

944 TURBO TRACK CAR

A track day 944 Turbo? Well, yes, it's a no brainer, particularly from a bang-for-buck point of view. There's no shortage of cheap 944 Turbos out there. Pick one up for, say, £5k, rip the interior out, stick in a cage, bolt on a spare set of wheels with sticky tyres and off you go. Sure it will be a bit scruffy, but what the hell, you'll be having a lot of fun for not a lot of money, and in a Porsche, too.

Well, that's one way to do it, and a compelling one, too. But there is another way, and that's to do it properly. Build a track day 944 Turbo that looks like it's emerged from the factory circa 1990-something, using the Porsche parts bin and inspiration from racing transaxle cars that frankly don't get the kudos that they deserve. We're thinking Le Mans 924 Turbos, IMSA 944s, 924 Carrera GTs and GTRs and, to fast forward, the 968 Turbo S. The amalgamation of

the above could quite easily be described as a 944 Turbo GTS.

Enter, then, Jim Wilkinson, a man with vision and a plan to build the ultimate 944 Turbo track day and potential race machine. Now it should be said that, along with the plan and the vision, Jim does also have the all-important wherewithal. By that we mean the skills and facilities to carry out this sort of job. Jim, you see, runs a highly regarded bodyshop, P3 (Prestige, Paint, Perfection), and he's a pretty handy engineer too. That's all useful stuff when time and fabrication equal big bills. It's why Jim could be slightly indulgent in this project and use a Porsche that would otherwise not be the obvious choice from a cost/potential return point of view. But then what project is ever worth what goes into it. They are all an indulgence of sorts and, without folk like Jim, life would be very dull indeed.

Jim is no stranger to Porsches. He's had

a few 911s and he's currently also working on a narrow body 911, with 3.2 Carrera running gear. He's also got a soft spot for the 944 Turbo. Like all good projects, this one started small and escalated. "Well, you know how it once you get going," says Jim. Er, yes, all too well Jim.

So where to begin? Well, with a 944 Turbo. In Jim's case it was a 1986 car with 200,000-miles on the clock. Predictably the sills were shot, as were the bottoms of the front wings, but apart from that it was just fine, which was all that was required. Jim replaced the inner and outer sills and the bottoms of the front wings, and then proceeded to strip the shell of all its underseal and sound deadening. An immaculate shell was – as far as Jim was concerned – a crucial starting point for the project, and a means to getting the 944 down to a sensible weight. A standard 944 Turbo weighs in at 1350kg, which given its size, is not exactly lightweight (although it

