

The Great One and its Little Brother

By

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My fascination with Pontiacs began with my dad's 1968 Tempest sport coupe. He had the car from new until I was about 10 years old. It was our everyday car. Despite the fact that over the years I have always gravitated to 1964 – 67 square bodied GTO's as my favorites I still had fond memories of the Tempest and wanted one if I found a nice original car. My brother Scott's favorite was the 1968. In the process of finding his first car (a highly optioned Nordic blue 1968 Le Mans hardtop) I came upon a 35000 mile completely original (down to the plug wires) Meridian Turquoise Tempest post coupe. It was absolutely stunning but the owner was asking \$6800 for it in 1989. We passed and the car was never sold.

Ten years later while attending a car cruise my wife and I ran across the car again. The owner came to the show with a cardboard for sale sign and the Tempest. I immediately knew it was the same car. This time she was desperate to find a care taker for her baby. She was moving to a house in the country on a long rock road and could not bear to drive it in that dust and rock. She wanted to find a new home for the car. She was more interested in the buyer and what they were going to do with the car than the money she would receive. Apparently she took a liking to my wife and I and we became the new owners in 1999. It was a perfectly preserved original car. The original paint was all intact minus a few scrapes here and there. It was originally sold at Vincel Pontiac in St. Louis. It was a 350 auto, power steering, manual brakes sedan. All aspects of the car were in great condition. It reminded me so much of my dad's car with it's new for 68 body style and the styled beaked chrome bumper.

Some may disagree with my decision, but I converted the car to a 4-speed, upgraded



the motor to HO specs, added a posi-traction carrier with 3:55 gears and installed a hood tach and AM/FM radio. I used all the proper items from 1968 so the car appears as it could have been ordered. It has had many different wheel combos through the years including dog dishes, rally II, Hurst, and currently rally I wheels. All of which had Firestone redlines.

My brother Scott kept his Le Mans for all those years until about 3 years ago when it was destroyed in a serious accident. He walked away with minor injuries which was a testament to the cars design. Unfortunately there isn't enough space for that story here. About a year and a





half later we were able to find him a replacement. This time he went the GTO route with a solar red hardtop, parchment top and interior. The car was essentially a rust free original from out west. It was highly optioned with turbo 400, air conditioning, power steering, brakes, console, 8-track, AM/FM, rear defrost, tilt, gauges, trunk

release, remote mirror, rally II wheels, hideaway headlamps. After a thorough cleaning and some paint and dent work we decided to convert it to a 4-speed as well. This was done with all the proper 1968 components that could have been originally ordered on the car. Scott enjoys driving the car and joined the Gateway GTO association this last fall. Even though I am the older brother it turns out with this pair of cars, Scott wound up with "The Great One" and I have the little brother!

