

June 8th, 1998

30 years with a Tiger. This may be long and boring to many but I needed to write it down.

June 1965:

Summer before my last year of college. I had \$500 in pocket to buy a car for the next school year and beyond. I found a nice TR3 for sale for the \$500. I went home and told my parents about the find. They suggested that if they contributed some more money that they have some say in the car I buy. So I bought a 1964 Corvair instead for \$900. So much for my first LBC opportunity. The next school year I collected all the literature I could about various sport cars including the Tiger brochure (black cover with Red car). I still have the brochure.

June 5th, 1968:

I returned from Vietnam with \$5000 in pocket, no wife, no job, no obligations. My parents were living in King City, CA at the time (just south of San Jose). I got a copy of the San Jose paper looking for Tiger ads. Found two for sale on used car lots.

June 8th, 1968:

My father, brothers and I went to San Jose to look at the Tigers. The first one had been worked over extensively, flares, straight exhaust, a 289 engine that was claimed to have spent time in a land speed record attempt car. It ran well, sounded great, but had more rattles, clanks and other body noises that made it sound like it would not last very long. On to the next car. A 1967 Carnival Red Mk1A (B382002420) with only 10,000 miles. Factory stock except for the LAT 5 weld on traction bars. Black hard top included. I took my father on a test drive around the block, went back and bought the car. \$3,468 including California sales tax and licensing. I ask the sale man why the car was on the lot. He said that the user car lot in San Jose (Jack London Imports) belonged to the new car dealer in San Francisco who originally sold the Tiger. The car belonged to the new car dealers wife. She apparently did not like the car so the dealer took it back and gave her a Ferrari instead.

Summer 1968:

Trip to Oregon, job looking, back to California for my brothers wedding, back to Oregon (got a job). 10,000 miles in 10 weeks.

Winter 1968:

A college friend of mine lived in Portland, drove a BRG Mk1. He told me the previous summer that if I got a job in Portland he would teach me to snow ski. I bought a pair of studded snow tires for the Tiger and the friend and I would take turns driving our Tigers up skiing each weekend (about 65 miles to Mt. Hood). One weekend we decided we should take the studded tires off the back of one Tiger and put them on the front of the other one. We never went skiing again with studded tires only on the back. As long as the roads were plowed, the Tiger was a great ski car. The heater even worked well enough to keep you warm. The Tiger was never a handling problem as long as the driver paid attention and planned ahead. The only damage to the car during the 5 years I drove it skiing were rock chips to the paint and glass.

1969:

I got into sailing. I bought a Sunfish, 13 foot sail boat (same length as the Tiger). I made a carrying rack for the Sunfish out of one inch square steel tube. It mounted to the Tiger hardtop like a ski rack and mounted to the rear bumper. I used this rig for a number of years to carry the Sunfish to local races.

December 1970:

I got married. The Tiger was our honeymoon car (ski trip).

1970s:

I drove the Tiger daily to work. Much of that time it was 6 miles and 21 stop lights one-way. Four or five clutch jobs. The stop and go and the 2.88 gears are hard on the clutch.

Early 1980s:

I had a Thistle sail boat for years. It is 17 foot, boat and trailer weight about 750 pounds. I needed a new tow vehicle so I used the Tiger for several years to tow the boat to local races. Fortunately I did not have to launch or retrieve the boat on the steep ramp.

1984:

I drove the Tiger as a daily driver for 16 years and 154,000 miles. It got to the point where it was starting to smoke a little and my two sons could no longer fit together in the passenger seat with the one seat belt. (When your wife also works, taking and getting kids is shared responsibility.) The Tiger went into the garage and I bought a commuter car.

Summer 1991:

Finally had the time and money to rebuild the Tiger. I spent the summer rebuilding the engine, transmission, rear end and all suspension components. I got it running in early September and decided that a good break-in run would be a trip to Bakersfield, California for my 30th high school reunion. 850 miles the first day. I was reminded very quickly that the sitting position in the Tiger was different than the other cars I drove. The only problem on the trip down was part of the original oil filter system coming loose and losing a couple of quarts of oil before I figured out exactly where the leak was. On the trip back I developed a blister on one tire about 50 miles from home. The tire blew while I was on a back road. I have since learned about the failure mode of steel belted radials that set for extended periods of time with out moving. The trip was 1850 miles in 4 days.

1990s:

Each summer I select a project for the Tiger. With two children in college I can only afford one project at a time. The dash refinish project is documented at the Tiger Web site. Fuel tank strip and refinish and trunk repaint. A set of Sunbeam Specialties LAT 70s after my original steel wheels cracked around the mounting holes. The Tiger was never autocrossed or driven excessively hard so the wheels lasted a long time. This summer was rebuilding door panels.

Today:

I try to drive the Tiger to work every day during the Summer (including today), weather permitting (this is Oregon). I take to the Portland All British Field Meet each Labor Day. It still has the original paint wearing a little thin in places. There is no rust even though it sat outside for 15 years. It is still factory stock, all the original stuff is under the hood or in a box if not needed (windshield washer bottle and original oil filter plumbing). I use the small half quart spin on oil filters for daily driving and put the original back on for shows.

David Wedeking
Hillsboro, OR