The Need for Speed

Just how quick is a 615bhp 911 Turbo? We strapped our timing gear to Cargraphic's GT RSC 3.6 to find out.

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615hp. Not a number to be sniffed at and not an engine's power output that you relish getting the best of the morning after the night before that saw a couple of inches of snow fall in a very short period of time. But Cargraphic can only be at the Millbrook Proving Ground on this day with its 997 GT RSC 3.6 and anyway, despite losing 150 kilos, this 997 Turbo still retains its four-wheel drive transmission. Which might help.

A short introduction to the car. It's the same GT RSC 3.6 that Cargraphic entered into the 2008 Tuner Grand Prix and finished second behind a less than street legal competitor (see issue 80), and has the appearance of a car that has comprehensively been rebuilt from only carbon fibre. It's everywhere, from the front wings, boot lid, doors and engine cover, with the interior equally as trimmed in the black weave along with some very thin, very smooth black leather. The centre console complete with PCM screen remains but the full fat standard seats have been ditched in favour of some shoulder-hugging, hip-pinching carbon-shelled Recaros. The sunroof and multi-function steering wheel remain. But this is all dressing for the main course that lies beneath that distinctive engine cover.

In conjunction with RS Tuning the engine conversion consists of modifying the VTG turbochargers and accompanying intercoolers and replacing the entire exhaust system,

including the manifold, with a high-flow stainless steel system with 200-cell tri-metal cats. The air filter is less restrictive and the accompanying remap results in that mighty 615hp being produced at 6500rpm and 609lb ft of torque available from 2500rpm. With a full tank of super unleaded the car weighs in at 1435 kilos. The small matter of 428hp-per-ton, then.

The first task of the morning, once the snow has been cleared, is to record just how quick Cargraphic has made its ultimate 911 Turbo. First gear, 4500rpm and let the clutch out and get her rolling before introducing the throttle pedal to the bulkhead. That's the advice of Michael Schnarr, Cargraphic's head, anyway. And after attempt number seven or eight it works. And with just the right amount of slip from the rear Dunlops the Turbo tears away from the line with a ferocious bite and a degree or two of slip from the back axle. Second gear is needed in a blink of an eye and is also met with a wag from the tail as you release the clutch as quickly as possible while simultaneously getting back on the throttle.

It's the same story with third and fourth gear but now a degree or two of collective lock is required as the speed starts to get big on you. Fifth just delivers you slap bang in the middle of a tsunami of torque and as the speed climbs you think someone may have attached the front of the 911 to the back of a F15 on full afterburner. Sixth gear gets you to 160mph and would easily, you sense, transport you to a bigger range of speed but there's still thawing snow and standing water just where you want to hit the brakes to slow for the end of the mile straight so, I'm embarrassed to admit, I didn't attempt to start braking from over 160mph on standing water.

The unavoidable wheel slip at the start meant we were three-tenths of a second off the GT RSC 3.6's ultimate pace. It's been clocked by a German magazine at completing the 0-60mph sprint in 3.3 mph but today, with five degree temperatures we settled on a two-up figure of 3.6 seconds (identical to the time we achieved with a standard 977 Turbo at Millbrook in 2007). 3.5 seconds later and you've cracked 100mph – 1.3 seconds before the standard car – aided by the fact that third is good for over the ton. From here on in Cargraphic's mean machine has a standard Turbo waving the white flag. It's a crushing performance.

A standard GT2 would stand a slightly better chance, itself capable of reaching 100mph in 7.9 seconds, but again the Cargraphic Turbo's monstrous power delivery and surging torque has the most powerful production car Porsche has ever built looking which way the carbon fibre clad machine went. Reaching 150mph from a standstill over two seconds quicker than a GT2 is not to be taken lightly, and being 4.5 seconds quicker to the same speed than your regular Turbo is plain rude, as is reaching 120mph from a standstill in under ten seconds, when a sub-ten 0-100mph is considered quick.

The GT RSC 3.6's in-gear performance appears to be from another world, also. Take 50-70mph in third gear, in a regular 997 Turbo it takes a scant 2.1 seconds, the GT2 just 1.8, yet this Cargraphic machine is half a second quicker still. In fourth gear the RSC takes just 1.9 seconds to complete the same discipline, half a second quicker again than anything Weissach can pull out the bag. As the speeds climb so the crushing accelerative forces of what this sticker-wearing 911 can do continue to have you eyes out on stalks: 90-110mph in fourth gear in 1.8 seconds, 2.3 seconds when in a ratio higher. 120-140mph in fifth gear is completed in 3.3 seconds, a time that is down to good old-fashioned power, plain and simple. Even in top gear at low speeds Cargraphic has created a powerplant that demolishes all before it. 70-90mph in sixth gear in just 3.1 seconds is a crushing turn of speed in anyone's book.

Extracting these kind of figures from a 911 Turbo not only readjusts your thinking of what constitutes a fast 911, but it enables you to put a figure on a set of performance parameters that otherwise you would have to draw a conclusion from following a quick burst of full afterburners in second, third and maybe fourth gear on Her Maj's highway. It's only when a car manages to consistently shave over half a second off the in-gear times of a 997 Turbo that you are able to appreciate the work that goes into these big power Porsches the likes of Cargraphic build.

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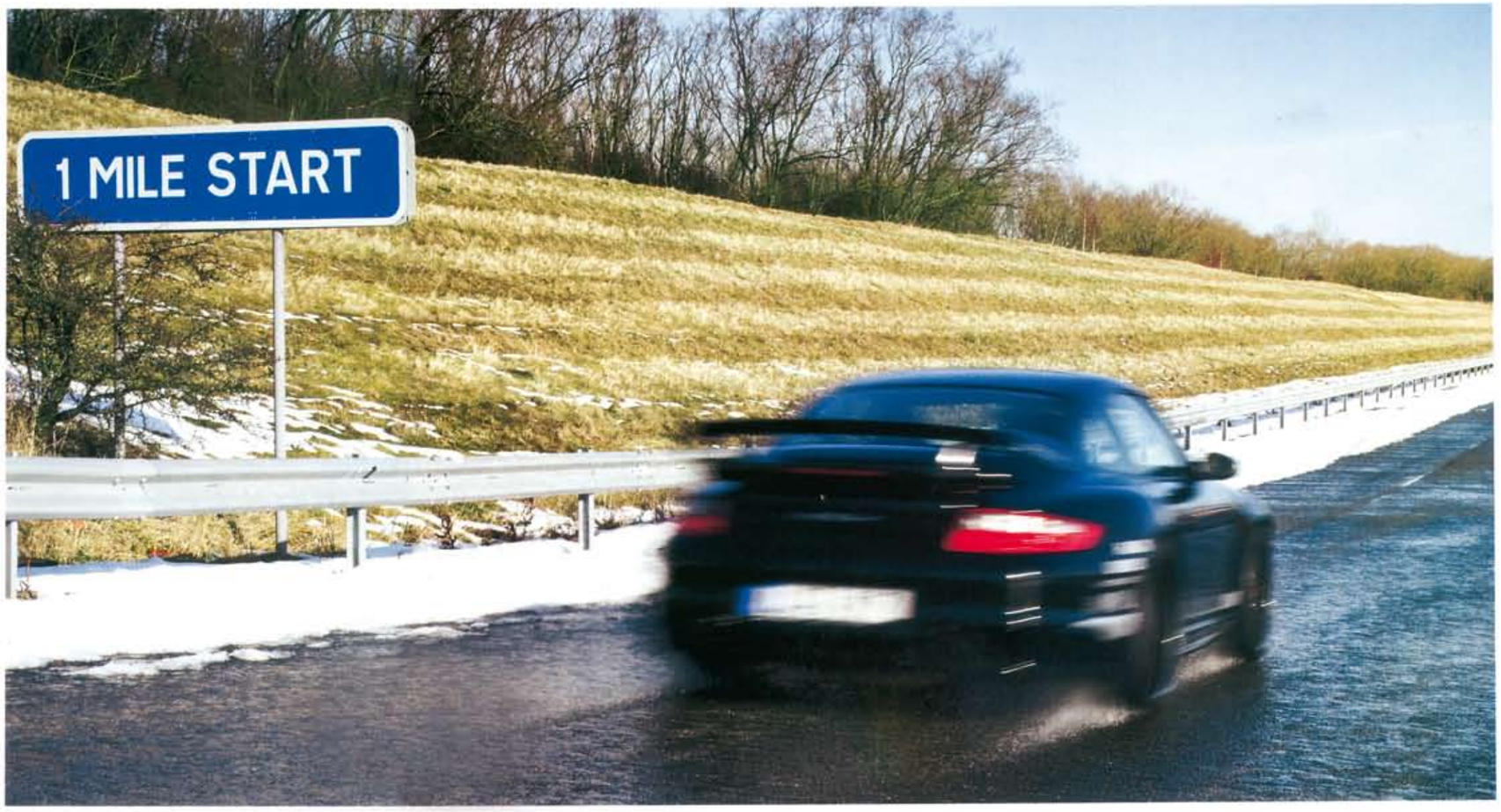

They are so much more than just a headline-grabbing power figure and a specific acceleration time the ECU has been mapped to achieve; cars like the RSC, and the RSC in particular, are created to deliver across the board, providing a tractable engine that will pull from 2000rpm in sixth as impressively as it will fly through the timing beam at full chat.

With the flat-six mill and its exhaust cooling in the winter's afternoon, the ting and ping of cooling metal accompanied by the whiff of hot Mobil 1 and worked over Pagid pads, I jump in the RSC's driver's seat one last time to position it for one last photo call and spot the odometer: 22,425km (13,934 miles)! And it bangs in 7.1 second 0-100mph times? If I hadn't just recorded the time myself I wouldn't have believed it. A testament to just how accomplished the standard 997 Turbo is, but also to the ability, knowledge, skill and know-how of Porsche tuning houses such as Cargraphic, that they can rightly claim to build some of the most useable supercars in the world. And some of the quickest, too

AGAINST THE CLOCK
Acceleration through the gears

SPEED	RSC	GT	TURBO
0-20mph	1.0	0.9	0.9
0-30mph	1.5	1.4	1.4
0-40mph	2.1	1.9	2.1
0-50mph	3.1	2.7	2.9
0-60mph	3.6	3.7	3.6
0-70mph	4.2	4.5	4.7
0-80mph	5.3	5.3	5.8
0-90mph	6.2	6.8	6.9
0-100mph	7.1	7.9	8.4
0-110mph	8.5	9.7	9.9
0-120mph	9.7	11.1	11.6
0-130mph	11.1	12.7	14.0
0-140mph	13.3	15.3	16.3
0-150mph	15.2	17.5	19.0
0-160mph	18.4	20.2	23.0

ACCELERATION IN-GEAR

DISCIPLINE	GEAR RSC/GT/TT			
	3rd	*4th*	*5th*	*6th*
30-50mph	2.1/2.7/2.4	3.8/4.3/3.5		
40-60mph	1.2/2.0/2.0	2.5/3.4/2.7	4.6/5.0/3.7	
50-70mph	1.3/1.8/2.1	1.9/2.6/2.4	3.0/3.9/3.1	
60-80mph	1.5/1.9/2.1	1.8/2.4/2.6	2.2/3.0/3.2	3.4/5.0/3.8
70-90mph	1.5/2.1/2.2	1.8/2.5/2.7	2.1/3.1/3.3	3.1/4.0/3.8
80-100mph	1.8/2.2/2.4	1.8/2.62.8	2.1/3.3/3.4	3.1/3.9/3.8
90-110mph		1.8/2.7/2.9	2.3/3.3/3.5	3.2/4.4/4.0
100-120mph		2.1/2.9/3.0	2.6/3.5/3.7	3.4/4.6/4.3
110-130mph		2.4/3.2/-	2.9/3.8/4.0	3.5/4.8/4.8
120-140mph		2.6/-/-	3.3/4.1/4.3	3.8/5.1/5.4
130-150mph			3.8/4.5/4.5	4.4/5.8/6.1
140-160mph			4.6/5.3/-	5.2/-/-

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