

DADDY, why did you buy that piece of Junk?

By

Roger and Judy Mac Zura



That is what my eleven-year-old daughter asked me as I pulled into the drive way with my "'66 GTO dream come true", on a car dolly. The year was 1994, and I had sold my last muscle car in '77. I had a brand new set of (no longer made) ET Diamond spoke wheels, still in the box that I had purchased in '78, in the hopes of someday mounting them up and cruising again. Yes, this car was in bad shape, but I had been doing body and paint as a side line since I was 15 years old, so I figured a few pieces of sheet metal, lead, bondo and whatever else it would take to throw some paint on it, along with a carb rebuild, would put us on the street.

Then we attended our first GTO car show hosted by the Woodward GTO Tigers. I turned to my wife and said our daughter was right! I had purchased a piece of JUNK! At that point I realized that this could not be a quick fix. I joined the Woodward GTO Tigers and GTOAA, knowing I could get a lot of help from like- minded car guys. Rather than junk out a '66 HT 4 sp factory A/C car, I began the ordeal of the parts and parts cars chase. Once I got into the restoration I decided to do what we call in aviation, a zero time rebuild. I wanted a car that I could get into and drive anywhere without the worry of something going wrong. That meant every component including wiring was replaced or rebuilt. All patch panels were butt welded except for the two over laps in the trunk replacement floor. Then every body part and chassis



component were chemically DIP stripped and all of the sheet metal except for the two NOS front fenders were E-Coated.

Now, I expected a few "bumps in the road" on the way to this complete restoration.





Here are a few of the more memorable ones. One would think that NOS fenders would be great, but we found out that I would have been better off using the old ones for a better fit. We searched all over the country looking for someone to refinish our upper door revel moldings. After finding the right place, (but not price), and waiting, they finally arrived. One look told the story; the shipping company had crushed the box and moldings. Start all over again! Then there was the NOS ignition switch snafu. The first time we powered up the system the ballast resistor wire went up in flames, (due to a bad switch), so I had to rebuild the wire harness. There was also the case of the missing right rear oil galley plug in the new short block that we purchased. We did manage to replace it without pulling the motor. Three times we had to remove the alternator and power steering assembly to access the left head freeze plug that kept leaking. Oh, let's



not forget about removing half the front end due to a bad A/C POA valve. Did I forget to mention the overflow of sweat from my painter's gloves onto the quarter panel as I was applying the final color coats? I'm telling you these problems because I don't want you to be discouraged with your pride and joy when "things happen".

We (I say with my lovely wife's help and her pay check) built a rotisserie and panel painted all parts in our garage. We originally were going to paint the car red, black, blue or anything but the original platinum with dark blue interior which we thought was not very attractive. Then we noticed that there weren't that many platinum '66's around. So we began the arduous task of mixing all types of silver to get a color as close to factory as possible but with some eye appeal. After the 24th batch and spray-out, my wife and daughter both agreed this was indeed the color. Arnie Beswick says, "It sort of reaches out and grabs ya". Even though the car is not numbers matching, I tried to keep it as stock and period looking as possible and built it the way I would have done it, if I could have ordered it new by adding, tri- power, power brakes, tilt steering, wood wheel, rally gauges, tinted windows, 3:23 posi, and sway bars. It drives some of the purists up a wall when they see the ET's. (Now a set of American T-70's). Is it a Trailer Queen? Well yes and no! Because we live a mile and three tenths down one of Michigan's finest dirt and chloride roads, we must trailer, but that has not stopped us from putting over eight thousand miles on the car since its completion in late 2001. Up to one third of those miles were put on Woodward Ave.



During the build we acquired several parts cars. One of which was a Marina Turquoise H/T which, after evaluating, was too nice to part out. So what started out to be a quick rebuild turned into a total frame off restoration as well. We were scheduled to have it finished for the 2013 co-vention in Dayton, but that did not happen. Instead we cleaned up the Platinum '66 and took it, as the concurs entry. After 13 years and 8,500 miles we pulled off the third Gold award in both GTOAA and POCI for that car.

Not bad for a piece of junk!

In 2014 we took the Marina Turquoise '66 to Pittsburgh, for the GTOAA Nationals and brought home a Gold award. We have since sold the car to a gentleman in Chicago.

Last year we decided to finish our Capri Gold '65 H/T. We took it to GTOAA and POCI conventions and brought home Gold awards again.

That car is another story for another day.

Roger & Judy Mac Zura

I am originally from Granite City, and joined the club, GATEWAY GTO, because we are always drinking Beer at Eddies Tavern or hanging out at various places with the club. I still have family and friends in Granite, including Cecil (high school classmates) and Annette Morton.

