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PERFECTION

SPEEDART'S FLAWLESS PORSCHE 911 TURBO



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PORSCHE PERFECTION

STORY COLUM WOOD PHOTOS JOOST DEMUYNCK

SPEEDART'S BTR550 MIGHT JUST BE AS GOOD AS IT GETS

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ometimes when the next generation of an exceptional platform is unveiled people aren't overly enthused with it at first – the new M3 being one such example. But when Porsche unveiled the 997, the Turbo in particular, it was immediately recognized by all to be a superior car than its predecessor in every single way. With brand new technology, a huge performance increase and a return to more classical Porsche styling, the 997 Turbo is about as good as you can get for a car you can drive every single day.

When German Porsche tuner SpeedArt decided to rework the Turbo, they set out with a similar mind-set to the Porsche engineers who built the 997. "We focused on performance and design," says Björn Striening, SpeedArt's CEO, whose team was dedicated to building a superior performer with a more impressive and "sporty" design. But, says Striening, "The design had

to support the performance of the car."

So when SpeedArt engineers built their project, code named BTR550, they took into account all the aspects of what a Porsche should be to create a superior performer in every category. As a result, the car might not have the fastest zero-60 time of any Porsche, or the highest top speed, but it is one of the best all around packages on the market.

Two independent tests performed by German car magazines showed that the BTR550 was not only one of the best, but THE best. "We had two tests together with four competitors and each time we had the fastest car on Annau du Rhin (in France) and the Nurburgring grand prix track," says Striening. "The result of the test was always that the complete package (power, suspension, sound, aerodynamics, etc.) of the SpeedArt 997 Turbo was the best of all five cars."

In one of the tests, this one at the Nurburgring short track, the SpeedArt car set a 1:38.53 lap time – a half second faster than the second place Edo Competition car.

What is important, however, is that while it can dominate on the track, just like the stock 997 Turbo, the BTR550 is predominantly a street car. "It is ready for both the street and the race track," says Striening, "but more for street use."

When it comes to performance, as the name might suggest, the SpeedArt car makes 550 hp. The 70-horsepower improvement over stock might not be a huge increase, but considering there are quite a few alterations, you can be sure the numbers are legitimate. Called the "Power-Kit 550" this performance package makes use of a complete exhaust system including new headers, sport catalytic converters and a sport exhaust with dual-tipped twin mufflers.

The system is unique in that it allows the driver to control the volume of the exhaust. By flipping a switch on the dashboard the exhaust system will go from using just the center two of the four rear pipes to all of them. As a result, the volume will increase drastically.

"The sound is much deeper and more sonorous and sportive than the original," says Striening, who refers to the stock exhaust note as, "really boring." Even more importantly, unlike other sound-control systems the SpeedArt one does not bypass the cats, which means that the full 550 hp is available in emission-friendly mode.

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All this new piping was necessary to deal with the extra boost pressure produced by the SpeedArt modified ECU. While the horsepower numbers are impressive, the torque figures are even more so with the complete system delivering an impressive torque gain, up roughly 75 ft-lbs to 575! That's particularly impressive when you consider the 997 Turbo already makes buckets of torque.

The added power is then transmitted to Porsche's new all-wheel-drive system via a new clutch and a single mass flywheel from ZF Sachs – the same company that supplies parts to the BMW-Sauber and Ferrari Formula 1 teams. The result is real-world performance of 3.4 seconds from zero-60 and 11.7 seconds in the quarter mile.

SpeedArt claims a new top speed of 205 mph is possible, (compared to the stock 193), however, at that point the car simply runs out of gearing – not horsepower.

Achieving and maintaining traction is thanks to Michelin Pilot Sport tires in sizes 235/30/20 and 305/25/20, mated to 20x8.5-inch and 20x11-inch forged CTS (Challenge Twin Spoke) wheels. These one-piece rims are a new design by SpeedArt and somewhat surprisingly suit the BTR550 better than the company's other (more classically German) designs. This might have something to do with the fact that they have been color-matched to the Porsche's paint. Striening says the CTS wheels will be made available to consumers in any color they wish and also says that an alternative 245 and 325 tire fitment is available.

Sitting over those wheels is the impressive physique crafted by SpeedArt's design engineers. The overall look of the car is a team effort by the whole staff, explains Striening, but, he says, "obviously we have a well-educated designer who makes suggestions."



SPECIFICATIONS / DETAILS
2007 PORSCHE TURBO

ENGINE
Porsche twin-turbo 3.6L flat-six

ENGINE MODIFICATIONS
SpeedArt Power Kit 550 including headers, catalytic converters and a sport exhaust system with sound switch; ZF Sachs clutch and single-mass flywheel

ENGINE MANAGEMENT
SpeedArt modified ECU

NUMBERS
Horsepower: 550 hp
Torque: 575 ft-lbs
Zero-60: 3.4 sec.
Quarter mile: 11.7 sec.
Top Speed: 205 mph

WHEELS, TIRES
(f) SpeedArt one-piece forged 20x8.5-inch CTS wheels with 235/30/20 Michelin Pilot Sport tires;
(r) SpeedArt one-piece forged 20x11-inch CTS wheels with 305/25/20 Michelin Pilot Sport tires

BODY
BTR-XL aero kit including new front bumper with front splitter, side skirts, diffuser, adjustable carbon spoiler and ram-air spoiler

SUSPENSION
ZF Sachs adjustable sports suspension

INTERIOR
Recaro Seats with black leather and Alcantara with silver plastic inserts, middle console in black and white carbon combination, 340 mm carbon-look leather with yellow stitching and aluminum sport steering wheel, SpeedArt floor mats with yellow stitching, short shifter, carbon-look leather shift boot, aluminum door panels

UNLIKE OTHER SOUND-CONTROL EXHAUST SYSTEMS, SPEEDART'S DOES NOT BYPASS THE CATS, WHICH MEANS THAT THE FULL 550 HP IS AVAILABLE IN EMISSION-FRIENDLY MODE.



On the front of the car little has been changed, with the fog lights being moved to a more central location while the outside air intakes are exaggerated from stock, but still kept much closer to OE than, say, the TechArt design. It's not a bad look but on a black car you'd hardly even notice any changes had been made.



Examining the sides and then the rear, however, is when the aerodynamic (and aesthetic) changes begin to present themselves. The new sideskirts twist as they approach the end of the car leading the eye to the Porsche's naturally large shoulders. Around back, the changes are most shocking with the addition of a diffuser that adds a third gill to the Turbo's trademark two. This small addition also helps to make the rear of the car even more bulging than before – something you really have to be a Porsche fan to appreciate.

The massive adjustable carbon rear spoiler hearkens back to the days of the old air cooled Porsche Turbos, while the original spoiler underneath is less stock than it appears. A SpeedArt specialty, the company designed a look-a-like stock spoiler that diverts air flowing around the car into the engine to battle any Turbo lovers arch enemy – heat soak.

The whole aerodynamic package, explains Strienig, not only flows air into the engine and to the brakes, it creates additional downforce and high-speed stability.

THE COMPANY DESIGNED A LOOK-A-LIKE STOCK SPOILER THAT DIVERTS AIR FLOWING AROUND THE CAR INTO THE ENGINE TO BATTLE ANY TURBO LOVERS ARCH ENEMY – HEAT SOAK.

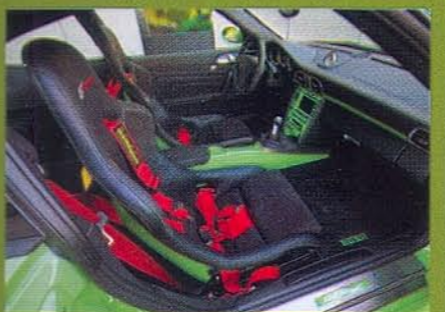


THE COMPETITION

TechArt GTstreet



WE WERE FIRST to show you TechArt's GTstreet back in March at the Geneva Motor Show and followed up with coverage of it doing battle against Europe's top tuners at the Tuner GP. Now that the car has been officially unveiled we thought it would be appropriate to give the Porsche a little more attention.



The heart of the car is a flat-six with larger VTG turbos which produces a whopping **630 hp at 6800 rpm and 605 ft-lbs at 4500 rpm**. Thanks to a modified transmission, the GTstreet hits a **zero-60 time of 3.2 seconds**, putting it on par with the world's most exotic cars. To hit 120 mph, just keep your foot down for an additional 7.7 seconds as the car races to its **top speed of 214 mph**. The car is also a real shocker in the looks department, with the typical TechArt front end design which also features a retractable carbon lip. To further enhance the aggressive qualities of the car, new front fenders are used which widen each side by 10 mm (0.4-inches). The GTstreet also gets a massive rear wing and dual bumper vents which have been embellished to cartoon-like proportions.

The complete package also includes 20-inch wheels, a TechArt brake upgrade and the ingenious PASM-compliant VarioPlus suspension system. ■

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A BTR600 WITH LARGER VTG TURBOS IS IN THE WORKS.



"Design has to follow technical regulations," he says and "that means that we have to consider downforce and balance of the car." While the look is obviously important, the performance benefits are paramount and so after all the pieces have been designed and tested using CAD software they are sent off for final tweaks and manufactured by another company; one which also manufactures parts for Porsche.

In combination with the decals, carbon wing, carbon mirrors and black front splitter the BTR550 really gives the appearance of a track car. And thanks to the tried and tested components, as well as the addition of 70 hp and 75 ft-lbs of torque the BTR550 really acts like a track car too. It just happens to be built for the street.

Strienig is pleased with how his BTR550 has stacked up against the competition in independent testing and just recently the car underwent another challenge. SpeedArt brought the car to the Michelin Technology Center (see story on Page 110) with many other European tuners and left with both good news and bad news. Using technology normally only available to just OEMs and Formula 1 teams, the company was able to test their aerodynamics at speed. "The result was that our spoiler design really gives the car more and better downforce," says Strienig, "and the handling and the balance of the car is much better."

The bad news, however, is that SpeedArt didn't walk away with a podium position. The team can't feel too bad however, as the performance tests were organized for extremes, whereas the BTR550 was built to be a well-balanced sports car.

It seems, however, as though the whole experience may have given Strienig an idea. Shortly after the Michelin tests he announced a BTR600 with larger VTG turbos is in the works. **MLE**