

GTO of the Month

By
Terry Schott



It was June of 1986 when I joined the Gateway GTO club. I had always had Pontiacs to drive, but I had never been able to get a GTO. I had been married for 10 years and we had started our family, so it seemed like a good time to start looking for one. I really liked the '67 body style, so I thought I'd try to find one of them.

Back then, long before I knew anything about the internet, I had to watch the newspaper ads or from time to time, buy a Hemmings Motor News and look through all of the listings. I watched the local papers and called when I saw anything that might be a possibility.

In May of 1988, I saw an ad in the paper that caught my eye. It was for a 1968 GTO. I didn't really want a '68, but I thought I'd better check it out. The car was close enough being located in Maryville, Illinois and after a phone call to the seller, I was on my way. When I got there, the car was pretty much as he had described it. It was Verdoro Green with a black vinyl top. The car had been repainted but it had the original 400 motor in it and a 4-speed with a console. It had power steering and an AM radio with standard brakes. Not many options on it at all. It had painted wheels with "dog-dish" hubcaps. The black interior looked to be in pretty good shape. I started it up and it sounded good. A careful inspection underneath revealed no rust and a good solid frame. The car really drove nice and after a little discussion on price, I ended up the owner of a '68 GTO. I returned a couple of days later and picked it up and drove it home. The car was very solid and only had 65,150 original miles.



The '68 made it to a few Gateway events. We used to have a car show at Don Darr Pontiac on South Lindbergh and I took it there for a show. I also took it to MAR drag strip in Wentzville. With an open rear end and street tires, I just took off at the tree and floored it. It spun quite a bit and ran 15.60 at 93.55 mph. I always wished it had a "posi" rear end, because I know the E.T. would be a lot better, based on the mph.

I always liked the way the '68 drove, and to be honest, it is more pleasurable than driving the '67 with its standard steering. I later did put a set of Rally II wheels on it to dress it up a



bit. I drove it to an occasional Gateway event, but then in May of 1989, I got my red '67. I did run the '68 occasionally and always kept good gas in it with stabilizer. The more I drove the '67, the less the '68 got driven.

Over time I did do a few repairs to the car. It had a droopy hideaway headlight door, so I ended up replacing the vacuum lines and actuators to fix its problem. I also had to repair the radiator and do a little work on the brakes and rebuild the carburetor. Lately it has developed an exhaust manifold gasket leak at the head that I need to fix. A couple of years ago, while exercising it, I blew the tread off the left front tire at about 50 mph. It didn't do any damage, but I had to put on the spare to limp it home for 5 miles. I'm not sure how old the tires are, but I haven't replaced them since I've had it.

The odometer currently reads 66,900, so I'd really hate to get rid of the car. It will just have to sit and wait till my other projects in the garage are completed. My plan is to restore it as my retirement project. I guess we'll see how that goes.

