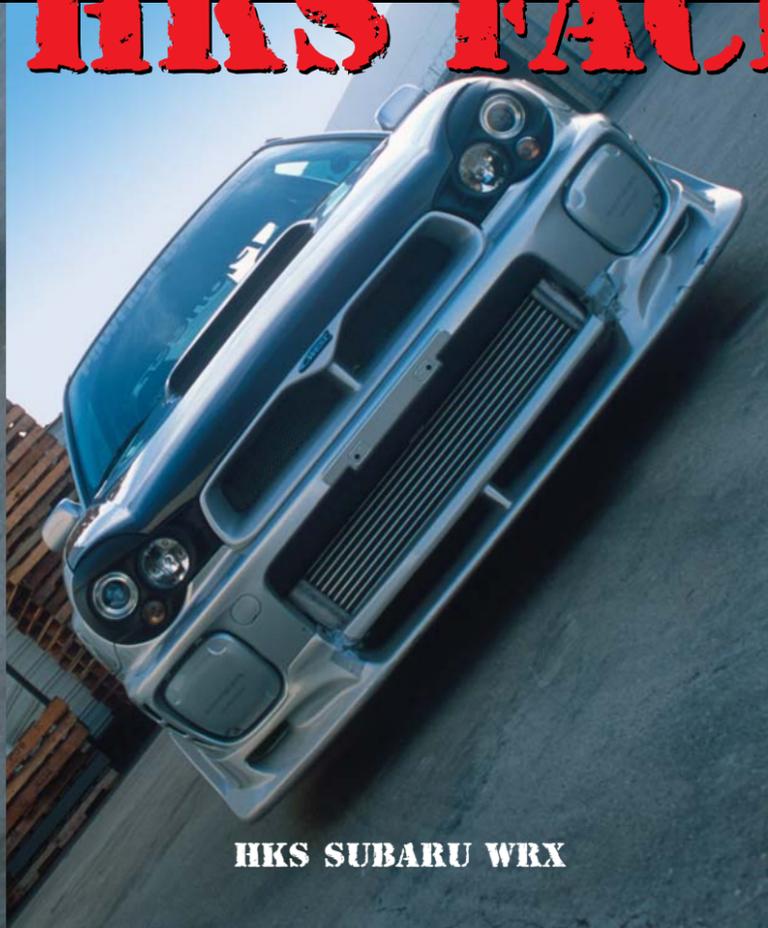


HKS FACEOFF

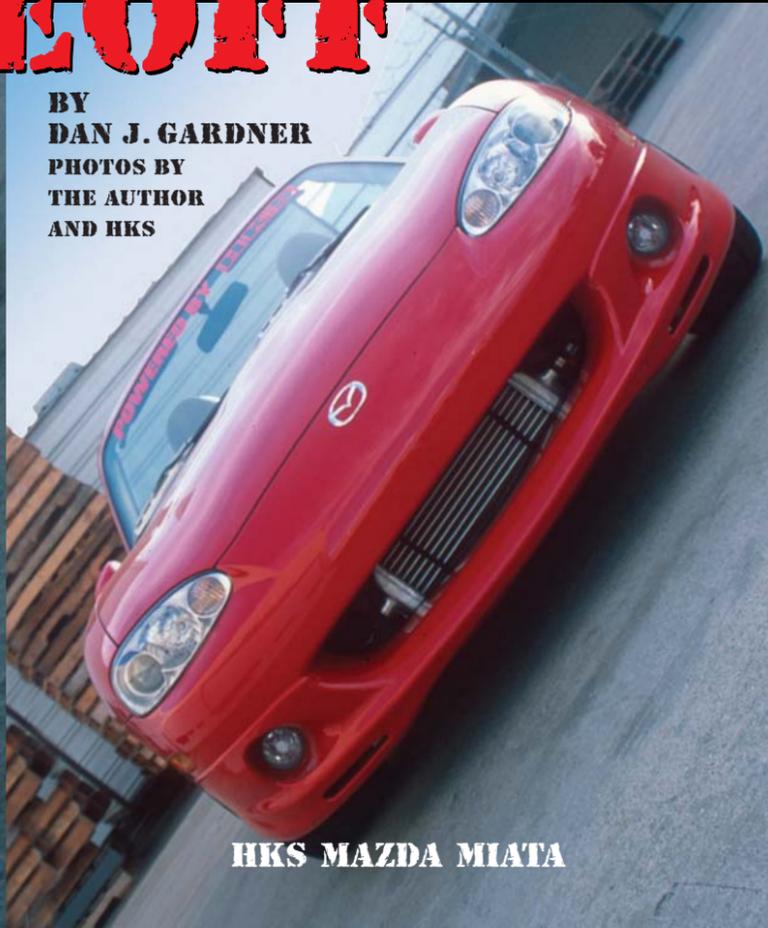
BY
DAN J. GARDNER
PHOTOS BY
THE AUTHOR
AND HKS



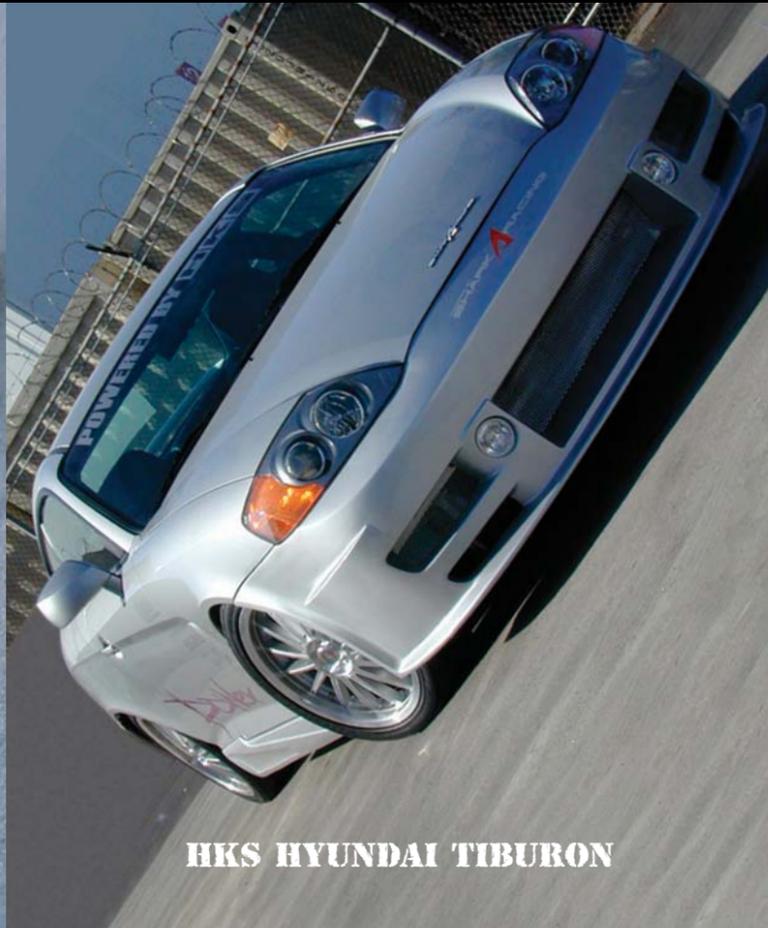
HKS FORD FOCUS



HKS SUBARU WRX



HKS MAZDA MIATA



HKS HYUNDAI TIBURON

Power. It's what politicians and rabid auto enthusiasts crave. Both types of power can help you get places faster. Whether you're headed to become the senate majority leader or the fastest guy from Tempe to LA, you're going to need some serious helpings of the stuff. HKS has been serving up power to speed freaks since 1973. Actually, it wasn't until a year later that the company had produced the very first aftermarket turbocharger for a passenger car. Since then, HKS has pioneered many other aftermarket goodies, including the first commercially available electronic turbo timer and boost controller.

Tuner shops often showcase their product line through project cars, and HKS is no stranger when it comes to morphing relatively mundane daily drivers into fierce, fire-breathing juggernauts. We got a chance to taste the extra-spicy versions of Subaru's WRX, Mazda's Miata, Hyundai's Tiburon, and Ford's Focus. All are

respectable performers out-of-the-box, but our testers were cooked closer to performance-perfection by the chefs at HKS. Read on to find out each of the recipes and how they turned out.

SUBARU WRX

> **The Flash:** Like it or hate it, a stock WRX is hard to miss, with its bulbous, bug-eyed front end and massive stock fog lamps. HKS employed the help of C-West and Sunny Styling to help augment the car, turning its "playful" face into a menacing shogun stance. A front lip spoiler, front grille, side skirts, rear valence, huge rear spoiler, and headlight garnish all pump up this WRX. A carbon fiber hood complete with ample hood scoop looks purposeful and shaves a few pounds of curb weight as well.

> **The Dash:** Compared with the already fleet stock car, this thing is wicked fast. Further, although we haven't driven the STi version

yet, we feel safe in saying that this HKS-enhanced car will prove to be even faster than the STi. WRXs have strange power curves—nothing much happens until about 4000 rpm. But when boost builds, hold on, there's Ferrari-like power here.

The clutch is tricky, with very little progression and an engagement point all the way at the top of the travel. The gear shift is finicky and first is very hard to engage, though we suspect some serious hard miles have been logged on this box. Handling is very neutral and the seats not only hold you securely in place, but are also comfortable to boot, even with the deep bolstering all around.

> **Numerically Speaking:** 308.2 horsepower and 290.8 lb-ft of torque measured at all four wheels, versus wimpy stock numbers of 182.8 and 191.2 respectively. Estimated crank horsepower is up a whopping 158 hp or 70 percent, bringing the total to 385.

> **HKS Sample Parts Bin:** GT2835 ball-bearing turbo upgrade

kit, stainless steel turbo manifold upgrade, front mount intercooler kit, Super Sequential Blowoff Valve (SSQV), F-CON V pro engine management, Carbon-Ti Hi-Power exhaust, racing downpipe, Super Mega Flow intake, EVC boost controller, turbo timer Type-1, Hipermax Damper II coilover kit.

> **Other Sample Parts Bin:** Volk Racing bronze SE-37 wheels (18x7.5), BF Goodrich G Force T/A tires (225/40ZR18), Brembo 4-POT 13-inch brake upgrade.

MAZDA MIATA

> **The Flash:** Okay, the Miata is a great handling car, but facts are facts: it looks a little, well... wussy. Mazda offers some dress up parts you can order as options or as accessories from your local dealer. HKS started there, adding a front lip spoiler and side skirts. Then, Racing Beat added their Type II rear wing and dual loop bar

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>> cont'd

along with the Streamline rear deck. Inside, Razo supplied a shift knob and full pedal set. It's not a radical appearance package overall, but it does make the car look a bit racier, especially with those stand-out metal loops behind the seats.

> **The Dash:** The Miata definitely feels tighter than the WRX, but that may be because the WRX lived the unenviable life of a press car before HKS got their hands on it. Overall grunt isn't nearly as pulse-quickening as the WRX, but the power is more useable across a wider rpm range. Turbo power comes on more rapidly and its application is smoother.

The car feels a bit nervous heading in a straight line, but that feeling gets exacerbated as you take even mildly fast turns. It slides away quickly, though it's not difficult to catch. The stock brakes could use an upgrade to help balance the additional power. Overall, the motor work is first rate and seems very reliable even for daily driving duty. The suspension could use a bit of tuning to keep the car more evenly planted.

> **Numerically Speaking:** Measured rear wheel ratings jump from 110.2 to 197.3

horsepower and 102.8 to 201.4 lb-ft of torque. Crank horsepower is estimated at 235, a 93 horsepower or 65 percent gain.

> **HKS Sample Parts Bin:** GT2530 ball-bearing turbocharger, turbo exhaust manifold, SSQV, front mount intercooler, F-CON V Pro engine management, EVC boost controller, Super Dragger exhaust, Super Mega Flow intake kit, turbo timer Type-1, 46mm boost meter, Hipermax Damper II coilover kit.

> **Other Sample Parts Bin:** Advan RG Wheels (17x7), Yokohama Parada tires (215/40ZR17).

HYUNDAI TIBURON

> **The Flash:** The Tiburon is a damn good-looking car. There are true Ferrari cues here, but if you're the type of guy who needs to advertise to the world that there's a li'l somethin' underneath, ATH/Shark Racing has some exterior goodies that should do the trick. A front bumper, aggressive side skirts, rear valance, and large angular wing all tell people you're up to something. Be warned, you're advertising to the po po too.

> **The Dash:** This car seems to be the

smoothest of the bunch... the car that you could let your significant other drive and not worry too much. It has forced air induction, of course, but the ramming comes by way of a supercharger instead of a turbo. Having a six-cylinder along with a supercharger makes for a much different driving experience from the others. Less "run, run as fast as you can" and more "smooth operator," this Tiburon seamlessly puts power to the ground.

The weakness lies in the suspension. More than any of the others, this Tiburon fails to control its chassis or diminish body roll. The lowering springs raise the red flag here and seem like easy culprits, as this car is not equipped with a coilover upgrade like the others. The steering is somewhat loose and not terribly responsive, but that's a Hyundai issue. If you like your power upgrades more modest and want to avoid turbo lag, this is a solid setup.

> **Numerically Speaking:** 207.8 horsepower and 184.1 lb-ft of torque can be had at the front wheels versus a stock 152.5/166.1 respectively. All in all, HKS estimates 245 ponies at the crank, a garnishing of 64 horsepower equating to an



additional 35 percent.

> **HKS Sample Parts Bin:** Hi-Power exhaust, Super Mega Flow intake, F-CON S engine management.

> **Other Sample Parts Bin:** Alpine Development supercharger kit, Sprint lowering springs, RH Evolution S15 wheels (18x7.5), Yokohama Parada Spec 2 tires (225/40ZR18).

FORD FOCUS ZX-3

> **The Flash:** European and edgy, the Focus has caught on quickly, much to the chagrin of the maker of a car called the Civic. With Focus sales so strong, there are plenty of appearance parts to choose from. This Focus, in fact, with just a few basic pieces looks altogether different from a stock ZX-3. The "Pumpkin Orange" paint sure doesn't hurt, either. European RS provided the front bumper, which changes the entire look of the car on its own. Wings West added low side skirts, a rear valance and a unique three-piece rear wing.

> **The Dash:** At the time of our test, the Focus was back on the rack, being tweaked for even more performance, so we looked but didn't touch (though *Gone in 60 Seconds* did enter our minds). Bottom line: no track test on this one.

> **Numerically Speaking:** Looking for "rock your world" horsepower and torque gains? There are gobs of it here. Check these stats: stock: 111.2 horsepower/ 120.7 lb-ft of torque; modified: 260.0 horsepower/ 254.5 lb-ft of torque. With an estimated 305 crank horsepower on tap, this Focus gains a

whopping 135 percent more of the stuff that smoky launches are made of.

> **HKS Sample Parts Bin:** Custom GT2530 ball-bearing turbocharger kit, SSQV, A/F knock amp meter, EVC boost controller, Hi-Power exhaust, Twin Power-DLI ignition amplifier, turbo timer Type-1, CAMP engine monitoring computer, 46mm boost meter, and 60mm oil pressure, fuel pressure, and water temperature meter.

> **Other Sample Parts Bin:** Toyo Proxes T1-S tires (225/35ZR18), RH Evolution D6000 wheels (18x7.5), Energy Suspension lower transmission mount, H&R coilover suspension.

The crew at HKS never leave well enough alone. As we write this, they're tinkering with the cars, testing new products, upgrading various bits and pieces, and generally making the cars put out more than before. Speed is indeed a thrill fueled by a little thing called power... HKS power.

HKS USA can be reached at:
310-491-3300 • www.hksusa.com

DAN J. GARDNER was born in Hollywood, grew up in Chicago, and following a zig here and a zag there returned to California to pursue automotive-related endeavors. Gardner enjoyed a stint at *Car and Driver*, assisting with track testing, copy editing, and reader relations. He now contributes his words and photography to *Sport Compact Car*, *Auto and Parts News*, *Sports Car International*, *Bimmer*, *Benzo*, *Velocity* and, of course, *Arizona Driver*. In addition, Dan does public relations consulting at the OEM and aftermarket level.

NASCAR TICKETS



With Phoenix International Raceway petitioning for a second NASCAR Winston Cup race beginning in 2004, fans may want to start making plans now. PIR announced that tickets for that new event will be awarded to current season ticket holders, as well as anyone who has purchased a two-day ticket package for the 2003 NASCAR Winston Cup Series Checker Auto Parts 500 Weekend at PIR. Tickets for the 2003 event went on sale in late February; packages can be purchased online, or by calling the PIR ticket office. Thursday and Friday single-event tickets are also for sale.

As for the 2003 NASCAR event, Saturday and Sunday reserved grandstand seating will be sold as a two-race package, ranging from \$100-230 for adults, and \$85 -185 for juniors/children. Fans purchasing a two-race package can purchase a Friday NASCAR Gatorade Qualifying Day/Chevy Silverado 150 Craftsman Truck ticket for only \$20.

Hospitality packages also are available for the weekend. The Weekend Fan Club Suite, Saturday Busch Party Pack, the Sunday Victory Circle and Mirage Club provide fans with tickets, food/beverages service and other special items.

General Admission seating is available on the 76/Circle K Hillside Friday (\$20*), Saturday (\$25*), and Sunday (\$30,*) (*kids 12 and under free each day).

While there are three options for purchasing tickets, it is recommended that fans purchase tickets for all events at PIR through real-time ticketing at the official PIR website. Through 3D seating maps, race fans can check out the view from their seat before purchasing, all with a few clicks of the mouse, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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