



THE CAR THAT GOT AWAY



A couple of us were talking about all those cars in our lives that got away. Cars we should have bought and ones we did buy but should have kept rather than selling. If there are 200 plus members in the club, there are probably 200 plus stories like mine. I'll start off with my Ferrari Story:

Seeing Red When I Should Have Been Seeing Green

By Ed Fleming

In March of 1970 I was racing my Z-28 Camaro at the 12 Hours of Sebring. Rear engine sports cars were the new idea and all the old front engine cars were now obsolete. At a drivers meeting, I just happened to sit next to Luigi Chinetti, the head of NART the North American arm for Ferrari racing. We got talking about the Ferrari 250 GTO which was on its way out. I told him I loved that car. Beautiful design, great Colombo V-12 engine, wire wheels, etc. Great looks, great sound (from the exhaust), great handling. The perfect car.

Chinetti offered to sell me the team GTO for \$7,000.00. Remember this was 1970. I had recently bought a new '69 Porsche 911 for \$4,000.00. So, this used, beat up Ferrari race car was almost twice the price of a brand new Porsche.

No problem, Edna and I had just saved up \$10,000.00 to buy a new house. When I returned from Sebring, I told Edna my plan to buy the Ferrari (we could put \$3,000.00 down on the house instead of \$10,000.00, everyone would be happy). Edna put her foot down and said we should put our money in a good investment. Property, not a car (and a used one at that). I pleaded with her (picture John Belushi pleading his case to Carrie Fischer in the Blues Brothers), "If you're a sports car junkie you have to have a Ferrari once in your life. Please, please, please." Edna reminded me that that was pretty much what I said when I bought the Porsche. "I'll sell the Porsche" I pleaded, "please, please, oh please!"

I'm still living in the house.

Fast forward to 2000. Edna and I are getting divorced. I'm out in California visiting family for Christmas. My sister has a surprise for me. She takes me to a friend of hers named Ernie. Nice guy and he has a lot of interesting cars.

We go out to the garage (4 double doors wide with about 30 cars inside). As we walk inside I see a 1962 Ferrari Berlinetta and tell Ernie about the Ferrari I almost bought. Ernie asks a few questions about which GTO (there were 39 made). Turns out he and a friend bought "my" Ferrari for \$6,500.00. Ernie was a mechanic for the Briggs Cunningham Museum and knew how to fix any car to museum quality. Ernie and his friend fixed the GTO up and in 1988 sold it for 16 millions dollars! That's 16 followed by three zeros, a comma, three more zeros, a decimal point and two more zeros.

Today my house is worth about \$200,000.00.

Edna had moved out, but was still coming by the house to get her mail. During this time there was an article in the Detroit Free Press about a Ferrari GTO being auctioned at Christie's where it was expected to fetch \$10,000,000.00. I cut the article out attached a sticky note that said "See. If you would have let me buy the Ferrari half of this could have been yours" and left it with her mail. That made me feel a little better for a while.

Of course I would have felt a lot better if she had let me buy the GTO in the first place. Then again, she always said I probably would have killed myself in it. It would go 195 m.p.h.

I would have died happy.

Or rich.



If you too have a car story like the one above, please forward it to editors@mqc.com and your story could appear in one of the Can Am Connections upcoming issues.