

BECAUSE RACECAR

Time Attack is simple: put down the fastest time possible around a track, meaning the most important choice for the driver is ensuring they build the right car. So why did Paul Henshaw here decide a 47-year-old Datsun was just the thing for the job?!

Words and photos: Troy Barkern

The crazy world of Time Attack is one of the fastest growing corners of the motorsport community. It's not hard to see why, either – it's exciting, challenging and accessible to a huge range of cars and drivers with different skill levels.

The actual sport itself is very simple: you have a limited number of laps to set the fastest time you possibly can in the ultimate pursuit of speed. The field is generally comprised of the likes of insane aero-clad Evos, WRXs, Skylines, Civics, AE86s and Silvias, so it clearly makes for an odd sight to see a 47-year-old Datsun 240Z being thrown around the track at the same time. What's even more surprising is the fact that this one is remarkably competitive with the rest of the too. Then again, it is packing an 800-odd-horsepower RB26 motor, so that may have something to do with it...

The first question we just had to ask Aussie-based owner Paul then, was – why a 240Z for this wild motorsport? Surely there

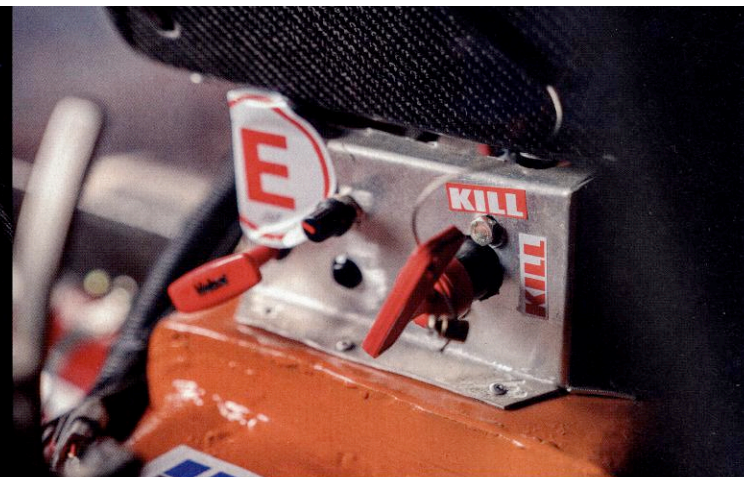
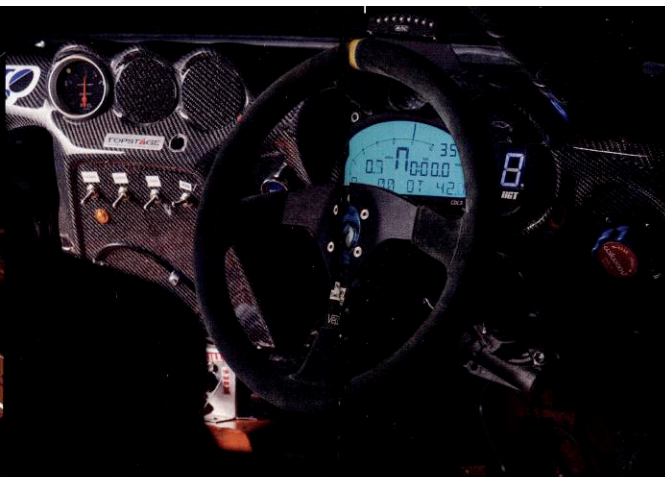
were easier options out there? "For me it was never about winning; I just don't have the available funds or skill level to be on the podium," he lays it out, revealing that his priorities list was more concerned with other factors. "The choice of car has therefore always been about what I love the look of."

Owning his own restoration business, Paul is keen to stress what an effective promotional tool running such an old chassis competitively has been. "Wherever the car goes it gets great coverage so that tends to also give the sponsors great value for money," he admits, continuing to explain that Time Attack seems to be either about winning or getting good exposure with a unique car.

Getting the Datsun to a competitive stage involved a little more than bolting some Webers to the side of an L-Series engine though. Paul picked it up as an unfinished project that had the roll cage already set up, so it was already destined for the track. A stock Skyline RB26 lump and five-speed gearbox were jammed into the Z at first,



DATSUN 240Z



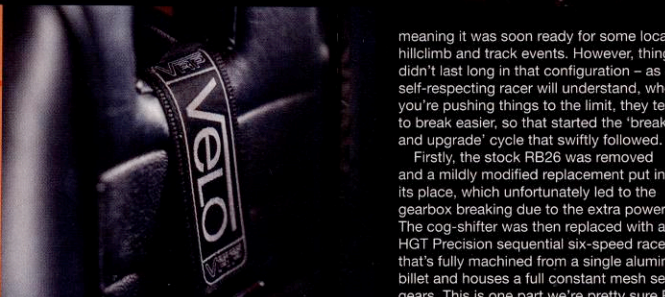
TECH CHECK MASSIVE ATTACK

Paul's Z was initially built for the world-famous and absolutely bonkers WTAC [World Time Attack Challenge] Sydney event.

Not heard of this annual gathering of epic machines? Imagine some of the craziest aero-clad cars known to man (just like this 240Z here, actually), all battling it out to try and smash the fastest outright time around the Sydney Motorsport Park circuit.

The event has attracted plucky car builders from all over the world, including the likes of Scotland's Andy Forrest with his frankly mental Subaru Impreza (that's quite possibly the fastest in the land), and even Keiichi 'Drift King' Tsuchiya himself.

Oh, and in case you're still not looking at tickets for this year's event in October, the fact there's also the Honeywell Garrett drift challenge featuring some of the planet's finest skidders should sweeten the deal!



meaning it was soon ready for some local hillclimb and track events. However, things didn't last long in that configuration – as any self-respecting racer will understand, when you're pushing things to the limit, they tend to break easier, so that started the 'break and upgrade' cycle that swiftly followed.

Firstly, the stock RB26 was removed and a mildly modified replacement put in its place, which unfortunately led to the gearbox breaking due to the extra power. The cog-shifter was then replaced with an HGT Precision sequential six-speed race box that's fully machined from a single aluminium billet and houses a full constant mesh set of gears. This is one part we're pretty sure Paul isn't going to have to replace anytime soon!

Nine laps into Sydney's World Time Attack Challenge of 2014, though, the mild RB26 decided to throw in the towel. Paul then approached PMC Race Engines to build him a bulletproof replacement. The final result was this 'RB28' that you see before you now. The RB26 was stroked to 2.8 litres and received extensive headwork, with practically no aspect of the internals missing out on the royal treatment.

Extra power delivery comes from the massive ID2000 fuel injectors, a MoTeC CDI module and Mercury coils. A MoTeC M800

is the brain of the operation that's set up to maximise the RB28's potential across the rev range. Finally, a BorgWarner EFR8374 turbo and a Hypertune intercooler caps so everything off. So, what's the final score? A whopping 810bhp and 640lb/ft on the dyno. Which last time we checked was ever so slightly more than the original L24 was putting out!

Obviously with a heap of power, something substantial was now needed to stop the car, so big six-piston AP Racing brakes were set up on the front and four-piston Wilwoods found their way onto the rear. Supershock bespoke coilovers, Arizona Z-Car billet arms and RAYS TE37 alloys keep this thing on the ground and provide some much-needed adjustability to the chassis, which is still very much a factory 240Z at its core. In fact, it even retains the factory suspension points and geometry because of the regulations of the class that Paul competes in.

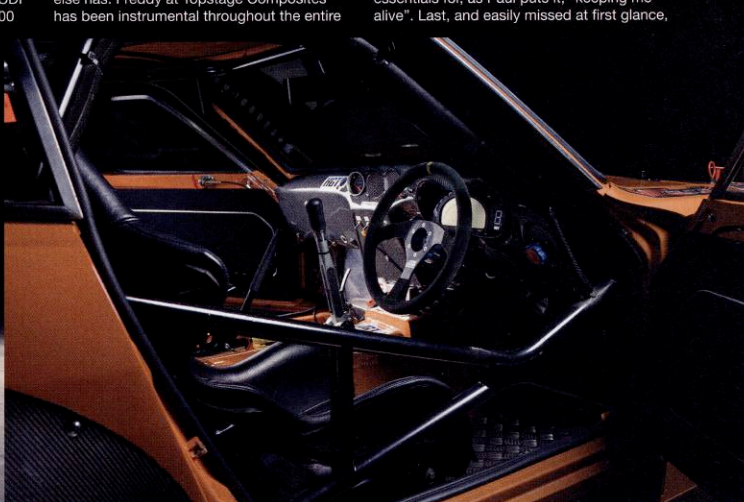
Outside is where some of the biggest 'wows' are now present though. A simply immense amount of carbon fibre is now attached to every portion of the car. "The aero has sort of escalated as everything else has. Freddy at Topstage Composites has been instrumental throughout the entire

time I've owned the car. Being a massive Z fan himself, he saw the potential and started helping with sponsorship and designing aero parts to make the car what it is now."

The aero started small with the bobtail spoiler and splitter, but then snowballed into the full-fat package you see before you, where every part serves a purpose. Some pieces are for simple weight reduction but the majority is designed to help bring some much-needed downforce for the 47-year-old body design. The currently bonnet vent setup is designed to get airflow through to the radiator, however it's a temporary measure as Freddy is currently designing a full carbon fibre part to replace it with. He needs every advantage he can get to push this car around the track in the fastest time possible, and all this aero plays a big role.

Inside, the Z is about as 'racecar' as you can get. A bare-bones interior cuts out as much unnecessary weight as possible and makes it very clear this machine was built for one thing – going as fast as possible. Aside from the roll cage the first thing you notice is that there's even more carbon in the form of a basic dash that houses the MoTeC display. From there your eyes wander to the various essentials for, as Paul puts it, "keeping me alive". Last, and easily missed at first glance,

A whopping 810bhp and 640lb/ft on the dyno



DATSUN 240Z



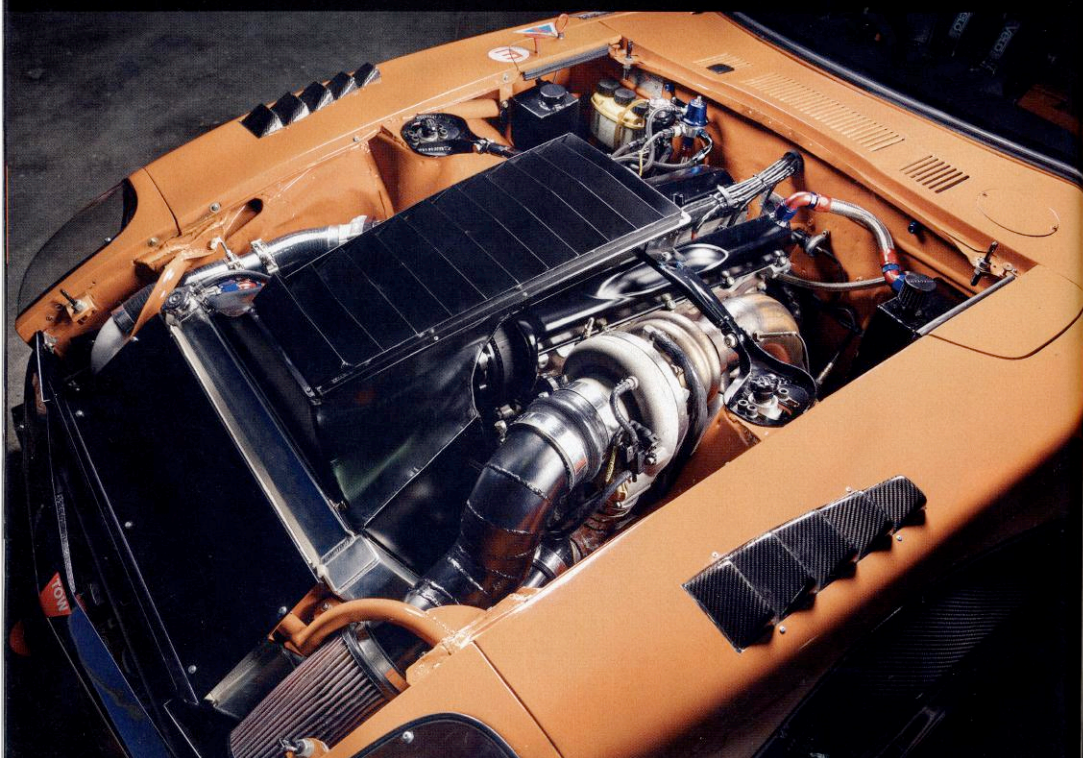
is the period Velo race seat that has been trimmed to match the original 240Z interior.

Perhaps the most important aspect of this build for Paul was to retain the 'soul' of the original Zed. As heavily modified as it is, any enthusiast can tell that underneath all the carbon and aero is a still a proud 240Z at its core, which is something he did not want to lose. A critical identifier is the chrome bumpers which, until recently, were original steel items, although they have since been replaced with fibreglass pieces for weight reduction. Paul had these carefully chrome

wrapped to resemble the original bumpers. "I love the classic look, and yes it has all this carbon on the car, but if you take the chrome bumpers off it just doesn't look the same," he muses. It's things like the chrome bumpers, original lights and a seat trimmed to match the original interior that make sure you know exactly what you're looking at: an old 240Z. Oh and how about the OG Japanese plate on the rear? That's not coming off anytime soon.

The fact that Paul runs his restoration shop shines through when you look at the finish and quality of this 240Z. Yes, it's very much a

serious track car, but each and every corner has been crafted with the finest care that only someone with Paul's background could accomplish. We're glad Paul chose to build a 240Z for the purpose of Time Attack challenges, because no doubt it's one of the most impressive and unique builds we've had the pleasure of laying eyes on. If you ever get across to Australia to encounter this car in the flesh (or you know how to work YouTube - Midge) you will understand what we mean - it simply demands your attention, and rightly so, it's an outright masterpiece. 🏆



TECHSPEC

ENGINE: 2.8-litre RB26-based stroked engine built by PMC Race Engines, extensive high-compression headwork with beryllium seats, custom cams and shim-less buckets, BorgWarner EFR 8473 turbocharger, ID2000 fuel injectors, MoTeC CDI, Mercury coils, Hypertune intake and intercooler, PWR radiator, HGT Precision six-speed sequential gearbox, Winters quick-change 10-inch diff

CHASSIS: 7.5x17-inch (front) and 10x17-inch (rear) RAYS TE37-VSL alloy wheels, custom Supershock coilovers, Arizona Z-Car billet arms, AP Racing six-piston (front) Wilwood four-piston (rear) disc brake setup

INTERIOR: Re-covered Velo bucket seat to resemble 240Z trim, full roll cage, Topstage Composites carbon fibre dashboard, MoTeC CDL display

EXTERIOR: Topstage Composites carbon fibre bonnet and V3 aero package

THANKS: "Custom and Classic Cars, CCC Racing, HGT Precision Gearboxes, PMC Race Engines, Topstage Composites, TC Race Fabrications, MDR Motorsport, Jazmac Performance, Jack and Shane, and of course the missus!"

Most important was to retain the soul of the original Zed

