

## Tuner Talk: Rise of the Turbos

When I was a kid learning to drive, I found a lot of cars for sale with turbo--just about every lot had one. A car with a turbo scared any non-wrench-turning driver with a shallow pocket, and even a lot of mechanics avoided them and recommended car buyers did the same.

The first car I drove with turbo was a 1991 Eagle Talon Tsi AWD! And I fell in love with both the turbo and the all-wheel-drive platform.

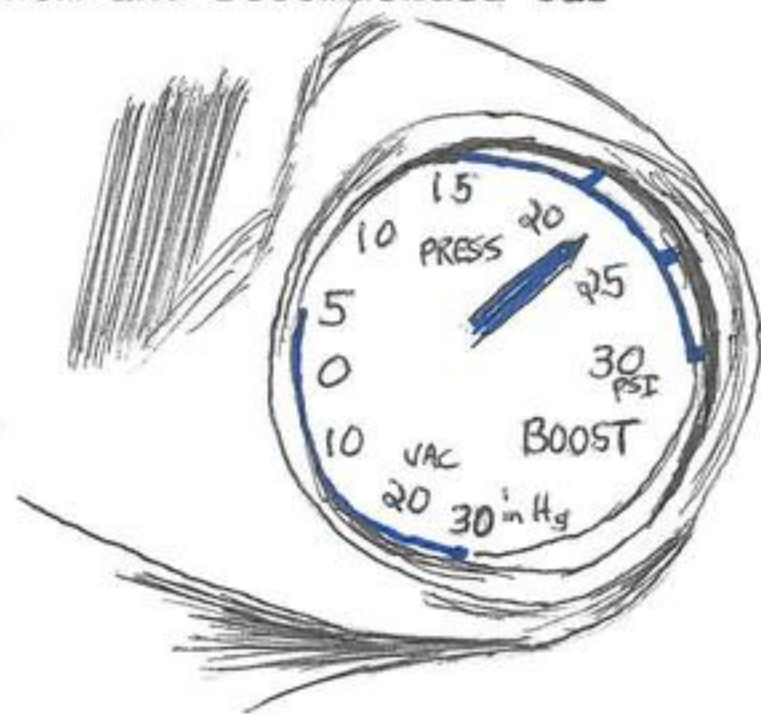
Even a lot of car dealers in the '90s were completely ignorant when it came to turbos--they'd just make stuff up on the spot. I remember one telling my stepfather that I shouldn't buy a used car with turbo because if the turbo blows--the engine goes with it. And that if I wanted a turbo car, new was the only way to go.

He just wanted to get the commission from a new car as as apposed to the used one I was looking at. We went to a different car lot because of it and that was when I learned at an early age that a car salesman is just that, a salesman. He's not a mechanic, and in some cases he/or she is not even a big fan of cars--just paychecks.

At 19 I was easily changing the turbo on my Saab 9000T; a regular repair with my driving. I'd get 25,000 or so miles on a turbo and throw a new one on just as easily as changing a starter--I'd even cut my own gaskets. I never upgraded it to a larger unit, just the stock. Which wasn't really a good turbo to be racing. The car ended up with almost 300,000 miles on it delivering pizza in Clemson S.C.--which really was a lot of deliveries considering that they were mostly campus runs, really close to the store.

After the Saab 9000T, came a Mitsubishi 3000GT VR4, with the 3-liter 6G72 twin-turbocharged V-6, with the full-time AWD, Four-wheel steering, active aero and electronically controlled dampers, an extremely rare car. I know in '99 they only made 287 of them! Mine was a '92, I'm not sure of the production number was that year, but I know it wasn't many because I've never seen another one like it--they're more rare than a Porche, or Ferrari.

The whole turbo scene has changed; because now the turbos are better made. Which shouldn't be at all surprising with all the years of development that's went into them, on and of track. So now everyone talks of turbos, something I've grown up with, and now the new cars are sporting more and more of them. I love it.



Now instead of sucking gas--like my '96 Eagle Talon Tsi AWD, that after modifications got only 9-miles per gallon!-- they actually save gas.

Look at Ford's EcoBoost and GM's 1.4-liter Ecotec, they both sport small turbos. And Honda is showing a new turbocharged replacement for their K-series that may even make its way into to the CR-Z ( 2012 said to possibly come with a 1.6-liter with turbo. ).

Buy a turbo car, throw a better air-increasing intake, higher flowing exhaust--including a racing cat.--, the factory computer will autotune itself usually enough on its own with those minor modifications, but a re-tune wouldn't hurt to squirt in a little more gas to match the air increase. Get some EBC brake pads and go to energysuspension.com to buy a set of red or black polyurethane mounts to stiffen up everything, along with a set of strut-bars, antisway bars for the front and rear if your car doesn't already have them (if it has turbo, it most likely has a factory set.). After these basics your car will be a monster compared to its factory counterparts.

Most turbo cars can even handle a small turbo upgrade with no going into the block or head! You still cut down on the life of the motor, but this would be expected: if you're doing such upgrades, you're obviously driving it in a way that you want the extra horses.

No NOS!

Spray the outside of your intercooler with it to get like a 10-20% increase of power for your turbo; but do not spray it in your motor--that's the quickest way to burn up your piston rings. An intercooler sprayer doesn't hurt the motor, it just gives your colder air, thus more power. I'm surprised you don't see more of them on cars.

Safety? Go to cuscousainc.com and if you're really worried go to summitracing.com to see their Safecraft LT series fire protection systems used by NASCAR, NHRA, and SCCA.

Which brings me to scca.com the best place to go to for all your racing info. I used to race SCCA rallycross and I loved it.

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For good BOVs and BPVs to get that whole Fast and Furious sound, go to turbosmartusa.com

For a good turbo upgrade go to: godspeedproject.com

Wanta go hardcore? try: maperformance.com/shortblocks or: atrperformance.com

(one of my old sponsors that helped with the Talon.)

