

SIMPLY AWESOME

Pics: John Douch

Those awesome statistics certainly narrow the choice of possible cars down to just a handful of models – in this case it's a Porsche 911, 996 GT2 Club Sport, owned by a very lucky Laurence Kalnin.

This particular Porsche model is the fastest road-registered Porsche available and is one of only five Club Sports and seven Touring versions in Australia.

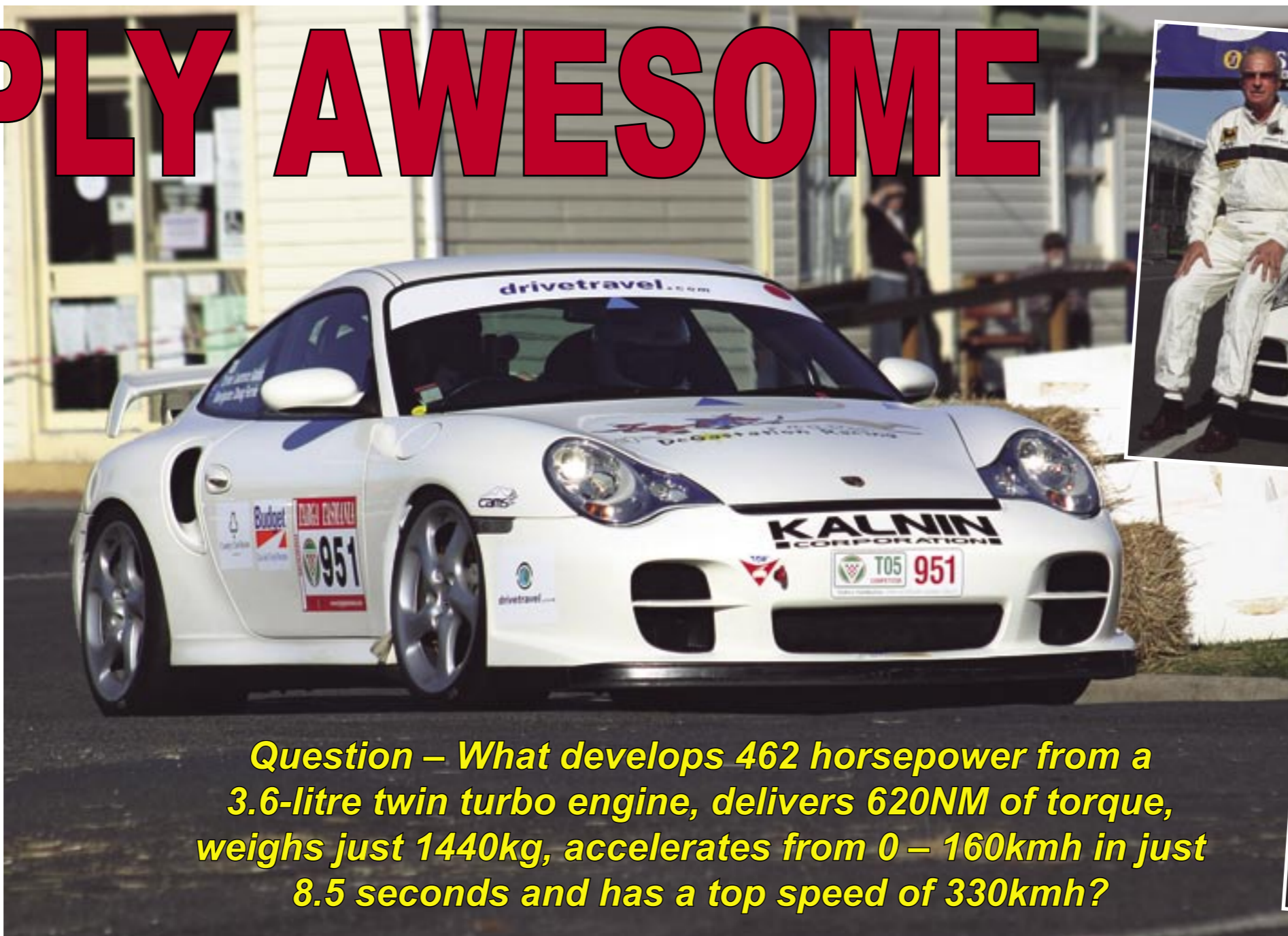
Built in the Porsche Competition factory in Germany with special lightweight construction, Kalnin's car is not just one of those cars which is only seen cruising the latte strips in Double Bay, Toorak Road or Goucher Street – it spends much of its life being driven as the makers intended, in full-on competition.

In the past three years its competition record reads something like this; Targa New Zealand in 2002 where it won a Targa trophy, Targa Tasmania in both 2004 and 2005 where it won its class outright and secured Targa trophies, and the Grand Prix Rally in 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005, winning multiple individual and team trophies.

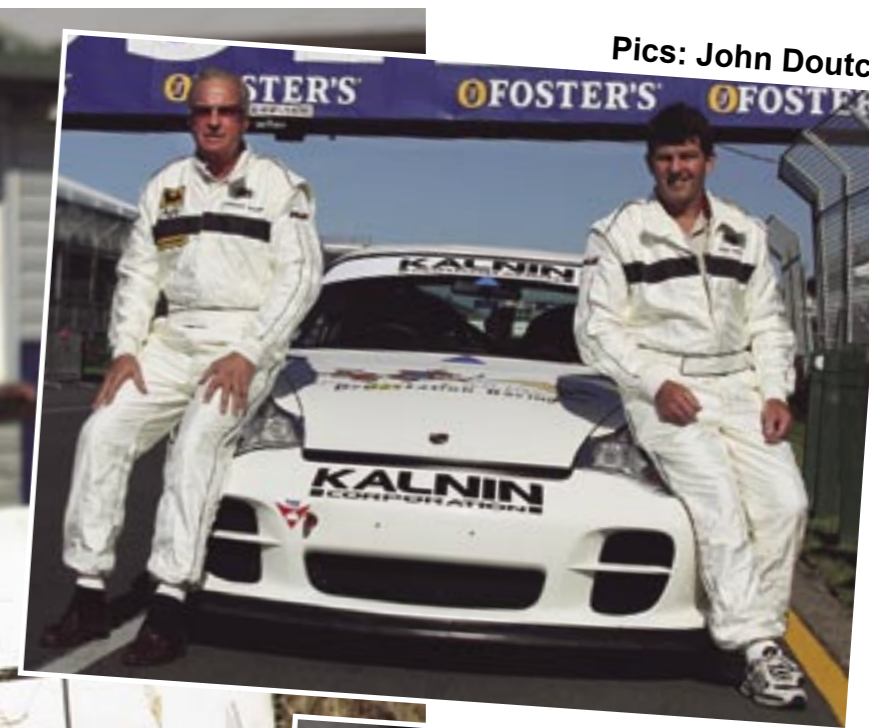
Not only that, but it sees regular outings at track days at Eastern Creek, Oran Park and Wakefield Park. After all, if you had a car like that you'd want to use it as much as possible, too.

But facts and figures are one thing, actual road impressions are another. RallySport Magazine didn't get to drive the car due to a clash of dates but is quite happy for Kalnin to describe its performance instead.

A measure of its speed was demonstrated in the 2004 Grand Prix Rally at the Sale Airport which was used for one of the high-



Question – What develops 462 horsepower from a 3.6-litre twin turbo engine, delivers 620NM of torque, weighs just 1440kg, accelerates from 0 – 160kmh in just 8.5 seconds and has a top speed of 330kmh?



● The Porsche engine is nearly impossible to photograph, and even harder to work on.



● True Porsche country. Kalnin and Fernie on their way to success in last year's Targa Tasmania.



● It's pretty standard on the inside, but push down the throttle and the GT2 explodes off the mark!



● Laurence Kalnin and Doug Fernie: ready for another crack at the Grand Prix Rally in their Porsche GT2.



● Underneath, the Porsche looks well used - just like any competition car should. Check out those fat tyres!

speed tests. Laurence Kalnin takes up the story:

"I carried good speed into the 90 degree left hand entry at the start of the strip, using second gear and arcing over to the right hand side of the strip.

"As soon as I got full power down I brought the car back to the centre of the strip and worked up through the gears, red-lining in fifth gear at around 245kmh and continuing flat in sixth. My last look at the digital speedo was as it showed 245kmh with the car continuing to accelerate.

"I reached the start of the flying eighth still flat in sixth with the car doing 300kmh and just a hint of floating right to left, not moving off line but there was enough movement to trigger my fears if the floating increased.

"Half way through the measured section I lost my nerve, braked and continued through the finish gate to end my run. Notwithstanding my loss of nerves, I won the event from approximately 100 other entries. This car is a technological wonder."

There are few production motorcars that can deliver that sort of performance and still be driven on the road. In the whole history of Porsche this car must be one of their most potent performers ever. No wonder it gives Laurence Kalnin and his co-driver Doug Fernie many exciting and exhilarating moments. Were motorcars ever meant to be this good? Porsche obviously think so.

HOW GOOD?

The Porsche 911 GT2 was the ultimate Porsche model when released in 2002. It was 10% more powerful and 7% lighter than the Porsche 911 on which it was based.

The biggest weight savings over the 911 Turbo came from making the Porsche 911 GT2 rear wheel drive (the 911 is all-wheel drive). Other weight-saving measures included fitting sport seats in front and deleting the rear seats.

TECH SPEC

Engine Type: Twin Turbo 6-cylinder
Horsepower: 462 bhp @ 5700rpm
Torque: 456lb-ft@3500rpm
Top Speed: 196mph
Acceleration 0-60: 4.0s
Brakes: ceramic composite
Suspension: Four wheel independent
Transmission: 6-speed Manual
Wheel Base: 2360 mm
Weight: 1440 kg

Beaumont's GP Rally

Confirming once again his dominance in this type of event, Jeff Beaumont, partnered by Ross Runnalls, took victory in this year's Grand Prix Rally.

Driving his familiar Mitsubishi Evo 6, the pair were just too quick for the rest of the pack, leading home Warren Gainsmith/Jenny Cole (Nissan GTR) and Laurence Kalnin/Doug Fernie (Porsche 996 GT2) in second and third spots respectively.

Another Skyline GTR, that of Jeff and Nerida Beable, was fourth, and Peter Ord/Geoff Floyd fifth.



● Jeff Beaumont and Ross Runnalls (Lancer Evo) in action at the Ballarat airfield. (Pics: John Douch)



● Laurence Kalnin's featured Porsche GT2 was a fine third overall.



● Warren Gainsmith gets it all sideways on his way to second place.

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