

My GTO
By Chris Winslow



I had first become interested in the new GTO when it was initially announced. I was a life long car nut who had never had a real performance car. I decided that it was time to change that when the new GTO hit the scene. Some early trips to the local dealers, however, found them adding “market adjustment premiums” to the already stiff \$34,000 price tag. That convinced me that the best option was to wait a while and see if the market cooled a bit.

By November, the 2004 GTO market situation had changed substantially. By this time, it was a fairly poorly kept secret that the 2005 GTO would have a 50-horse power increase over the 2004 model. This, and the normal seasonal slowdown in the sales of rear wheel drive performance cars had combined to induce the dealers to start making steep discounts off of the sticker prices. This was supplemented by GM with generous cash back offers and financing.

I took a trip to the local Pontiac dealer in St. Peters the Sunday before Thanksgiving to see what offers they had marked on the windshields. I had been there many times before but this time one car in particular caught my eye. It was a red GTO, but not the normal Torrid Red that I was used to seeing. This was a much darker shade of red. It was the only GTO I had seen in this color. A closer look revealed that the color was called Pulse Red. It was a limited edition car with red stitching on the seats and silver face gauges. I decided to come back during the week and take it for a test drive.

The week of Thanksgiving was particularly busy for me and I was not able to make it to the dealer before Thursday. On Friday morning, however, I had the whole day to myself so I headed to the dealer with my then 11-year-old son in toe. When I first arrived, I did not see the car anywhere and I was

sure I had missed my chance. To my relief, I found it sitting off to side of the dealership. It turns out that they had just returned from a local custom wheel shop where they had installed the most hideous set of aftermarket wheels on it that I had ever seen. They were really proud of these wheels and had already slapped a \$2500 dealer added option sticker on the car. It was readily apparent to me that anyone that would stick wheels like that on any car, let alone a car like that, just didn't get it.

I was the only customer in the place and I soon had an anxious salesman nipping at my heels. When I asked to take the car for a test drive, he looked at me like I was crazy. He told me that they did not let customers drive the GTOs because too many people came in just to take joyrides. I was eventually able to convince him to let me take the car on a brief test drive and I was totally hooked. I was able to make a great deal on the car that included losing the ridiculous wheels they had installed for the factory wheels and tires. I had the car in my garage by 6:00 that night. (For those of you that are wondering where Paula was during all this, she was at work. I did call her and ask if it was OK with her if I bought the GTO. There is some question here on the timeline as to whether I called her before or after I had signed the papers. I am pretty sure it was before, but I would really appreciate it if nobody asked my son what he remembers on this subject. It is probably better not to revisit that one and his silence on the subject is a lot more expensive than it used to be).

Those of you who know me know that I am almost obsessive about keeping this car bone stock. My goal is to eventually show this car in a concours show when it gets old enough. I basically want this to be the car that everyone looks to when they are trying to figure out exactly how these cars left the factory. To date I have made exactly 4 modifications to this car, all of which are reversible. They are:

- Installation of a skip shift eliminator (That 1 to 4 shift drove me nuts!!!)
- Replacement of the leaky AC Delco battery with a Red Top Optima battery
- Installation of a dead pedal
- Modification of the left fuel rail cover to prevent chaffing of the fuel line

The dead pedal installation was a custom set up that I made from a spare GTO gas pedal. I built a special bracket that mounts to the floor and kick panel such that it can be removed easily with no evidence it was ever there.

The fuel rail cover mod is one that I have been meaning to share with everyone. As such, I have included more information on that one as the Tech Article of the Month in this edition of the *Hoodscoop*.

