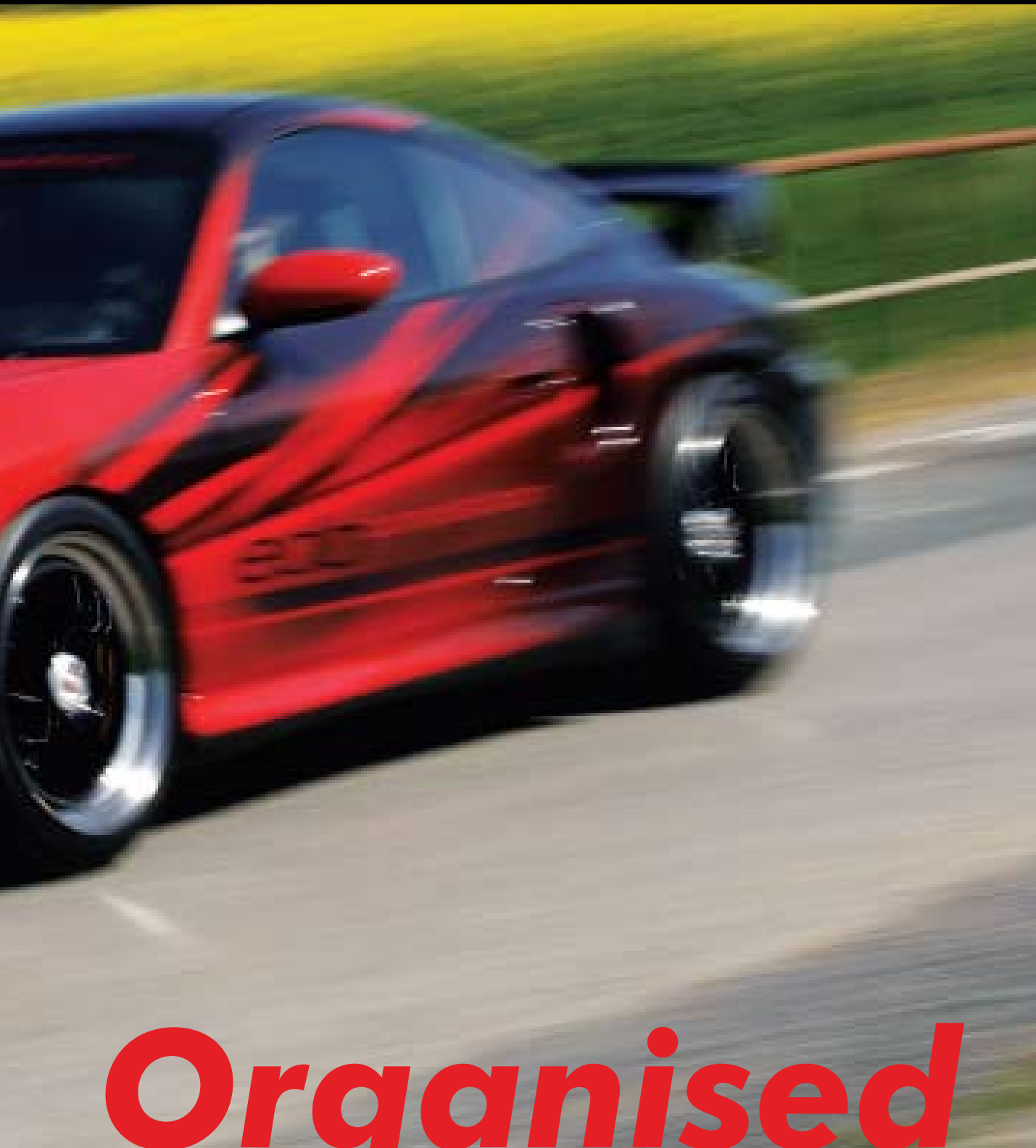


Edo 996 Turbo



There's nothing subtle about this 996 Turbo. Everything from the colour scheme to the performance is brutally outrageous

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Organised

CHAOS

Edo 996 Turbo



When we arrive at the new headquarters of Edo Competition, business is in full flow. Ferraris lie ripped apart outside, two Porsches are up on ramps and the car we've arrived to drive is nowhere to be seen.

The 997 Turbo is in South Germany, waiting for the latest 12-day group test that the German titles insist on. But it's always easy to console yourself in a showroom stocked with all manner of Porsches, Ferraris and even a Maserati MC12 strewn around like litter on a housing estate. After five minutes of intense discussion and a look to the blazing sun we select the 996 Turbo with the lurid colour scheme.

Company boss Edo Karabegovic breezes in, lights the first of the day's monumental cigarette intake, laughs at my ironing skills and sets us up with the keys. With that he's away to give someone grief about a set of sports seats that haven't arrived, and fill in endless sales orders.

At any one time Edo has 30 cars going through the creative process and, despite his recent expansion, he now finds himself eyeing up more buildings just for storage. Few other tuners, even big names, can match that.

His Ahlen-based firm has become one of the fastest-rising stars of the German scene since Edo decided he didn't want to spend so long away from home, even though he was winning domestic sports car honours with his own team and a bright future was more or less set in stone for him.

But in 2001 he turned his hand to tuning Porsches and built a car to beat the record round the Nordschleife. Despite Porsche coming up with the Carrera GT, Edo went to work on a borderline racing GT2 that stormed round the old Nürburgring in the hands of Patrick Simon. The final time was 7 minutes 15.63 seconds; faster than the works Porsche, and this one car took Edo into the big time.

His record and the Tuner Grand Prix win in 2005

with the same car cemented his status among the very best tuners in the land. And when he was approached by owners with Ferraris, Lamborghinis and more, he welcomed them with open arms. He will now confidently take on any project his customers want, from a mild tweak on a Gallardo to the 800bhp Maserati MC12 XX that takes pride of place in the workshop. He has even rebuilt a Ferrari after a major accident; to Maranello's rather grudging approval.

A Ferrari 360, two F430s and a 512BB are outside the workshop, together with five 996s, a 993 and an old 912. He will restore, retool, re-engineer or simply add the finishing touches, and prefers a boutique, personal form of tuning to knocking out kits by the dozen through dealers.

With 996 Turbos coming down in price, they are increasingly finding themselves getting tweaked, and this is still the bread-and-butter model on the workshop floors.

Edo has wrung 585bhp out of the last-generation Turbo, with the help of a K24 GT2 turbocharger set-up and the inevitable sport filter and stainless steel exhaust with a tri-alloy aluminium cat. While almost every Porsche of this calibre has four exit pipes, though, it is a surprise to see the dummy outer casings simply welded into place on this car.

But it's an explosive beast and will match the figures

We select the 996 Turbo with the lurid colour scheme



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of the current 997 Turbo to 62mph with a time of 3.7 seconds. More impressively, it will now smash through the 125mph mark in 9.9 seconds and keep going to a solid 215mph. So it's much faster, louder and far more engaging than the 997 Turbo. And it costs less, too.

Locked into the real world of resale value and manufacturer guarantees, most of us take the safe option and head for the new car. But this one is so much more entertaining that many with the spending power to order a brand new 997 Turbo have, instead, opted for the 996 with a healthy dose of power and suspension tuning to make it aggressive and fun. This is a car that has the strength, power and drama of the old school Turbos, without the real sense of danger.

Edo dropped this particular 996 down to the deck with a fully adjustable KW suspension set-up. It's so low, in fact, that driving it across gravel is a nerve-wracking experience as the grinding sound of that low-slung 'GT2 Shark' front splitter hitting stone is a horrible, expensive noise. It looks good, mind you, providing a longer, near flat-nose look from the side as it swoops to the floor.

I can see a few replacements being required as anything other than a glass-smooth road gives it problems. But you could always knock the suspension up a notch on poor roads. This car also comes with a new grille and a reprofiled GT2 tailfin that does give a subtly dramatic look that marks the car apart from the crowd.

I blip the throttle and the burbling new exhaust roars in response. I then dip the clutch and the Turbo pulls away cleaner than a rental car. Yes, the ride is hard, and I have to crawl slowly along the unfinished access road, but then Edo has always found a way to make a clutch that can cope with a tornado feel comfortable round town.

Edo has pointed me in the direction of his 'test track' – a set of near-deserted roads near the former coal mine that form the dramatic backdrop for our static photographs. So that's where I'm heading to find out just what a difference this conversion really makes.

It's loud, raucous, pulls at the leash and fidgets and fights on a tight bend

Simply put, it transforms the car into a whole new animal. It's loud, raucous, pulls at the leash and will fidget and fight on a tight bend. It feels like a full track set-up, too, as one violent rut brings that grinding noise back to haunt my tortured ears. Regular road users might want to ask for the comfort setting; I know I would.

This car might cost about the same as a 997 Turbo, but that's where the similarity stops. This is a visceral version of the everyday superhero; it's Lassie with rabies.

The low rumble has been replaced with a vicious roar and every rev ripples across the surrounding fields like an aftershock. There's a horrible, blaring flat-spot at about 3000rpm, but push past that and the engine takes on a delicious, manic note that will ensure you hold the lower gear every single time.

Edo's tinkered version of the 3.6-litre twin-turbo engine



As is often the case with 996 engines, there's not much to suggest that there is anything out of the ordinary going on here



Edo Karabegovic is a busy man, always rushing around, planning his next creation



Edo Competition's new headquarters are a hive of activity, with Porsches and other sports cars being worked on all the time





is just violent in the mid-range, as it comes complete with 575lb ft of torque to match the horsepower figures. And that equates to near-daft pull through the gears – at anything above 2000rpm the car takes off like a stabbed rat, yanking gently at each corner, with the power feeding back and forth and side to side as the 9x18-inch front and 12x18-inch rear wheels feel for grip.

A short-shift kit on the gearbox and a beefier clutch

provide a rather more muscular action to the driving experience and a much keener feel to the car, as the six-speed now feels like a bolt-action rifle. And as soon as the drivetrain snaps into the higher gear, the surge of acceleration slugs the driver's seat and sends the car hurtling towards the horizon.

It is face-bendingly fast and ridiculous numbers on the clock become mere landmarks as it all feels so accessible – I wonder why Porsche had to take the next step and kill the love with the new car. They just needed to slam a load more horses into the old one. This is a riot of a car that makes the adrenaline-ride of the GT2 it apes in many ways redundant at a stroke. It's that good.

There's that much power you need to think about it in a bend now, as there's more than enough power to get into trouble. With the stiff-as-a-board suspension set-up it will take stupid levels of speed in to the apex if kept on a smooth throttle and linear brakes. But it only takes a sneeze on the gas pedal mid-corner to unleash a violent reaction beneath, as the front wheels scramble to contain the slide and keep the car in line.

Now, Porsche's baseline systems are so good it can more than handle the horses and will drag the car back towards the straight line. But this 996 Turbo feels so much more alive than the 997 variant that it's well worth considering as an alternative.

For the brakes, Edo has fitted 370mm front discs with six-piston, single-block calipers, while at the rear there are four-piston calipers clamping 342mm discs. The resulting system is like throwing an anchor down at any speed, as

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Specification

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Engine

3.6-litre, K24 GT2 turbochargers, BMC sport air filter, engine remap, tri-alloy catalytic converter, stainless-steel exhaust

Maximum power: 575bhp at 6790rpm

Maximum torque: 575lb ft at 4530rpm

Transmission

Short shift gearchange, uprated sports clutch

Suspension

Two-way adjustable KW stainless-steel threaded suspension

Brakes

Front: 370mm discs with 6-piston calipers

Rear: 342mm discs with 4-piston calipers

Wheels and tyres

Front: 9x18in Star rims with 245/35R18 tyres

Rear: 12x18in Star rims with 315/30R18 tyres

Performance

0-60mph: 3.7 seconds

Top speed: 215mph

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the combined skills of a rock-solid set-up and no pitch at the front end help the chassis make the most of the huge contact patches and haul off the speed.

This car was built with a racer's philosophy and feels geared to the track; those broad tyres take a little more direction to the apex and demand a bit of shoulder rather than fingertips. And with a crescendo of gnashing gears, wrung out revs and occasional tyre squeal as the front wheels load up, the car fires through pretty much any bend on maximum attack. You can drive it gently, ignoring the extra power; but you won't, it's that kind of car.

While it's a loud, loud car, most customers go for the quiet look on the outside. However, this is a rare example of the optional vinyl covering Edo can provide. With complex paint jobs becoming increasingly expensive, this coating might work as a cheap way to cover a track car, or a novel way of dressing a racer, but here the base engineering deserves a slick paint job and nothing more to do justice to the mayhem below.

That's business as usual at Edo Competition, one of the fastest growing tuners on the Porsche scene – mayhem. There's an assault on the 400kph barrier to come with the MC12, Edo is going back to the old Nürburgring with his GT2 for another crack at the record and, in between all this, he had to nail the boss of Recaro who was ducking on his seats and oversee the mods to tens of millions of pounds of metal and carbonfibre.

That's the kind of chaos you just have to love, the kind of chaos that has quietly handed Edo the competitive edge. **911**

