

# WAKING THE ZED

*This classic Datsun had been slumbering in an Essex dealership for a while, unused and overlooked. But Jay McToldridge found it, offered it some smelling salts, and set about sprucing it up in fine style...*



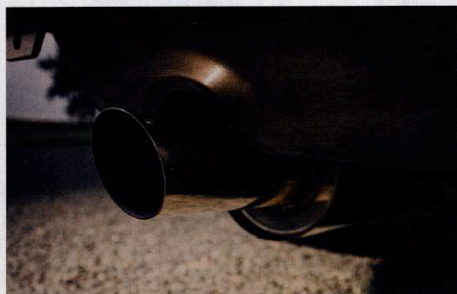


## WILD CARD: DATSUN 240Z



**T**he allure of the Z car is one of those perennial constants in the cosmos. Like photosynthesis, gravity and those fiddly little ketchup cups you get in McDonald's, it's ever-present, ubiquitous and inextricably interwoven into the very fabric of the universe itself.

For many of you, the Datsun 240Z will need no introduction. But if you're in the mood for a history lesson, here it is in a nutshell: in 1969, Datsun's S30 series emerged onto the global motoring scene like some glorious butterfly from an intricately crafted Japanese chrysalis. It was so beautiful, so perfectly proportioned, that it slightly shifted the Earth from its axis, and countless onlookers swooned to the floor, overwhelmed by its majesty (probably). Sold as the Nissan Fairlady Z in Japan and the Datsun 240Z elsewhere, it's no secret that the designers owed an unashamed stylistic debt to the Jaguar E-Type. The car's long



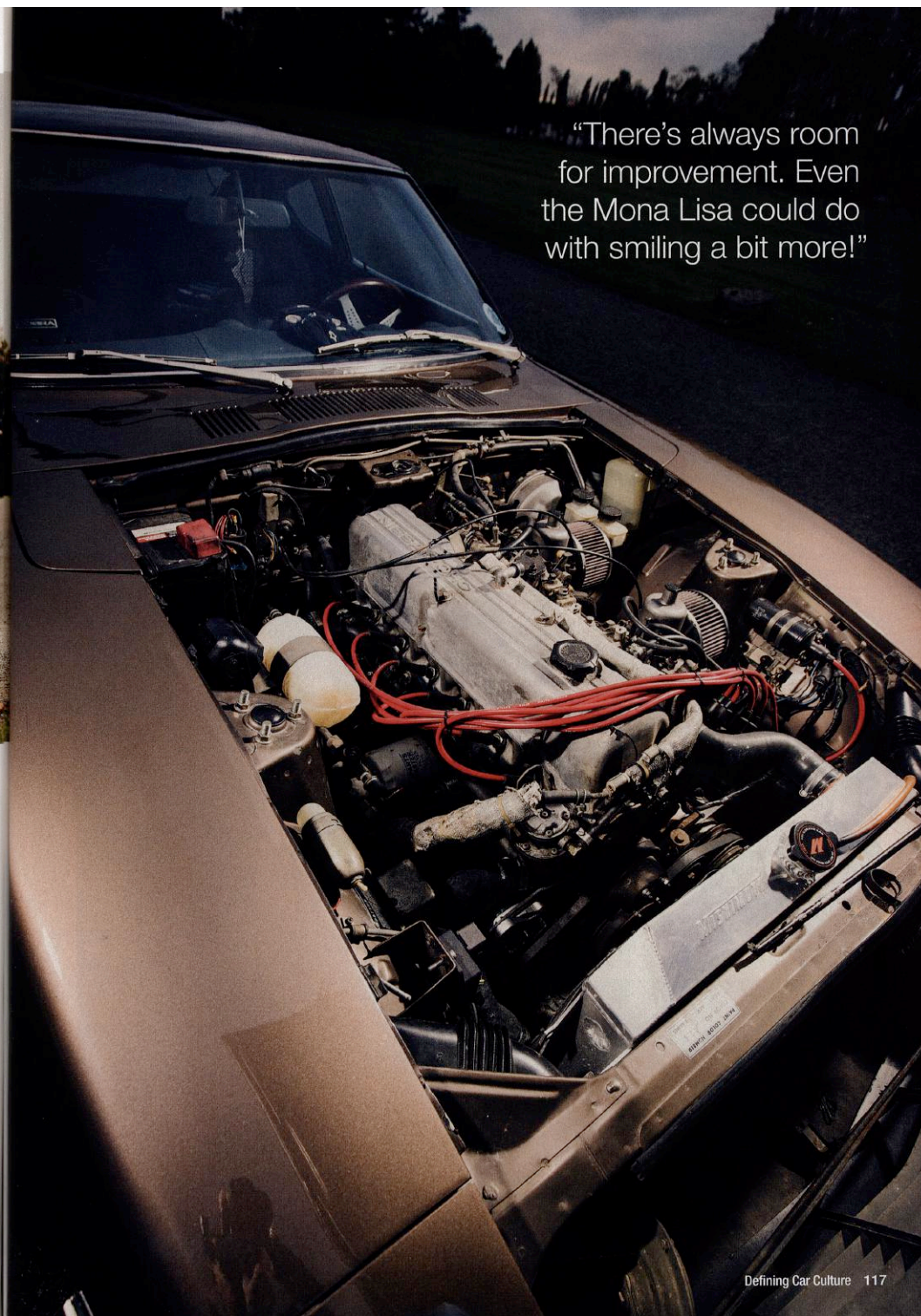
nose, squat cab and GT ethos were all very Jaguar, although the performance was thoroughly Japanese. It came with an eager twin-carbed straight-six, its 2.4-litres offering a raspy 150bhp-odd. There was all-independent suspension, rack-and-pinion steering, and 10.7-inch brake discs. It'd do 0-60mph in a flat eight seconds, and go on to 125mph. To an early-seventies audience, this was a spec list to die for. The straight-six unit evolved for the 1974 model year into a longer-stroked 2.6, to create the logically named 260Z. Increasingly stringent US emissions regulations ushered in a rapidly evolved variant the following year, the 280Z. Which, as you've probably guessed, had a 2.8-litre motor. What you're looking at here is a 240Z that's rocking the 2.8-litre lump.

It speaks volumes for the quality of the design that there's still just as much to love about the Z today. While the march of technological progress means that the performance is now comparable to a perky hatchback, those hips don't lie. Time has done nothing to dilute the sheer gorgeousness of the thing. The stats are only significant on paper, of course. Certain newer and less exciting cars may be more powerful, but they're also heavier and more sanitised, and it's all in the delivery – the Datsun is a gruff, meaty, yet balletic thing, a constant source of joy.

But there's always room for improvement. Even the Mona Lisa could do with smiling a bit more. And that's where Jay McToldridge comes in.

Some of you may recognise the name. JayMac is the figurative and literal driving force behind the relentless Players Show colossus, collecting the finest modified metal from the UK and beyond into a series of top-flight events every year, and it stands to reason that he'd know a thing or two about building badass cars.

We featured his Mk1 Golf a few months back, and it immediately became our favourite Volkswagen. And that's saying something. Retro Dubs are quite different to classic Datsuns though, aren't they? So how did all this come about?



“There’s always room for improvement. Even the Mona Lisa could do with smiling a bit more!”



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It's a laid-back ride all right



"Ah, I've always wanted one of these since I was a kid," Jay grins. "Some people dream of 911s, but to me this has always been a better shape. And they're rarer now!"

Sound reasoning. We can totally get on board with that. Rarity is important, and you can't put a price on style.

"I found the car advertised online," he continues. "It was on sale with a dealer in Epping. He'd had it for over a year – it had belonged to a friend of his who'd moved to Malaysia and asked him to sell it. The pictures in the ad were awful, but we took a drive down to view it... and were amazed with what we found. It was so clean!"

The car had lived a pampered and easy life. It was a Californian import; the one-owner car was all matching-numbers original and had covered just 50,000 miles in its carefree life in Newport Beach, Southern California. And you know what's great about California? The weather's better, so they don't have to grit the roads in the winter. Usually when you find original, unrestored 1970s Z cars they're a bit crumbly. If they've lived in Japan, they've been rained on a lot; if they've been imported to the UK, they haven't been rustproofed and have simply dissolved in the winter salt. But this car? "There was no rust in it anywhere. Absolutely none at all," breathes Jay with undisguised wonder. Lucky find, huh? A deal was done, and he collected the car a week later. A fulfilment of a lifelong dream.

Naturally, having got the pristine museum piece home, he did exactly what you or I would have done with this unmolested original: started modifying it to make it cooler.

"It was 100 percent stock when I bought it," Jay explains. "The very first thing I did was to buy the BRE front lip, as the front end looks awful



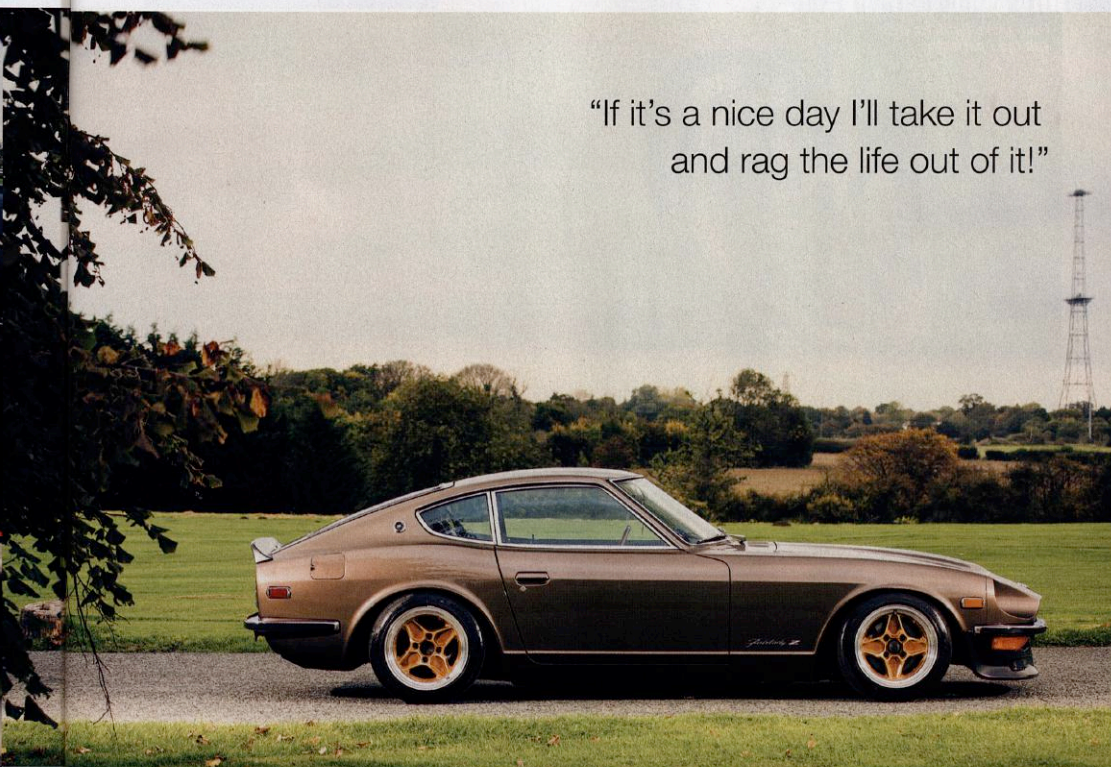
MOMO Super Grand Prix wheel

without it, and the next job was to do something about the ride height. I ordered a set of BC Racing coilovers with EMP Performance, but I got impatient and just couldn't wait to get the thing lower. So we got it into the shop and cut the springs – just like we used to do in the '90s!"

Before long the pukka BC units took the place of the hacked coils, and Jay threw on a timeless set of Watanabe wheels that he'd spotted for sale, at the same time getting on the blower to Nankang to order in a set of their sticky AR-1 cut slicks.

"To complement the coilovers, I also went mental on the Techno Toy Tuning website," Jay laughs, "and basically ordered all of the billet suspension components they do – arms, struts, bushings, the lot. The guys there looked after me, and Carl brought it all over in his hand luggage." (For the uninitiated, Carl Taylor is the other major player in the Players empire. The fact he likes to hang out in the States makes this sort of international parts-hauling a little bit easier...)

One of the principle concerns with running an old motor-car is the ever-present worry of finding yourself parked on the hard shoulder in a cloud of steam, which hangs over every mile of motoring like the Sword of Damocles. Thankfully Jay was starting with a strong base, the car having always been looked after, but for the sake of belt-and-braces he tapped up Mishimoto for a custom setup to totally overhaul the Datsun's cooling system – something he says has made a huge difference. It's also a useful base mod in terms of reliability, given that Jay's ultimate treatment of the engine has seen its twin SU carbs replaced with triple Webers, the big-six barking through a custom exhaust to the tune of 200bhp at the wheels. Which is more than enough for mischief in a lightweight, rear-wheel-drive tearabout.



"If it's a nice day I'll take it out and rag the life out of it!"



Cobra RS buckets



What a lovely bit of wood



## WILD CARD: DATSUN 240Z

Four-spoke Rotiform GTB suit the Z perfectly



Those Watanabes were only a stop-gap as Jay's a bit of a wheel perv, and the decision was made to work with Brian at Rotiform to create something unique and special for the Z: an old-style design with a fresh new twist, the GTB is a classic four-spoke with a lot more girth than you'd have found in the '70s, rocking a gorgeous Tequila Sunset finish.

"Lastly came the seats," says Jay. "I wanted an old-school Japanese look, and as usual Cobra came up trumps. I really do use the car a lot now, considering its age. If it's a nice day I'll take it out and rag the life out of it! It's the car that gets the most attention out of everything I've ever owned, which is saying a lot when you consider some of the ridiculous stuff we've done in the past. Most people love it, because you just don't see these cars around any more."

The fulfilment of a dream, then. A beautiful classic, tastefully updated and reengineered for mischief. Job done, on to the next one? "Oh no, I've got plans," Jay laughs. "How does a Rebello 3.2 stroker engine running 340bhp sound?" Yep, that sounds all right to us. The Datsun's reawakening has been an unqualified success, and it's turned into a real waking dream. Zed's not dead, baby. Zed's not dead. ■



### TECH SPEC: DATSUN 240Z

#### STYLING

BRE front splitter; BRE rear ducktail spoiler.

#### TUNING

2.8-litre L28 straight-six; triple Weber 40 carbis; custom equal-length manifold; full EMP 2.5in stainless steel exhaust system; Mishimoto radiator; 200bhp at wheels.

#### CHASSIS

8x15in ET0 and ET-15 Rotiform GTB wheels; 195/50 Nankang AP-1 cut slicks; BC Racing coilovers; Techno Toy Tuning billet lower front and rear control arms; Techno Toy Tuning billet TC rods; Techno Toy Tuning billet hubs.

#### INTERIOR

Cobra RS seats; MOMO Super Grand Prix wheel.

#### THANKS

James at The Play Bay; the boys at John Danby Racing; Brian and Jason at Rotiform; Ben at Nankang; Dom at Snap-On; Tom at Meguiar's; Forge Motorsport; Cobra Seats; Patrick at Mishimoto; the boys at Playhouse; Will and Keiv at Chelmsford Autos.



## LIAM FLAHERTY'S MAZDA MX-5

**FC says:** We've seen the mighty MX-5 being adapted for many different styles in recent years. From show cars to drift cars, and even highly strung track monsters, it seems like there's nothing this little roadster doesn't do well when the owner puts their mind to it.

Not content with settling on one particular look, Liam here has amazingly nailed pretty much every single possible niche with his incredibly impressive Mk2 version of the little Mazda – a car which now boasts an epic spec list that's longer than most novels.

"All I wanted was a nice set of wheels to start with, but here we are three years later and with thousands spent, I've got something that's really special to me to show for it," Liam laughs.

The black bodywork has been treated to

bumpers from the likes of Bomex and Duce, as well as carbon fibre rear over-fenders out back, with the car now propped up on not one but two different styles of WORK wheels.

Far from 'all show and no go', however, a look under the bonnet not only reveals that Liam's swapped up the engine for a more potent 1.8-litre version, but has also added one of Flynn's Miata's awesome turbocharger kits into the mix to now offer up around 300bhp to the party. With uprated fuelling parts, forged internals and a Torsen LSD out back, it's clear our owner here knows what he's talking about when it comes to a highly usable fast car, too.

We've seen some pretty damn epic MX-5s coming out of the woodwork lately, and Liam's here is no exception. Lavi!

### SPEC: MAZDA MX-5

#### MAIN MODS

1.8-litre VVT engine swap from 2003-spec MX-5; Flynn's Miata turbo kit with GT2560R turbocharger; forged con rods and pistons; AdaPronic ECU; DeatschWerks 700cc fuel injectors; paddle clutch; Torsen LSD; face-lift front-end conversion; Bomex front bumper; Duce rear bumper; cut and spaced-out front wings; Garage Vary side skirts; Carbon Miata carbon fibre rear over-fenders; Monster carbon fibre three-piece ducktail spoiler; WORK Emotion OR Kiwami alloys (front); WORK Meister S1-R alloys (rear); MeisterR coilovers; Mazda hardtop; Wilwood big brake kit; Cobra leather reclining seats; Takata harnesses; DND carbon fibre steering wheel; coilovers.



### SPEC: 350Z HR

#### MAIN MODS

Deep Space pearl wrap; WORK XSA wheels; nitrous injection; Alcantara trim; Hydrodipped interior panels; Elbach camber arms, bolts and anti rollbars; HSD Monopro coilovers; Amuse GT Kit; full titanium Amuse exhaust system.



## JAMIE REID'S 350Z

**FC says:** Jamie has been reading Fast Car for many years now and he's obviously put that experience to good use when building this drop Zed gorgeous 350. Being a late spec HR edition with the VQ35HR in its bay, gave Jamie the perfect base to start with; a quick glimpse at the spec shows he hasn't wasted that advantage.

On the outside a flip wrap has been added to the Amuse enhanced lines of the 350Z, while the

WORK wheels, HSD coilovers and Elbach goodies bolted to the chassis make sure this Nissan goes as well as it looks.

The floppy hue isn't the only nod to the glory days of modifying either; he's had nitrous installed too – giving this Zed 403bhp of V6 grunt. Jamie is a regular event goer too. So if you want to see this beast in the flesh, get yourself along to a Jap show!

A big-six barks through a custom exhaust to the tune of 200bhp

