

NOW WITH *added* BOOST

This twin-turbo 350Z may offer GT-R-trumping levels of power in a hilariously raw package, but getting it to this capable stage was a steep learning curve for owner Paul Gregory here...

Words: Sam Preston
Photos: Adam Walker



Whether it's the time you skimmed out on that £5 iron that never properly worked or decided that a £30 mountain bike you spotted in Tesco would be up for the task of taking you from Land's End to John o' Groats, we've all been on the wrong end of the 'buy cheap, buy twice' philosophy at one point or another. It's something our New Mills-based 350Z owner Paul here regrettably can relate to only too well when looking back on his previous project car: a Rocket Bunny-kitted Mazda RX-7 that was built to chase big power figures at the expense of other important aspects of the build. Learning the hard way and eventually throwing in the towel with his gremlin-filled rotary love affair, he sensibly decided to learn from his mistakes and cover all bases when picking up and planning to modify this 350Z three years ago. And the result is a car that not only boasts impressive numbers on paper, but backs it up with a thoroughly over-

engineered chassis that ensures this is one beast that's ready for anything that's thrown at it...

"It was definitely a case of buying cheap parts to get a nice power figure more than anything else," Self-employed plasterer Paul explains while looking back on his RX-7. "It caused quite a few engine rebuilds to take place...!" Putting the Mazda to one side, he decided to go back to square one by purchasing this then-completely standard Nissan 350Z a few years back as a blank canvas to prove that a heavily modified car build could indeed be done properly with just the right mindset.

The plan with the tidy, then-silver JDM example was an ambitious one from the outset; revolving around adding a duo of turbochargers to that celebrated VQ35DE V6 engine, while packaging it all with a heavily re-worked chassis to ensure the car could withstand up to double the standard power to run through its rear wheels. With the humble 350Z arguably overlooked in recent years thanks to the introduction of its younger,

550BHP TWIN-TURBO 350Z

flashier sibling – the 370Z – as well as the recent domination of the R35 GT-R, of course, Paul was keen to remind the world how much of a tuneable, rewarding platform this back-to-basics car can still be.

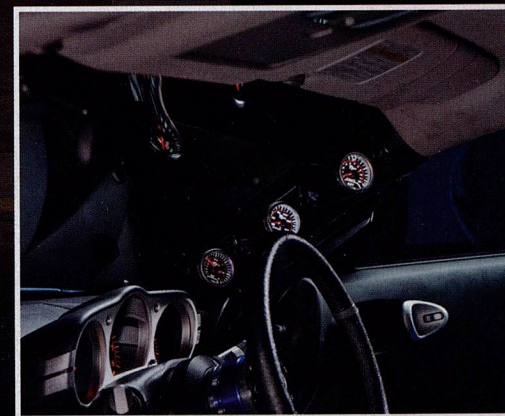
With the help of his mates, Paul set the car up in his garage and prepared to upgrade practically every square inch of it. “I started with that GT-R-style front bumper and side skirts; I was keen to do things differently wherever I could.” Showing his thirst for uniqueness early on, the front end is certainly striking now – a breath of fresh air from the NISMO-style kits we’re used to seeing on modified 350Z builds. This is matched with the nicely vented front wings and bonnet –

carefully adapted from OEM items thanks to Paul’s mate Lee at the local ML Motorbodies body shop.

“It was around this time that I sold up the RX-7,” Paul continues, explaining how every penny of the substantial sum he made from the car was instantly poured straight into the Nissan. Amongst the huge list of bits he picked up at this stage, most notable was the full Sparco-clad interior overhaul, more substantial coilovers and anti-roll bars, huge eight-pot KSport stoppers as well as perhaps the most memorable tweak to the car on first glance: that bright Porsche Miami Blue re-spray that looks pretty epic when set off with the carbon fibre scattered around the rest of

the exterior.

Now boasting a pretty solid base in anticipation of more power, but with the engine sensibly remaining stock up until this point, Paul got serious with the idea of adding boost to the revvy NA lump. The first step was to employ the help of Craig from fabrication wizards Top Gear Stockport to whip up some custom metalwork that would help get things moving. As well as a free-flowing 3” exhaust system, he also rather ingeniously crafted up that double-tiered crash bar that sits tight behind the front bumper, housing the intercooler and oil coolers and ensuring that every free square inch of space around the engine is cleared for the introduction of



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When spec'ing the parallel Garrett GT2561 turbos for its '530BB' turbo upgrade kit, US-based Jim Wolf Technology worked in conjunction with one of Infiniti's product planners at the time to ensure the upgrade retained reliability and offered minimal turbo lag while increasing power significantly.

Paul's customised his conversion with a host of bespoke parts such as the turbo manifolds and downpipes to ensure everything fits snug in the cramped bay, as well as bolstering the fuelling system with 750cc ID injectors, a duo of Bosch pumps and entirely new fuel lines.



two turbochargers plus all that inevitable associated pipework.

While this masterpiece of fabrication work was being performed, Paul got busy researching the best way to perform a twin-turbo conversion to the car. The obvious solution came in the form of Jim Wolf Technology's tailor-made '530BB' kit, but he soon realised he might've been heading down a dead end... "This package was only for left-hand drive cars, and my steering rack was guaranteed to get in the way," he explains. To get around the problem, he instead began snapping up individual parts from this kit, such as the two Garrett GT2561 ball-bearing turbos, before heading all the way over to WGT Auto Developments where a host of

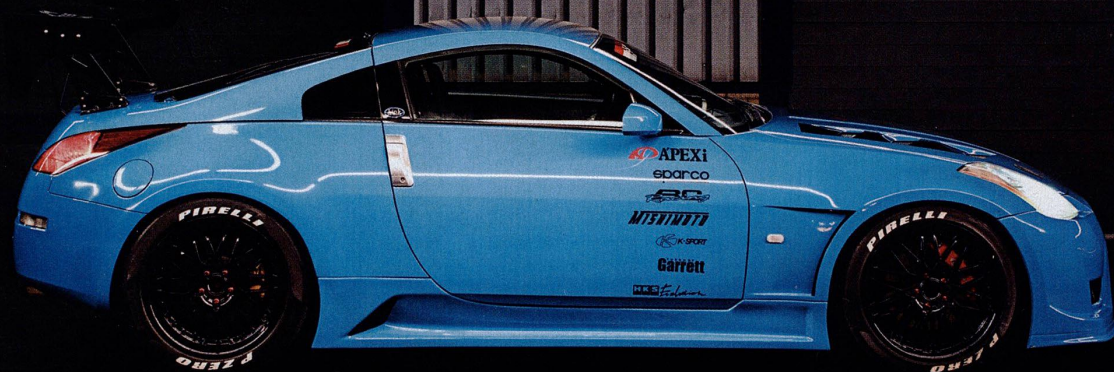
custom parts were used to get everything talking to one another.

With bespoke manifolds whipped up from WGT and the fully capable fuelling system transferred over from the previous RX-7, the turbos were tucked away under each side of the car's shallow 'V' profile with millimetres to spare. "Everything was actually pretty plain-sailing once we got the manifolds just right," Paul modestly says. Another minor headache came in the form of having to rip the car's standard single fuel line from the underside and painstakingly replace it with a twin-line return system that was also a lot larger in size to match the rest of the upgraded system.

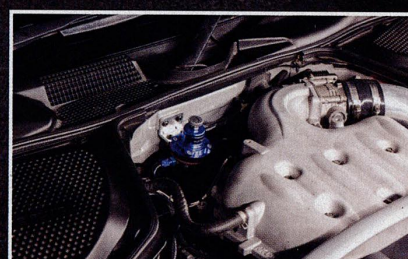
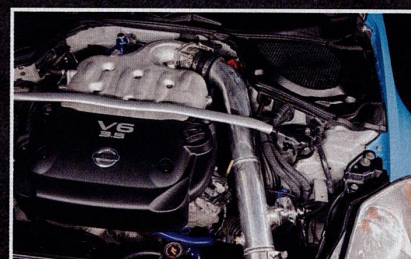
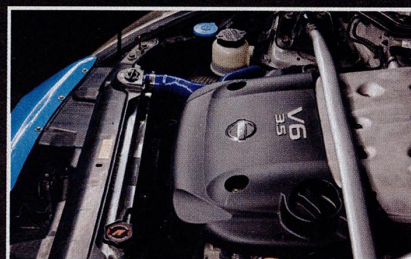
You might've noticed that for now at least, the V6's internals have remained untouched.

This helps to explain why Paul has only had the car mapped to a lowly 0.7bar of boost up until this point. "These engines are said to be able to take about 450whp without forging them, so that's exactly what we aimed for until I re-build the internals in the next few months," he tells us. Still, boasting 550bhp at the flywheel in a relatively light package, no driver aids and a manual gearbox, it isn't exactly sluggish as it is...

"At the moment all the torque comes in by 1500rpm, so it basically wheel spins in any gear!" Paul grins, revealing that so far, the drivetrain has coped impressively well with the new-found grunt. With a sturdier clutch so far being the only transmission upgrade, he hints that a new LSD is also on the cards around



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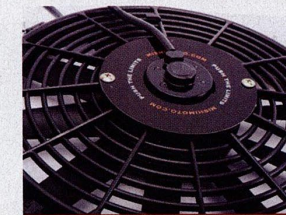
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