

R35 NISSAN GTR

Hard as it might be to believe, Nissan has plans for progressive changes to upgrade the GTR supercar throughout its model life ... to make it even more super! The first of these changes have been revealed with the launch of the 2010-11 GTR.

There is no tougher environment than Victoria's Phillip Island Raceway in streaming wet going – but it was in those conditions that Nissan offered Car Showroom a test of the latest twin-turbo all-wheel-drive R35 Nissan GTR.

Only 11 handpicked Nissan dealers throughout Australia sell the Nissan GTR and have the specialized service tools to maintain them. The 2010-11 model sells for \$158,800 or \$162,800 for the GTR Premium model.

Nissan GTR Overview

While some pretend to be 'Supercars' – by any measure Nissan's GTR is the real deal. Its in-your-face aggressive styling, growling twin-turbo V6 engine, massive array of chassis artillery and all-wheel-drive technology add up to one of the world's greatest high performance coupes.



There are two Nissan GTR models – the regular Nissan GTR and the Nissan GTR

Premium. That latter scores two-tone red and black leather trim, Bose audio and smoke-grey 20-inch alloys (chrome 20-inch alloys on the standard model).

You can pick the latest model visually by the front brake calipers – the first R35 Nissan GTR had large ‘Brembo’ logos while the new version has large Nissan and smaller Brembo logos.

In detail, there are numerous changes for the 2010-11 version:

- The satellite navigation system is HDD-based and displays on a 7-inch digital display which has a new data logging function
- Automatic headlights
- Speed-sensing windscreen wipers
- Upgraded audio with Bluetooth and iPod connectivity
- Recalibrated shock absorbers
- Stiffer rear suspension radius rod bushings
- New wheel alignment settings
- Rear diffusers with cooling ducts (previously only fitted to V-Spec models)
- An improved-flow catalyst in the exhaust
- Improved cooling for the six-speed dual-clutch transmission

Nissan GTR Engine

No changes for the remarkable V6 VR38DETT twin-turbo 3.8-litre engine. Maximum power is 357kW at 6,400rpm and peak torque of 588Nm is delivered between 3,200-5,200rpm.

It’s an all-alloy V6 with twin IHI turbochargers.

One skilled technician at Nissan’s Yokohama plant hand-builds each Nissan GTR engine from scratch in a specially sealed ‘clean room’. Its technical specifications are meticulous – for example the plasma-coated cylinder bores maximize cooling efficiency and are just 0.15mm thick compared to conventional cast iron liners of 2.6mm.



Same for the six-speed dual-clutch transmission and rear transaxle – hand-built. Like the Nissan 370Z, the Nissan GTR in full auto mode automatically blips the throttle for racing downshifts – staggering technology appreciated by performance drivers.

And here's the truly remarkable bit – despite the bespoke assembly and race car like performance, Nissan says each GTR driveline has a lifespan of at least 200,000kms and in normal (non-racetrack) use up to 300,000kms.

Nissan GTR Interior

There's no room for compromise in a genuine coupe supercar and that means there's no room in the back seat – nicely shaped and contoured though it is. The Nissan GTR's interior is functional and tailored for the driver – but curiously the boot is large and can fit two sets of golf clubs.

Front seats are body hugging and have an excellent electronic adjustment with one dial handling all the work. Naturally the thick sports steering wheel (with lots of functional buttons and paddle-shifters just like an F1 car) adjusts for rake and reach and you're instantly cosseted for performance driving.

And of course, the round analogue instruments are highlighted by the large tachometer

(red-lined at 7,000rpm). Within the tacho is a gearshift indicator with a digital display of the selected mode and gear.



The multi-function display in the center console gives a myriad of information with superb graphics for items like engine temperature, turbo temperatures, gearbox and differential etc...again straight from F1 and sports car racing. Below the multi-function display is a cluster angled towards the driver with controls for audio and air-conditioning and also – most importantly - chassis and drive-train set-ups.

All-up with its functionality and staggering array of information, the Nissan GTR interior alone justifies the vehicle's price tag.

Nissan GTR Exterior & Styling

One of the GTR's many standout attributes is its appearance. There's nothing 'Nancy Boy' or subtle here – it's full-on aggression and race-car purposefulness.

“We didn't want a nice, elegant shape – we wanted an original shape,” explained Shiro Nakamura, Nissan's Senior Vice President of Design. “Some people who buy this car will also have a Ferrari or a Porsche. This car must be different from all others. I see it as a car influenced not by feminine beauty like Italian cars, but by masculine imagery – it is strong, well toned, well muscled. Japanese Muscle.”



It certainly is – wide, ground hugging, flat-sided and high-waisted. It’s also aerodynamic – 0.27Cd.

At the rear, the four round taillights are styling cues from the Skyline and are a Nissan performance car heritage. The large rear wing and underbody diffuser highlight the Nissan GTR's high-speed aerodynamics, while the beautifully crafted exhausts add to the muscle look.

The theme continues at the front with massive cool air intakes, a low splitter and sharp, angular lights.

Nissan GTR On the Road

Your Car Showroom correspondent spent considerable time with Nissan’s Chief Vehicle Engineer Kazutoshi Mizuno some years ago when he was running the company’s Le Mans race team and came to Phillip Island for testing. Since then, Mizuno-san has climbed the ranks within Nissan’s engineering department and is now universally called “Mr GTR” for his passion and determination to build the world’s best high performance coupe.

Then and now, he was joined at Phillip Island by race driver Toshio Suzuki who is the chief Nissan GTR test driver and the man at the wheel when the Nissan GTR lapped Germany’s Nurburgring circuit in 7 minutes 26.70 seconds – the road car lap record.



It seemed strange that they were apologizing for Victoria's wintry weather which on the day of our test turned the Phillip Island circuit into a skating rink. One of Mizuno-sans passions is chassis development – maximizing the tyre contact patch – and really, the conditions actually served a good purpose in illustrating the incredible competence of the Nissan GTR.

A two-wheel-drive supercar would have looked silly scrambling to find traction in the conditions, but the GTR was fast...very, very fast.

You can adjust the traction control ('R' is for circuit work) but even in its maximum setting, the Nissan GTR drives like a high performance supercar. On the drenched Phillip Island circuit, turn-in was remarkable (we even 'backed' it in a couple of times with trailing throttle oversteer – just like a race car).

At the limit, there is some all-wheel-drive understeer mid-turn - which quickly translates to controllable oversteer and more rapid acceleration as the technology overcomes the lack of grip.



We just loved the purposeful ‘clunk’ as we shifted gears manually and even the mean engine growl when idling in first gear lets you (and the world) know this is a serious sports car. Acceleration is neck straining to say the least, accompanied by a roar from the exhausts.

Despite the atrocious conditions, this was one of the most exhilarating drives we can recall.

For the mundane workweek, simply switch the Nissan GTR transmission to full auto and it happily becomes a commuter car with no fuss...but abundant performance is available just by pressing the accelerator.

Nissan GTR Challenges

It seems trite when considering its genuine supercar performance, but reverse parking a Nissan GTR - with its high-waisted rear end and small rear windows - can be problematic

Nissan GTR Verdict

To borrow a line from Channel Nine Rugby League football commentator Phil Gould...”this is beyond ‘Wow’ it’s like ‘Double Wow’ and ‘Triple Wow’!” Much like

the Subaru WRX Sti Spec R Impreza and the upcoming Lexus LFA, if there are any dinosaurs out there who think the Japanese manufacturers can't compete in the supercar league – the GTR's brilliance shoots those antiquated ideas down in flames

Nissan GTR Competition

Priced at \$158,800 and \$162,800, the GTR makes for difficult comparisons. The Porsche 911, Mercedes-Benz SL and BMW 650 all start North of \$200,000.



Maybe you would think about the Lexus IS F – it's not as fast or race car-like, but it's stickered at \$129,900.

The conclusion is probably that Nissan has created a unique car with the GTR.