

Ian Parr is an engineer at Honeywell. His 1965 Pontiac GTO is shared with his wife Theresa and twins Jacqueline and Donovan. The car was shown at the 2012 Goodguys 3rd Spring Nationals, held at WestWorld in north Scottsdale, in March.

In the mid-seventies, when he was about fifteen, Ian Parr wanted to become a mechanic. He was lucky to have an opportunity to work with a very good mechanic—Dick Fredric—who told Ian not to become one. Fredric told Parr that no one ever expects their car to break down, it always takes too long to fix, and it always costs too much. Fredric said cars are a good hobby.

Parr took his mechanic's advice: he went to college and became an engineer, then got married, bought a house, rented it out and bought another house, then

worked on raising a family. Life was good, but in the background, he had never given up one dream: to own a Pontiac GTO (though affording it was going to be tough).

In the mid-nineties, the Parr family relocated to Phoenix from Buffalo, NY. Ian was now in a perfect part of the country to enjoy a GTO, and he knew he wanted a 1965 convertible—but it had to be something he could afford. He found a listing in *AutoTrader*, in August 1997. The car had the wrong engine—a 1963 421—was finished in primer pink and was disassembled. But it was what he could afford. He researched its Pontiac Historical Society (PHS) documentation, which showed it was built on May 11, 1965, with of course the correct 389, a 4-barrel carburetor, 4-speed manual transmission and transistorized ignition. It had drum brakes all the way around, with a 3.23 rear end. The car was originally painted in

Mayfair Maize (pale yellow), with a parchment (white) interior and a black top. This would not have been Ian's first choice of color combination, but it was a real GTO. One other thing: it was on Vancouver Island, in Canada.

So on a Wednesday night in September 1997, Parr and a friend headed north from Phoenix with an empty trailer. They arrived Friday night on Vancouver Island and stayed in the guest room at the seller's house. (As Parr told us his story, while showing his completed car at the Goodguys Spring Nationals, he noted that the seller "is a good guy!") They loaded up the GTO (along with all its parts) on Saturday morning and arrived back in Phoenix by Sunday night—exhausted but very excited.

Since the original engine and tranny were long gone, Parr decided to rebuild the GTO the way he wanted it. He had started to save up some money to pay for the

restoration, when his wife gave birth to twins, in January 1999. The car project was going to be delayed awhile. Life was still good, he recounts—and he was not going to give up his dream.

In 2002, Ian started the restoration. He had never done a restoration of any kind before, and he knew he was in over his head. He just didn't realize how far. But some very good friends—Frank Westbrook, David "DJ" Jacobs and Jeremy Jacobs—said they would get him through it. "Without their help, this GTO would not be on the road today," says Parr. "But, as they say, behind every good man is a good woman. My wife Theresa supported me through this journey, and without her support, I would still just be dreaming."

The body was removed from the frame. The frame, inner fenders, rear axle, control arms, core support and other pieces were powder coated. All the undercoating was removed, and the body was very straight. The hood scoop was opened up to be a real ram air. The body was painted Nocturne Blue (a '78-79 Trans Am color) with a red pinstripe. The interior was refinished in parchment white. The bumpers were rechromed, and all the trim was polished. The new convertible top is a blue canvas, which Parr says holds up better than vinyl in Arizona.

Under the hood is a 1971 455 V8 engine with an Edelbrock intake and Edelbrock 1903 750 CFM carb. An HEI ignition was rebuilt with MSD replacement parts. The 5/16-inch fuel line was replaced with a 3/8-inch line, and a vapor return line was added. The transmission is a Tremec TKO-600 5-speed with a 3.90 limited-slip rear end. The car has Flowmaster dual exhaust with the GTO's optional splitter tips.

A power-assisted master brake cylinder was added, with stainless steel brake lines and disc brakes at all four corners. To upgrade handling, front and rear stabilizers were added, along with new springs and KYB shocks. The power steering unit was upgraded with a variable power steering unit. Wheels are 15-inch Pontiac Rally IIs with the red center caps.

Ian added power windows, aftermarket air-conditioning with original controls, and an original AM/FM radio with a power antenna, plus the console with vacuum gauge. Fisher Body seat belts were added, front and rear. The dash includes the Rally Gauge set, and the interior is capped off with the '65's desirable wood-grain steering wheel. Parr also added an Alpine stereo, concealed in the glove box, with speakers in the kick panels and behind the rear seat, plus a 12-inch subwoofer in the trunk. The sound system is powered by two amplifiers: a 4X50-watt amp for the interior and a 1000-watt amp for the subwoofer.

When Parr showed the still-in-progress '65 at the Pontiac Heaven event in 2006, "Father of the GTO" Jim Wangers signed the glove box. He wished Ian good luck, and Ian says he needed it—he did not finish until 2008. The final touch was a 1964 Arizona license plate with a 1965 sticker. In Arizona, if the plate number is not being used, then the MVD will let you register that plate. The odometer just turned over 4000 miles in early 2012. Parr says, "I never gave up my dream, and I have a true appreciation for the many talented individuals who bring their rides to the Goodguys Rod & Custom Association shows. We enjoy driving the GTO ... and just living the dream." ■

# LIFE IS GOOD

STORY BY IAN PARR  
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