

KEEPIN' IT REAL

MODIFIED MAG'S RESIDENT DRIVING
EXPERT **MIKE SPECK** CATCHES THE
DRIFT BEHIND THE WHEEL OF THE
REALTIME S2000.

Story **Mike Speck** Photos **Mike Maez**

SO, LET ME set the scene for you. I arrive at Bill Mitchell Airport in Milwaukee at around 3:30am after a delay of more than four hours and meet up with Mike Maez, *Modified* photo extraordinaire, for the one-hour drive up to Road America. The plan is to meet up at 8am that morning with RealTime Racing team manager Nathan Bonneau for an evaluation of their new Honda S2000 drift car that they are campaigning in Formula D. A 450 hp race car and only three

hours of sleep is a really bad combination to be sure. But it wouldn't be the first time for me, and to be honest, knowing RealTime's reputation for building top flight and very proper World Challenge Touring Car entries for the likes of multi-time champions Pierre Kleinubing and team principal Peter Cunningham, the lack of sleep was pretty much nullified by the anticipation. I'll let you know right up front, the car did not in any way shape or form disappoint, and the pics in this feature should make it pretty



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REALTIME'S 2004 HONDA S2000



obvious that I had a really great time with this rolling evaluation.

We ended up at the track a bit late, and as Mike and I were getting an understanding of the track areas we could use, Bonneau came cruising up in a stock 2004 light silverish blue S2000. It hummed right along with that characteristic Honda valvetrain sound, but it was quickly and violently drowned out by the staccato bark and snarl of another vehicle making its way toward us.

The approaching cacophony finally became visible and indeed it was RealTime's first and very wicked attempt at a drift car – it is a Vortech supercharger and liquid to air intercooler equipped 450 hp Honda S2000 bearing the ever so recognizable white and electric orange RealTime paint scheme. The car wore a brand new set of 17-inch Bridgestone RE-01R ultra high performance tires and sported a carbon fiber rear wing from one of the team's World Challenge RS-Xs. The carbon fiber hood is deeply louvered for cooling, and the exhaust that typically would exit

below the rear bumper is routed out just behind the driver's seat. The car also has a substantially lower and meatier stance. Overall, the car looks and sounds really pissed off.

I went out to get familiar with the lay of the land as it were, in the stock S2000, and after a few laps and a couple of slides we got prepared for the drift car.

Bonneau told me later that the idea behind the car was simply to have some fun and see what comes of it. Even though the car was received at the team's immaculate Saukville, Wisconsin shop well before the first drift event in which it was entered (Formula D, Round 3), preparation was limited to taking the car down to a bare frame, removing the sound deadening material and adding some structural rigidity enhancing welds. Other than that, the car was left to sit on its rotisserie while the crew focused on the task of their 2006 World Challenge effort.

Then, three weeks prior to the first event at Chicago's Soldier Field, the team built the car and had it ready with time to spare. Even from



THE CAR TRANSITIONED
VERY SMOOTHLY AND
EASILY FROM **ONE**
FULL-LOCK SLIDE TO
ANOTHER THANKS
IN LARGE PART TO
THE APPARENTLY
WELL-SORTED **MORTON**
DAMPENED REAR
SUSPENSION.



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REALTIME'S 2004 HONDA S2000

THE S2K WAS SURPRISINGLY
EASY TO GET SIDEWAYS,
AND BELIEVE ME, I DROVE IT
AS SIDEWAYS AS I COULD.



the steering wheel to the point where I needed it, and there was never a hint of cavitation to the steering rack mechanism. The steering was so easy to use, that I found myself scrolling through the data acquisition system to make sure I wasn't overheating the car while at full lock.

The gearbox is basically stock with a stronger feeling shifter and an aggressive race clutch. Launching the car properly requires a very conscious blend of clutch and throttle. Not enough throttle and the car will stall easily, while just a bit too much throttle will evaporate the rear tires in smoke. The AP pedals and competition footbox are all business and give the machine yet more of a serious race car feel. The throttle was changed, through much effort, from the stock fly by wire

system to a throttle linkage, and it was one part of the car that I had a bit of a hard time getting used to. Getting small changes in the throttle application was a bit difficult, but I'm sure that with more time in the car it would become easier to get those small inputs sorted out. As it was, there was so much power available that small changes simply weren't that necessary.

In a nutshell, I thought the car was a fantastic example of what can be done with some real know-how and a decent budget. It was easy to drive, and frankly I thought it was so well sorted out that it made me look a lot better than I actually am. Although Bonneau said many times that the car was built for the fun of building and driving it, the fact of the matter is, you don't become a nine-time World Challenge championship team by just doing it all for fun. From the attention to

detail, the workmanship, and the utter capabilities of this phenomenal Honda S2000, I would say there is more than just a hint of competitiveness and seriousness about the task of winning in the hearts and actions of the drivers and crew of this exceptional team.

Pierre Kleinubing, who has piloted a RealTime World Challenge race car for nine seasons, and who has won no less than three championships during that time, has been the driver selected to drift the team's S2000 in the Formula D series. Having raced against Pierre in the past I can tell you without reservation that he is an immensely capable race driver with really exceptional car control. Despite a somewhat lackluster debut in the car, it simply is a matter of time before he adapts to the drifting 'scene' and we all will end up seeing the orange and white Red Line Oil, Bridgestone shod, RealTime Honda S2000 at the sharp end of the drifting field.



SPECIFICATIONS REALTIME RACING 2004 HONDA S2K

ENGINE

Honda F22C1 2.2L in-line four

ENGINE MODIFICATIONS

Mahle pistons, Carillo rods, C&S Performance machinework, RTR reworked head, 3.5" SS exhaust; Vortech supercharger, pop-off valve; Eibach valve springs, Skunk2 cams, throttle body; Bosch fuel pumps, spark plugs; RC Engineering fuel injectors, C&R radiator, intercooler; Comptech header, Red Line oil

ENGINE MANAGEMENT

EFI Technology

DRIVETRAIN MODIFICATIONS

Short throw shifter, race clutch