

Robert Baltazar's 1991 Mazda Turbo RX7

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WHEN I FIRST SAW ROBERT BALTAZARS' 1991 RX-7 Turbo at SevenStock, I admired it, but wasn't captivated. I'm guilty as we all are of not looking deep enough sometimes, it's the cars with the \$10K paint jobs and chrome engine bays that get all the attention. Roberts' car obviously gets driven, it has a few door dings and dirt in the engine bay, but still it's a very nice example. So I chatted with Robert, and that's when I became more interested. It's not necessarily what he's done to the car, but what he does with the car. For the 'drivers,' the necessities are not a big single turbo and tons of power. Instead, the mandatory mods are suspension and a roll-cage, and what the car is missing in power, it makes up for in grip.

I must admit, in talking with Robert I was enamored with the idea of living at the foothill of the Pomona Canyon Road, and being able to tear it up any time you want. And that's the purpose Robert has built the car for, a canyon carver and fully capable track car. What RX-7 owner can't admire that? And the day I met Robert for the photo shoot couldn't have been better, driving up the Canyon Road on a perfect 80 degree Southern California evening only endeared the car to me further. We didn't exactly set any time records, but I couldn't get the idea out of my head of practicing all day long, shaving off a few tenths each time up and down.

Robert acquired this car seven years ago, with intent of scouting it out

for a friend. Upon meeting with the then current owner, Robert was impressed with how clean it was having only 54K original miles. He liked what he saw, and advised his buddy to purchase the car. But when the friend and owner couldn't agree on a price, Robert came into the picture. He didn't want to let an opportunity to grab the car slip away, so he offered \$6500 and walked away proud owner. His buddy still regrets the decision



not to buy the car.

Being so clean, Robert could have just left the car alone and enjoyed. But coming from a background of working on older American cars, Robert couldn't resist the urge to tinker. He was lucky to have such respected names as Racing Beat and Mazdatrix nearby, and consulted with them before deciding on any upgrade path, an extremely smart move for any rotary owner. Roberts' quest for knowledge has also led him to Atkins Rotary, and purchasing their engine rebuild video. Obviously the 13BT will need freshening at some point, still being in factory form, and Robert feels as though with the tools and experience he now has, that he'll be able to complete the dubious task.

Like most turbo rotary owners, Robert started by opening up the exhaust with a downpipe, pre-silencer, and an HKS cat-back exhaust. For additional fuel to compensate, he added rx7.com 720cc secondary injectors and a Walbro fuel pump. He then had his stock Series 5 turbo rebuilt by MJ Turbo. They clipped the wheel and installed a ceramic compressor wheel for quicker response and slightly higher



flow capability. With a GReddy Profec Type-A boost controller keeping things at 12 psi, the car was tuned by SP Engineering to a respectable 266 rwhp and 256 lb/ft of torque.

But the horsepower numbers only begin to tell the story. Robert has paid special attention to suspension tuning, doing things the right way. The core of these modification are the JIC FLT-A2 coil-overs, with pillow-ball upper mount and 15-way adjustability, the JIC setup gives Robert all the control he needs to adjust for changing track conditions. It's with proper suspension tuning that an FC really starts to shine. Many owners think shocks and springs are enough, but that's just the beginning. All the stock bushings need to be replaced, which is a tedious job many owners skip, but not Robert. And as any racer will tell you, adjustability is the key. Robert has built in suspension-tuning capability in just about every area, front and rear camber, sway bars, and shock valving. Then the true sign of someone who understands the dynamics of handling, Robert had the car corner weighted by Universal Technical Institute. It's the details that matter when you're ass-out around a corner at 90mph.

Robert has paid for all of the modifications over a period of seven long years, whenever he was able to pick up enough extra cash. So understandably he was thrilled to be chosen for a sponsorship in 2004 through "Advanced Import Tuners" (aitracing.com). They fixed his car up with a full body kit including hood, front and rear bumper and paint, which is how I met Robert, in the AIT booth at SevenStock. "I enjoy my car. It gives me a break from my wife and life in general. I love to go into the canyons and road race. It is quite an adrenaline rush. I have also taken my car to California Speedway and Button willow." Almost brings a tear to my eye.

Plans for the car include a new TO4R single-turbo setup, Wolf 3D Version 4 ECU, and to fix the few door dings that are present. Robert hopes that with more visibility, he'll be able to pick up more sponsorship, since there is so much untapped potential left in the car. We hope that Robert will continue to enjoy tearing up the Canyon Road safely, and represent the handling prowess of the FC to other car owners.

Robert would like to give thanks to Racing Beat, Mazdatrix, Will at AIT Racing, Wolfman at R&R Rotary, Tim at Dave Turner Racing, and his patient wife. **RX**



The Mods

SUSPENSION:

JIC FLT-A2 coilovers
Polyurethane Bushings
Racing Beat rear tow eliminator
Mazdatrix rear camber adjuster
Cusco front strut bar
Mazdacom transmission mounts
Mazdacom Engine mounts
Mazdacom diff mount
Auto Power 4-point roll cage
Racing Beat front sway bar
Suspension tech. Rear sway bar
Mazdatrix front sway bar adjustable link
Racing Beat rear sway bar adjustable link
Wheels: Enkei RPO-1 Wheels Rear 18x9.5" 35mm offset • Front 17x8" 35mm offset
Tires: Nitto 555 Rear 265-35-18 • Front 235-40 17

BRAKES:

Front and rear Dave Turner Carbon Metallic Pads
Front and rear Brembo rotors
Racing Beat Stainless steel brake lines
ABS eliminated

EXHAUST:

Racing Beat 2.75" downpipe and presilencer
HKS old school 2.75" exhaust

ENGINE:

Dyno tuned by SP Engineering: 266rwhp – 256rwtq at 12psi
Rx7.com 720 cc injectors in secondary, 550 cc primaries
Walbro 255lpm fuel pump
Injectors cleaned by RC engineering
Mazdatrix silicone vacuum hose (blue)
S5 turbo rebuilt and ported by MJ Turbo at 70k
Bonöz intake
Chris Sanders TID (Turbo induct)
Greedy BOV kit
HKS Turbo timer
Greedy Profec A boost controller
Racing Beat ultra wires
Aerodyne radiator shroud
Remapped ECU by SP Engineering

TRANSMISSION:

Racing Beat 9.5lbs flywheel
Racing Beat street and strip clutch
Stainless steel clutch line
Mazdatrix short shifter

GAUGES:

Autometer ultralite Boost, EGT and Oil Temp





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