



Alan Finkenbinder's Pontiac Story



My addiction to Pontiac's By Alan and Liane Finkenbinder

I grew up on a large family farm located 6 miles west of Odell, Illinois. It was an active farm, farming over 600 acres of ground (considered large in the 60's) and operating a couple of custom hay balers and several corn shellers. My dad also operated a repair shop on the farm and was the township road commissioner for a while. We usually had several hired hands to help out with the custom work.

In the shop my dad rebuilt/modified engines, tractors, trucks and almost anything requested of him including body work and painting. I remember even building a stock car or two for the local track in Fairbury. He would shorten or lengthen truck frames, drive shafts and would even weld up cracked cast iron blocks/heads.

As a young boy (from a family of 6) we were introduced to all things mechanical by helping out in the shop and farm operations. We began with Shetland Pony's & Horses and eventually go-karts & Minibikes. Later while helping out with the corn shellers and balers we would spot old cars left sitting on the neighboring farms. Eventually we started dragging some of them home to see if we could get them running to drive around on the country roads. (I think this is where my collecting began). In junior high we began to read the Hot Rod magazines and noticed a local legend racing Pontiac's. (Farmer Beswick) Since living near the town of Pontiac, IL. and the aspirations to have something other than a Chevy or Ford, we began favoring Pontiac's, especially the GTO's.

My first licensed car was a 65 GTO in which I installed a 400 engine at 15 years old. It wasn't long and cars came and went, attended college, career, engagement and marriage in Sept of 1978 (Liane). I then sold everything and upgraded to a Grand-Prix to begin family life. It wasn't long though and I began collecting cars again as we had purchased a farm-stead which included several large (Empty) farm buildings. Early on I collected 20's & 30's cars such as Packard's, Franklin's, etc., but eventually went back to my passion of Pontiac's.

My collection has grown over the years but didn't include a GTO Judge. To resolve that I began looking for one and eventually purchased a 69 Carousel Red Judge in Sept of 1998. Liane and I traveled to Bryon, IL. to look at the car. The car was owned by a gentleman who had recently lost his son due to an accident and had reluctantly decided to sell it. It came equipped with the 400 RAIV and had been converted to an automatic with hand controls to accommodate his Vietnam war injuries. He had even grudge raced it at the Bryon drag strip with hand controls! Lucky for me he had saved the original steering column, 4 speed trans, console and all the misc. parts to put it back to original. I need to note that if it were not for Liane I may not have come to terms while negotiating the price on this one. We were only 500 apart and neither of us would give in. After several days Liane finally got tired of me whining about it and instructed me to just pay the price and get it. Wow what a great wife!

We did take the car to several area cruise-ins, but found we couldn't go far with the 390 gearing. It was on display in the Pontiac/Oakland Museum and in front of The Bank of Pontiac for some time and has been to a couple of the first GTO AA Regional shows in Pontiac. It has been in storage for many years but due to the coaxing of several Gateway GTO members (No names here) and my grandsons, I have it out once again. Hopefully soon I will find the time to reunite the 4-speed back to as originally equipped. (Been saying that for 20 plus years now!)

I have always stated that when I retire, I will start reducing the size of my collection and up-grade in quality. Moving in that direction last fall, (Oct, 2021) I actually sold 8 cars from my

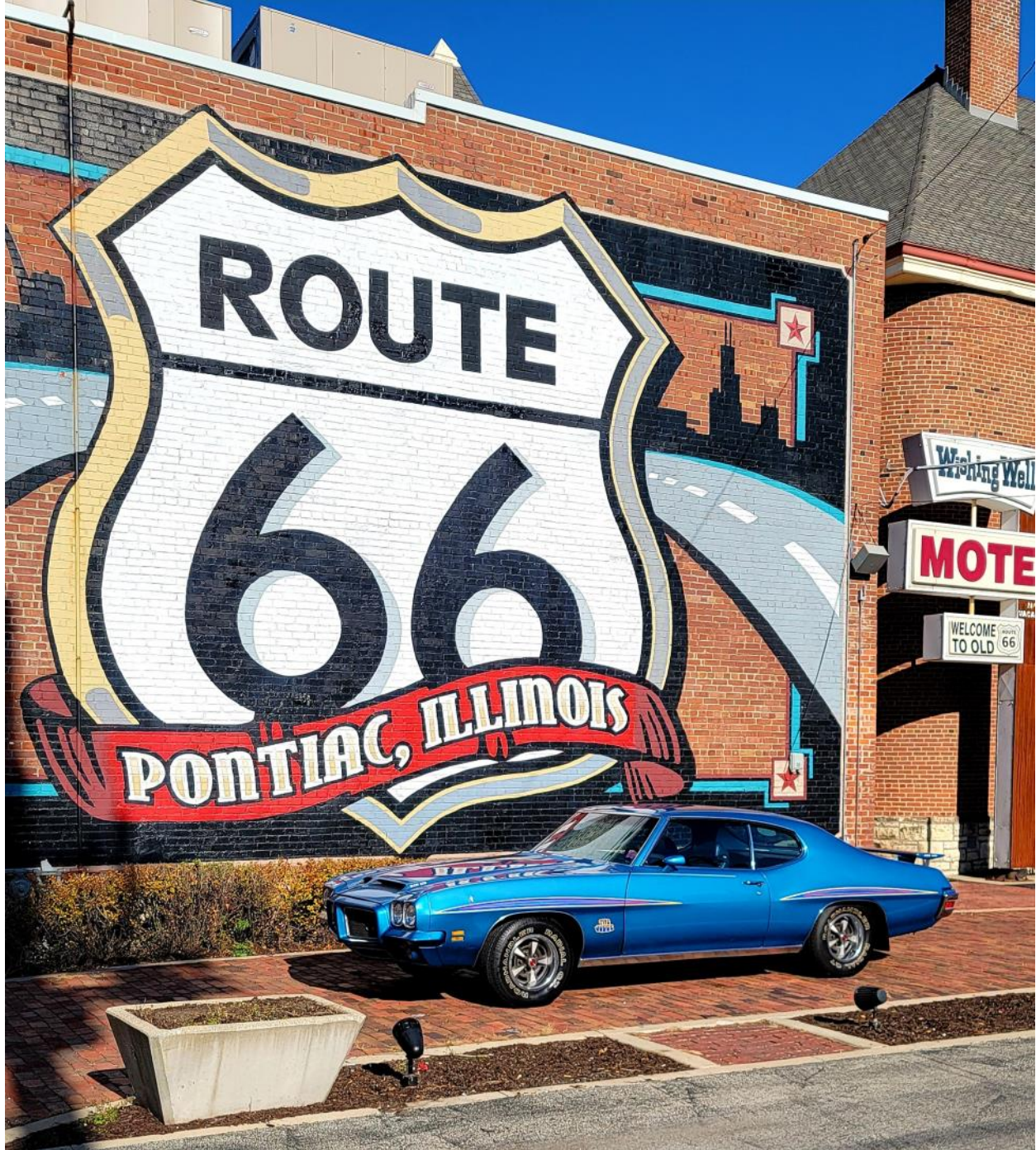


collection including the low mileage original 1968 (Verdoro Green) GTO. To follow through with my plan and to help with my seller's remorse I began searching for an up-grade. I eventually located an original (numbers matching) Lucerne blue 1971 GTO Judge with 455HO, 4-spd and A/C. It certainly has helped out with my seller's remorse as well!

This summer (June/July) I let 2 more cars go continuing with the reduction of the collection. I do admit I also added 1 as well! Liane and I traveled to Gainesville, GA. to pick up a 1989 Firebird Banditt II with plans to attend the Firebird Fest 2023 in St. Louis. In the future my collection will continue to decrease in numbers and gain in quality. At least, that's my plan and I'm sticking to it! (Ha Ha!)

Someday I need to document all the cars I have owned and or still have in my collection. I have been very blessed to be able to have owned all the cars, tractors, Roof mowers, etc. and that Liane tolerates and actually enjoys the activities we attend and the friends we have met throughout the years.

Alan Finkenbinder's Pontiac Story



Alan Finkenbinder's Pontiac Story

