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BRIAN'S NISSAN SKYLINE GT-R

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BRIAN'S NISSAN SKYLINE GT-R

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TESTING AT THE NÜRBURGRING – PART 1

For car manufacturers, the Nürburgring is the holy grail in terms of testing new models. Once the Nissan chiefs had been persuaded that it would be beneficial, the Skyline GT-R (R32) development team embarked on a program of testing there that was initially challenging.

On January 24, 2002, Nissan announced the launch of the Skyline GT-R (R34) M·spec Nür and V·spec II Nür, with a limited production run of just 1,000 cars. "Nür" is short for Nürburgring, one of the world's toughest racing circuits. In addition to local German car manufacturers, many of the world's most prestigous manufacturers visit the circuit for development tests, and it is known as a sacred place for sports car development. It is obvious that the last limited edition was named after this historic circuit, a circuit where successive generations of the Skyline GT-R have gone through developments tests.

The Nürburgring is located in the mountains of the Eifel plateau south of Cologne and approximately 124 miles (200km) west of Frankfurt, Germany's financial and commercial center. Nürburg is Nürburg Castle (burg means castle in German) and the circuit (ring in German) is built around this old castle.

The history of this circuit began after the First World War, dating back nearly 100 years. Construction engineers designed a long circuit of approximately 17.6 miles (28.3km), including the 14.2-mile (22.8km) Nordschleife (North Course). Construction began in the summer of 1925, costing a total of 14 million Reichsmarks at the time. At times, more than 2,500 people worked on the project, though it is said to have originally started as an unemployment countermeasure program. Only two years later, on June 18, 1927, the Nürburgring officially opened for motorcycle racing; the first automotive race was held the next day.

019_FS_FURIOUS_Nissan SkylineD_USA-UK-DE_v2.indd 1 25/1/24 15:21

TESTING AT THE NÜRBURGRING – PART 1



The initial course comprised the 14.2-mile (22.8km) North Course and the 4.8-mile (7.7km) South Course for the total 17.6 miles (28.3km) of track. There were 89 left corners and 84 right corners, with an elevation difference of 984ft (300m). A British journalist who saw it at the time said: "It seemed as if a drunken giant had been sent to chart its route." Even now, it is accepted that it takes two weeks to roughly memorize the layout of the circuit, which has approximately 170 corners.

The Nürburgring North Course used to host the Formula 1 German Grand Prix, but since August 1976 – when Niki Lauda crashed his Ferrari 312T2 during the race and seriously injured himself – F1 has not been held on the North Course.

TOUGHEST COURSE IN THE WORLD

It is not just its track layout and narrow escape zones that make the Nürburgring so difficult. In addition to the high-speed corners and jumping at points where cars race through at over 124mph (200km/h), most of the corners are blind – the driver cannot see the road ahead because it runs through a forest. And because it was built in the early 20th century – relying on human power rather than heavy machinery – even the surface of the straights are not flat, but have subtle undulations. Furthermore, it is not a dedicated racing track with high grip for circuit use, but a mountain pass with a surface similar to an ordinary road. As the course passes over 12.4 miles (20km) through the mountains – with inconsistent weather conditions and a tendency to rain – the conditions are so challenging that it is rightly known as the toughest circuit in the world.

Nevertheless, the reason for testing at the circuit is that the car is subjected to powerful stresses due to the uneven road surface and lateral Gs. It is said that doing one lap here will put the equivalent of 1,242–1,864 miles (2,000–3,000km) of stress on a car driving on ordinary roads. This is the only course in the world where extreme tests of the finish of passenger cars, especially sports cars, are carried out.

The Skyline GT-R M-spec Nür launched in January 2002, with the emblem shining on the rear. It was a special car that exhibited the strong connection between the GT-R and the Nürburgring.

SKYLINE AT THE NÜRBURGRING

The Skyline's experience of the Nürburgring goes surprisingly far back. However, it was not initially a development test. In 1967, Nissan brought a Skyline 2000GT (S54CR), and a service car – the Gloria Van – from Japan to test drive on major circuits and to check out the tracks for future racing activities in Europe. The venues included Le

019_FS_FURIOUS_Nissan SkylineD_USA-UK-DE_v2.indd 2 25/1/24 15:21



The Skyline GT-R (R32) development team visited the Nürburgring in 1988. At the time, the test run was conducted in a prototype that looked like a Silva (S13).

Mans in France, the Reims public road circuit, Monza in Italy, and Silverstone in the UK. At the time, the Nürburgring was also operational in West Germany.

The driver behind the wheel of the Skyline 2000GT (S54CR) was Yoshikazu Sunako, who had driven a Prince R380 to victory over a Porsche 90 in the 3rd Japanese Grand Prix, held at Fuji Speedway in 1966. Sunako later said that when the four-door sedan Skyline 2000GT performed exceptionally well, local staff were keen for Sunako to take the car to Germany, saying: "Please drive it in a Nürburgring race." Unfortunately, the Skyline 2000GT never appeared on the starting grid at the Nürburgring. After that, although Nissan said that the car was driven on the Nürburgring, no development tests were carried out there.

BAPTISM OF FIRE ON A GRUELING CIRCUIT

In the 1980s, several domestic car and tire manufacturers began conducting development tests at the Nürburgring. However, the Nürburgring was a baptism of fire for newcomers – in one manufacturer's test, the stresses and lateral Gs from the road surface were so great that the car's body distorted while on the track. This was said to cause the rear window to come off and gaps to appear in the door.

In September 1988, the Nissan Skyline development team brought the Skyline GT-R (R32) to the Nürburgring for the first time, but it was disguised as a Silvia (S13). Naganori Ito, who was in charge of the development of the Skyline GT-R (R32) recalls: "We decided to conduct a graduation test at the Nürburgring



A Skyline GT-R (R32) styled like a Silvia (S13) undergoes maintenance in the garage. It was driven for the first time on a rigorous track and though it had a painful baptism, useful data was acquired.

019_FS_FURIOUS_Nissan SkylineD_USA-UK-DE_v2.indd 3 25/1/24 15:21

TESTING AT THE NÜRBURGRING – PART 1



Nürburgring tests were conducted in July 1989, just before the launch of the Skyline GT-R (R32). These last-minute tests established that development targets had been reached and confirmed the model's final specification.

to see how we could prove the success of the 901 movement, which aimed to be the world number one in chassis performance in the 1990s." Though there was a view within the company that there was no need to go all the way to Germany to test the Skyline GT-R (R32) – which was a model only created for the Japanese market – the Nissan bosses were persuaded to do the test.

"From the end of 1987 to the summer of 1988, we matured the Skyline GT-R (R32) on our in-house test course," said Ito. "There was a plan to drive on the German autobahn, so quite a lot of continuous driving at 250km/h was done on the test track in Tochigi. I thought, 'this would be good,' so we drove there, but the Nürburgring was a unique course."

It was reported that the first day of testing had mixed results. Although several German manufacturers were testing their cars in continuous laps, the Skyline GT-R (R32) development car returned after half a lap of the course due to trouble with the turbo. In addition, problems such as body rigidity, suspension rigidity, and maneuverability began to surface. The Nürburgring was a test course, and though Nissan had not experienced problems when driving on the German autobahns, the extreme driving conditions of the circuit threw up numerous technical issues.

Nevertheless, the development team made improvements and solved the problems one by one. In one month, over 100 laps were driven in total. The various issues encountered and resolved at the Nürburgring contributed to the evolution of the Skyline GT-R (R32) – when it made its debut in 1989, it was a 4WD supersport car unlike any the world had ever seen.

After that, the development tests for the Skyline GT-R (R33) and successive models were all carried out at the Nürburgring, in addition to testing on the in-house test course. ♦



After this test run – which was also intended as a graduation exam – was successfully completed, the development team took a commemorative photo. The relief on the faces of those who achieved the target performance is evident.

019_FS_FURIOUS_Nissan SkylineD_USA-UK-DE_v2.indd 4 25/1/24 15:21

THE CARS IN 2 FAST 2 FURIOUS

After automobile fans had gone crazy about the spectacular vehicles on display in *The Fast and the Furious,* the producers of the series decided to make every effort to put together a gallery of amazing sports cars in the second movie in the franchise.



The spectacular 1993 Mazda RX-7 FD driven by Orange Julius in *2 Fast 2 Furious.*

After passing through Tej's Garage and seeing that surveillance devices have been installed in their cars by the police, Brian and Roman make the decision to change cars. To do this, they challenge two of the drivers they competed against in Verone's race. Fonzie and Fabio, two arrogant and quarrelsome guys, turn up to the race with their girlfriends, driving a 1969 Yenko Camaro and a 1970 Dodge Challenger R/T.

One of the reasons for the great success of the first movie in the saga was showing, in action and in full detail, the kind of car that most lovers of speed dream of driving. For that reason, the producers made sure to present even faster and more eye-catching sports cars in the following movies.

In *2 Fast 2 Furious,* special attention was paid to providing the main character in the film, Brian O'Conner, with an extraordinary fleet of cars, giving him the opportunity to get behind the wheel of three real gems: the

019_FS_FURIOUS_Nissan SkylineD_USA-UK-DE_v2.indd 5 25/1/24 15:21

1999 Nissan Skyline GT-R (R34), the 2002 Mitsubishi Evo VII, and the classic 1969 Yenko Camaro.

Roman Pearce, his companion, was also able to show off some great cars: a 2001 Mitsubishi Eclipse Spyder convertible followed by a memorable 1970 Dodge HEMI® Challenger R/T – not forgetting the battered old Chevrolet Monte Carlo in which he was the king of the Barstow speedway.

FAST AND BEAUTIFUL

In the race that opened the movie, viewers saw even more stunning sports cars, including the 1993 Mazda RX-7, driven by Orange Julius. This car was customized by the specialist builder, Eddie Paul, from the Mazda in which Dominic Toretto races at the start of *The Fast and the Furious*. Another legendary car from the first movie, Brian's 1994 Toyota Supra, served as inspiration to create the 1993 Toyota Supra Turbo driven by Slap Jack. Suki's incredible Honda S2000 was especially eye-catching, above all for its unique pink bodywork decorated with the illustration of an elf warrior woman.

A few cars appeared more briefly: a 2003 Dodge Viper SRT-10, a 1995 Porsche 911 Carrera, a 2002 Nissan Sentra SE-R, and the 2000 Acura NSX owned by Tej Parker.



David Marder, the production supervisor, made sure that all these vehicles would be available and in a suitable condition to be filmed. For that purpose, he had a huge warehouse in Miami and a workshop where expert mechanics and painters worked tirelessly, painting, straightening panels, and doing everything possible for these cars to always look radiant in the cameras. ♦

THE ADVENTURES OF BRIAN O'CONNER

A difficult childhood

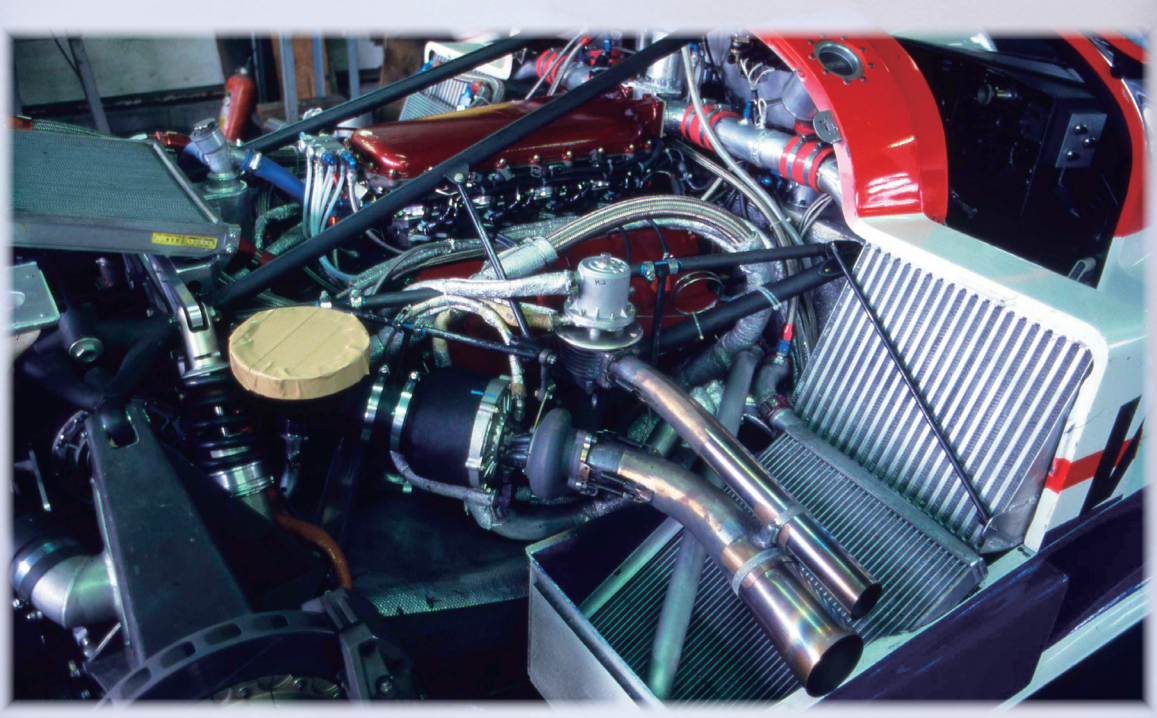
Brian is a reserved guy who very rarely talks about his past. In *Fast Five,* when he is hiding out in Río de Janeiro, he has a beer with Dom and says that he envies him for the good relationship he had with his father. Brian admits that he doesn't remember anything about his dad: "I don't recall him yelling, or smiling. To be honest with you, I don't even remember what he looked like. I don't remember. He just... he was never there."



019_FS_FURIOUS_Nissan SkylineD_USA-UK-DE_v2.indd 6 25/1/24 15:22

DEVELOPING A RACE-SPECIFIC ENGINE

After several years using production car-based engines for its competition models, Nissan acknowledged the need to produce an exclusive racing powerplant if it was to mount a successful challenge in the 24 Hours of Le Mans.



The VEJ30's radiator and intercooler were located on the side of the vehicle. The layout was changed from the 1986 chassis, which was retained in the 1987 model.

The 1986 24 Hours of Le Mans was NISMO's first attempt at the race, but it was really just testing the water to gain experience. In 1987, the second year of the challenge, the team began full-fledged efforts to win the Le Mans based on the experience of the previous year. The major new development was the introduction of the VEJ30, a newly developed 3.0L V8 twin-turbo engine designed specifically for racing.

In 1982, the first World Endurance Championship (WEC) race in Japan was held at Fuji Speedway, and this marked the beginning of full-scale development of Group C cars among Japanese automakers. Nissan began participating in the race in 1983 by supporting private teams that used Nissan cars. The engine installed in the cars at that time was the LZ20B turbo unit, which was used in the Super Silhouette car race. It was a 2.0-liter, four-cylinder, four-valve inline DOHC engine with a maximum output of over 400ps. As the designation indicates, the base engine was a mass-produced SOHC L20B with a four-valve DOHC head specially designed for racing.

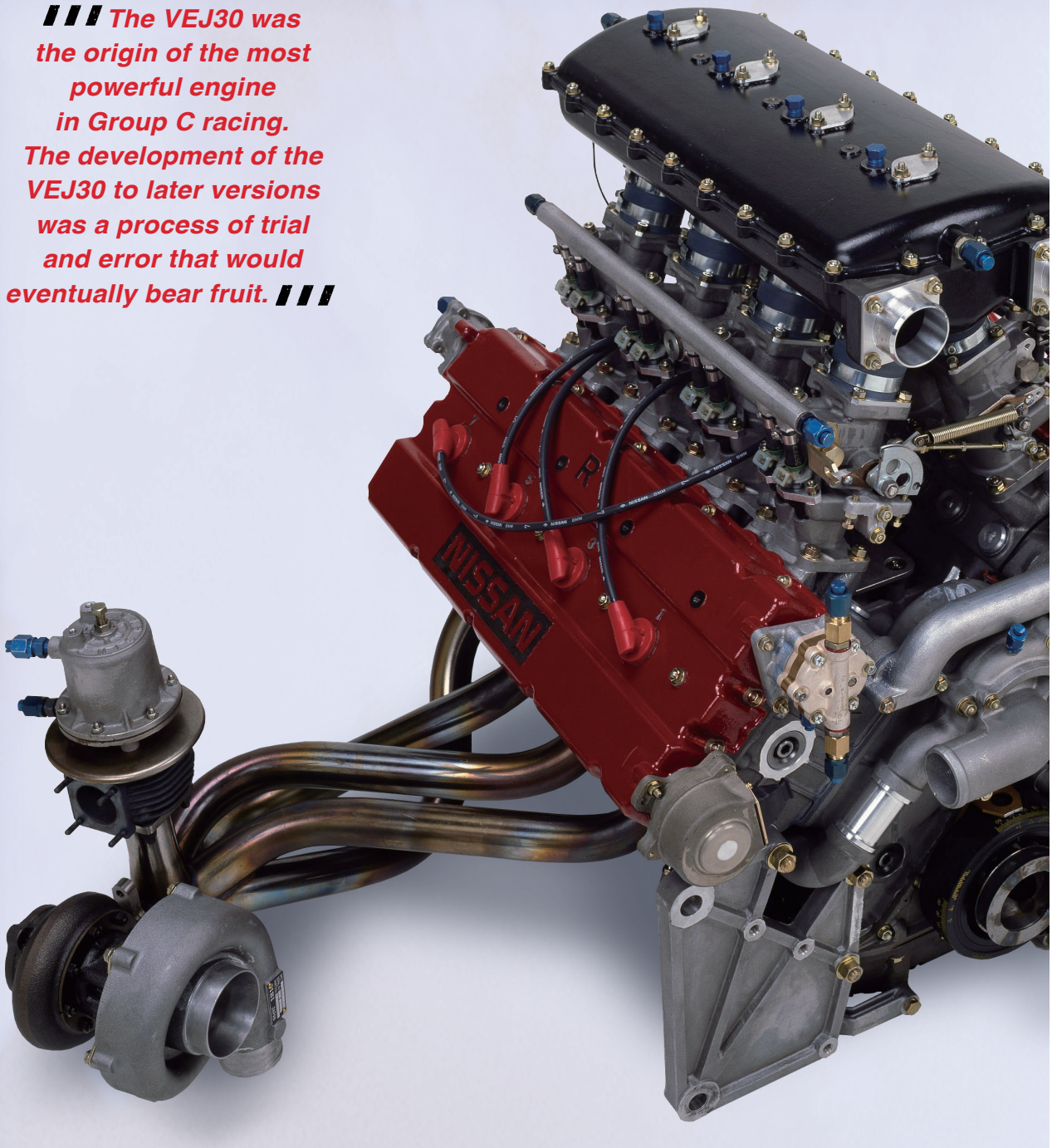
In 1984, the FJ20 turbo engine installed in the Skyline (DR30) and Silvia (S12) was used as the base unit for race tuning. In race specifications, the engine squeezed out a maximum output of around 450ps. The FJ20's displacement was then further increased to 2.3 liters, and its performance was boosted to nearly 600ps.

However, both of these engines were based on 2.0L four-cylinder in-line powerplants, which had a large displacement disadvantage compared to the engines used in

019_FS_FURIOUS_Nissan SkylineD_USA-UK-DE_v2.indd 7 25/1/24 15:22

DEVELOPING A RACE-SPECIFIC ENGINE

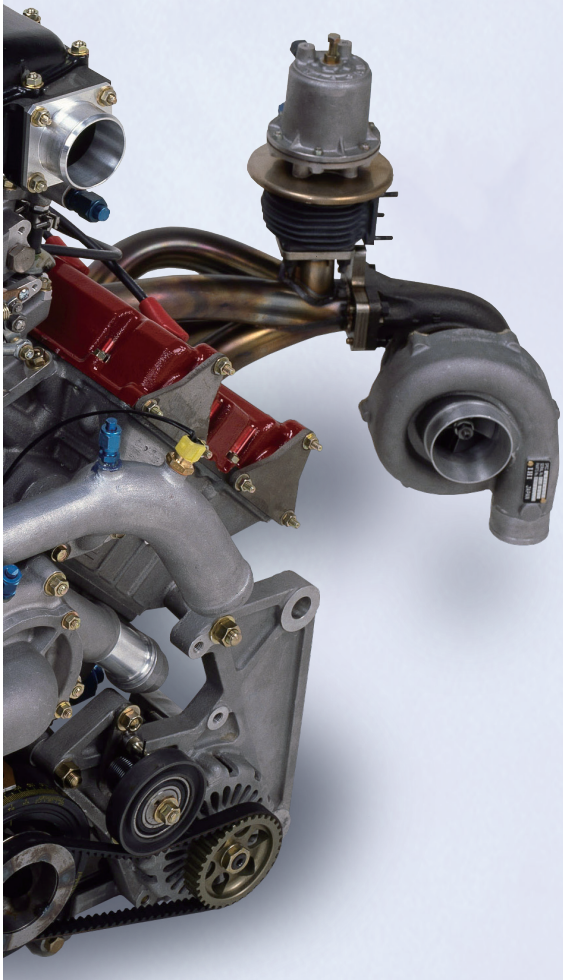
The VEJ30 was the origin of the most powerful engine in Group C racing. The development of the VEJ30 to later versions was a process of trial and error that would eventually bear fruit.

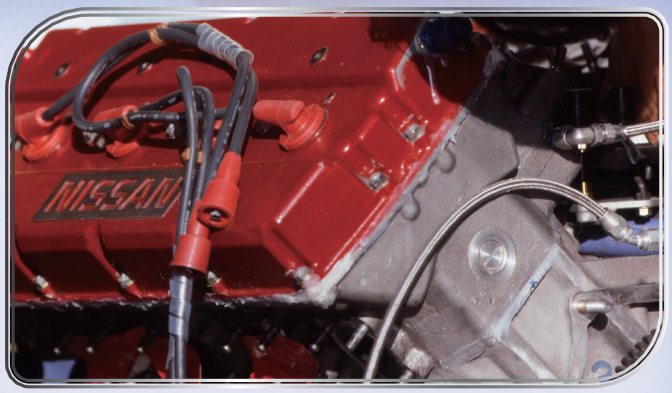


leading overseas machines such as the Porsche 956. It was clear that in trying to get the maximum power output of these engines, it would make them less durable. As a result, in 1985, an engine developed by Electramotive in North America was fitted. Based on the mass-produced 3.0L V6 SOHC VG30 turbo, the unit produced a maximum output of 650ps. This year, Nissan's involvement also changed from supporting private teams to providing a full works competition team, and the idea of developing a full-fledged Group C car was also established. The changes proved fruitful – the team finally won the WEC Championship in October.

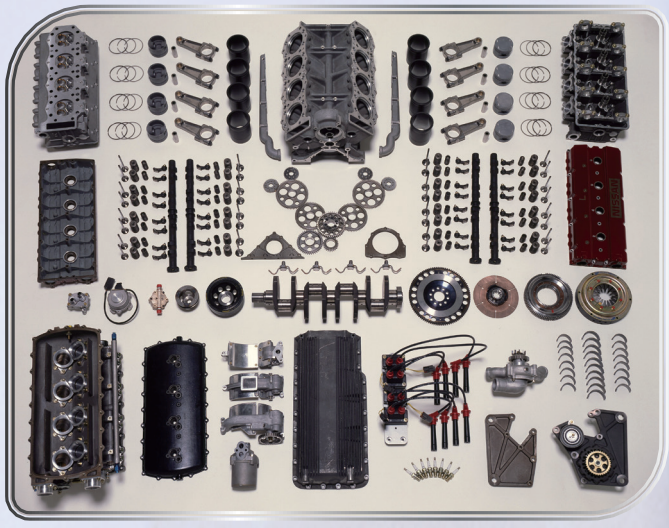
In 1986, the VG30 turbo engine was installed and a new chassis

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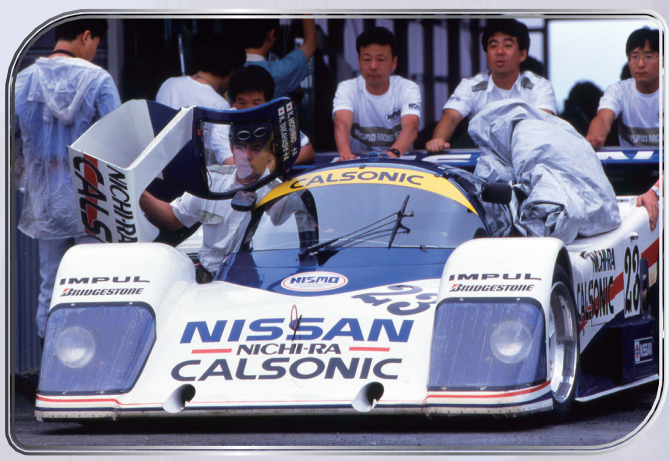




The VEJ30 featured wide cam covers and a somewhat old-fashioned look.



The camshafts on the VEJ30 were gear-driven. The valves were complicated mechanisms that required a swing arm, which was eliminated with the VRH30 upgrade in 1988.



With the race-tuned VEJ30 engine, the potential of the R87E prototype improved to the level of securing several pole positions. Nevertheless, durability was still an issue.

was introduced. In competition terms, the big news this year was Nissan's first entry into – and completion of – the 24 Hours of Le Mans race.

The following year saw the introduction of the race-specific VEJ30

019_FS_FURIOUS_Nissan SkylineD_USA-UK-DE_v2.indd 9 25/1/24 15:22



In 1987, the team made a second challenge in the 24 Hours of Le Mans. The pictured car was the previous year's R86V equipped with a VG30 turbo.

engine, a 3.0L, four-valve, DOHC twin-turbo V8 unit with maximum output in excess of 700ps. This was the first time since the GRX-3 – a 6.0L four-valve DOHC V12 engine mounted on the R382 prototype racing car introduced in 1969 – that a Nissan racing engine was not related to a unit from a mass-produced car.

However, the VEJ30 was not the type of engine that could achieve both fuel efficiency and power with a small combustion chamber due to its complicated mechanism, including a swing-arm valve drive system and a larger valve clamp angle. The engine powered the Nissan to pole position in several qualifying rounds of races, but in the actual races, fuel consumption and durability were not good enough. It became a problem.

In 1988, the VRH30, based on the VEJ30, was introduced with a much-improved direct-drive valve system and other significant improvements. Although the performance and durability of the engine were dramatically improved, it was still not enough to deliver race wins for Nissan. However, this experience was undoubtedly the key to the birth of the VRH35Z, which was later known as the most powerful engine in Group C cars. ♦



The two R87Es at Le Mans in 1987 were equipped with the newly developed VEJ30 engine. Three Nissan cars were entered this year, but all of them retired.

019_FS_FURIOUS_Nissan SkylineD_USA-UK-DE_v2.indd 10 25/1/24 15:22

STAGE 19
CHASSIS CENTER SECTION (2)

In this issue we will join the front left beam to the center section of the chassis.

PARTS

19A



19B



19C



EM



19A Rear steering box support
19B Front steering box support
19C Front left beam
EM Screws 2×5 mm (×3*)

*Including spares

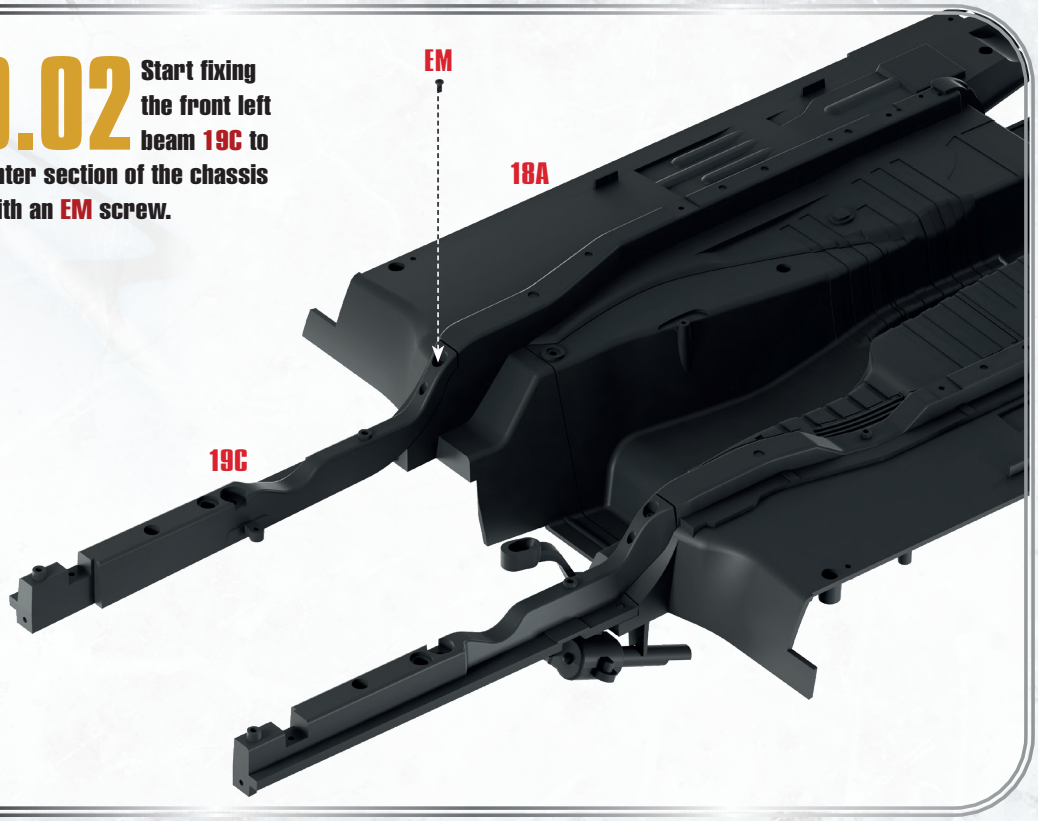
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19.01 Retrieve the center section of the chassis **18A**. Place the curved end of the front left beam **19C** over the highlighted area of the center section of the chassis **18A**.

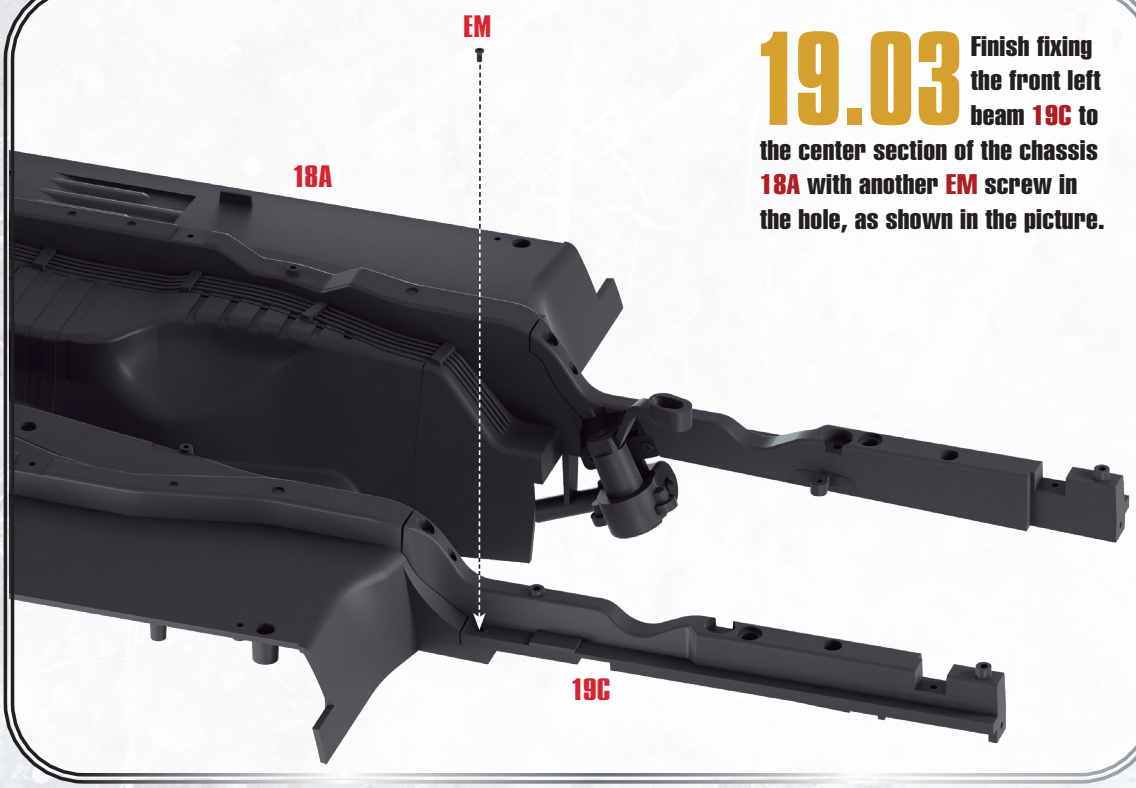


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19.02 Start fixing the front left beam 19C to the center section of the chassis 18A with an EM screw.



19.03 Finish fixing the front left beam 19C to the center section of the chassis 18A with another EM screw in the hole, as shown in the picture.

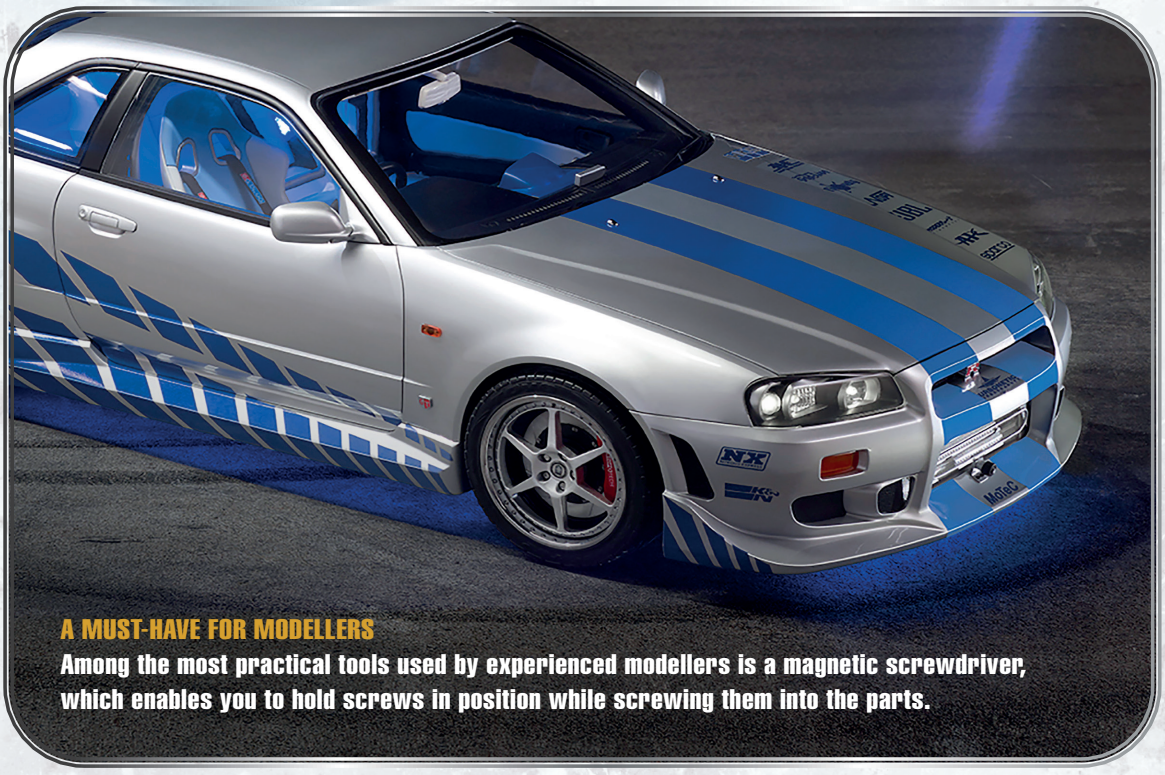


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Final assembly



Keep the rear and front steering box supports (19A and 19B) aside for future stages of assembly.



A MUST-HAVE FOR MODELLERS

Among the most practical tools used by experienced modellers is a magnetic screwdriver, which enables you to hold screws in position while screwing them into the parts.

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