

My GTO

By

Paul Kondrick



I owe my health club for the fact that I have my GTO.

Back in the early 80's I joined my local health club and the fitness craze. I loved working out and loved the results. The only thing I didn't love was the half hour drive to get there. But after about a year they opened another club within 10 minutes of my house. And that's where I met David.

We started out just talking during our workouts, but that grew to working out and having long conversations about cars in the parking lot afterwards. David had owned a '68 GTO while in college, and proceeded to share with me the history behind the car. He told me about the Big Little GTO book, which I promptly went out and bought. The more I read, the more intrigued I was with owning my own GTO. So I started saving my money. And watching the Classic Cars for Sale section of my local newspaper.

About three years later I had enough saved up and starting looking seriously. My goal was to find a really nice '67, as I really liked the body style. I looked at a number of them, but never really found one that was what I wanted. Then it happened. While looking at the ads I found one that listed both a '64 and a '65. I went and looked at them both. While the '64 was nice, I never got over the need to have a GTO with the vertical headlights. Once I drove the car

it was a done deal, and I took the car home.

It had been, to a large extent, restored. The original red paint had been redone, and motor had been rebuilt with .30 over rings installed. Original 389 with Tri-Power and 4-speed (while the Tri-Power was not original in the car, I also got the original 4-barrel manifold and carburetor). The paint was good, and the top worked well but would eventually need to be replaced. New upholstery and carpeting to boot!

The first place I took the car was to Chuck-A-Burger on one of their Classic Car nights. It was there that I learned about the Gateway GTO Association, and I have been a member ever since.

Fast forward to 1997. I had just taken a really good customer out to lunch, and had driven him there in my GTO. After lunch I asked him if he wanted to drive it back to his place of work. He smiled and said "if I drive it, I won't go back to work at all today!" So I dropped him off and headed home.

On my way to the house I got stopped behind a car that was partially in the left turn lane on Manchester Road. I was stopped for only 10-15 seconds and WHAM!!! Another car hit me from behind. So hard in fact that it pushed me into the car in front of me. At first all I could see was the sky, and I assumed the back of the seat had broken off. I later found out that the front seat bolts had stripped and the whole seat tipped backwards. The woman who hit me had been having an argument with her son in the car, and when she looked up she was into the back of my car!!!

I took my sad-looking car to Jim Novelly, who did wonders with it! He not only put the car back to its original condition, but fixed a couple of body panels that had been incorrectly installed previously. And the woman's insurance company started to balk at the cost of the repair. But my agent came to an agreement with their adjuster and the rest is history. My car was the talk of the club, but for all the wrong reasons.

I have to admit that shortly after that I stopped going to the Club meetings, as they had switched from Thursdays to Wednesdays (my bowling night). And while they are now back to Thursdays, I have not been able to find my way back, although I continue to be an active club member and renew each year.

I still take my GTO out on nice days during warmer weather, and love the looks I get as I drive down the street. It was great fun to take it down to Ted Drewes for the world's best frozen custard last summer! I had waited since high school to have my first Muscle Car, and now I can't imagine my life without it!!!