

# NISSAN 350Z GT-S [‘06]



What happens when a team of UK Nissan engineers decide that they can build a better car than most aftermarket tuners? Say hello to the 350Z GT-S...

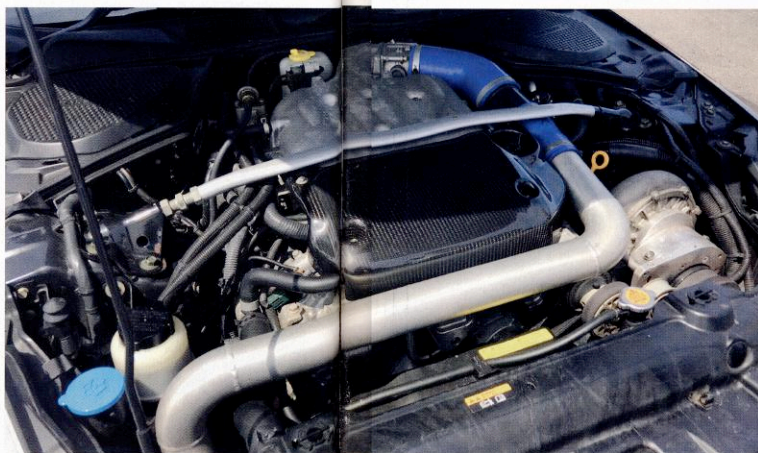
Words: Matt Bell

**S**kunkworks: a word used to describe after-hours projects and one-off builds. It's not often that manufacturers get involved in this business, but it seems Nissan has a sense of humour, not to mention a hankering for more power, once in a while too.

Take this 350Z, for example. Unassuming to most, it's got a few choice holes at the front, a slightly wider body, a spoiler at the back and a set of bronze NISMO five-spoke alloys. But, apart from that, nothing untoward is going on, right? Delve deeper though, and you find that Nissan has tweaked a number of performance aspects, including installing a trick supercharger for plenty of added grunt.

Originally a concept car called the 350Z GT-S, and built for Goodwood's Festival of Speed back in 2006, Nissan UK was originally deliberating as to whether it could offer a

supercharger kit as an aftermarket extra, but such was the cost of building the car, it decided instead to focus on the release of the new 370Z that was unveiled just two years later. This car genuinely belongs to Nissan and for most of the year it sits in a heritage centre alongside other beauties from Nissan's ancestry. In fact, we can't believe they actually handed over the keys to this unique piece of motoring history.



## The Car

Let's get one thing straight: Nissan hasn't simply bolted on a supercharger, whacked the boost up and gained lashings of extra power nice and easily. Instead, the unit is a clutch-operated centrifugal blower with a front-mount intercooler designed for reliability. This is controlled by a button next to the gear lever which simply says 'Novidem - Kompressor'; Novidem (based in Switzerland) being the company that was tasked with building the supercharger.

With the blower off, it's just a regular 350Z. This is a 2006 model so it comes with the 301bhp base V6. Switch the button to 'on' though, and an anti-social whoosh is released, as you drive by you sound more like some sort of air compressor tank. Mash the throttle and you are pinned back in your seat as the car propels forward with much more enthusiasm - that's the beauty of forced induction! Here, the power is boosted to 382bhp and torque jumps to around 313lb/ft, making for a much quicker car than stock. In fact, it feels significantly more than 382bhp, such is the usability of its power band. Essentially Novidem fine-tuned the mapping to produce a power curve that's completely linear and pulls smoothly to the rev limit without any spikes. This gives you a constant shove no matter where you are in the rev range.

The exhaust was also modified by Novidem and features an electronically-operated valve system that is actuated in relation to engine revs; this then bypasses the rear silencer for a far meatier soundtrack.

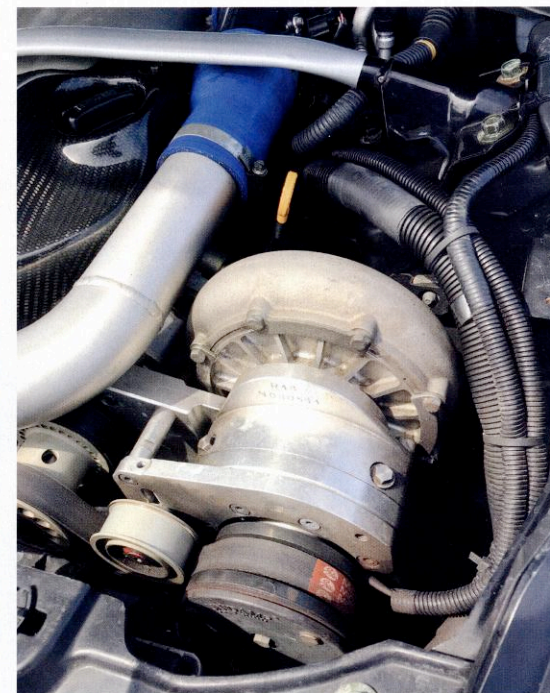
It's not all raw, though. The main focus around the build was to produce a car that had two sides to it; hence the user-controlled supercharger. Nissan included the NVH pack (noise, vibration and harshness), which was designed to reduce unwanted road noise and dull exhaust noise. Inside the options list was pretty much fully-ticked with heated seats, sat-nav, a BOSE sound system and loads of other sought-after bits and bobs.

## FAST FACTS

■ The 350Z GT-S was conceived by Nissan's European Technical centre based in Cranfield, right here in the UK.

■ The supercharger was fitted so flush to the engine itself that, rather impressively, there was no need to raise the bonnet line.

■ A simple on/off switch near the gear stick instantly transforms the car's power from 300bhp to 382bhp. It's all a bit Mad Max!





## ROAD TEST > NISSAN 350Z GT-S



### Chassis and Styling

The chassis on the GT-S was tweaked, too, thanks to the introduction of Bilstein components. Instead of fine-tuning the dampers on the Nordschleife, the team was said to have set up the car on British B-roads around Nissan UK HQ at Cranfield. This actually makes driving this one in the UK more of a joy than a back-breaking chore.

It also means that you can drive harder and quicker on back-roads than you would on a regular set of coilovers. The high-speed handling was tweaked in Germany on the Autobahn, and the decision was made to stick with 18s (instead of 19-inch wheels) for comfort. The ultra-lightweight, forged NISMO monoblocks (built by RAYS), were wrapped in sticky Dunlop Sport 9000 tyres to offer optimum performance.

The body kit was developed by German aerodynamic company, Strosek. It claims that, at 90mph, downforce is improved by up to 30kg at the front and 60kg at the rear, depending on how the wing is set. This kit comprises new front and rear bumper sections, side skirts and the adjustable

rear spoiler. The re-styled front section incorporates a deeper front air dam with an extended splitter and extra cooling ducts for the engine and brakes. At the rear, the number plate indentation has been lowered and now sits just above the diffuser. Cutaways behind each rear wheel aid the extraction of hot air from the brakes.

Each aspect of the car was designed with the idea of offering individual 'packs' to regular cars. So, the supercharger would come under the 'engine pack', the Bilstein suspension would come under the 'suspension pack' and the more aerodynamic body kit under the 'aero pack'.

Such was their intentions that Nissan focused on trying to keep costs down by modifying as few parts as possible. As a result, the GT-S retains stock engine internals, clutch, transmission, propshaft and driveshafts. What's good to know for standard 350Z owners too, is that Nissan can be quoted in saying that the stock components were so over-engineered that the extra power hike and torque jump can be handled without breaking a sweat. Lovely. 🍷

### FACT FILE

#### PERFORMANCE

- 382bhp and 313lb ft of torque  
- 0-62mph in 4.8 seconds

#### ENGINE

3.5-litre VQ35DE V6 engine, Novidem clutch-operated centrifugal supercharger, front-mounted intercooler

#### CHASSIS

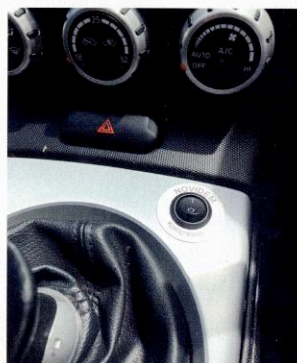
18in RAYS NISMO forged monoblock alloy wheels, Bilstein dampers, Brembo brakes

#### EXTERIOR

Bespoke body kit (comprising new front and rear bumper sections, side skirts and adjustable rear wing)

#### INTERIOR

Top-spec leather factory interior with all the options... and a supercharger switch panel!



### POTENTIAL

Unfortunately, it's going to be impossible to get your hands on the one single GT-S that was ever created. But thankfully, it's easier than you think to tweak up a standard 350Z to a similar spec using aftermarket parts!



#### >>> SUPERCHARGER

Torgren offers a Vortech supercharger package designed specifically for 350Zs. Like the one that features on the GT-S, it's a centrifugal affair that promises to be fairly straightforward to get up and running.  
[www.torgren.uk](http://www.torgren.uk)



#### >>> WHEELS

Those rather nice, RAYS-built NISMO rims might break the bank somewhat, but luckily, Rota does a very similar style in the form their best-selling GTR. The good thing too, is that they even come in the same bronze colour. Bonza!  
[www.rarerims.co.uk](http://www.rarerims.co.uk)



#### >>> BODY

The GT-S has a slightly more aggressive kit than standard, and this can be emulated with one of the many designs available at Knight Racer. Even if the GT-S is a bit subtle for you, they can sort you out. Did someone say Rocket Bunny?  
[www.knightracer.com](http://www.knightracer.com)



#### >>> SUSPENSION

If you're cranking up the power with a supercharger, it's probably a good idea to bolster up your suspension with a decent set of adjustable coilovers. BC Racing is a trusted brand that definitely won't let you down.  
[www.bc-racing.co.uk](http://www.bc-racing.co.uk)