



Nissan 300ZX

— 1990-1996

FROM THE '90S, BUT NOT OF THE '90S. by Andrew Zeman

Despite the speed with which cultural trends come and go, it's probably too soon for 1990s nostalgia. That's OK,

because we don't appreciate the 1990-94 Nissan 300ZX as a period piece; it is instead a timeless sports car, which is what you get when you do all set to create a world leader. "As soon as the 300ZX was unveiled at the 1989 Chicago auto show, we knew it would redefine the range of cars from Japan," remarks one Wheel Drive editor Michael Jordan, "just as the 240Z had in 1968."

Indeed, the 300ZX traces its lineage directly to the original 240Z, which was the brainchild of Masamoto Ueda, president of Nissan North America, the legendary "Mister U." Through successive iterations, Ueda's 240Z had lost its focus and become a kind of personal luxury car. The fourth-generation Z was back to square one.

The new 300ZX's DOHC 24-valve, 3.0-liter V-6 used the same cast-iron block from the previous Z-car's 3.0-liter V-6 but was otherwise a light, high-tech design. It incorporated variable intake valve timing to boost low-end torque, then reamed to its power peak at 6400 rpm. The normally



sprouted version put out 222 hp; the Turbo developed 300 hp. Thanks to a pair of small turboburgers (one for each of the four banks). At the time, the Corvette's 4-cyl V-6 made 245 hp, while the Toyota Supra's turbocharged inline-six developed 232 hp, with versions of the 300ZX were equipped with a viscous limited-slip differential to help put the power down.

Meanwhile, the suspension included dual-mode dampers to deliver crisp handling without a punishing ride. In addition, the Turbo came with Super HICAS four-wheel steering, which quickened steering response and

improved steering stability. (Four-wheel steering became fashionable in Japanese cars during the 1990s, but only the Nissan sports proved more than just a gimmick.)

The high-tech character of the 300ZX reflected an internal directive at Nissan known as "9012," which sought to make the company No. 1 in innovative technology by 1990. The Nissan 300ZX was a product of an ancient Japanese auto industry, one that was belatedly moving beyond the renaissance mode. 1989's Z in particular was riding high, as a new focus on driving dynamics gave edge to the company's cars, while Toyota's presence in

marketing efforts gave the company a sense of heritage.

Upon the new Z's arrival, the magazine pitted a 300ZX Turbo against a Porsche 944 Turbo (which was half again more expensive) and found the Nissan to be a match for the Porsche on the road, while being much more livable on the street. It was named an AutoMobile Magazine All-Star for the first year, and we traveled at the 300ZX's ability to deliver track-level performance without the compromises. We added: "The 300ZX 'gives us its speed and excitement in a friendly, low-offensive way.'"

To drive this Z-car today, as we recently did with a '95 300ZX Turbo, is to be wowed by its performance as we were back then. Although the car from 1990 is 21 years old, it's no less a contemporary in feel. One behind the wheel, the 300ZX feels like a modern luxury and sports seriously all the way to the 7000-rpm redline. The 300ZX Turbo was fun then (0-60 in 4.5 seconds, a top speed of 165 mph), and it's fun now. There's no comparable above in the back when the

The Specs

ENGINE	2.0, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, 2.8, 3.0, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 4.0, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 5.0, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 6.0, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8, 6.9, 7.0, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 8.0, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 9.0, 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, 9.6, 9.7, 9.8, 9.9, 10.0, 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 10.5, 10.6, 10.7, 10.8, 10.9, 11.0, 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 11.4, 11.5, 11.6, 11.7, 11.8, 11.9, 12.0, 12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4, 12.5, 12.6, 12.7, 12.8, 12.9, 13.0, 13.1, 13.2, 13.3, 13.4, 13.5, 13.6, 13.7, 13.8, 13.9, 14.0, 14.1, 14.2, 14.3, 14.4, 14.5, 14.6, 14.7, 14.8, 14.9, 15.0, 15.1, 15.2, 15.3, 15.4, 15.5, 15.6, 15.7, 15.8, 15.9, 16.0, 16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 16.4, 16.5, 16.6, 16.7, 16.8, 16.9, 17.0, 17.1, 17.2, 17.3, 17.4, 17.5, 17.6, 17.7, 17.8, 17.9, 18.0, 18.1, 18.2, 18.3, 18.4, 18.5, 18.6, 18.7, 18.8, 18.9, 19.0, 19.1, 19.2, 19.3, 19.4, 19.5, 19.6, 19.7, 19.8, 19.9, 20.0, 20.1, 20.2, 20.3, 20.4, 20.5, 20.6, 20.7, 20.8, 20.9, 21.0, 21.1, 21.2, 21.3, 21.4, 21.5, 21.6, 21.7, 21.8, 21.9, 22.0, 22.1, 22.2, 22.3, 22.4, 22.5, 22.6, 22.7, 22.8, 22.9, 23.0, 23.1, 23.2, 23.3, 23.4, 23.5, 23.6, 23.7, 23.8, 23.9, 24.0, 24.1, 24.2, 24.3, 24.4, 24.5, 24.6, 24.7, 24.8, 24.9, 25.0, 25.1, 25.2, 25.3, 25.4, 25.5, 25.6, 25.7, 25.8, 25.9, 26.0, 26.1, 26.2, 26.3, 26.4, 26.5, 26.6, 26.7, 26.8, 26.9, 27.0, 27.1, 27.2, 27.3, 27.4, 27.5, 27.6, 27.7, 27.8, 27.9, 28.0, 28.1, 28.2, 28.3, 28.4, 28.5, 28.6, 28.7, 28.8, 28.9, 29.0, 29.1, 29.2, 29.3, 29.4, 29.5, 29.6, 29.7, 29.8, 29.9, 30.0, 30.1, 30.2, 30.3, 30.4, 30.5, 30.6, 30.7, 30.8, 30.9, 31.0, 31.1, 31.2, 31.3, 31.4, 31.5, 31.6, 31.7, 31.8, 31.9, 32.0, 32.1, 32.2, 32.3, 32.4, 32.5, 32.6, 32.7, 32.8, 32.9, 33.0, 33.1, 33.2, 33.3, 33.4, 33.5, 33.6, 33.7, 33.8, 33.9, 34.0, 34.1, 34.2, 34.3, 34.4, 34.5, 34.6, 34.7, 34.8, 34.9, 35.0, 35.1, 35.2, 35.3, 35.4, 35.5, 35.6, 35.7, 35.8, 35.9, 36.0, 36.1, 36.2, 36.3, 36.4, 36.5, 36.6, 36.7, 36.8, 36.9, 37.0, 37.1, 37.2, 37.3, 37.4, 37.5, 37.6, 37.7, 37.8, 37.9, 38.0, 38.1, 38.2, 38.3, 38.4, 38.5, 38.6, 38.7, 38.8, 38.9, 39.0, 39.1, 39.2, 39.3, 39.4, 39.5, 39.6, 39.7, 39.8, 39.9, 40.0, 40.1, 40.2, 40.3, 40.4, 40.5, 40.6, 40.7, 40.8, 40.9, 41.0, 41.1, 41.2, 41.3, 41.4, 41.5, 41.6, 41.7, 41.8, 41.9, 42.0, 42.1, 42.2, 42.3, 42.4, 42.5, 42.6, 42.7, 42.8, 42.9, 43.0, 43.1, 43.2, 43.3, 43.4, 43.5, 43.6, 43.7, 43.8, 43.9, 44.0, 44.1, 44.2, 44.3, 44.4, 44.5, 44.6, 44.7, 44.8, 44.9, 45.0, 45.1, 45.2, 45.3, 45.4, 45.5, 45.6, 45.7, 45.8, 45.9, 46.0, 46.1, 46.2, 46.3, 46.4, 46.5, 46.6, 46.7, 46.8, 46.9, 47.0, 47.1, 47.2, 47.3, 47.4, 47.5, 47.6, 47.7, 47.8, 47.9, 48.0, 48.1, 48.2, 48.3, 48.4, 48.5, 48.6, 48.7, 48.8, 48.9, 49.0, 49.1, 49.2, 49.3, 49.4, 49.5, 49.6, 49.7, 49.8, 49.9, 50.0, 50.1, 50.2, 50.3, 50.4, 50.5, 50.6, 50.7, 50.8, 50.9, 51.0, 51.1, 51.2, 51.3, 51.4, 51.5, 51.6, 51.7, 51.8, 51.9, 52.0, 52.1, 52.2, 52.3, 52.4, 52.5, 52.6, 52.7, 52.8, 52.9, 53.0, 53.1, 53.2, 53.3, 53.4, 53.5, 53.6, 53.7, 53.8, 53.9, 54.0, 54.1, 54.2, 54.3, 54.4, 54.5, 54.6, 54.7, 54.8, 54.9, 55.0, 55.1, 55.2, 55.3, 55.4, 55.5, 55.6, 55.7, 55.8, 55.9, 56.0, 56.1, 56.2, 56.3, 56.4, 56.5, 56.6, 56.7, 56.8, 56.9, 57.0, 57.1, 57.2, 57.3, 57.4, 57.5, 57.6, 57.7, 57.8, 57.9, 58.0, 58.1, 58.2, 58.3, 58.4, 58.5, 58.6, 58.7, 58.8, 58.9, 59.0, 59.1, 59.2, 59.3, 59.4, 59.5, 59.6, 59.7, 59.8, 59.9, 60.0, 60.1, 60.2, 60.3, 60.4, 60.5, 60.6, 60.7, 60.8, 60.9, 61.0, 61.1, 61.2, 61.3, 61.4, 61.5, 61.6, 61.7, 61.8, 61.9, 62.0, 62.1, 62.2, 62.3, 62.4, 62.5, 62.6, 62.7, 62.8, 62.9, 63.0, 63.1, 63.2, 63.3, 63.4, 63.5, 63.6, 63.7, 63.8, 63.9, 64.0, 64.1, 64.2, 64.3, 64.4, 64.5, 64.6, 64.7, 64.8, 64.9, 65.0, 65.1, 65.2, 65.3, 65.4, 65.5, 65.6, 65.7, 65.8, 65.9, 66.0, 66.1, 66.2, 66.3, 66.4, 66.5, 66.6, 66.7, 66.8, 66.9, 67.0, 67.1, 67.2, 67.3, 67.4, 67.5, 67.6, 67.7, 67.8, 67.9, 68.0, 68.1, 68.2, 68.3, 68.4, 68.5, 68.6, 68.7, 68.8, 68.9, 69.0, 69.1, 69.2, 69.3, 69.4, 69.5, 69.6, 69.7, 69.8, 69.9, 70.0, 70.1, 70.2, 70.3, 70.4, 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117.5, 117.6, 117.7, 117.8, 117.9, 118.0, 118.1, 118.2, 118.3, 118.4, 118.5, 118.6, 118.7, 118.8, 118.9, 119.0, 119.1, 119.2, 119.3, 119.4, 119.5, 119.6, 119.7, 119.8, 119.9, 120.0, 120.1, 120.2, 120.3, 120.4, 120.5, 120.6, 120.7, 120.8, 120.9, 121.0, 121.1, 121.2, 121.3, 121.4, 121.5, 121.6, 121.7, 121.8, 121.9, 122.0, 122.1, 122.2, 122.3, 122.4, 122.5, 122.6, 122.7, 122.8, 122.9, 123.0, 123.1, 123.2, 123.3, 123.4, 123.5, 123.6, 123.7, 123.8, 123.9, 124.0, 124.1, 124.2, 124.3, 124.4, 124.5, 124.6, 124.7, 124.8, 124.9, 125.0, 125.1, 125.2, 125.3, 125.4, 125.5, 125.6, 125.7, 125.8, 125.9, 126.0, 126.1, 126.2, 126.3, 126.4, 126.5, 126.6, 126.7, 126.8, 126.9, 127.0, 127.1, 127.2, 127.3, 127.4, 127.5, 127.6, 127.7, 127.8, 127.9, 128.0, 128.1, 128.2, 128.3, 128.4, 128.5, 128.6, 128.7, 128.8, 128.9, 129.0, 129.1, 129.2, 129.3, 129.4, 129.5, 129.6, 129.7, 129.8, 129.9, 130.0, 130.1, 130.2, 130.3, 130.4, 130.5, 130.6, 130.7, 130.8, 130.9, 131.0, 131.1, 131.2, 131.3, 131.4, 131.5, 131.6, 131.7, 131.8, 131.9, 132.0, 132.1, 132.2, 132.3, 132.4, 132.5, 132.6, 132.7, 132.8, 132.9, 133.0, 133.1, 133.2, 133.3, 133.4, 133.5, 133.6, 133.7, 133.8, 133.9, 134.0, 134.1, 134.2, 134.3, 134.4, 134.5, 134.6, 134.7, 134.8, 134.9, 135.0, 135.1, 135.2, 135.3, 135.4, 135.5, 135.6, 135.7, 135.8, 135.9, 136.0, 136.1, 136.2, 136.3, 136.4, 136.5, 136.6, 136.7, 136.8, 136.9, 137.0, 137.1, 137.2, 137.3, 137.4, 137.5, 137.6, 137.7, 137.8, 137.9, 138.0, 138.1, 138.2, 138.3, 138.4, 138.5, 138.6, 138.7, 138.8, 138.9, 139.0, 139.1, 139.2, 139.3, 139.4, 139.5, 139.6, 139.7, 139.8, 139.9, 140.0, 140.1, 140.2, 140.3, 140.4, 140.5, 140.6, 140.7, 140.8, 140.9, 141.0, 141.1, 141.2, 141.3, 141.4, 141.5, 141.6, 141.7, 141.8, 141.9, 142.0, 142.1, 142.2, 142.3, 142.4, 142.5, 142.6, 142.7, 142.8, 142.9, 143.0, 143.1, 143.2, 143.3, 143.4, 143.5, 143.6, 143.7, 143.8, 143.9, 144.0, 144.1, 144.2, 144.3, 144.4, 144.5, 144.6, 144.7, 144.8, 144.9, 145.0, 145.1, 145.2, 145.3, 145.4, 145.5, 145.6, 145.7, 145.8, 145.9, 146.0, 146.1, 146.2, 146.3, 146.4, 146.5, 146.6, 146.7, 146.8, 146.9, 147.0, 147.1, 147.2, 147.3, 147.4, 147.5, 147.6, 147.7, 147.8, 147.9, 148.0, 148.1, 148.2, 148.3, 148.4, 148.5, 148.6, 148.7, 148.8, 148.9, 149.0, 149.1, 149.2, 149.3, 149.4, 149.5, 149.6, 149.7, 149.8, 149.9, 150.0, 150.1, 150.2, 150.3, 150.4, 150.5, 150.6, 150.7, 150.8, 150.9, 151.0, 151.1, 151.2, 151.3, 151.4, 151.5, 151.6, 151.7, 151.8, 151.9, 152.0, 152.1, 152.2, 152.3, 152.4, 152.5, 152.6, 152.7, 152.8, 152.9, 153.0, 153.1, 153.2, 153.3, 153.4, 153.5, 153.6, 153.7, 153.8, 153.9, 154.0, 154.1, 154.2, 154.3, 154.4, 154.5, 154.6, 154.7, 154.8, 154.9, 155.0, 155.1, 155.2, 155.3, 155.4, 155.5, 155.6, 155.7, 155.8, 155.9, 156.0, 156.1, 156.2, 156.3, 156.4, 156.5, 156.6, 156.7, 156.8, 156.9, 157.0, 157.1, 157.2, 157.3, 157.4, 157.5, 157.6, 157.7, 157.8, 157.9, 158.0, 158.1, 158.2, 158.3, 158.4, 158.5, 158.6, 158.7, 158.8, 158.9, 159.0, 159.1, 159.2, 159.3, 159.4, 159.5, 159.6, 159.7, 159.8, 159.9, 160.0, 160.1, 160.2, 160.3, 160.4, 160.5, 160.6, 160.7, 160.8, 160.9, 161.0, 161.1, 161.2, 161.3, 161.4, 161.5, 161.6, 161.7, 161.8, 161.9, 162.0, 162.1, 162.2, 162.3, 162.4, 162.5, 162.6, 162.7, 162.8, 162.9, 163.0, 163.1, 163.2, 163.3, 163.4, 163.5, 163.6, 163.7, 163.8, 163.9, 164.0, 164.1, 164.2, 164.3, 164.4, 164.5, 164.6, 164.7, 164.8, 164.9, 165.0, 165.1, 165.2, 165.3, 165.4, 165.5, 165.6, 165.7, 165.8, 165.9, 166.0, 166.1, 166.2, 166.3, 166.4, 166.5, 166.6, 166.7, 166.8, 166.9, 167.0, 167.1, 167.2, 167.3, 167.4, 167.5, 167.6, 167.7, 167.8, 167.9, 168.0, 168.1, 168.2, 168.3, 168.4, 168.5, 168.6, 168.7, 168.8, 168.9, 169.0, 169.1, 169.2, 169.3, 169.4, 169.5, 169.6, 169.7, 169.8, 169.9, 170.0, 170.1, 170.2, 170.3,
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