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The opening pages of

1964-1972 Pontiac Tempest & LeMans Buyer's Guide

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1964–1972 Pontiac Tempest & LeMans Buyer's Guide

Model Year 1964–1972

Models	Pontiac Tempest / LeMans (A-body)
Coverage	1964–1972; GT-37, LeMans Sport, convertibles
Market	GTO's volume siblings; verify in the clone's shadow
Authentication	VIN + trim tag + PHS invoice
Key check	Rust map; PHS on premiums; GTO-clone VIN check

Every specification in this guide was checked against factory literature, marque references, period road tests, and documented survivor cars. Where sources disagree or the record is silent, this guide says so rather than guessing.

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Inside This Guide

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Chapter 1 — Why Buy a Tempest or LeMans

The Tempest and LeMans are the GTO's volume siblings — the same A-body platform, the same handsome 1968–72 styling, the same Pontiac V8 soundtrack — at a fraction of GTO money. That's the entire buying case in one sentence: nine-tenths of the experience for a third of the price. The LeMans Sport convertible, the GT-37, and the big-engine cars are the collector picks; the six-cylinder Tempests are the cheapest entry to the classic Pontiac world. Every one of them benefits from the GTO's aftermarket: mechanical parts, trim, and expertise flow downhill from the halo car.

The market reality is kind to the patient buyer. Tempests and LeManses are bought to be driven — the GTO premium pays for documentation and pedigree, while the LeMans buyer pays for metal and mechanicals. Condition dominates price: a solid, honest LeMans Sport with its born-with 350 is a better buy than a rusty 'rare' car with a story. And the documentation standard is higher here than in most segments, because the GTO clone industry trained Pontiac buyers to verify everything — a discipline that protects LeMans buyers too.

The entry points are unusually friendly. A six-cylinder Tempest or a 350-powered LeMans sedan is genuine 1960s Pontiac motoring — the split grille, the coke-bottle styling, the V8 rumble — for the price of a used economy car. The restoration path is clear and supported: the Pontiac aftermarket covers the A-body deeply, PHS Automotive Services documents the factory build, and the knowledge base (forums, clubs, specialists) is decades deep. Buy the best condition you can afford; the market rewards solid cars and punishes projects in this segment more than most.



Chapter 2 — The A-Body Line: 1964–1972 at a Glance

The Tempest/LeMans spans two A-body generations. First generation (1964–67): the original intermediate — 115-inch wheelbase, stacked headlights from 1965, the GTO born as a 1964 LeMans option package and spun off as its own model in 1966. Engines ran from the 215 six through the 326 and 389 V8s. These are the vintage cars: scarcer, more elegant, thinner parts support, and the 1964–65 GTO-option cars carry serious premiums with serious documentation burdens.

Second generation (1968–72): the coke-bottle cars — 112-inch wheelbase (116 on wagons), Endura nose on the GTO, the LeMans as the volume line with the 350 standard and the 400 and 455 optional. This is the buyer's sweet spot: abundant supply, deep parts, the best styling, and prices from affordable (Tempest sixes) to collectible (LeMans Sport convertibles, GT-37s, big-blocks). The 1968–72 cars are also the restoration guide's subject in this series — the knowledge base is deepest here.

Generation	Years	Character
First A-body	1964–67	Original intermediate; GTO born here
Second A-body	1968–72	Coke-bottle; buyer's sweet spot

The buying advice by generation: 1964–67 for the vintage Pontiac enthusiast — beautiful, scarcer, and demanding more inspection skill and parts hunting; 1968–72 for everyone else — the rational buy, with the deepest support and the clearest market. Within 1968–72, the LeMans Sport (1969+) is the upscale pick, the GT-37/T-37 (1970–71) is the budget-muscle pick, and the base Tempest is the value pick. Match the car to the intent; the platform rewards all three.

Chapter 3 — The GTO Relationship: What It Means for Buyers

The GTO is the best thing that ever happened to LeMans values and the worst thing that ever happened to LeMans authenticity. The good: every mechanical part, every trim reproduction, every specialist technique developed for the GTO applies directly to the Tempest/LeMans — the aftermarket depth is a GTO hand-me-down. The bad: the GTO clone industry means every LeMans with performance pretensions needs verification, because the parts to fake a GTO are all available and the profit motive is real.

For the buyer, the relationship cuts three ways. First, parts and knowledge are cheap and deep — the GTO tax doesn't apply to LeMans mechanicals. Second, documentation standards are high — PHS invoices, trim tags, and VIN decoding are routine in this market, and sellers expect the questions. Third, the clone question (Chapter 13) is ever-present: a LeMans wearing GTO trim is either a tribute (priced as one) or a fraud (priced as a GTO) — and the buyer's job is knowing which before paying. The GTO's shadow is long; buy with the lights on.

Chapter 4 — What They Cost: Market Ranges

Tempest/LeMans prices span the classic Pontiac ladder. At the bottom: six-cylinder Tempests and tired 350 LeMans sedans — honest projects and drivers at entry-level prices, the cheapest way into the A-body. In the middle: solid LeMans coupes and hardtops with V8s — presentable drivers needing nothing urgent, the heart of the market. At the top: LeMans Sport convertibles (3,438 built in 1972 — 3,121 automatics), GT-37s, big-block cars, and documented rarities like the 1971 T-37 455 HO (11 built) — collector money with collector documentation requirements.

The convertible commands the steepest premium — open A-bodies are genuinely scarce and the market knows it. The big-block premium is real but verification-dependent: a documented 400 or 455 car is worth multiples of a 350 car; an undocumented 'big-block' claim is worth nothing until proven. The price discipline: pay for condition and documentation, never for stories. The GTO-adjacent market has heard every story; the cars with paperwork