

CAR OF THE MONTH TEN YEARS AFTER

By Ken and Kathy Boyer



In August of 2005, we bought our GTO. Kathy and I had been talking about, looking at, and admiring these stealthy little road rockets since the 2004 GTO was announced.

Built in Australia, Holden GM Monaros had been burning up the Outback in the land down under for many years. Sometimes referred to as the “Aussie corvette”, Monaros were well-respected for their potent performance. In their full race form, these cars were dominant competitors in the Australian V8 Supercar series, which was basically a bare-knuckle brawl between Holden GM, Ford, and others. While in Australia on company business, Bob Lutz (GM USA) along with Holden Special Vehicle guys drove/tested the Monaro. At his urging, the cars were reconfigured to meet American standards and became the new era Pontiac GTO’s.

When the 2005 GTO’s arrived with increased power, hood scoops, and traditional-style dual exhaust outlets, it was time to buy.

It took a lot of searching but we finally did locate the exact car that we wanted – a 2005 Mid-



night Blue Metallic GTO with black leather interior, automatic transmission, and 18" wheels. About a year after we had bought the car, we discovered that Midnight Blue Metallic was a one-year only color and ours was 1 of 44 as optioned! That's not even one car per state!

We had contacted 20-25 Pontiac dealers by phone. The answer was always the same – "No, we don't have that particular car" or, sometimes, "Yes we have that car but with a six speed manual transmission" or "with 17" wheels". Several times, aggressive dealers would say, "Yes, I think there's one on the next boat. Come in, put \$500 down, and we'll try to get it for you. Should be about a month". It was beginning to look like our dream car was not going to happen,

We began to consider other options. Black with red interior was very, very cool! Red! – you can't go wrong with a red GTO – Right?! The cyclone grey cars also looked really sharp!

Then, about a month later at 9:30 in the morning, the phone rang and an excited voice on the other end said "Ken, I found your car!" He then described it and said it was at Four Flags Motors In Edwardsville, Illinois. I'm sorry to say I was so excited that I did not write the caller's name down. I remember from our previous conversation that he had said he was a retired coal miner now selling cars at a low volume Pontiac dealership somewhere south of St. Louis on Illinois Route 3. He had spoken of his brand-new 1965 Tri-Power 4-speed GTO. He said it was the "cat's meow" and, even now, he missed it terribly. GTO people are a very special breed. Even though it had been about a month since I had contacted that dealership, that old GTO guy had remembered me, found our car, and called. How cool is that!?!

The rest of that day was just a blur. I called Four Flags and confirmed the car was there, then called Kathy at work. I told her the sticker price and she said, "what are you quibbling about, call them back and make a deal. If we lose that car, I'm gonna shoot you." Well, I know that little lady pretty well and she is a very good shot. Since I am a good husband, I dutifully did what Kathy said and called them back and made a deal that I could live with. That afternoon we drove to the dealer with a cashier's check. After a little small talk, they gave us the keys and told us to go try it out! We fell in love with the car and by 9:00 that night it was tucked



away safely in our garage.

As delivered, all 2005 GTO's are great performance cars. The gutsy LS2 is very smooth and makes good power across a wide RPM range. The upscale interior is quiet and comfortable, and those large

bucket seats are absolutely top-notch. If you have one of these cars (no matter what color or options), you have a limited production high-performance jewel that's 'bad to the bone'.

Our car drove and handled beautifully but, for some motorheads, good enough is never good enough – so eventually we made some mild modifications. JHP Vehicle Enhancements shipped us a very nice set of CV8Z 18x8 wheels from Melbourne, Australia. A set of meaty G-force BF Goodrich KDW 235/40ZR18 tires were installed. A Lingenfelter performance air intake; Kooks long-tube headers and cats. A MagnaFlow catback exhaust; race-ready electric cutouts; Moroso SF-R mufflers with MagnaFlow 4" tips completed the exhaust. PBJ (Performance by Joe) did a nice job with the dyno tune. BMR supplied a lightweight skid plate and stout strut-tower brace. Billet Prototypes provided a catch-can and some really nice low-key underhood details. JHP also sent a dashpod with GM volts and oil pressure gauges. Of course, we retained all of our original parts.

They say time flies when you're having fun. That must be true because, in what seems like the blink of an eye, our 2005 GTO is ten years old.



Well, hell, that means Kathy and I are ten years older too! GR-RRR! We don't move as fast as we used to (a malady that our little goat doesn't suffer from) but we have not stopped having fun with our GTO. We still enjoy cruising and an occasional car show. The Annual Main Street Cruise Night is a local "must attend" event that we never miss. We can easily spend a week of what I refer to as "quality time", and Kathy thinks of as "just a lot of damn work", preparing our GTO for that night. We always have a blast at this event!

GTO's are made to be driven. No matter what you call it – a roadtrip, cruising, or grand touring – it's our favorite way to enjoy our car. We pick some obscure location, usually somewhere in the Ozark foothills, and head out for a day of adventure. After plotting a route on a roadmap, we grab some snacks, cold bottled water, a handful of Rock & Roll CD's, (and a Garmin, just in case we can't find our way home) and we're good to go. No interstates! Just scenic two-lane highways and well-maintained blacktop roads. Kathy navigates and I drive. Our GTO is perfect for this type of driving. It's a sleek and capable grand touring machine!

In fact, it seems like the old adage "GTO – a flying machine for people who can't stand heights" is as true today as it was back in the 60's.

Kathy and I are both very proud to be members of the Gateway GTO Association and the GTO Association of America – a status we hope to maintain for many years to come!

