



Hearing the term “barn find” can be counted on to cause a multitude of synapses to begin firing in the brain of any car guy. Long shots suddenly seem not only possible, but probable. When money is considered, both for the initial purchase or an estimate of the refurbishing and/or restoration of the long-lost car, the low end of the scale is clearly visible while the other end (high purchase price and 500 hours worth of \$100/hour restoration work—not including the replacement parts required) seems very foggy. Visions of the final result, selling the finished car, are exactly the inverse: clearly seen is a Barrett-Jackson price with several well-heeled buyers bidding against each other. Getting low-balled and having to settle for a take-it-or-leave it price? Unthinkable.

It’s much the same with a lagered-up college sophomore looking down the bar at a would-be Penthouse Pet. In his mind he sees himself rolling out a clever pick-up line, followed by a wink and drink, some cooing small talk and a quick stroll back to her apartment. Or the purchaser of a Powerball ticket, imagining how he would spend his multi-million dollar winnings without ever considering that he could be one of the 175 million losers. It’s probably human nature to be optimistic in cases like this. That’s what sells lottery tickets, what keeps the bars filled and what perks a car guy’s ears up like a retriever in the tall grass sensing a pheasant every time he hears the term “barn find.”

Today, however, barn find has become something of an over-used term. Originally it described a car parked or dragged into a barn, garage or other building (or behind one, or out in a field) and simply forgotten. Once it was “discovered” it was usually purchased for a lot less than it was worth because the owner had no idea of his old car’s actual value. Part of the excitement surrounding the barn find was the unspoiled condition of the car, regardless of whether it was a low-mileage original or a 100,000-mile rusted-out hulk; it was a time capsule, untouched since it was put there. The other component was the price, which was always assumed to be ridiculously low.

## GT40 BARN FIND? WELL, NOT QUITE

One recent story popped up about Ford GT40 P/1067 which was “sleeping.” The short story was that someone was driving past an open garage in Thousand Oaks, California and spotted what looked like the rear end of a GT40. It was surrounded by boxes and junk and naturally made someone’s heart skip a beat. While the actual details were sparse, as they usually are with these Internet reports, the car was last vintage raced in 1977 and after a blown engine the car was parked in the garage. The owner, Dennis Murdoch, began to repair the car but an injury side-lined him. The car sat, and that was in the late 1970s. Twenty-five years later it was still sitting. How time flies.



Short story shorter, contact was made with the owner who realized he was never going to finish the car, and he sold it. At last report was it would either be restored to concours or prepped for vintage racing. How would you like to have a choice like that?



P/1067 was last raced at Monterey in 1977. It was purchased in 1973 by George Walther, father of Indy 500 driver Salt Walther, who had the fingers of his left hand partially amputated following a crash and fire in the 1973 event. Walther sold the car in 1975. He passed away in December 2012.

