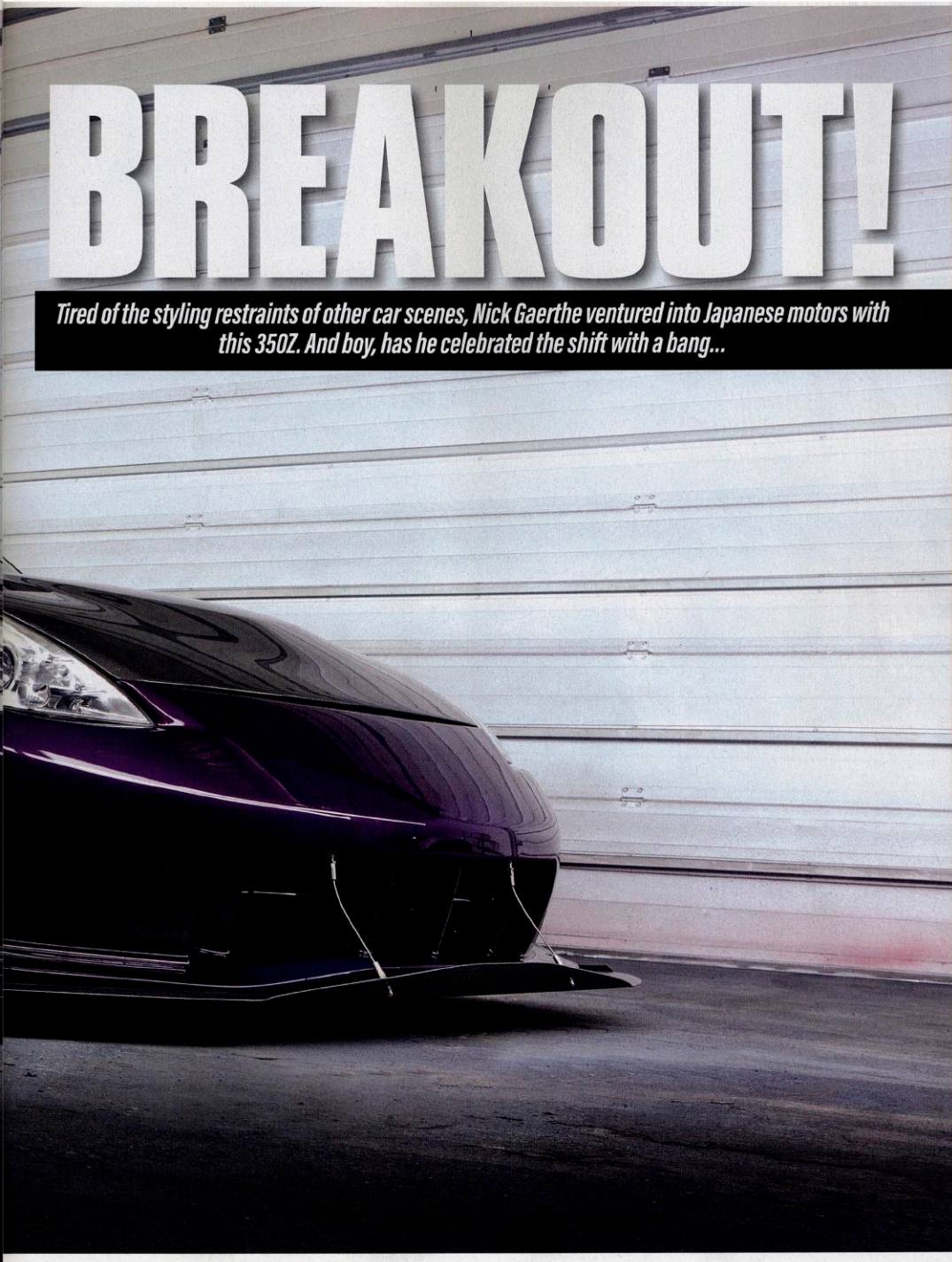


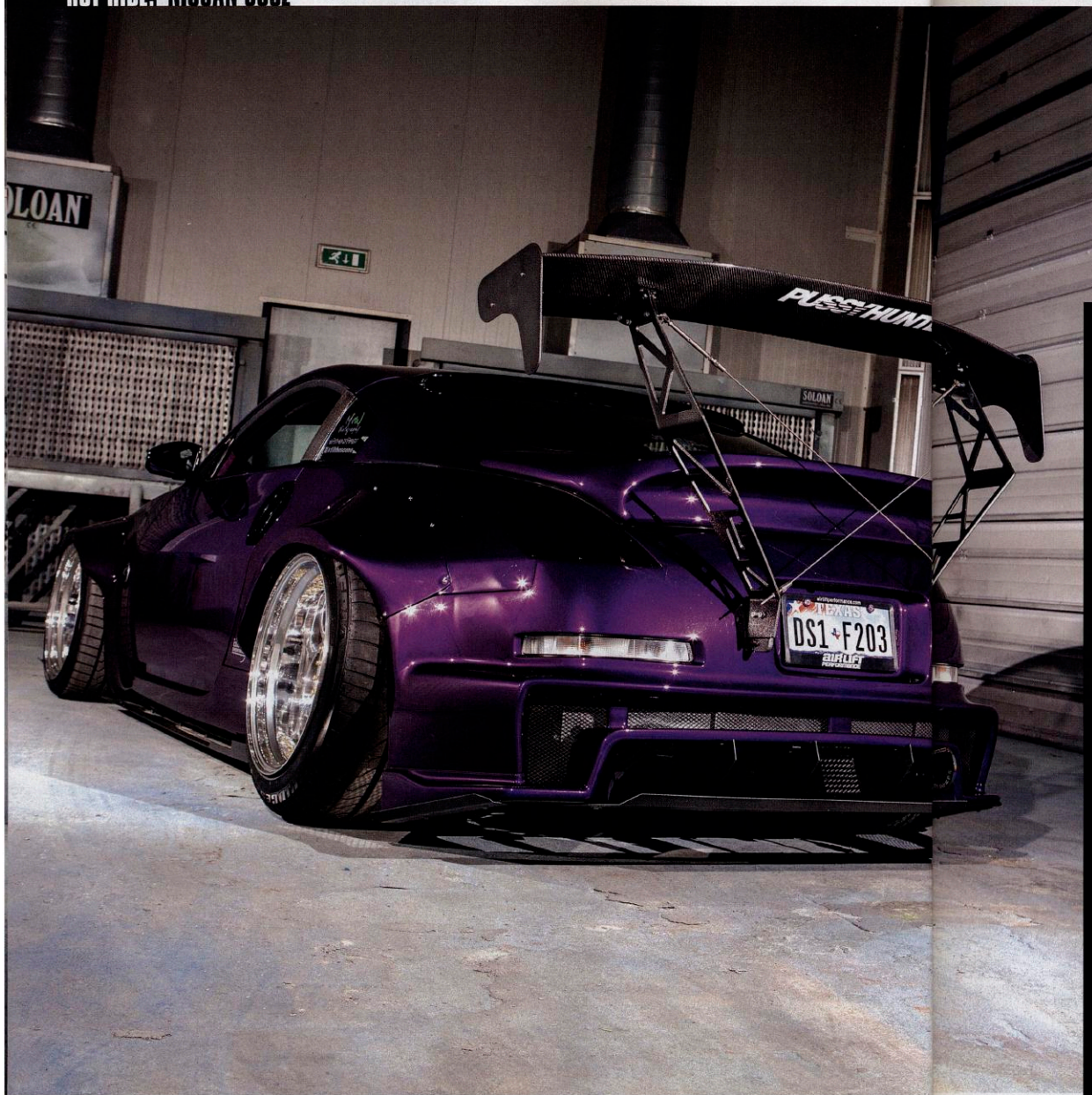


BREAKOUT!

Tired of the styling restraints of other car scenes, Nick Gaerthe ventured into Japanese motors with this 350Z. And boy, has he celebrated the shift with a bang...



HOT RIDE: NISSAN 350Z



"The Japanese car scene just seemed a whole lot more epic to me!"

Ever had one of those fleeting moments of madness where you've been tempted to sack it all in, dye your hair blue and go live in a hut in the woods? In this crazy age of be-cool-or-die-trying conformity, we're surprised this hasn't happened more in recent years.

The world of modified cars isn't safe, either. The internet is quick to judge every millimetre of offset on your new alloys and comment on how the colour of your brake callipers clashes so badly against your re-sprayed bodywork. Thumbs down.

But why should it be like this? Surely if the owner is pleased with the outcome of their ride, the matter should end right there? For Rotterdam-based Nick here, the amount of control he felt was placed on him by social media in the German car world got so intense, he felt he needed a way to escape. And it didn't take long to find a new car scene that appeared a little more open to a bit of silliness...

"The Japanese car scene just seemed a whole lot more epic to me!" says our young metal worker on the shift from Golfs to Nissans a couple of years back. "You can basically build what you want here with no boundaries." Because Nick was done with simple,

reserved tweaks to his cars and was ready to build something a little crazier in the form of this Nissan 350Z. And we think you'll agree, he's achieved it...

Not that everything started swimmingly with Nick's first foray into more Oriental metal. "I had a big accident in it soon after buying it," he recalls through gritted teeth. Damaging the front and rear ends in the shunt (on his way back from getting his impressive Focal ICE install, no less), Nick used this opportunity to tuck the car away in his garage and go full-bore with his modification plans a little earlier than planned. Every cloud and all that.

As he had extensive fabrication knowledge at his disposal, it was somewhat inevitable Nick would opt for a killer wide-body conversion in one form or another. But why follow the crowds? "I did consider heading to Rocket Bunny for the arches at first, but then thought, 'Why not try and be a bit more exclusive?'"

The quest moved in the direction of Florida-based Fiberglass Mafia, an up-and-coming firm that's setting the East Coast on fire right now with some killer flared arch applications. Its four-piece kit trumps that of its rivals by offering a pretty colossal 2.25-inch and 3-inch extra width on each side (front and rear respectively). After hearing no other 350Z was rocking this package in Europe at the time, Nick pressed the button and got it ordered sharpish.

Fiberglass Mafia flared arches – a colossal three inches of extra width



HOT RIDE: NISSAN 350Z



JOINING THE MAFIA

Mainly focusing on Japanese and European wide-arch applications, Florida-based Fiberglass Mafia has made one hell of a name for itself in recent years. Nick's four-piece kit may be extremely wide, but it's been cleverly designed to work alongside standard bumpers and side skirts if necessary, meaning you don't have to fork out for a whole new bodykit to obtain wider dimensions here. We'd recommend checking out the firm's arches for the all-new Ford Mustang if you're browsing, too. We can't wait to see it slapped on a few examples in the coming months...

With NISMO front and rear bumpers fitted and helping to accommodate the extra girth, Nick got to work with the cutting and riveting on the frankly colossal arch extensions, before whipping up some finishing touches only a professional metal worker could manage. "I thought the flares would look great with some extra bits, so fabricated front and rear splitters, side skirt extensions, and the carbon rear wing," Nick casually informs us. Not exactly a walk in the park for most, but with a bit of focus and a lot of welding, Nick's car was already becoming something rather unique in its class with the savagely aggressive new body mods.

Once a carbon fibre bonnet and 370Z side repeaters blended in on the front wings were added for a bit of extra Z-Car bling, Nick's V6 brute was ready for a lick of paint. And you've probably gathered that he wasn't settling for a sensible gray hue here. "It's from a limited-edition Fiat Panda, believe it or not!" he laughs, as he explains the origins of this truly awesome purple colour scheme, that seems to match the outrageousness of those new-found wide lines and brings the whole thing together.

Keeping the impressively quick momentum going with the build, Nick next made light work of installing one of Air Lift Performance's cutting-edge 3H air suspension packages, which uses trick sensors throughout the car to measure and adjust height and pressure on the move. Once dialled in with some decent height presets saved, it was just a case of what to prop up the car with.

For these, it was back to the States. This time to Michigan-based WatercooledIND for a set of its spanking new forged, three-piece split rims, which Nick ordered up in his fully custom requirements. This meant going for a

brain-meltingly 14-inch wide on the rear and 12.5 inches up front, in a diameter of 19 inches and finished off in a fully polished colour scheme with gold hardware. Talk about wheel royalty! It's pretty impossible to say they don't look anything short of pornographic now they're tucked under those cavernous arches.

Inside, the aforementioned Focal sound system install from Nick's friends at JM Car Hifi is topped off with a suitably hip fingerbanger ribbed gearknob that looks like it's come straight out of a pro drift car. As does the uber-cool Vertex steering wheel for that matter. Both of which keep Nick in check when he's up for a hard drive. The perfectly beefy V6 up front remains relatively standard for now, aside from the custom exhaust system that allows the burble to be unleashed to its full potential.

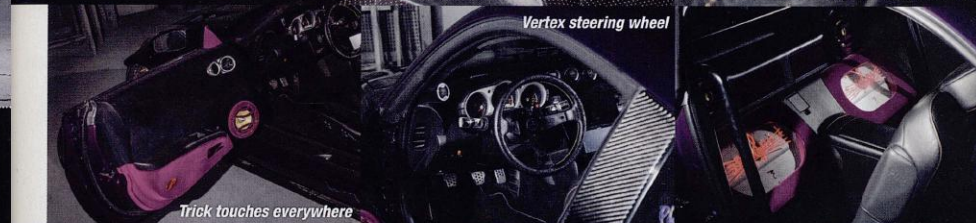
Left with a fully-fledged monster on his hands and understandably wanting to show it off at as many events



That Focal sound system



Super swish inside too



Vertex steering wheel

Trick touches everywhere



The colour's origins?
A Fiat Panda

HOT RIDE: NISSAN 350Z

#boom #epic

TECH SPEC: NISSAN 350Z

STYLING

Full re-spray in Fiat Panda purple; Fiberglass Mafra wide-arch kit; NISMO 350Z front and rear bumpers; custom front splitter, side skirt extensions, rear diffuser and carbon fibre wing; carbon fibre bonnet and mirrors; 370Z-style Z-logo side repeaters.

ENGINE

3.5-litre VQ35DE V6 engine; custom stainless steel exhaust system.

TRANSMISSION

Six-speed manual gearbox.

CHASSIS

Air Lift Performance 3H air suspension system and management; 12.5x19in (front) and 14x19in (rear) WatercooledIND MD1 three-piece alloy wheels with polished finish and gold hardware; Brembo brakes all-round.

INTERIOR

JM Car Hifi ICE install; Kenwood headunit and Focal speakers all-round; Likewise fingerbanger grooved gearknob with shift extension; Vertex steering wheel.

CONTACT

JM Car Hifi; WatercooledIND; Street Customs; Lowfitment.com; SlammedUK; Violent Clique; BattleGang.

as possible across Europe, Nick takes some time to reflect on what he's managed to achieve virtually singlehandedly in his garage. "It's everything I dreamt it would be and I am over the moon," he smiles.

"There are a few more bits I'd like to do. But for now, I'm just enjoying taking it to shows. Especially VAG shows, it seems to go down well there."

By spending time immersed in several different car scenes, patiently learning the pros and cons of each, we think you'll agree Nick's managed to break out of his shell with his latest work of art and let his deepest styling desires blossom. Just have a good think about that next time you're about to buy another tin of magnolia paint at the shops. ■



It's come a long way since that early accident



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TORQEN, Unit 10, Fourth Way, Wembley, London, HA9 0LH