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JAPANESE  
TUNING MAG

# JAPANESE CARS **BANZAI**

THE UK'S BEST-SELLING JAPANESE MAGAZINE

## THREE DEGREES

Meet the Time Attack privateer whose 500bhp FC3S RX-7 runs a unique hybrid of three generations of rotary powertrain

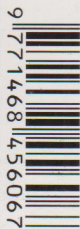


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Tractive Solutions uses WRC technology to deliver 500bhp from a standard STi block!



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**PLUS:**

- Old-skool Datsun 1200 pickups
- Ultra-rare S15 Silvia Varietta
- SEMA show
- 50 years of Toyota in motorsport
- \$50k Datsun 510
- Show-winning Évo VIII

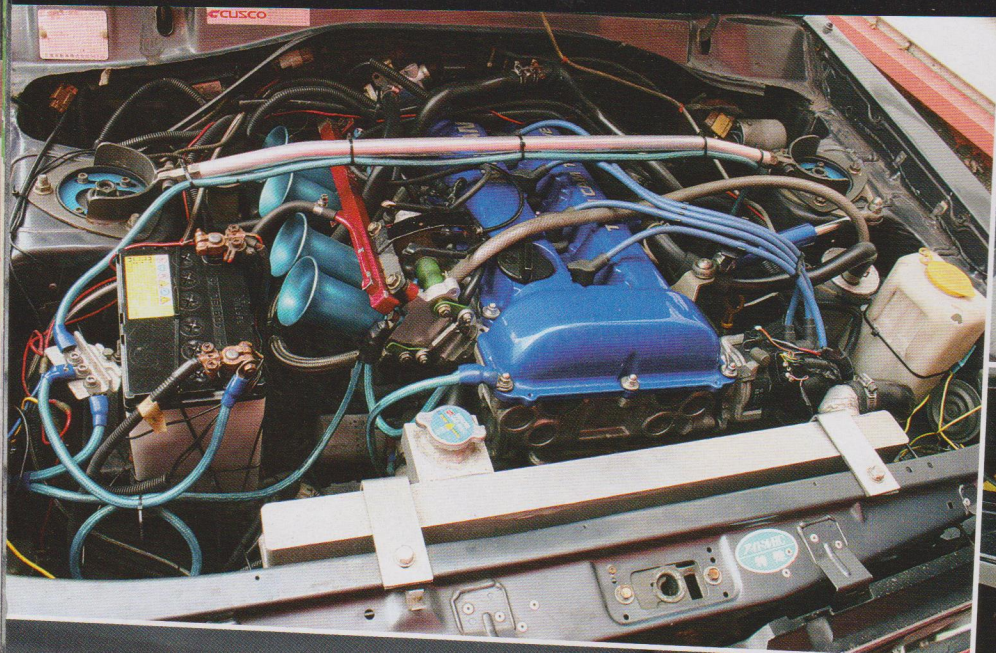


WILL RETRO UTILITY VEHICLES HIT THE RIGHT  
LIFESTYLE NOTE FOR JAPANESE CAR ENTHUSIASTS?  
WE SAMPLE TWO DATSUN SUNNY PICKUPS FOR SALE  
FROM JAPANESE PERFORMANCE PARTS.

WORDS & PHOTOS: JOE CLIFFORD



# B122 DATSUN SUNNY TRUCKS



OWNING PICKUPS LIKE THESE IS NOT SO MUCH ABOUT BEING A JAPANESE TREND-FOLLOWER BUT A UK TREND-SETTER



**A**side from the VW Beetle, I don't know of many vehicles like the B120-series Datsun Sunny Truck that have enjoyed a 23-year production span. Apart from one minor trim alteration in November 1986, when the original B120 chassis was improved with the addition of front disc brakes and a grey plastic grille for new rectangular headlights (from then on known as B122 chassis), this model remained unchanged from its launch in February 1971 to the end of its life in 1994.

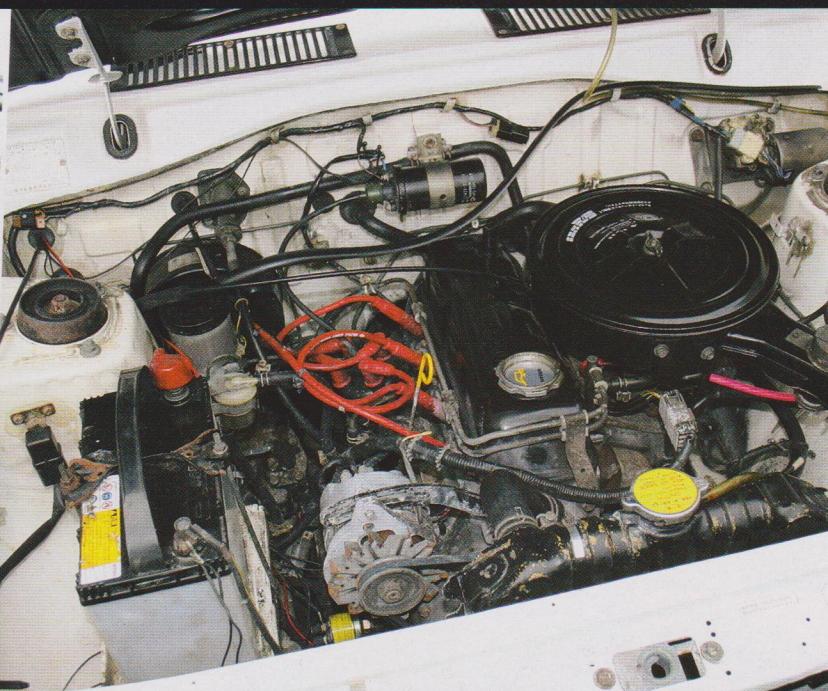
During this period it was nothing more than a cheap, economical commercial vehicle that

got used and abused by tradesmen from Mexico to Mombasa. Fortunately, as the pickup was based on the B110 series Datsun Sunny/1200, tough mechanicals and easy parts availability meant that early extinction was by no means a foregone conclusion.

In more recent years, however, the fortune of the little Sunny pickup has changed. It has become super-cool, especially among Japanese youths, who see it as a practical, lifestyle vehicle that is tuneable, rear-wheel drive, and has the facility to lug around lots of activity-related gear. It's not unusual to see these cars driving to drift meets loaded up with wheels, tools and food, competing on track

with the rest of the field, and then driving home on a fresh set of tyres. It's like a competition car and support vehicle rolled into one – not something you could say about a tricked-out S14.

For this reason, modified Sunny Trucks rarely come up for sale at Japanese auction houses, but when they do be assured that West Sussex-based Jap Performance Parts has its buyer poised to snap them up. Though a specialist Japanese car parts supplier and vehicle breaker, JPP also buys and sells complete vehicles, especially ones that proprietor Sajid Moghal knows are fashionable in Japan. This can be a little risky, business-



## TECH SPEC

**ENGINE:** A12 1171cc SOHC 8v four-cylinder, custom motorbike-style exhaust back box. Standard four-speed gearbox

**CHASSIS:** 14" Longchamp XR4 alloys with 185/60 Dunlop Le Mans tyres, lowering springs over standard front shocks, modified rear leaf springs

**EXTERIOR:** Resprayed white, black-painted bonnet, early B110 Datsun 1200 saloon stainless steel grille and circular headlights, front chin spoiler, chrome wind deflectors, chrome wing mirrors, rolled front arches

**INTERIOR:** Sparco bucket seat, Momo steering wheel, Autometer rev counter with shift light, DC5 Integra Type-R titanium gear knob

wise, as there is no guarantee that what is popular over there will automatically be here too. But with one other pickup already sold and dozens of phonecalls from interested parties, everybody who's seen JPP's current pair is convinced that Sajid's decision to import them was right. For identical models, they follow very different modifying courses. In fact, the only real similarity is the previous owners' choice of fitting the early Datsun 1200's stainless steel grille and circular headlights rather than the

anonymous grey plastic grille and rectangular lenses they originally came with.

Like a straightforward restoration project, the white car features standard bodywork, apart from a black-painted bonnet and jutting chin spoiler, plus the original A12 engine and four-speed gearbox. It's in phenomenal

condition, with no dents or scratches in the load bay and an extremely eager, fresh-sounding engine. Not surprising when you find out it's only covered 47k miles!

The only faults I could pick out were some flaked paint around the front arches (they have been rolled to accommodate the tasty

## TECH SPEC

**ENGINE:** SR20DE 1998cc DOHC 16v four-cylinder from S15 Silvia Spec-S, individual throttle bodies, yellow 440cc injectors, tubular exhaust manifold leading to custom system, alloy radiator, oil catch tank, MoTeC ECU in glovebox, six-speed gearbox

**CHASSIS:** 13" Watanabe alloys with 175/60 (front) and 185/60 (rear) Yokohama Grand Prix M7R tyres, Cusco front coilovers with pillow-ball top-mounts, modified rear leaf springs, front strut brace, engine brace

**EXTERIOR:** Resprayed graphite grey, wide-arch conversion, chin spoiler, adjustable rear wing on custom alloy mount, chrome wind deflectors, circular wing mirrors

**INTERIOR:** Cobra bucket seat, Datsun three-spoke steering wheel, modified gear lever, component stereo system, oil temp/oil pressure/water temp/air fuel ratio gauges in custom dashboard pod, additional oil temp/pressure and battery voltage gauges in centre console



Longchamp alloys and lowered suspension) and a faded Sparco bucket seat. Well, three faults if you include the fact that it's not particularly easy to get in or out of. Apart from a monster Autometer rev counter and shift light (a little unnecessary for 69bhp), there's nothing remotely electrical mediating the link between car and driver. The windows will tone your arms, there's no power steering and certainly no traction control system, which can be amusing considering the light weight of this car. It's refreshing going back to basics, and ever-so-cool just cruising along with your elbow propped up on an open window. But it's not what you'd call invigorating.

That's where the grey one comes in, as the Mr Hyde character to the Dr Jekyll of the white pickup. Imagine a car so light you could hoist up the rear end yourself, matched to a tuned SR20DE engine on throttle bodies and

MoTeC management. Trust me, this engine is just getting going at 7000rpm and that adjustable rear wing is there for a reason – to create some extremely necessary downforce. With a tough triple-plate clutch on board, this car can light up the rear tyres in fourth gear!

As it was bought from an auction, the car's provenance and specification has not been fully divulged. Immediate condition is the key factor, and in that respect this car doesn't disappoint, for it has been beautifully put together. The S15 Silvia Spec-S engine conversion and S15 Silvia Spec-R six-speed gearbox are definitive aspects, we just have to assume that the propshaft is custom and the differential non-standard. It doesn't look like any changes were made to the engine mounts, though the gearbox obviously sits further back than normal; hence the S-bend in the new gear lever.

Looking at the wide-arch body kit and the way it is carefully shaped to follow the body's swage lines, this is no adaption either. Perhaps the chin spoiler is model-specific too, but there's no real way of telling. Overall, it's not pared down or subtle like the white pickup, and nor should it be with such hard-hitting performance under the bonnet.

Owning pickups like these is not so much about being a Japanese trend-follower but a UK trend-setter. There's no guarantee that old-skool Japanese pickups will gain the same following as more traditional old-skool cars, but with limited availability and immense tuning potential, you could soon have a ride that'll make every tradesman and lifestyle junkie jealous 🍷

**CONTACT:** Jap Performance Parts (01293 520090 or [www.japperformanceparts.co.uk](http://www.japperformanceparts.co.uk))