
1968 Pontiac GTO - Royal Bobcat Sport Coupe

Royal Bobcat Sport Coupe

Estimate	USD 200 000 - 225 000	Drive	LHD
Year of manufacture	1968	Interior colour	Other
Chassis number	242378P142080	Condition	Used
Lot number	552	Location	
		Fuel type	Petrol
		Exterior colour	Other

Description

To be OFFERED AT AUCTION at Auctions America's Fort Lauderdale event, April 1-3, 2016.

Chassis No.
242378P142080

Estimate:
\$200,000 - \$225,000 US

Royal Pontiac is widely accepted as the most significant Pontiac high performance dealer, and as the Pontiac equivalent of other "American Supercar" builders such as Nickey, Yenko, and Baldwin-Motion for Chevrolet and Grand Spaulding Dodge for Mopars. No "supercar" collection is complete without a Royal Bobcat Pontiac, and the rarity and significance of this 1968 Royal Bobcat GTO make it truly unique.

Original owner Mike Rutherford had planned to buy the car and have his good friend Arnie Beswick replace the stock Ram Air 400 engine with a 428-cid, 425-hp unit. Because of his busy racing schedule, Beswick advised Rutherford to order his new GTO from Ace Wilson's Royal Pontiac, whose elite crew would handle the transformation. As Arnie tells it, he had to make appeals on Rutherford's behalf to GTO "Godfather" Jim Wangers and "a few people at Royal", before consummating the deal. Word of the project apparently spread, because the car's arrival at Royal "coincided" with a visit from

Popular Hot Rodding magazine photographer Lee Kelley, who took the now-famous cover shot of Royal's Milt Schornack and Dave Warren hoisting the 428 into the car's engine bay.

Mike Rutherford, who owned the car until 1999, raced it extensively on the street for the first couple of years, with Arnie tuning the car for the occasional foray to the drag strip, where the two shared turns at the wheel. Arnie's search for more performance in the GTO began even before its arrival at Royal when he secured a pre-production set of Ram Air II cylinder heads, which were bolted to the 428 short-block prior to its installation. He took the car to JR Headers, who installed a custom-fabricated set of tubes, and he modified the front and rear suspension for improved launching, always respecting Rutherford's caveat that the car not be cut.

As Arnie Beswick recalled in a feature article on the car in the June 2009 issue of Muscle Car Review, ""Even though it was more of a street car than a racecar, it did make numerous trips to some Midwestern drag strips, including Cordova, Illinois and Kahoka, Missouri. The "BossMan" lettering was put on the car when Mike felt it had paid its dues and earned the title. That's also when he had my name put on the fender."

The BossMan Royal Bobcat GTO was eventually acquired by noted musclecar collector Mike Guarise. Muscle Car Designs of Minooka, IL performed a frame-off restoration using primarily refinished parts original to the car, including the 428-cid engine that appeared in the famous Popular Hot Rod cover photo. In fact, that shot was re-created for two magazine articles when Schornack and Warren flew in to help install the engine to complete the restoration.

The race day graphics, which remained on the car until Rutherford sold it in 1999, were re-created in vinyl for easy application and removal should the stock Royal Bobcat look be preferred by the new owner. In addition, the stock tires, wheels and hubcaps are included to return the car to its original Royal appearance.

Among the features of this Meridian Turquoise (Code K per data tag) Royal Bobcat are twin hood scoops, hidden headlights, bucket seats, center console, radio with factory 8-track tape player, wood-rimmed steering wheel, space-saver spare, American Racing five-spoke wheels, BFGoodrich tires and the appropriate period graphics.

The BossMan Royal Bobcat GTO is unquestionably unique. Its creation was approved by Jim Wangers, its conversion was performed by celebrated Pontiac talents Milt Schornack and Dave Warren; it is the only 1968 GTO known to be associated with both Royal Pontiac and Arnie Beswick when new; it met with instant celebrity status as a magazine cover car and earned its BossMan moniker as a street fighter cum drag racer tuned by none other than "The Farmer" himself - together which make the BossMan Royal Bobcat GTO singularly significant in Pontiac and Royal Bobcat history.
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Auctions America

Title Ms

First name Megan

Last name Boyd

5536 County Rd.

Auburn 46706 Indiana

United States

Phone +1 (888) 554-2131

Fax +1 (260) 927-9799

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