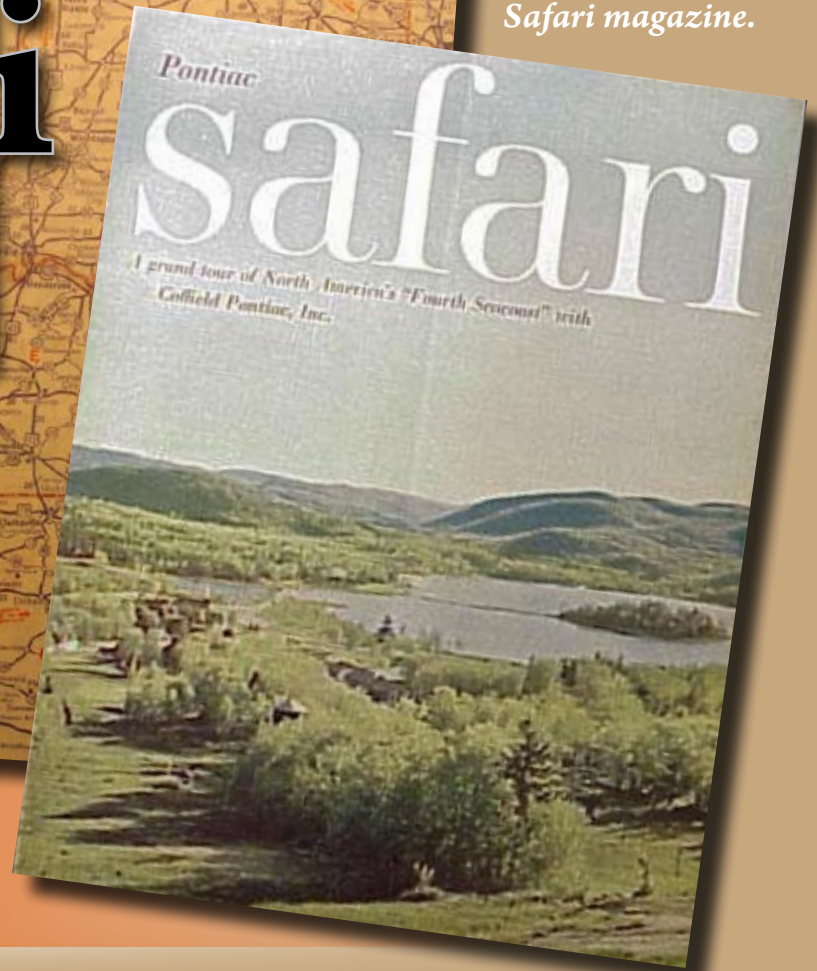


Pontiac's **safari** *magazine*

by Tim Dye

According to Pontiac all you needed for your next road adventure was a map and a Safari magazine.... and a new Pontiac!

*Volume 1, Issue 1
Safari magazine.*



The Safari was a travel-type magazine published for Pontiac owners. Each issue featured motor trips including major points of interest, interspersed with Pontiac information. The first issue was published in August 1960 and featured a motor trip from Niagra Falls to Montreal. General Manager S.E. (Bunkie) Knudsen introduced the new publication to Pontiac owners with a letter inside the front cover. In part his message said “We fully realize that our customers are Pontiac’s most important asset, and we sincerely hope

that Safari will bring added enjoyment to your Pontiac travels”.

The first issue was a standard size just under 8 1/2” x 11” and had 20 pages. The cover featured a scenic landscape, and besides the Safari title, had the dealers name. The dealers name, address and phone number were on the back cover as well. I am speculating here a little bit, but I suspect the dealers supplied mailing lists of their local customers to Pontiac and they in turn personalized the magazine with the dealer imprint. The bulk rate info indicates it was mailed

out of Detroit, Michigan.

The centerfold in that first issue featured a two page ad with a beautiful full color illustration of a 1960 convertible by Van &

Fitz. These award winning artist had just begun working with Pontiac the previous year, helping to promote Pontiac's Wide-Track era that also began that year. It seemed Pontiac had a winning combination going with the Wide-Track, Van & Fitz and the Safari magazine. In the third issue they

printed some comments received from people about their first Safari. "We're home again now and the trip was just as exciting as Safari said it would be. We referred to your story on Niagara Falls, Toronto, Old Fort Henry and especially the magnificent St. Lawrence Seaway many times. It was an ideal guide. Our Ventura Vista gave us perfect performance every one of the 2,500 miles...we are looking forward to future issues of Safari, expecting them to constitute a "travel library." Wow, I don't think Jim Wangers and the folks over at Pontiac's



ad agency could have written a better promotion for Pontiac and the Safari magazine.

I already mentioned that there was

usually a great centerfold ad in every issue, the inside of the back cover was usually reserved for Pontiac information of some kind. I have even seen offers there, for example one promotion offered a 1966 GTO promo model.

The back cover is another place of interest for collectors today. Besides the dealer information, there was usually another Pontiac

ad printed there. And what's interesting about both the centerfold ad and the back page ad is that often they are unique to this magazine and seen nowhere else. But there is not always a Pontiac ad on the back, I have seen some examples that the local dealership had their own ad there.

The Safari was issued bi-monthly and published by Adland Publishers, Inc. of Detroit. There is no editor or staff listed, Pontiac must have supplied the Pontiac content, and the publish-



Back cover of Safari magazine featuring a local Pontiac dealer advertisement.

er created the travel content and laid it all out. Although there had to be a little more interaction at times because some of the travel pictures had a Pontiac in them.

Some of those 2-page spreads were pretty fantastic, particularly those featuring highly collectable cars like the issue that introduced the '69 Judge to Safari readers. But from a collectors standpoint the issue every Fall that debuted the new models would have to be the most desirable. Remember how I pointed out that many of the ads and pictures were unique to the Safari magazine? This is most evident in the new model issues. Besides be-

GTO is clearly an illustration. I have never seen this anywhere else. There is a smaller photo at the bottom right of the page that is the same way, featuring a red '66 GTO convertible. Don't get me wrong, I think this is great, and to me it is what makes the Safari magazines worth collecting.

I don't know how many of each issue were printed, but these are not extremely rare. And when you do find them you should not expect to pay over \$10.00 an issue. Being affordable, and interesting makes them a fun collectable.

The last issue of Safari was distributed in 1971, it was the June issue, volume 12, number

1966 Pontiac preview issue, September / October 1965.

3. I don't know if there is a connection, or if it's just a coincidence, but 1971 was also the

last year Pontiac ads and publications featured those wonderful Van & Fitz illustrations. The final trip Safari readers took was down the Blue Ridge Parkway in the Great Smokey Mountains.

General manager at Pontiac in 1971 was James McDonald, and just as in every issue of Safari from the beginning there was a letter from the general manager. But there was no mention of

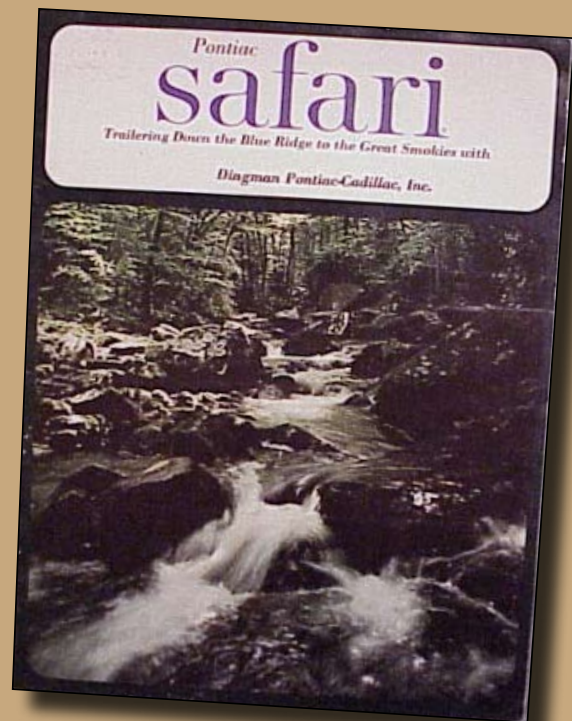


ing different, some of the photos were strange. A good example is the 1966 preview issue dated September / October 1965 volume 6 number 5. There is a large two page photograph that the text says was taken at the rolling green grounds of a Catskill Mountain hotel. Sure enough that part is a photo, as is the girl in the photo, but the gold '66

this being the last issue in his letter, I don't think he wanted to be the bad guy. Instead, it was a letter addressed to all Safari readers signed, Pontiac Motor Division. In part the letter said "We believe it (Safari) has well served its intended purpose during the decade of the 60's. Although this will be the final Safari, you will be hearing regularly from Pontiac and your Pontiac dealer."

Was it planned, or a coincidence that the last issue of the Safari magazine features two illustrations of Pontiac Safari wagons? The one below was inside the magazine, and then there was a different illustration on the back cover.

These magazines are still useful today, but instead of taking us on a road trip with Pontiac, they take us on a trip through a decade of Pontiac history.



This is the last issue of Safari, June 1971, issue 12, volume 3.



1971 Safari at an Asheville, North Carolina golf course. This is another great illustration by Van & Fitz.