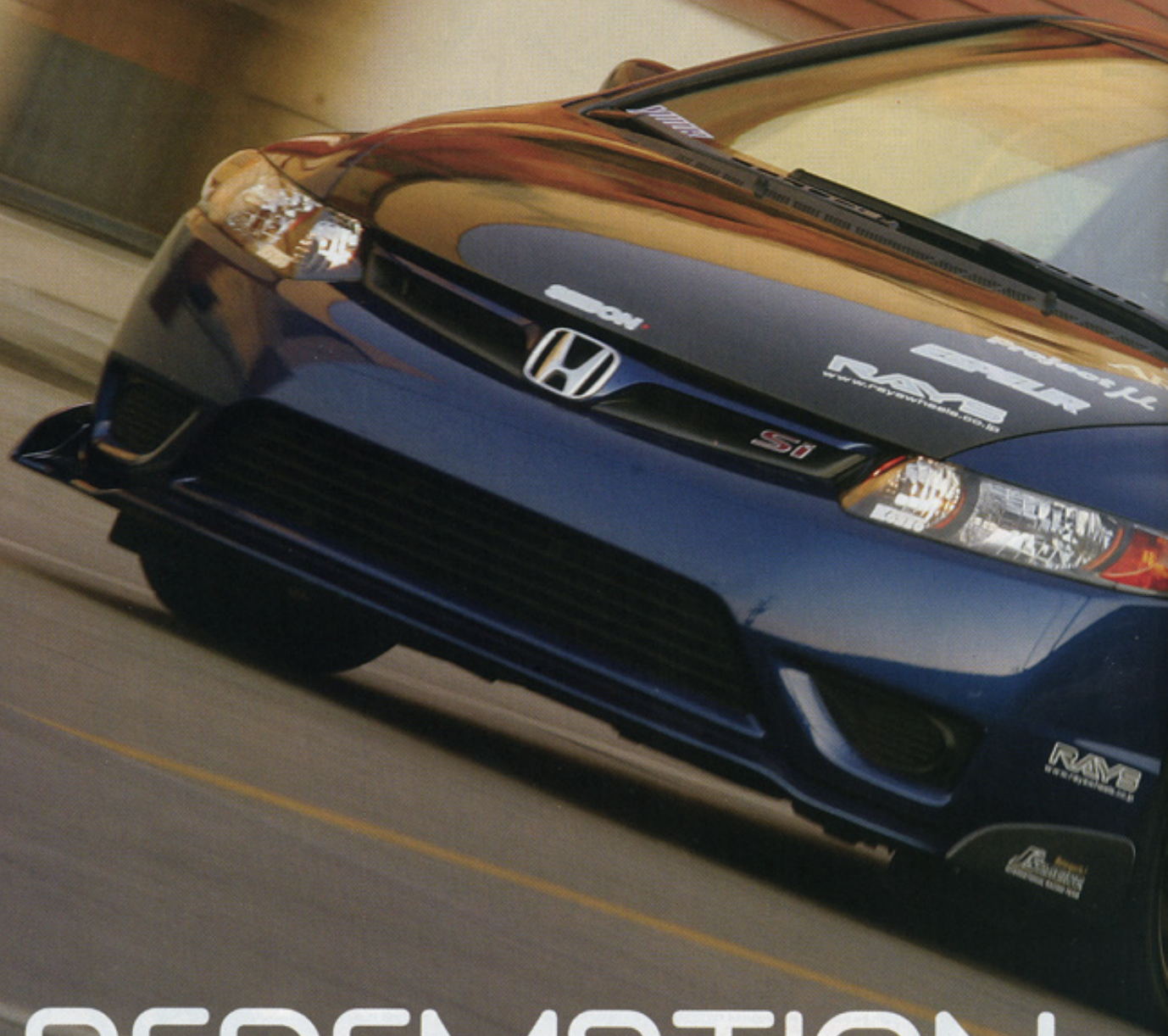


IMPORT TUNER MAGAZINE : REDEMPTION SONG




REDEMPTION SONG

MACKIN'S TAKE ON THE NEWEST SI

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PHOTOS BY HENRY Z. DEKUYPER

The import scene owes a lot to the Honda Civic. Sure, Supras and Skylines sell magazines and whet the fancy of the ever-important 18-30 year-old male demographic, but the Civic is the bread and butter of the scene. Affordable, fun, lightweight and economical, it might seem an unlikely candidate to start a worldwide tuning craze. But that's exactly what the Civic did—give birth to the sport-compact scene.

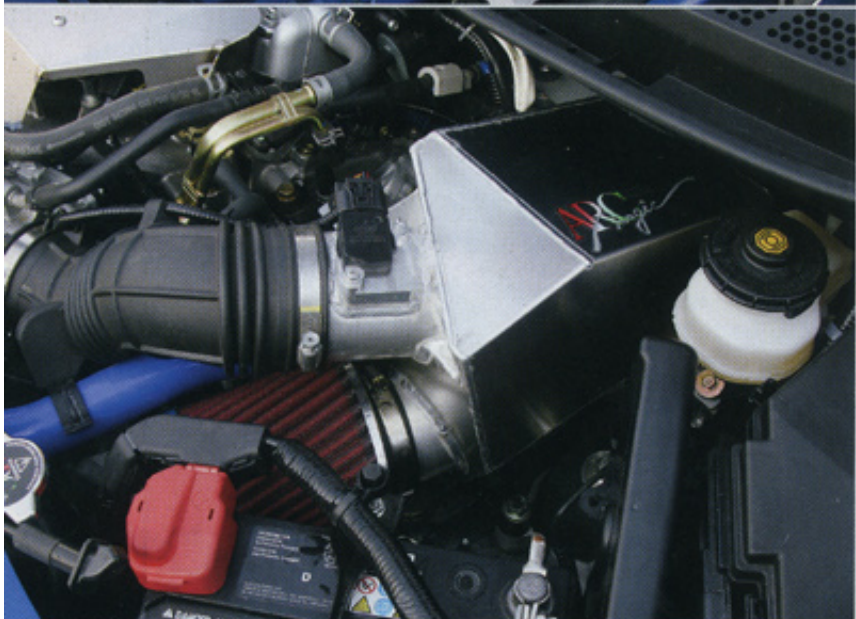
A dark blue first-generation Honda Civic Si is parked on a paved street. The car is covered in various racing stickers, including 'ARC', 'MOTOR OIL', 'BUDGET', 'SEVEN', and 'HONDA'. It has gold-colored wheels and a black side mirror. The background shows a light-colored stone building with windows.

The first Civic hit our shores in late 1972 to go toe-to-toe with the Toyota Corolla and the other small Japanese cars that were starting to trickle over to our side of the Pacific. Equipped with a massive 1169cc engine, painted steel wheels, an AM radio and spartan interior trim and amenities, the first-generation was a far cry from the current plush incarnations.

Throughout its 30-plus-year production, the Civic has undergone continual development—getting bigger and more luxurious, while receiving more powerful and efficient engines. With 197-hp, a 6-speed transaxle with a limited-slip differential, and amenities like navigation, the latest Si has come a long way since the first Civic arrived stateside. That's not to say the older Civics were gutless pigs.

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Honda didn't build the Civic to be a performance car, but it's easy to imagine they did. With a power-to-weight ratio better than most of the cars in its class and engines that made more power per liter than some performance cars, the Civic accelerated, braked, turned and drove better than many cars out there. Enthusiasts saw unadulterated, raw potential in the little Honda.

That potential, combined with the sheer number of Civics produced and the continual improvements in Honda engine technology, catapulted the Civic to divine status it enjoys today. Engines from different Civics can easily be swapped into those that came with smaller or weaker ones. And because so many Civics have been made with so many engines and options, even the poorest tuner can improve the performance of their ride with junkyard Honda parts for next to nothing.

The most prolific Civic engine swap platform has to be the fourth, fifth and sixth generation Civics, which people install DOHC VTEC engines into, like the B16. These swaps can often be made smog-legal if you get the right parts—a bonus for the law-abiding.

The early part of the 2000's was dark times for Civic enthusiasts. It seemed Honda was turning its back on the tuner



scene, making a bigger, heavier and less nimble car; focusing on making it better for the average commuter—not enthusiasts. The 2001-2005 Civics marked the high point of enthusiast dissatisfaction with the Civic, especially the funky EP3.

Thankfully, Honda saw the error of its ways and went back to its old formula for the 2006 Civic Si. With a 2-liter engine derived from the now-defunct Acura RSX Type-S and well-tuned performance suspension (something the last Si lacked), Honda has redeemed itself and its flagship Civic.

To help get the bad taste from the mouths of many loyal Honda fans after the 2001-2005 Civic debacle, Honda decided to donate Mackin Industries a new Si to prove it's all it's cracked up to be. In short, Mackin Industries got this blue 2006 Si to do with as they pleased.

Technically, the new Si was loaned to Mackin Industries for the 2006 SEMA show in Las Vegas. But, Mackin, a JDM importer in Santa Fe Springs, Calif., plans on using it for more than just shows. "Our main plan is to build the car to compete in Time Attack events and local track days (road racing)...like the Industry Track day (www.industryday.org) we host a few times per year. If budget allows, or if time permits, we would like to revamp the car to Honda Challenge specs and possibly race in that series." In fact, according to Mackin, by the time you read

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this, the Si will be fully gutted and sporting a rollcage.

Because the car will be shown and raced, it needed some dress up and power mods—which Mackin handled with style. For more than a decade now, the B-series engines have been the choice of Civic owners looking for a bump in power. The small-block Chevrolet engine of the tuner world, the B-series has had virtually all its secrets revealed. Not to say that 500-whp from a B18 on pump gas is weak... there's just bigger and arguably better options out there now—namely the K-series engines.

To give the Civic's K20 engine a little more oomph, Mackin handed it over to Skunk2 Racing for them to extract a little more N/A power. Skunk is legendary in the Honda world and has extensive experience tuning and building the K-series engines, making them the ideal people to get the job done.

The K20 responds wonderfully to freeing up its intake and exhaust tracts, so that's exactly what Skunk did for Mackin's Civic. The K's bottom-end was left untouched, while the cylinder head received Skunk's full attention. After tearing down the head, they performed a port and polish, then bolted on a set of Skunk2 Pro Series Stage 1 camshafts and Pro Series cam gears. A set of stock valves ride under Skunk2 valvesprings and retainers.

With the massaged cylinder head installed, the engine dress-up

began. An ARC titanium intake manifold and spark plug covers were bolted on, and the whole thing was topped off with an ARC billet aluminum oil cap.

The exhaust side of the K20 was freed up with a DC Sports header and a 60mm stainless-steel Espelir JGT500R exhaust, while the intake side breathes a little easier thanks to an ARC Super Induction Box and a port-match at the intake manifold to



cylinder head junction. The fuel and ignition system remain OE, other than an ECU re-flash and installation of Denso Iridium sparkplugs. Like we said, the new K20 responds well to simple breathing mods, and the K in Mackin's '06 Si is no exception. With just the above mods and a Hondadata re-flash, the car put down an impressive 209-wheel hp and 131-wheel torque. Given that, it's easy to see the potential of the K20.

One of the biggest beefs we had with the last Si was the less-than-spectacular suspension. Honda did an awesome job of fixing that problem and gave Mackin an excellent platform to improve upon. Mackin went straight to work and bolted up J's Racing coilovers on the front and an Espelir rear ASD spring/shock combo



out back. While the suspension mods are limited, it's really all the car needs at this point.

Big brake kits are a favorite of both the show and road race scenes, so it's no surprise that a Project Mu big brake kit sits up front. The Mu kit uses 355mm rotors, 4-piston calipers, Project Mu B-Force pads and stainless-steel braided lines.

Being it's a showcar, Mackin Industries spent just as much time on the exterior of the car as the engine. Sporting a set of 19x8 Volk Racing TE37 wheels wrapped in 223/35/19 Yokohama Parada Spec 2 rubber, the Si has looks to match its grip.

The body mods are an aftermarket/manufacturer collaboration; with J's Racing supplying the carbon front splitter and Honda Factory Performance bringing the side skirts and rear lip. A J's Racing GT wing and sticker scheme by Euphoric Designs rounds out the body mods.

Stepping inside the Si, the driver and a passenger are held into Sparco Milano 2 seats by Sparco 3-inch competition harnesses, while they keep an eye on the engine via the Autometer Nexus instrumentation. A Project Mu shift knob and pedals top off the interior mods nicely.

Honda may have made a few missteps with the previous generation Civic, but as this Si shows us, they've fixed those problems. As you can see from Mackin Industries' Civic, with very few changes, you can have an Si that is worlds above what you can reasonably expect from a "commuter" car.

THE BODY MODS ARE AN AFTERMARKET/MANUFACTURER COLLABORATION; WITH J'S RACING SUPPLYING THE CARBON FRONT SPLITTER AND HONDA FACTORY PERFORMANCE BRINGING THE SIDE SKIRTS AND REAR LIP.





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HEAD TO THE MESSAGE BOARDS AT WWW.IMPORTTUNER.COM TO CHAT ABOUT THIS FEATURE VEHICLE

NAME: MACKIN INDUSTRIES
AGE: OLD
HOMETOWN: SANTA FE SPRINGS, CA
OCCUPATION: DISTRIBUTOR
HOBBIES: CARS
BUILD TIME: NOT LONG AT ALL
FEEDBACK: Productinfo@mackinindustries.com

QUOTE: "We built this car to kick ass and take names"