

# A Car and Driver

## Britt Massey and his gold 1978 Trans Am

By Dan Pool, Editor  
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Like all American boys growing up in the late 1970s, Britt Massey had seen *Smokey and Bandit* which came out in 1977, and instantly became a Trans Am fan or as Massey says, “true blue Pontiac.”

Just before he turned 16, his parents bought him the 1978 gold Trans Am they had spotted with a for sale sign near the old Blue Star grocery store in Jasper. The 1978 pure American sports car was bought from Jim and Tammy Fields of Jasper. Tammy had bought the car new from Knight Chevrolet in Ellijay and got it “bird delete,” meaning the massive eagle or as some call it the screaming chicken iconic logo was never on the hood.

Showing off the car which Massey still owns and drives, he said there is a back story which gave a lasting lesson in the birthday gift. Massey, a Jasper native, said during the test drive his dad took mom “and at one point he opened it up pretty good and mom immediately began protest about me having this vehicle, fearing it was too powerful and I would get killed driving it.”

“Dad said, ‘no, he is level-headed enough and mature enough,’ and the way he went to bat for me



**Jasper native Britt Massey with his first car, which he has owned for 43 years and still drives**

has really stayed with me.”

When they got the keys from Ms. Fields, Britt said the scene was repeated with the woman having tears streaming down, “I told her that this wasn’t going to be a case where a sixteen-year-old has that car wrapped around a tree and that I will cherish it and take care of it. I have owned that gold Trans Am for 43 years now and I kept my word.”

That doesn’t mean, Massey doesn’t like to go fast, but he keeps his racing on the track, where he has a second Trans Am (black and complete with bird decal) built especially for drag racing.

Massey said he came by his love of cars honestly as his father Bobby and his uncles, Tommy and Kenny, all liked racing and were fine mechanics.

After talking with his dad about the old days of drag racing, they went searching for a new engine and came home with a 1969 Pontiac 428 that they had Danny Bruce of Bruce Performance of Jasper rebuild with a 500 “streetable horsepower.”

After a couple of years, he added a 125-horse nitrous kit “just for some added pleasure.” Noting that it is now illegal to use a nitrous kit on the road, he still enjoys it on tracks.

Following that he replaced the transmission with a rebuilt unit that he bought for \$100. On the first test drive, “I shifted out of first gear and it wouldn’t

take second, the engine would just rev but the car wasn’t going anywhere.” Massey said he figured that he had to drive it like a manual, “pulled the shifter into low gear, manually shifted to second and ‘tweaked the tire.’ Been in the vehicle ever since.”

The unique car also features a custom interior, of Diamond Truck Velour, put in by Johnny Rich of Jasper in 1988-1989 and has been the same ever since.



**Current Specs: 1978 gold Trans Am, 1969 428 cubic inch Pontiac engine, TCI Turbo Transmission (with manual valve body & shift kit), 3:73 rear gear ratio**



**The original rear paint and Trans Am decal behind the spoiler. The rest of the car had been repainted.**