

# HANG TIME

While the waiting game may not be as fun as, say, Hungry Hungry Hippos, its rewards speak for themselves. René Dost had to exercise extreme patience to complete this 370Z, but he's ended up with a true world-first...

Words: Dan Bevis  
Photos: Adam Rous



If there's one phrase that's been annoying tuners since the birth of the idea of rucking about with cars, it's 'Slow and steady wins the race'. Your mum loves to tell you that, in the hope that it'll stop you driving about like your shoes are on fire, but it's a nonsensical concept isn't it? Races are there to test who's fastest, and fast is logically faster than slow is, well, slow.

What's really annoying about this stupid and illogical phrase, however, is that it's actually true. Just look at Aesop's fable of the tortoise and the hare. There are other factors in reaching the finish line beyond

relentless all-out pressure. Remember in the first Cars movie, when Lightning McQueen refused to stop for tyres as he didn't want to waste time, and his rears popped? Yeah, that's Pixar giving you solid life lessons. (Daniel, stop it with the cartoons! – Midge)

René Dost is a man who can give you a clear demonstration of the importance of patience and strategy over hysterical thrust. His car, the one you're looking at here, is the first and only right-hand-drive 370Z in the world to be running an AAM Competition twin-turbo conversion. AAM are a US-based outfit who developed this upgrade for the

left-hand-drive USDM 370Z, and it's was pain in the arse to get it working on RHD cars. That's why nobody's done it. Well, nobody until now... And while he considered other options which would have been quicker and easier, his patience has ultimately been rewarded in the form of a devastatingly fast and genuinely unique Nissan. Quite simply, there is no other car like this.

There's a certain inevitability to René's quest for horsepower, given his first steps into the Japanese tuning scene back in his twenties. Having bought his first car, a '94 Honda Prelude 2.2 VTEC 4WS, and

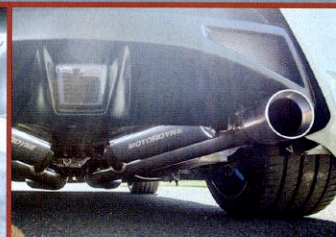
totalled it not too long afterwards, he set a self-imposed horsepower abstinence for a couple of years before returning to the fray with a little more savvy and experience, buying another identical Prelude and turning it into his first proper project car: forged rods and pistons, race cams, wet nitrous system, it was serious stuff. "I learned everything about car mechanics and electrics with just a hardcopy of the workshop manual and a DIY spirit," he grins. "I wouldn't shy away from anything. And after nine years and an appetite for much more power, I started dreaming about a Litchfield-tuned GT-R."

Sure, don't we all? Unfortunately there's often a chasm of difference between what we want and what the state of the economy will allow us to afford, and it was the act of test-driving a GT-R that led René to what would ultimately become 'Project weaponIZED'.

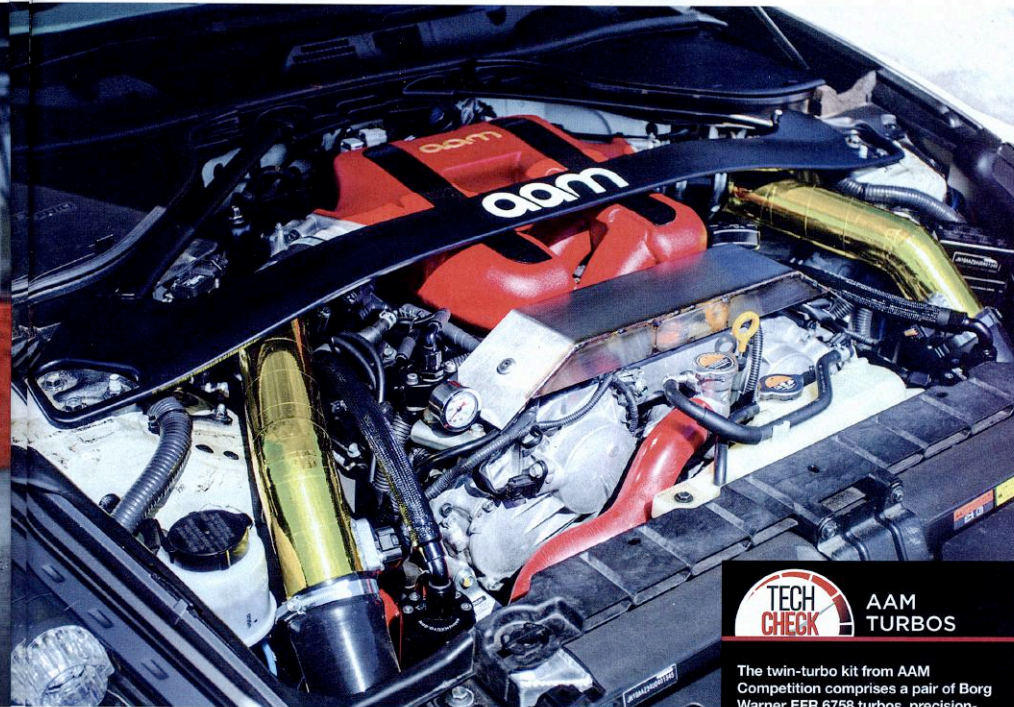
"At the time of trying a GT-R at a nearby Nissan Performance Dealer, my wife spotted a pearl-white 370Z standing beside it," René recalls. "Only then did I realise that this would become my next sportscar. I didn't even want to bother test-driving it (but my wife made me do it anyway). I just wanted to buy the Z!" And so an ex-demo 2013 GT Edition with just

6,000 miles on the clock was soon sitting on the driveway. And, you'll be unsurprised to learn, the reimagining of the car commenced pretty much straight away.

"I began with the small stuff - bodykit, exhaust, and intakes," says René. "From the outset, everything I'd modify would have to be of the best quality. Bulletproof Automotive helped me source a genuine Power House Amuse Vestito aero bodykit from Japan, complemented with the Nismo rear wing." The Amuse kit presented a hurdle or two, but as we know, this isn't the sort of thing this guy loses sleep over. The cost of shipping the







## TECH CHECK AAM TURBOS

The twin-turbo kit from AAM Competition comprises a pair of Borg Warner EFR 6758 turbos, precision-cast tubular stainless manifolds and downpipes, aircraft-grade intercooler pipework, a huge intercooler with custom-cast end tanks, high-flow intake filters, a high-flow in-tank Walbro fuel pump along with bigger injectors, the necessary software to get it all working, plus of course all of the fixings, clamps, gaskets and what-have-you to get it all fitted. What's most impressive – particularly given that the system's good for over 800whp in the right setup – is that AAM boast OEM levels of quality and reliability. So you're not going to end up with a highly-strung turbo motor that goes really fast once and then always runs rough or throws up warning lights... this is a quality upgrade. Of course, if you have to convert it from LHD to RHD then it does complicate things a bit, but thankfully René and Torqen have trodden that path for you now...

bodykit straight from Japan to the UK would have cost more than the kit itself, but a few friendly chats with Bulletproof resulted in them loading the order onto one of their freight containers which regularly shuttle between Japan and US, only charging for the shipment from LA to the UK. René had to wait a couple more months to do it this way, but he's cool with waiting. Better to play the long game and get it the way you want it than to rush things.

"The exhaust had to be a Motordyne Shockwave, with gorgeous Helmholtz resonators," he continues, "mated to a pair of Berk high-flow cats, and Stillen Gen3 cold air induction. All this raised the car to a level, optically and acoustically, that I think the 370Z should've been at from factory!"

Having raised power to 362bhp, René opted to focus on the suspension next. A set of Torqen S coilovers made the ride noticeably more direct and responsive, while Eibach anti-roll bars at either end firmed up the chassis

to help deploy those extra horses effectively. Naturally things like speedbumps and MOT ramps were becoming an issue running this low, so the decision was made to fit a set of Stanceparts air cups to the front too. René was keen to keep the install stealthy, and the compressor, air tank and lines were hidden away under the boot floor – despite the fact that there was already a big Bose subwoofer squirrelled away in there! His attention to detail is really in evidence here, as it is with the steering wheel, which has been cunningly reshaped before being retrimmed in perforated leather and silver Alcantara. Another mod which has truly altered the driving experience is the B&M short-shifter matched to a weighted Mishimoto gearknob, which give a lovely clunk-clunk feel with minimal throw.

So, with the car shaping up into a mighty all-rounder, was René satisfied with his achievements and happy to call it a day by

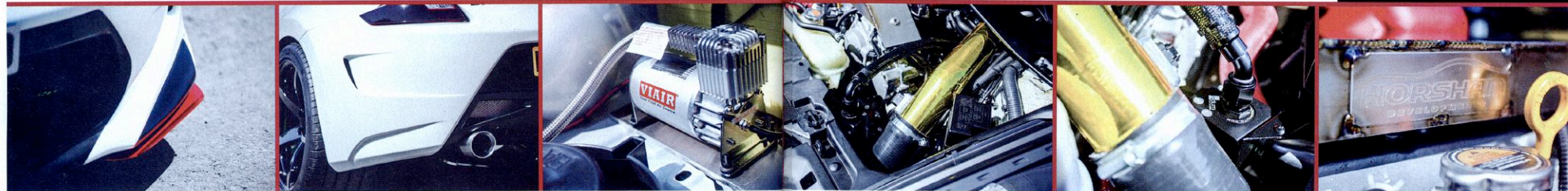
this point? No, of course he wasn't. "It was always the plan to turbocharge it, right from the start," he laughs. "I had already gone the turbo route with my Honda Prelude; it had high-comp pistons and FRM cylinder liners which made forced induction unsuitable unless you dropped in forged sleeves, so I stuck with nitrous oxide in the end... but the next car had to get some kind of forced induction, ideally turbo! I had licked blood with my twin brother's Audi S3." It wasn't an easy road though, as we've already touched upon. The only suitable right-hand-drive turbo conversion kit, made by GReddy, had been discontinued, and although René placed an order with US-based GTM for a twin-turbo kit, he almost lost his money after a six-month wait as the company was going under. Disenchanted, our man was on the cusp of giving up on turbos and dropping a deposit on a Stillen supercharger kit, when Torqen suddenly announced a collaboration

with AAM Competition to convert their twin-turbo kit to RHD. René jumped right in with a pre-order, essentially making his car the guinea pig and test mule.

"Little did I know that I'd have to hold onto my dream of boost for quite a while longer" he laughs. "My TT kit had been sitting in my living room in LHD guise – bless my understanding wife – waiting to have the driver-side exhaust manifold replaced by a modified design, along with a few other alterations. I had such trust in Adrian at Torqen that I would not falter. I was determined to see this through!" Things really started moving last July, when the kit was finally ready to be installed by Horsham Developments. It took a few months more to get everything perfected, thanks to the necessity of upgrading things like the clutch, fuelling, braking system, thermal shielding and so on, plus unforeseen complications thrown up by RHD-specific air-con hardlines and the Amuse bumper

undertray, but eventually it all came together superbly. On collection day, René found himself gleefully clambering into a fully refreshed Zed, its mild EcuTek tune running a super-safe 6psi-ish and still providing a monstrous 501bhp and 435lb/ft.

So our man had reached his finish line now, right? After a protracted but justified wait, his dream 370Z twin-turbo was complete and it was time to mosey off into the sunset? "Not quite," René smirks. "On my cruise back home from Horsham Developments on a damp day, I decided to gently squeeze the gas pedal on a straight stretch and had the rear end nearly break loose in 4th gear! Cold sweat and curses overcame me, and I knew I had to ditch the stock tyres ASAP!" More girth was required – supercar power demands a supercar contact patch, and after a little head-scratching with the measuring tape René decided to throw all of his chips on the table. The result is a set of frankly huge BC Forged





## 370Z TT



rims, 20-inches in diameter, with the rears weighing in at a juicy 11-inches wide; these wear 305-section Michelins, which is just the kind of silliness you're more likely to find on a Porsche 997 Turbo. "Boy, do they hook up now," he assures us. "And EcuTek's advanced traction control works a charm too!"

A car built for serious performance then, and engineered to be incredibly tough as well as phenomenally rapid. Given that René's proudly done everything on this car by himself, aside from Horsham Developments' work to convert it to twin-turbo, it's perhaps unsurprising that he readily admits it's something of a garage queen. "This car is my absolute pride and joy," he beams. "It's never seen rain or salt, and only gets driven about 1,000 miles a year, hence showing just 11,000 miles as of today." But don't go thinking this is a waste of its talents – when the conditions are right and he takes it out for a drive, he drives it hard. Very hard. The formidable

nature of the spec kinda speaks for itself, and the obvious performance really, really does too. "Reactions to the car are great," he says. "People flocking around my Zed with eyes wide, taking out their phone cameras, whether it's the kids on my street, pedestrians in the car park or the MOT mechanic, or even van drivers pulling alongside and taking photos on the dual carriageway."

Slow and steady, it seems, has won the race once again. René had to wait – and wait, and wait – for all of this to come to fruition, but the payoff for his patience is right here before you: the world's first and only RHD 370Z with AAM twin-turbos. He's not finished, of course; as a parting shot, he regales us with tales of the Torqen 8-pot brakes and Braum Racing seats populating his shopping list. But he's already won the game. Others may follow with conversions like this, but he got there first – and he did it without a single compromise. 🏆



## TECHSPEC

**Engine & transmission:** VQ37VHR 3.7-litre V6, stock internals, AAM Competition twin-turbo conversion – installed and EcuTek tuned by Horsham Developments, AAM Competition performance intake manifold, CJ-Motorsports Stage 1 fuel system, DeatschWerks DW300 in-tank fuel pump, Injector Dynamics ID1000 injectors, Motordyne ShockWave E370Z exhaust with optional turbo primaries (full 3-inch dual tubing), Stilen lightweight crank pulley, Mishimoto radiator, Z1 Motorsports front-mounted oil cooler (25-row) with thermostatic sandwich plate adapter, Torqen silicone hose master kit, modified PCV system with Radium Engineering dual oil catch cans, Boulekos Dynamic Sprint Booster V3, 6-speed manual (with synchro rev matching), B&M short-throw shifter, Competition Clutch Stage 2 - Street Series 2100 clutch and flywheel, RJM Performance heavy duty clutch master cylinder, ZSpeed Performance heavy duty concentric clutch slave cylinder.

**Power:** 501bhp @ 6600 rpm (0.40 bar); 435lb.ft @ 4200 rpm (0.48 bar)

**Chassis:** 9.5x20-inch ET29 (front) and 11x20-inch ET18 (rear) BC Forged RS45 wheels – forged monoblock in black chrome finish, Wheel Mate Products Muteki Super Tuner SR35 lug nuts, 265/35 (f) and 305/30 (r) Michelin Pilot Sport 4S tyres, stock Akebono brakes (4-pot front, 2-pot rear), Torqen S coilovers, Stanceparts front air cups, Eibach front and rear anti-roll bars, SPL PRO rear anti-roll bar end-links

**Interior:** AEM Wideband UEGO AFR gauge, GReddy Infometer-TOUCH, GReddy Profec electronic boost controller, custom vac/boost gauge, re-poled and re-trimmed steering wheel by Royal Steering Wheels, KOSO EX-02 speedometer (GPS), Mishimoto weighted gear knob

**Exterior:** Power House Amuse Vestito aero kit with custom front air skid plates and LED DRLs, carbon vinyl wrapped side skirts, EVO-R Nismo High Wing, Philips D2S HID 6000Ks, EVO-R flashing LED rear foglight, custom black-painted headlamps with ONElight Halo Orb LED rings, custom smoke taillights, tinted windows, rear wiper delete, resprayed wing mirrors in Candy Ruby Red, custom gas strut bonnet props

**Thanks:** "Special thanks go to Adrian at Torqen for making the RHD TT kit possible through his vision and persistence with the collaboration with AAM Competition. Special thanks also go to Jez and Craig at Horsham Developments who saw through the challenging TT kit installation."



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