

PontiAction

PONTIAC HISTORY

PONTIAC HISTORY CONTINUES

Pontiac 1961–1970

Most of Pontiac's models built during the 1960s and 1970s were either styled like, or were siblings to, other GM makes (except Cadillac). However, Pontiac retained its own front and rear end styling, interiors, and engines.

The 1961 models were similarly reworked. The split grille returned, as well as all-new bodies and a new design of a perimeter-frame chassis for all its full-size models (something which would be adopted for all of GM's intermediate-sized cars in 1964, and all its full-sized cars in 1965). These new chassis allowed for reduced weight and smaller body sizes. It is interesting to note that the similarly styled Chevrolet still used the radically different "X" frame in the early 1960s.

But a complete departure in 1961 was the new Tempest, one of the three BOP (Buick-Olds-Pontiac) "compacts" introduced that year. Toward the end of the 1961 model year, a fancier version of the Tempest, called "LeMans" was introduced. A mispronunciation of the famous 24 Hours of Le Mans auto race in France was emphasized.

All three were uni-body cars, dubbed the "Y-body" platform, combining the frame and the body into a single construction, making them comparatively lighter and smaller. All three put into production new technology that GM had been working on for several years prior, but the Tempest was by far the most radical. A seven-foot flexible steel shaft, rotating at the speed of the engine, delivered power from the front-mounted engine to a rear-mounted trans-axle through a "torque tube." Because it was curved when installed, the so-called "propeller shaft" was dubbed "rope-shaft." The design's father was none other than DeLorean, and its advantage was twofold: first, the car achieved close to a 50/50 weight balance that drastically improved handling; and second, it enabled four-wheel independent suspension. This was a feature that no other American car could match save the Corvair, as well as eliminating the floor "hump" that usually came with front-engined rear-drive cars.

Though the Tempest's transaxle was similar to the one in the Corvair, introduced the year before, it shared virtually no common parts. GM had planned to launch a Pontiac version of the Corvair (dubbed "Polaris"), but "Bunkie" Knudsen—whose niece had been seriously injured in a Corvair crash—successfully argued against the idea. The Polaris design apparently made it to full-scale clay before it was cancelled. The Tempest won the Motor Trend Car of the Year award in 1961—for Pontiac, the second time in three years. DeLorean's vision has been further vindicated by the adoption of similar designs in a slew of modern high-performance cars, including the Porsche 928, 924 and 944, the Corvette C5, and the Aston Martin DB9.



1961 Tempest

PREZ SEZ:

Well, Hot August Nights is getting close. There are a lot of car shows out there, almost every week between then and now. Jim & Cecilia, Hugo & Susan and Dale & Jacque spent a weekend at the Lovelock car show. Naturally Jim and Hugo won trophies, but yours truly got Zippo. I did take the '39 instead of the '53, maybe that had something to do with it. I did find out the '39 is pretty road worthy; had no troubles at all. It was a lot of fun and the people in Lovelock are very nice. If anyone attended the Reno HAN show downtown and won awards, they can also pay a buck along with Jim and Hugo.



Dale Lowery

Our next meeting is on the grass at A&W Wed., June 17. You probably already saw the e-mail, so be sure to get your Pontiac out and enjoy the fun. We will discuss plans for our Summer HAN Kickoff Party. The details are still being worked out. If you have suggestions bring them along on Wednesday. I had an interesting phone conversation from a gentleman in Las Vegas with a 1955 Pontiac Chieftain convertible, who's looking to have it restored. He thought Reno might be better than the luck he has had in Vegas. He said everyone in Vegas thinks they are movie stars. I have his info if anyone has a suggestion that I can pass along to him. See everyone on the 17th.



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EDITOR'S CORNER

PontiAction is the official newsletter of the Silver State Chapter of the POCI. We need members to submit articles, jokes and life experience stories. New members, we would like to hear your car stories. All articles are appreciated. Let me hear from you. **LET'S TALK PONTIAC**. Submissions are due on the **FIRST** day of the month. Submissions received after that will be in the next newsletter. Submit to: nevadabird@charter.net **OR** **MAIL TO:** Jacque Lowery, 12520 Westridge Dr., Reno, NV 89511



(continued from Page 1)

Unless customers checked an option, the Tempest's power-plant was a 194.5 Ci inline-slant-four-cylinder motor, derived from the right bank of the venerable Pontiac 389 V8, enabling it to be run down the same production line as the 389, saving costs for both the car's customers and Pontiac. Pontiac engineers ran early tests of this motor by literally cutting off the left bank of pistons and adding counterweights to the crankshaft, and were surprised to find it easily maintained the heaviest Pontiacs at over 90 miles per hour. In production, the engine received a crankshaft designed for just four cylinders, but this didn't completely solve its balance issues. The engine gained the nickname "Hay Baler" because of its tendency to kick violently, like the farm machine, when its timing was off.



The aforementioned Buick 215 V8, was ordered by less than two percent of its customers in the two years it was available, 1961 and 1962. Today, the 215 cars are among the most sought-after of all Tempests.

In 1963, Pontiac replaced the 215 with a "new" 326 which was really a 336 with a bore of 3.78 and stroke of 3.75 (same stroke as the 389), an iron block mill that had the same external dimensions and shared parts with the 389, but an altered, reduced bore. The response was that more than half of the 1963 Tempests and LeMans (separate lines for that one year only) were ordered with the V8, a trend that did not go unnoticed by management. The next year, the 326 would become a true 326 with a new bore size of 3.72. The Tempest's popularity helped move Pontiac into third place among American car brands in 1962, a position Pontiac would hold through 1970. Pontiac capitalized on the emerging trend toward sportier bucket-seat coupes in 1962 by introducing the Grand Prix, taking the place of the Ventura which now became a trim option on the Catalina. Although GM officially ended factory support for all racing activities across all of its brands in January 1963, Pontiac continued to cater to performance car enthusiasts by making larger engines with more power available across all model lines. For 1963, the Grand Prix received the same styling changes as other full-sized Pontiacs such as vertical headlights and crisper body lines, but also received its own squared-off roof-line with a concave rear window, along with less chrome. This concave rear window would be duplicated on all Tempest/LeMans four door intermediates in 1964-1965.



1962 Grand Prix



1963

For 1964, the Tempest and LeMans' trans-axle design was dropped and the cars were redesigned under GM's new A Body platform; frame cars with a conventional front-engine, rear-wheel-drive layout. The most important of these is the GTO, short for "Gran Turismo Omologato," the Italian for "Grand Touring, Homologated" used by Ferrari as a badge to announce a car's official qualification for racing. In spite of a GM unwritten edict against engines larger than 330 Ci in intermediate cars, DeLorean (with support from Jim Wangers from

Pontiac's ad agency), came up with the idea to offer the GTO as an option package that included a 389 Ci engine rated at 325 or 348 horsepower. The First true "Muscle Car"? Many will argue it to be the 1964 Pontiac Tempest LeMans "GTO". Even Pontiac itself warned: "To be perfectly honest, the Tempest "GTO" is not everyone's cup of tea. ... It's suspension is firm, tuned more to the open road than to wafting gently over bumpy city streets. It's dual exhausts won't win any prizes for whispering. And, unless you order it with our lazy 3.08 low-ratio rear axle, its gas economy won't be anything to write home about." Well, apparently, one man's warning is another's ringing endorsement. Pontiac had hoped to sell approximately 5,000 of the 1964 Tempest GTO's and was overwhelmed when they actually sold 32,450 of them: 18,422 2-Door Hardtops, 7,384 Sport Coupes and 6,644 Convertibles were produced in 1964. The "GOAT", as it was affectionately referred to, generated a cult following and surprised all of its competition!



***For the man who wouldn't mind riding a tiger
if someone'd only put wheels on it—Pontiac GTO***

The entire Pontiac lineup was honored as Motor Trend's Car of the Year for 1965, the third time for Pontiac to receive such honors. The February, 1965 issue of Motor Trend was almost entirely devoted to Pontiac's Car of the Year award and included feature stories on the division's marketing, styling, engineering and performance efforts along with road tests of several models. Due to the popularity of the GTO option, it was split from being an option on the Tempest LeMans series to become the separate GTO series. On the technology front, 1966 saw the introduction of a completely new overhead camshaft 6-cylinder engine in the Tempest, and in an industry first, plastic grilles were used on several models.

The 1967 model year saw the introduction for the Pontiac Firebird pony car, a variant of the Camaro that was the brand's answer to the hot-selling Ford Mustang. The true pony king was the 400 V8 (the same as the GTO) which rated 325-hp. This was also offered with the optional Ram Air, which featured a different camshaft. Full-sized cars got a major facelift with rounder wasp-waisted body lines, a name change for the mid-line series from Star Chief to Executive and a one-year-only Grand Prix convertible.

1968 introduced the Endura 'rubber' front bumper on the GTO, the precursor to modern cars' integrated bumpers, and the first of a series "Ram Air" engines, which featured the induction of cold air to the carburetor(s) for more power, and took away some of the sting from deleting the famous Tri-Power multiple carburetion option from the engine line up. Full-sized cars and intermediates reverted from vertical to horizontal headlights while the sporty/performance 2+2 was dropped from the lineup.

For 1969, Pontiac moved the Grand Prix from the full-sized lineup into a G-body model of its own based on the A-body intermediate four door modified from 116 inches to 118 inches wheelbase chassis, but with distinctive styling and long hood/short deck proportions to create yet another niche product – the intermediate-sized personal-luxury car that offered the luxury and styling of the higher priced personal cars such as the Buick Riviera and Ford Thunderbird but for a much

lower price tag. The development of the car really has an interesting twist. Pete Estes and Delorean needed a car to take the place of the sagging sales of the full size Grand Prix, but the development cost of the car was too much of a burden for Pontiac division alone, so Delorean went to his old boss now at Chevrolet to gather support for the development cost of the new "G" body Grand Prix. Estes agreed to share in the cost and allow Pontiac to have a one year exclusivity on this new car; the next year Chevy would follow with its version which was called Monte Carlo. The new Grand Prix was such a sales success in 1969 as dealers moved 112,000 units – more than four times the number of Grand Prixes sold in 1968.



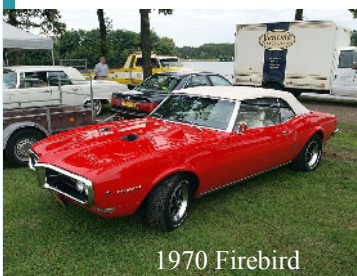
1969 Grand Prix

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The GTOs and Firebirds received the Ram Air options, the GTO saw the addition of the "Judge" performance/appearance package, and the Firebird also got the "Trans Am" package. Although originally conceived as a 303 cubic inch model to compete directly in the Trans Am racing series, in a cost-saving move the Pontiac Trans Am debuted with the standard 400-cubic-inch performance engines. This year also saw De Lorean leaving the post of general manager to accept a similar position at



1969 GTO Judge



1970 Firebird

GM's Chevrolet division. The 1969 Firebirds received a heavy facelift but otherwise continued much the same as the original 1967 model. It was the final year for the overhead cam six-cylinder engine in Firebirds and intermediates, and the Firebird convertible (until 1991). Production of the 1969 Firebirds was extended into the first three months of the 1970 model year (all other 1970 Pontiacs debuted Sept. 18, 1969) due to a decision to delay the introduction of an all-new 1970 Firebird (and Chevrolet Camaro) until after the first of the year – Feb. 26, 1970 to be exact.



Interesting side note—I found these photos of a concept car called Banshee. It was designed by Delorean around 1964 and Pontiac planned to put it into production in 1966.

The Banshee was never shown to the public: GM President Cole thought it would eat into the Corvette's market share and Chevrolet was developing the F Car which became the Camaro/Firebird. One could guess that the doors of the Banshee made their way into the design parameters of the DMC-12 in 1975, but there was no mention of this.

From *Performance Years* newsletter: Effective immediately, we're proud to announce that Ames Performance and Performance Years have teamed up to be the largest and now the only exclusive classic Pontiac parts supplier in the Nation. This new event will have a powerful, positive effect on our hobby as we move to the future. By combining resources service levels go up, buying power goes up, focus increases and costs come down. That equals a better buying experience for all of you.

While Ames will continue what they do REALLY well (directly support the retail Pontiac customer), I will be heading up the newly formed Max Performance Group whose purpose is to create new and better products for retailers like Ames so we can enjoy the cars we love even more. Up until now, PY has been a catalog retailer, a Pontiac Forums community leader and quietly behind the scenes has been responsible for hundreds of reproduction parts for the Pontiac market. It is a natural progression to channel all our resources to make these product lines better for our customers. We're also beefing up our inventory levels. Better inventory levels mean less backorder frustrations for our dealers and ultimately you! From now on, to order Pontiac parts, please call AMES at 1-800-421-2637.

To place an online order, please go to <http://www.amesperf.com/>

That also frees us up for some extra time to give some TLC to the very first Pontiac Forum to exist on the internet-- The PY Forums! And oh by the way, we now have added the resources of Ames to our community. Kevin and Don over at Ames have signed on to be the major sponsor of the forums for the next 4 years. That's some pretty good stuff!

So what can you do to help keep our hobby alive and well? Support us both in our new ventures! Also, Join in! Participate on the forums. Join and actively participate in the GTOAA and POCI. Stop whining and complaining about what you don't like and start doing something about what you don't like. If everyone just does a little bit, it's WAY better than a few people that have to do a LOT.

From Cars & Parts:

DID YOU KNOW?

LITTLE TREES, the auto air freshener made by Car-Freshner Corporation, came about in 1952. Julius Samann, a local scientist in northern New York, heard the complaint of a milk truck driver about the smell of spilled milk and used his experience extracting aromatic oils from Canadian pine forests to develop the first products.

Silver State Pontiacs Website

If you haven't done so in awhile take a look at our website

www.silverstatepontiacs.com

There is a nice photo gallery of members' rides—if you don't see your car there be sure to send some photos to our webmaster, Hugo Tafel.

Our 2015 calendar of club events is posted there, as well as all back issues of the newsletter. A section that Hugo is trying to build on is Tech Tips. If you have manuals or tips and tricks, please contact Hugo to get these added to this section.

UPCOMING EVENTS

CLUB EVENT	DATE	LOCATION
Regular Club Meeting	June 17	Reno A & W
HAN Kickoff BBQ & Meeting	July 16	TBA
Pontiacs on the Grass	August 4	Reno A&W

CARDIOLOGIST FUNERAL

A very prestigious cardiologist died and was given a very elaborate funeral by the hospital he worked for most of his life.

A huge heart covered in flowers stood behind the casket during the service as all the doctors from the hospital sat in awe. Following the eulogy, the heart opened and the casket rolled inside. The heart then closed, sealing the doctor in the beautiful heart forever.

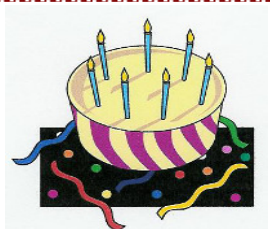
At that point one of the mourners just burst into laughter. When all eyes stared at him, he said "I'm so sorry...I was just thinking of my own funeral. I'm a gynecologist!"

The priest fainted.

BIRTHDAYS

MAY

Bonnie Saludes	3rd
Jan Hollingsworth	4th
David Kasper	5th
Ray Hollingsworth	5th
Liz Gilmore	12th
Rhonda Kelly	28th



JUNE

Kevin Sullivan	2nd
Ceclia Alcala	10th
Mike Zmak	16th
John Saludes	25th

ANNIVERSARIES

MAY

Dave & Sharon Lynch	47 yrs
Todd & Rhonda Kelly	25 yrs
Joe & Michelle Schenck	20 yrs
David & Terri Schuff	38 yrs
Jim LeBar/Cecelia Alcala	15 yrs

JUNE

Gary & Kelly Geyer	42 yrs
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NEXT MEETING

JUNE 17 6:00 PM

A&W, RENO