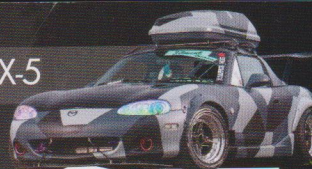




RETRO PERFECTION AE86

HEAD TURNING MAZDA MX-5



JAPANESE

Performance

ROAD RAGER

INSPIRED BY A Hardcore drift machine, this daily driven wide-arched Impreza is packing a 550bhp Skyline RB25 engine and RWD! Well, that's one way to make the school run more interesting!



**BRAKING:
THE RULES
OF STOPPING
EXPLAINED**

DEC '15 £4.50
No.179 www.chpltd.com



chp

ALSO INSIDE...

DREAMS CAN COME TRUE
LANCER FAN'S 590BHP EVO V

AMUSE-KITTED SUPER COUPE
SUPERCHARGED NISSAN 370Z

MUGEN MASTERPIECE
CARBON CLAD FN2 CIVIC TYPE R





HOONICORN

WORDS: DANIEL BEVIS PICS: STEVE HALL

MAKING A ROAD CAR OUT OF A FULL-BORE DRIFT CAR IS A TRICKY BRIEF. BUT WHEN IT ALSO HAS TO BE A SHOW CAR AND A FAMILY CAR, TOO... THAT'S SURELY JUST A MYTHICAL BEAST?



Win on Sunday, sell on Monday. It's a classic formula that's sustained the motorsport budgets of works race teams from time immemorial. Whether it's the halo effect of having your manufacturer logo glued to a Formula One car, or the more relatable kudos of racing a Touring Car that looks for all the world like a stickered-up version of an everyday commuter, there's a proven relationship between motorsport success and forecourt sales. It's why car-

makers pump such extravagant funds into the seemingly pointless pursuit of driving around in circles at high speed; people like racing, people buy cars, it just makes sense.

Sometimes, however, this natural association forms itself with no real impetus from the race teams in question. Take, for example, Jap Performance Parts and their RB25 Impreza. JPP, as many of you will already be aware, are a formidable supplier of JDM parts; they sell tuning upgrades, break imports, all sorts. And they also



build some pretty badass cars – it's a showcase of what they have to offer, but it's also for their own amusement. They're petrolheads through-and-through, you see, it's something they're naturally compelled to do. From their BEAMS-powered '75 Celica to the astonishing Evo IX 'Sprint Wagon' estate, they like to do things the unusual way. So it was that they found themselves crafting an Impreza drift car for the 2010 JDM AllStars season. They took a two-door STi Type R shell, converted it to rear-wheel drive, and fitted a Nissan RB25 straight-six in the nose. It took a lot of graft, pluck and dedication as they were as keen to get it aesthetically perfect as they were to build a formidable and competitive drift machine, but the guys ended up with one of the UK's most celebrated skidders.

Now, an eagle-eyed observer was rather taken with this idea. Garry Bird liked what he saw, and one day decided to give Jap Performance Parts a call. His question was simple: 'Can you build me one of those...but a road-legal one?' Well, there's nothing these fellas enjoy more than a challenge, so they picked up the gauntlet and here we are.

'We started with a GC8 Type

R shell that we had in stock, and we sourced a suitable RB25 motor from an R33 Skyline GTS-T,' says JPP's head-honcho Sajid Moghal. 'We had to modify the Subaru's front subframe to accommodate the Nissan's engine, and then the gearbox was mated to an Impreza Type R rear diff, shafts and hubs via a custom propshaft.' Complex stuff, of course, but it helped exponentially that this wasn't their first time doing it, the lessons learned from the development of the drift car paying dividends throughout the process. Indeed, the fact that all of their modifications and developments had been tested in the arena of competition drifting really worked to bolster the credentials of the package: if it could survive that kind of regular and unrelenting abuse, it follows that it'd be more than up to the task of functioning as an entertaining road car.

'The idea just made a lot of sense to me,' says Garry. 'I used to have an Impreza Type R, but having gone through numerous bottom ends I got fed up of rebuilding the thing, and bought a hawkeye instead. But my heart was always with these classic Imprezas, and I always wanted to get back to

the old style. So when I saw Saj's car, it flicked a switch in my head; I called him up with the idea of building a road-going version and he was really enthusiastic. We talked over the various options, quickly discounting the idea of building a 4x4 RB25 Impreza as being too complex and expensive to be workable, and instead planned to the brief that I wanted something to act as a track car that was also a show car, as well as being sensible enough for me to take the kids to school in.'

Blimey. Briefs don't get a lot more demanding than that, do they? It's lucky that Saj has magic in his fingers and a brain full of wiring diagrams and engineering solutions. A lesser mind might have been daunted by the prospect of building a car that had to tick so many boxes. But not Saj, he just got stuck in.

Now, before we get into the mechanicals, let's just take a moment to consider the way the thing looks. You see, while it's vital for competition cars to be good-looking in order to reflect well on their owners and sponsors, it's equally important for heavily modified road cars to talk-the-talk as well as walk-the-walk; while the world will always have ample room for sleepers,

cars like this need to shout about their abilities. It's only fair warning, right?

It's almost hard to believe that the classic Impreza three-box profile is knocking on the door of a quarter of a century old – while it doesn't look strictly contemporary today, it's still pretty fresh. And you've probably noticed that this car only has two doors. Unlike the more common four-doors, these shells would usually be spotted wearing RS, Type R, 22B or P1 badges, something for the connoisseur, and that's very much appropriate to this customer's brief. It's for this reason that JPP spoke to HT Autos about using one of their

PROJECT: DRIFT SUBARU
JAP PERFORMANCE PARTS' DRIFT SUBARU WAS AN INSPIRED IDEA FROM THE START. WHILE YOU DO SOMETIMES SEE IMPREZAS IN COMPETITIVE DRIFTING, THEY'RE BY NO MEANS COMMON, OWING TO THEIR INHERENT 4WD DNA. THE PROJECT STARTED AS A BIT OF FUN FOR THE GUYS, BUT DEVELOPED AT SUCH PACE THAT IT TURNED INTO THEIR OFFICIAL DRIFT CAR FOR THE 2010 SEASON; THEIR PARTNERS AT PR DEVELOPMENTS CONVERTED THE CHASSIS TO RWD, THE NISSAN RB25 MOTOR WENT IN, AND THE MADNESS SPIRALLED FROM THERE. IT QUALIFIED 8TH ON ITS FIRST TIME OUT (THE CAR WAS JUST ON A TEST DAY, THEY DIDN'T EVEN INTEND TO ENTER QUALIFYING, BUT IT WAS GOING WELL...) AND WENT ON TO CLOCK UP COUNTLESS IMPRESSIVE FINISHES



'THE CLASSIC IMPREZA STILL LOOKS FRESH 25-YEARS ON'





wide-arch 22B replica bodykits for the project. ('Oh yes, it had to have the 22B width,' laughs Garry. 'That was a deal-breaker.') This makes the wings around 35–40mm wider than stock, helping to bump up the aggression as well as accommodate a broader footprint. And the fact that the whole thing's finished in pure, snowy white seems rather appropriate, too, doesn't it? Sitting out in the rain for our shoot, beneath the myriad burning pinpricks in the sky, it looks almost virginal. Which should lull a few contenders into a false sense of security at the traffic lights...

OK, so let's talk about the meat in this retro sandwich. As you know, there's an RB25 under the copiously vented bonnet. But it's no ordinary RB25. 'We kept the GTS-T block, and fitted it with an RB26 long-nose crank, RB26 rods and pistons, and an HKS TF06 turbo,' Sajid grins. In addition to this, you'll spot the shimmering

and serpentine top-mount tubular exhaust manifold, running through a custom downpipe to a bespoke system, as well as that unmissable front-mount intercooler. The iconic bonnet scoop remains in situ because, well, you can't have an Impreza of this age without one really, but the new, larger I/C sits proudly on the nose as much as a statement of intent as to ramp up performance by keeping things Fonz-like. The whole setup is overseen by a smart Link G4 ECU (Link's slogan is 'Smoke the tyres, not the engine,' which says a lot for their nous), that features mind-boggling customisability across all parameters and is probably cleverer than you are. Don't take that personally, that's just how technology's evolving...

'The plan is to have switchable levels of boost, so it can have the full 550bhp when I'm playing, but something a bit more toned down and sensible for the school run,' reasons Garry. The fact that he's

justifying the build as 'sensible' becomes all the more curious when he starts talking enthusiastically about anti-lag, but it's all just part of the jigsaw for him. Sure, this isn't the simplest way to build a car like this, but it's the right way.

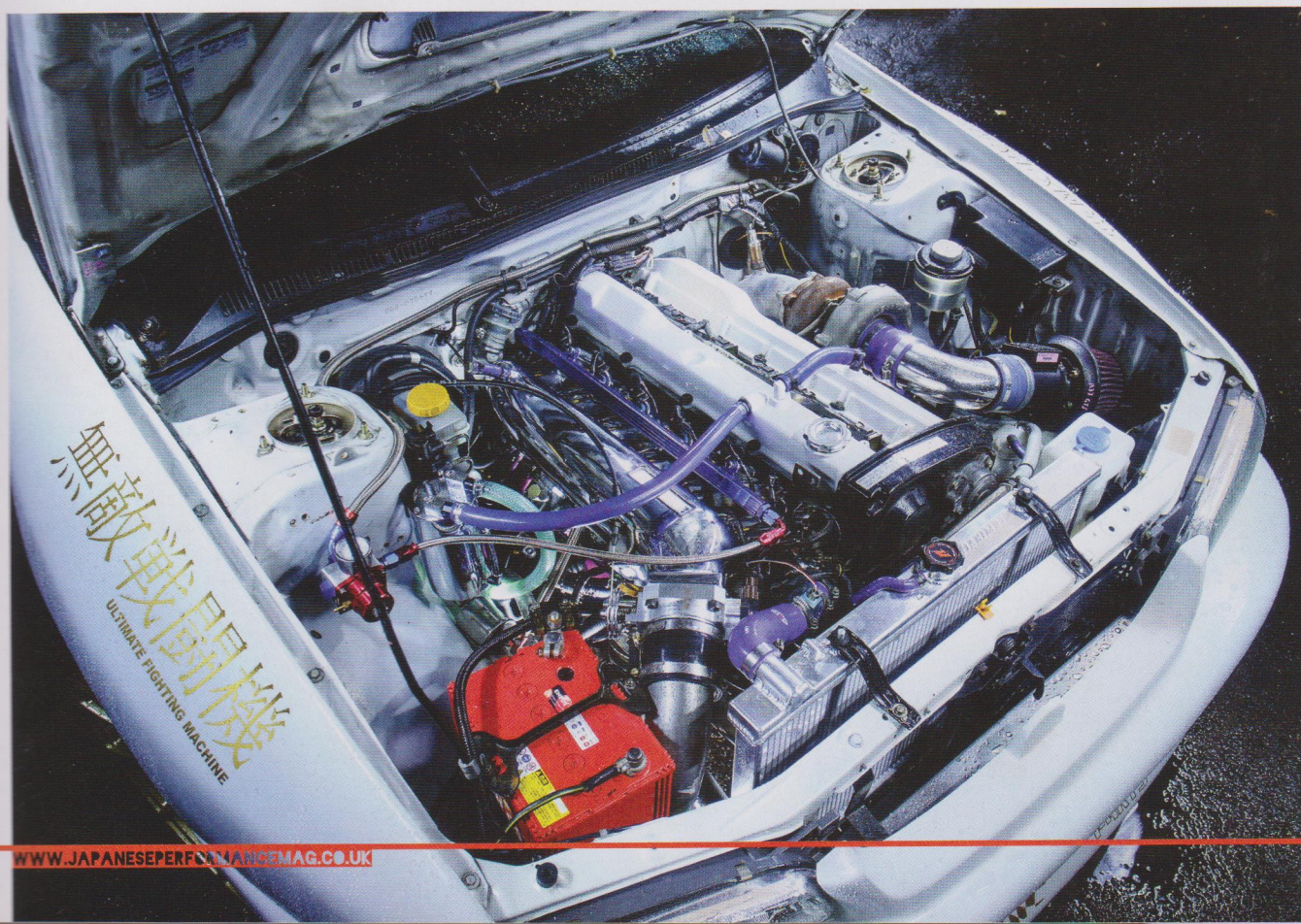
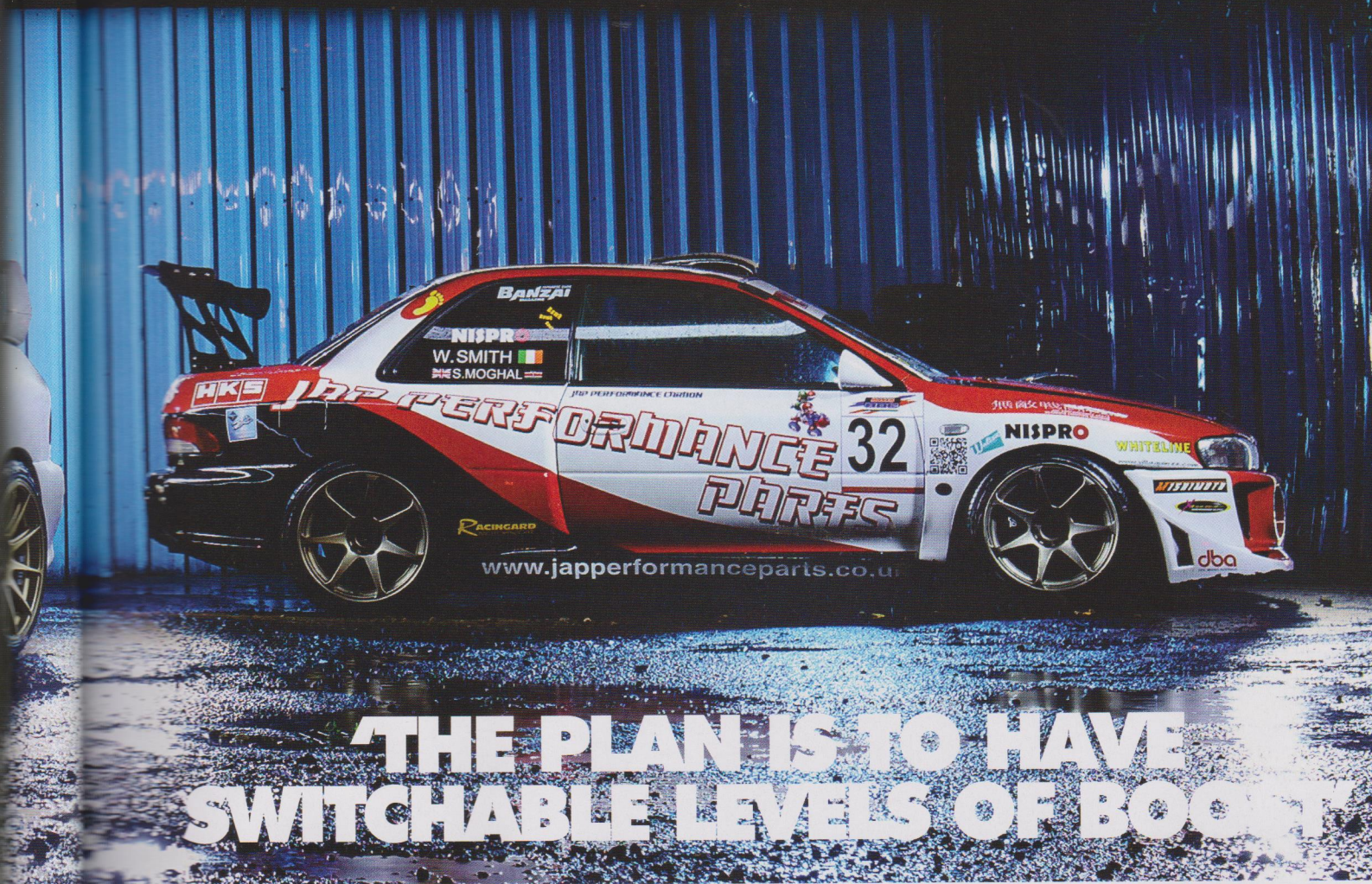
'The project's taken about two years on and off, but the actual working time equates to about two months,' says Sajid. 'Garry's been closely involved in the development throughout.'

'Yes, it's been a fun process,' Garry confirms. 'We tested the car when the RB25 was stock and it was lairy enough, so I can't wait to find out what it's like once the ECU's set-up for all the mods. I always had one eye on the show car aspect, too; I knew that when I parked up on a showground that engine would be a central feature, so a lot of effort's gone into showcasing it properly – polishing, dress up, there's about £8.5k in there just getting it looking lovely.'

So it's very much got the

**JAP PERFORMANCE PARTS
JPP HAS GROWN OVER THE LAST
DECADE FROM BEING A SMALL,
FAMILY-RUN BUSINESS INTO ONE
OF EUROPE'S LARGEST SUPPLIERS
OF JAPANESE PERFORMANCE
PARTS (THE CLUE'S IN THE NAME,
REALLY), BOTH NEW AND USED,
ALONG WITH MYRIAD TUNING
OPTIONS. THEY IMPORT
CONTAINER-LOADS OF JDM CARS
FOR DISMANTLING, ON THE BASIS
THAT ANY CAR THAT HASN'T BEEN
EXPOSED TO OUR MERCURIAL
WEATHER AND SALTED ROADS
WILL BE A BETTER STARTING POINT
FOR HARVESTING SPARES. IN
ESSENCE, IF YOU WANT OR NEED
IT, THEY'LL ALMOST CERTAINLY
HAVE IT ON THE SHELF – AND IT
WON'T BE THE SORT OF ROT
YOU'LL FIND ON ONLINE AUCTION
SITES. SAJID AND HIS TEAM HAVE
STANDARDS TO MAINTAIN!**

show, but it's also all about the go – Sajid and his team have delivered on the crazy brief with gusto. 'Oh, I'm so looking forward to the 2016 show season!' laughs Garry. 'The looks on people's faces when they hear an Impreza rumbling past without that trademark flat-four bubba-buh-bubba-buh-bubba-buh sound. And then when they see me getting the tail out!'



TECHSPEC

ENGINE

Nissan RB25 2.5-litre straight-six, RB25 block with RB26 long-nose crank, RB26 stock rods and pistons, HKS TD06 turbo, HKS head gasket, ARP conrod bolts, HKS Kevlar cambelt, HKS M35i plugs, HKS oil filter, HKS engine oil, aftermarket inlet manifold and rail with Q45 throttle body, ASNU 600cc injectors and wiring, Link G4 ECU, Mishimoto R32 radiator, Mishimoto slimline twin fans, Mishimoto header tank, Mishimoto exhaust wrap, fuel pressure regulator, RCM in-tank fuel pump, Honda S2000 clutch master cylinder, Honda Civic EK9 coolant reservoir, large front-mount intercooler with custom pipework, top-mount tubular exhaust manifold, HKS wastegate, custom downpipe, full custom exhaust

TRANSMISSION

RB25 gearbox, Xtreme twin-plate ceramic clutch, custom propshaft, STi Type R rear axle with R180 diff

SUSPENSION

BC Racing coilovers

BRAKES

Gold Subaru Brembos (stock four-pot calipers at time of shoot)

WHEELS

9.75x18in XXR 527 wheels all round with 245/40/18 (front) and 255/35/18 (rear) Falken tyres

INTERIOR

Lowered seat rails and Cosworth wraparound race buckets, flocked dash, Acewell digital dash, Momo steering wheel

EXTERIOR

Fully repainted STi V5 Type R two-door shell, HT Autos replica 22B body kit inc. bumpers, Evo VI bonnet stay, crystal front lights

The concept behind this build may, on paper, sound a bit mad and unrealistic – like the automotive equivalent of the mythical unicorn (or should that be Hoonicorn?) – but that analysis fails to take into account that the people involved here have very strong characters with an unshakable force of will. Yes, it is possible to use a competition drift car as a template, turn it into a sensible family car and not lose any of its forthrightness. Indeed, the fact that the car's equally able to pelt for the horizon as it is to cosset the kids almost lets you forget that this is, in essence, a RWD-converted Impreza with a

whacking great Nissan motor. It's just as well that they've put as much effort into aesthetics as performance, isn't it?

'The most important element of the build, without a doubt, is the dump valve,' Garry explains. 'My five-year-old son insisted! He makes 'pssst' noises when he's pushing his toy cars around, so there was no way that this car wasn't having one.' You see, this insane drift monster is really a sensible family car after all. And hey, if that's not mad enough for you, you should see what Garry's got lined up for his next project. 'I've always fancied a twin-engined Impreza,' he

THANKS

'WALTON SMITH AT NISPRO PERFORMANCE, EVERYBODY AT JAP PERFORMANCE PARTS (AND I MEAN EVERYBODY), HT AUTOS FOR THE 22B KIT, EVERYONE WHO'S HELPED WITH FINDING PARTS FOR THE PROJECT AND, OF COURSE, MY FAMILY FOR ALL THEIR SUPPORT.'

ponders. 'I'm pretty sure that hasn't been done before. But if anyone can make it work, Saj can...'

Well, there's a challenge. But in the meantime, Garry and his mythical monster of a Subaru have got some work to do – there's scalps to take on track, and show trophies to win. But first and foremost, of course, he's got to get the kids to school. 