

944 TURBO TRACK CAR



IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT PORSCHEs

Jim has been running P3 Prestige Paint Perfection from his Riverside, Charlton base for 12 years. Aston Martin trained; he then worked at Porsche bodyshop RS Autos for 12 years before setting up on his own. It's not all about Porsches then, although he is currently working on a narrow body impact bumper 911, which at some point in its life was butchered into a 964 lookalike, but has now been converted back to its narrow status and into which Jim is putting 3.2 Carrera running gear. Well there's no point in getting too precious about a car that's had so many identities. However, knowing the standard of Jim's work, it will be well worth a look when it's finished.

Non-Porsche? Well, Aston Martin work has followed him throughout his career and he also specialises in Lamborghinis, with a Countach LP5000 currently in for restoration. Oh, and there is the small matter of his own Diablo! Anything else? Yes, he's currently in the throes of restoring a 1991 Lola F3000 car, and not just any old Lola. This one was raced throughout '91 by Damon Hill. Jim found it in a neglected state and when it's finished he intends to race it in the BOSS Formula series. Sticking a Cosworth DFV in the back of that will make building track day 944 Turbos look pretty tame.



Jim runs his own, highly acclaimed bodyshop and paint shop. Can you tell? As you can see, then, this a nut and bolt build, using new and fully refurbished parts

modified 911s of the GT variety.

Jim modestly attributes a good deal of this to the 944's suspension set up by Center Gravity, and in particular CG's head man, Chris Franklin, who Jim describes as an "absolute genius." Chris spent 10 hours plus on the 944 on CG's chassis rig getting the geometry and corner weights just so and achieved a fabled 50/50 balance, thanks to the 944's rather lighter front end over the standard car. Interestingly, David Barker at Augment Automotive told us that Jim's track 944 Turbo was by far the best handling 944 he's ever driven, and he's

driven a few, and without wishing to sound like a show off, so have I, and so as a keen 944 peddler, I was equally keen to see how Jim's car hangs together from an all round driving point of view.

First, though, I had to contort myself though the rather narrow gap between the roll cage cross bar and door opening, and drop myself into the seat. Jim is a bit shorter than me and age is catching up with my lanky limbs! Strapped in, and with one hand on the dished Momo steering wheel, and the other slotting the gearlever into first, we set off around the familiar

Longcross (also known to many as Chobham) test track.

A slow lap first to get a feel for things and then a gradual increase in speed. With solid engine and gearbox mounts and uprated bushes all round it's no surprise that Jim's 944 buzzes and tingles in all the right places, but actually not as much as you might expect. The carefully assembled engine is very smooth despite being devoid of the soothing influence of balance shafts. Typically the turbo introduces its own sound suppressing influence too. Lag is minimal, response near instantaneous as the hybrid

