

Next Generation

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INTRODUCTION BY THOMAS A. DeMAURO

What's your kid driving?

Pontiac

Notes

Calling All Cars was the title of my rant (Full Throttle), which ran in the August 2000 issue. I challenged the 15- to 22-year-old readers to stand up and be counted as the future of the Pontiac hobby. The deal was to take a good color photograph of your Pontiac

and tell us why you are so into it. You kept your end of the deal so I'm keeping mine. You will find eight prime examples of mostly youth-owned Pontiac power contained in the next four pages. In the April issue you'll see more. Just when you may have begun to lose hope in the future of our hobby due to the onslaught of sport compact cars in high school parking lots across the nation, these young men are here to tell you that Pontiacs are still the choice of the younger generation. Read on to find out why.

Appropriately Corn-colored

Centerville, Iowa resident Jeff McElvain's 1994 Trans Am GT received a factory bathing in seldom seen Sunfire Yellow, and the car has remained unchanged since, save for a K&N air filter. Truth be told, some body panels needed to be replaced after it was wrecked by its previous owner at the 13,752 mile mark. The front-end damage was an easy fix, though, and soon enough Jeff had it on the road. The automatic, T-tops, leather seats and CD player give Jeff all the right equipment for trollin'. While just 21 years old, he's owned three Trans Ams since the age of 16.

The other Pontiac in the picture is just as hot, but in a different sense. That's because 18-year-old brother Chris' 1994 Trans Am GT is not only white, it's a convertible. These boys sure love Pontiacs and are currently searching for an old GTO, Trans Am or other classic Poncho to restore. Special thanks to Burt Reynolds and Sally Field for sparking these kids' interest in Pontiacs (this was a common theme for most of the young readers). Now, not only can these Iowa brothers sit on the porch and watch their dog run away for five days straight, but they catch him if they want to, with such quick LT1-powered rides.



A Standout



This title refers to the fact that Matt Allyn is standing outside his '65 Tempest (um, sorry) and to the fact that his ride is a 4-door. Most kids prefer 2-doors but, hey, more doors are more convenient. Now 16, Matt bought his Pontiac in the summer of '99 from a man who used it as an occasional cruiser. Before that, it belonged to a woman who drove it daily and had installed upgraded brakes and dual exhaust. Its original owner purchased it in August of '65 and equipped it with the 2-bbl. 326 automatic tranny and very few options. He kept it for 30 years, during which time it sat in a garage developing rust spots on the body and in the trunk.

These days, this Tempest is a respected member of the local POCI chapter for Maple Grove, Minn. Having had an interest in Pontiacs all his life, what really attracted Matt to this model was the styling, specifically its stacked headlights. He's cleaned up the 326 and added some personal touches since buying it, occasionally driving it to a car show. "And now after its winter hibernation, it's looking and running better than ever," Matt said. Who says 4-doors can't be fun?

This One is OK.



Meaning Oklahoma. Of course a 1970 Firebird is much more than just okay, and 20-year-old owner Richard Jenen has improved upon his in grand fashion. He had the 400 built by Creitz Automotive, who also installed a Comp Cam and an Edelbrock intake and carburetor. Bolted to the heads are coated Hedman Hedders that feed into dual exhaust with Flowmasters. Ice cold A/C and an automatic transmission make for a comfy cruiser. Originally green-on-green, the Bird now sports a black interior and wears custom-mixed pearl blue. Coming soon are upgraded brakes with cross-drilled rotors, as well as 3.55 gears.

Realizing that he could not afford an LS6 Chevelle, Richard began his search for a '70-73 Camaro or Firebird and found this one. He says a lot of people don't know what it is, and he now has a license plate that reads 70 BIRD, just so people would stop asking what year Camaro he's driving. His brothers are Pontiac fans; one of them owns a T/A from each generation sans the first, and the other drives a 1999 Grand Prix GTP. This Pontiac passion that these boys share stems from their parents who lovingly cared for a '69 LeMans. Looks like all is OK in Oklahoma.

That's how 23-year old Jeff Meracle of Dousman, Wis. describes his addiction. He wanted a GTO since the age of 10, and finally got one after high school graduation. It's a '67 hardtop with a hood tach to keep tabs on the 400 HO engine's revs. The Goat also touts a close ratio 4-speed and (originally) 4.33 gearing. Though currently black, it will soon be repainted in its original color, Signet Gold Metallic. Since purchasing the GTO four years ago, Jeff has rebuilt the engine, restored the interior and rebuilt the rear end installing an Auburn limited-slip unit and 3.90 Richmond gears.

Jeff's fascination with Pontiacs stems from his recollections of his father's '65 GTO, which is still in the family's garage. The Meracles also own a Pro-Street '76 Firebird and a '79 Trans Am Special Edition and Jeff is considering adding a 2000 Grand Prix to this stable. A recent college graduate, Meracle is a member of GTOAA and the Original GTO Club and has worked as a parts consultant at a Pontiac dealer for the past two years. "I have about 20 t-shirts and my house is filled with posters and tons of Ertl die-cast cars, all Pontiacs. I am living proof that the Pontiac tradition is alive and well in my generation."

Pontiacitis



Appropriately **Red**

There is no more perfect a Pontiac color than red. The Henrys of Galesburg, Ill. like as much of it as possible. 22-year-old Dustin's 1965 GTO is powered by a '66 421 with #62 heads, a Comp Cams solid stick and dual 500 cfm carbs atop an Edelbrock P-65 intake. An M-21 4-speed turns the 12-bolt, 3.73-gear, posi-equipped rear. This Indian took second place at the 1996 POCI Convention in Moline in the Modified Class and is a family project that started off with Chevy power back when Dustin was just 13. See, age does bring wisdom.



The other two Ponchos are near-identical-looking Firehawks. Both have 6-speeds, 3.42 gears and graphite-colored interiors. But Dustin's '96 (right) features leather, while 18-year old Clay's '94 has cloth. Clay's has also been updated with '96 chrome wheels and SLP fog lamps. Dustin notes that his '96 has never seen a raindrop and is only one of 47 made that year. Not pictured is his wife's 1999 Grand Prix GT. Why? Maybe it's not red.

Does anyone else find it interesting that these two guys have the same initials, are the same age (22), live near Orlando, Fla. and both drive a LeMans? Hmmm. The red '70 belongs to David "Pontiac" Bonaskiewich and its unique look stems from painted bumpers, Centerline wheels and a fiberglass GTO hood. Underneath it is a 400 out of a '77 T/A, acquired for \$150, transmission included. The motor was rebuilt with the help of his father, and now sports #16 heads, TRW forged pistons, a Crane cam and an Edelbrock intake and carb. Backing the powerplant is a Turbo-350 with a shift kit, which abuses the remainder of the driveline including the 2.73 open rear. Says David, "I'll make sure the Pontiac hobby gets to other young people, even if I have to shove a Ram

Dees Be

LeMans

bet the other will soon be close behind it if the trend in similarities between the friends continues.

Air IV cam through the windshields of their Honda Civics!" The other D.B., Darrell Blankinsop, owns the 455-equipped '72. Speed parts include TRW forged pistons, a Ram Air IV cam and a Holley 650 Double Pumper atop an Edelbrock Performer intake. The Chevy 12-bolt posi rear is fitted with 3.73 Richmond gears and at the leading end of the driveshaft is a Turbo-400 trans. Inside you'll find a custom tweed interior with AutoMeter gauges and RCI buckets. All of the work (which was done completely by the owner) pays off to the tune of 13.28-second quarter-mile times on street tires. It looks like one of "Dees Be LeMans" is quite a mover. I'll



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Kenneth Barta of Indian Head Park, Ill. (an appropriate town name for a Poncho fan) wrote us a book on his experiences with Pontiacs. Here's a quote referring to our Calling All Cars article: "I must say you hit a nerve; the article was almost insulting, because I ooze Pontiac. I must tell you that Pontiac adrenaline runs through my veins as well as my father's and brother's. I consider myself a true gear head, speed freak, musclecar-loving, all-American kid." Pontiacs have run in the family ever since his father got his driver's license. Dad's owned a '64 Catalina, '71 Ventura, '78 GP, '85 Fiero 2M4, '90 Grand Am, '87 GP, '94 GP, '97 GP GT and '99 GP GTP, with which Kenneth claims to have hit 106 mph in a cornfield. Pictured here is Kenneth's first car, an '86 GP he named Obsession, which had a 3.8-liter V6. He has since purchased a '98 Grand Am GT called the Green Hornet, with a 3.1-liter V6. Kenneth also told us all about his friends'

a Lifer



Pontiacs, and all of the old and new Pontiacs he'd like to own one day. "Pontiacs have the looks and power to put all the other manufacturers to shame. If my story is not a testament to Pontiac loyalty and blood lines, then I don't know what is!" Indeed.

Earth Shaker



Though not in the usual sense. Scott Harwerth of Kansas City, Kan. is 16 years old and has a window-rattling stereo system in his 1968 Pontiac Tempest Custom. It involves a Sony deck (with a 10-disc changer) driving two 6x9-inch Kenwood Elexon speakers and two 2 1/2-inch JL Audio tweeters, as installed by Santa Fe Auto Sound. Later on, Scott added a 15-inch JL Audio W6 subwoofer with a

400-watt Kenwood amp; these he installed himself, a project that he says was a bit involved, but fairly easy once he figured it all out.

This Pontiac "sat in a barn for most of its life under a lot of quilts" which explains its excellent condition. A 1987 repaint didn't hurt either. The 350 engine has a new Rochester 2-bbl. carburetor, as well as new ignition parts and a new dual Walker sport exhaust. The A/C belt was also replaced, as were the hoses, which Scott says were so brittle they crumbled in his hands. "Now I am just driving and enjoying it. I have received so many compliments," he explained. Well, here's yet another one, Scott, because your car is certainly good enough for the pages of HPP. Just one tip: have that crooked license plate checked out. If it gets rattled off by all the noise emanating from within, you could be looking at a pricey ticket, son. 🐸