

Tyre and suspension changes key to improved cornering speeds



ROAD VERSUS MODIFIED

The difference between a road car and a modified track car may not be immediately obvious – until you drive them both. And that, says Edd Straw, is RSRNurburg's USP

Ever wondered how different the kind of off-the-shelf production car you drive every day to work or on the school run differs from a real track car? You may be surprised at just how far apart two similar-looking cars can be. That's exactly the premise behind RSRNurburg's 'Standard vs. Modified' track-day packages – albeit using cars that are at the 'hot' end of the day-to-day-use scale to start with.

Nurburgring-based RSRNurburg, which can trace its roots back to 1995, specialises in track days. Run by experienced racer and test driver Ron Simons, the racing school has operated since 2002.

It's at another legendary circuit, Spa-Francorchamps, that individual customers

or corporate groups have the chance to compare a production car with an upgraded version. For those wanting something a little less racy, there's also the chance to do the back-to-back test on public roads.

The premise is simple: six laps behind the wheel of the standard car, then six in the modified machine. Those taking the road option get up to three hours behind the wheel, but at a rather more sedate pace.

The improvement simply from a better set of tyres and high-specification suspension will come as a surprise to those without track or high-performance driving experience. With so much road-car focus on straightline speed and acceleration, it's actually in the corners where laptime can really be found

in a way that the driver can enjoy.

"When you look at an exhaust, you don't hear it," says Simons. "When you look at a spring or a shock, you can't get excited about it no matter how nice and shiny it looks – you have to test them to understand them.

"All these things that you can buy mean nothing until you can test them. And what's even better is if you test them back to back with the standard car. That's the whole idea behind this."

Taking the BMW M3 as an example, the switch to the modified version improves laptimes by several seconds, with suspension, wheels and cut-slick tyres among the upgrades – as well as an Akrapovic exhaust that helps the engine breathe a little easier, increases

WIN!
Turn over for your
chance to win a
Spa track day



RSRNurburg is based at
Spa and the Nurburgring



Back-to-back comparison
highlights benefit of mods

“All the things you can buy mean nothing until you test them against the standard car”

power and improves the noise.

“The suspension is KW Clubsport, so it’s usable on the roads but also very effective on track regardless of the conditions,” says Simons. “It’s not totally focused on what you would have for full slicks, but is something of an intermediate setting. But it’s worlds apart from the comfortable stock shock on the road car. It brings a lot of stability and a lot more traction.”

As well as a Recaro race seat, customers also benefit from the Race Navigator system, which allows them to compare their performance in the road car with the modified one.

“It’s not an ultimate data-logging system, but it’s very approachable and easy to use,” says Simons. “The most important things are the

entry, apex and exit speeds to show you what you gain from the tyre and from the suspension.”

The M3 is just one of the cars RSRNurburg offers. The range starts with the Renault Megane RS265, which is a far more impressive piece of kit than those used to seeing a regular Megane on the road may first think.

“We wanted to do an entry-level car because people without the experience should not drive our Porsche,” says Simons. “The aim is to test the difference between an original car and an after-market product and, actually, the Megane is the best for that. It’s an award-winning car.

“The chassis is so good that it deserves to run on the upgraded suspension and tyres and run more track-focused components. It flies compared to the standard car – you have so much more control, so much more feel. And with 260-270bhp to start with, it’s very quick.”

The next step is the BMW M235i, which Simons describes as “a real driver’s car”. It’s the first rear-wheel-drive machine in the range and, if anything, there’s a bigger gain to be had in the step from standard to modified because the regular car is built more for comfort than for speed.

The next step is the V8-powered M3,

although RSRNurburg is shortly to take delivery of the new M4, which is powered by a 3-litre, twin-turbo, straight-six engine.

“Then we go to the Porsche GT3 991,” says Simons. “These are more track-focused already, but there’s still a difference with the tyres and the suspension. The 991 is a very quick car and you must have absolute track knowledge because the speeds are serious. Exiting Pouhon and at Blanchimont you are travelling at 125mph. It’s a car that you need experience for.”

The track-comparison programme (six laps in the standard car and six in the modified car) includes all fuel and entry fees, as well as an instructor. Prices start at €995 for the Megane, rising to €1495 for the M235i, €1695 for the BMW M3 E92 and €1995 for the Porsche. All cars are also available for standard track rental, both at Spa and the Nurburgring.

There’s also the chance to take a hot-lap ‘taxi’ ride once you’ve tried the standard and modified cars to get a feel for just how quick it’s possible to go. 🏁

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