the color, then brought it back and canceled it for 65.

I just imagined what I was doing in 1978..... Driving my 66 lemans white, with black interior, chrome reverse and baby moons... just a little air in the hijackers. Cruising White Castle and hanging with my buddies. The thought went through my mind; this guy stored this car for me, for twenty years!! Luck was on my side; these cars didn't exist in my neck of the woods, North County. I remember the first time I saw a 64 GTO convertible it was 1980 at the POCI nationals in Gettysburg PA. It was gold and white the top was down and it had a white taunu cover over the interior. I met Jim Wagners at that meet and he drove my 65 GTO tripower 4 speed around the parking lot.



I knew if I went to Kentucky to get the car I wasn't coming back without it. I made the guy promise me, if I found anything, he forgot to mention we could negotiate some off the agreed price. We arrived and confirmed the motor was correct and then slid a jack under and checked out the rest. I griped about something and busted him another thousand. He licked his wounds and took the cash. I took the car for a drive around the lake.... It was scary, brakes were bad, steering loose, we loaded her up and headed for Missouri.

I remember the muffler fell off unloading it. Then it wouldn't start. That sinking feeling started to come over me..... I laughed it off, pushed her in the garage and started troubleshooting the problems. Before long she was running good enough to take around and have some fun. I always thought of this one as a keeper. There would be plenty of time to restore it, don't rush it just enjoy every turn of the wrench and savor every part purchase. I notice some of the original hardware missing, so I called the seller and asked him if he had any hardware left over from the body shop? He said he did and sent me a ten pound box of hardware. Soon I started replacing the old bolts back where they belong!

The 64 had excellent chrome bumpers and sheet metal, no rust, the interior pretty good. New emblems, hood scoops, chrome door handles and perfect taillights! The grills were the damaged and need to be replaced. I searched for grills and a wood wheel found NOS grills and an original 64 four spoke wood wheel on Ebay. The remote mirror was removed and rechromed.



Early 64 GTO's had the remote mirror mounted on the fender!!

I really never focused much on the 64, while we were getting the 67 ready for the nationals in Dayton. So couple of years past and the 67 GTO won gold. So I keep pushing back the start date on the frame off and need to make the 64 more fun to have around. I added tripower and detailed the motor an added a four core radiator.



Then last fall we pulled the two speed power glide and added a rock crusher four speed. Well the four speed conversion went perfectly. It's like owning a whole new car. With family demands and needing to be around the house more, I brought the car home from the shop to tinker on in the evenings. Recently added Pertronix ignition and Flame thrower coil also added rear seat belts to take the kids cruising. The other night I threw a new taillight harness, replace the flasher and got the blinkers working. The white top was looking dingy and starting to black streak. I had some super vinyl cleaner and it cleaned up real nice and so did the interior also. Next was onto the dash got out my silver paint pen and did the rings on the bezel not bad... then the plastic polish to the cluster lens and it looks like new. Hurst wheels with bullet centers and red line radials look great and dress her out nicely.



My plans are to keep this one, and do the frame off and return to the original color Sunfire Red. Maybe take her to the national and take the gold... but for now just have some fun banging gears and cruising.