



STREET FIGHTER

Based on a 991 Turbo S, TechArt's GTstreet R has more than 700hp and fully functioning GT3 RS-style aerodynamics. We let it loose on the outskirts of Stuttgart, in the wet...

Story: Simon Jackson Photography: Gus Gregory

Michelin's Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyre is exceptional when it comes to road-going rubber, of that there is little doubt. What it can't do, however, is bend the laws of physics or part water like Moses. Therefore ask it to convert more than 700hp into traction through its sophisticated tread block design on a cold, greasy road and logic dictates that (as any tyre would) it'll tend to get a little bit flaky – even when shod on a car with all-wheel drive. This fact is firmly entrenched in the back of my mind as I steer tuning giant TechArt's new GTstreet R, a modified

991 Turbo S that is both powerful and formidable, through a series of quick, twisty and very, very sodden German back country roads. If the tyres don't break traction and scream for mercy then there's a high chance that I'll probably shriek instead.

What you're looking at here is not your average 991 Turbo S, but then of that you probably guessed as much. It is both more powerful and yet similar in weight to that of a current 991.2 Turbo S, with lashings of carbon fibre utilised to achieve a dry weight of just 1610kg. Its headline power figure of 720hp, the most extreme state of tune available for

the 991 GTstreet R, is supported by an equally startling 680lb ft of torque. That's an additional 140hp and 127lb ft of torque over a standard (and already ludicrously quick) second-generation 991 Turbo S, alone more or less enough horsepower to propel your average family car along well enough. In addition, all those angular wings and protruding vanes are not solely there for show, they've been developed in a full-scale manufacturer-approved wind tunnel. As a result the GTstreet R's active aerodynamics package produces a claimed 321kg of downforce at 186mph. To put that into context, a factory GT3 RS produces 345kg, which in itself is

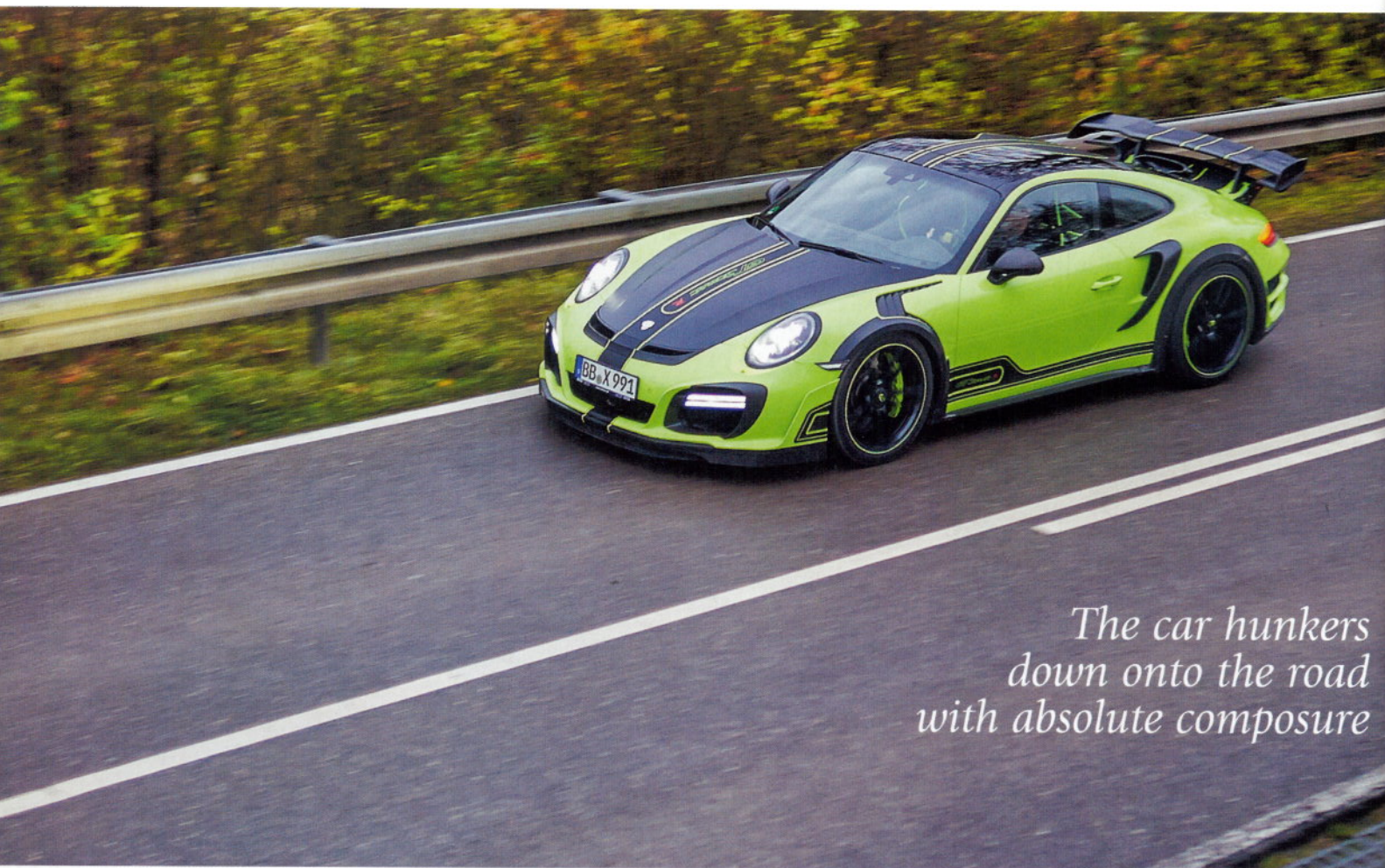


already three times what a GT3 can muster. Taking all this into account, in this state of tune the GTstreet R can reach 62mph in a little under three seconds (2.7sec) a couple of tenths faster than the car upon which it is based. It's not the first modified 911 to emerge from TechArt's HQ in Leonberg, just outside Stuttgart, but it could well be one of, if not the, wildest.

Since debuting its first 996 Turbo and 996 GT2-based 'GTstreet' cars in 2001, TechArt's GTstreet concept has become known for its employment of distinctive styling, increased performance and overall usability. The result, say TechArt is: 'a

highly individualized street-legal race car, suitable for daily use'. In succinct fashion, the German firm's latest GTstreet, this 'R' model, has been designed to offer all the visual and practical benefits of a 991 GT3 RS on a modern 911 Turbo platform. That means customers can choose from various tuning packages for either their 991 Turbo or Turbo S. For the former that's 540hp and 524lb ft torque; for the latter customers can choose between: 579hp and 553lb ft; 640hp and 649lb ft; or 720hp and 680lb ft. It's the most extreme of those options that we have here, and extreme is an apt word for it. From the nose backwards there are

aesthetically striking yet functional modifications everywhere you look. At the very sharp end an active front splitter is used to modulate and coax airflow into the car's cooling systems – the intercooler itself has been angled to the same degree as that found on the GT3 RS for best performance. Working in conjunction with TechArt's version of the car's factory 'noselift' system, the splitter is deployed at a press of the console-mounted button or when its driving mode so decrees, extending and retracting in conjunction with the rear spoiler (more on that shortly). This aids a reduction in lift as the car's

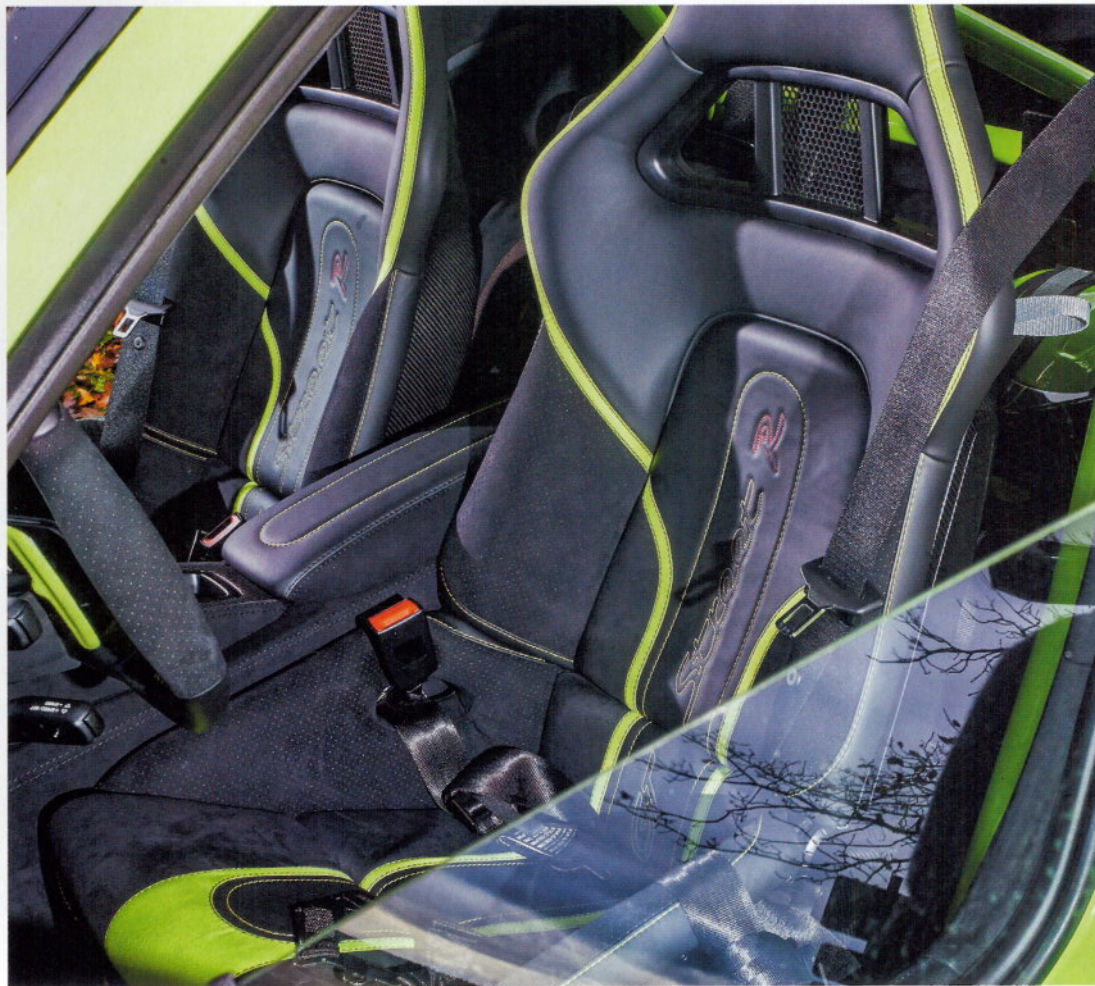


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nose dips and activates a central air outlet. TechArt offers two chassis options on the GTstreet R: a coilover unit called the VarioPlus that works in harmony with the factory PDDC system; or its own take on Porsche's 'noselift' system, as fitted to the car you see here, affording it an additional 60mm of front end ground clearance – and very useful it is, too.

Creating additional downforce, and adding a rather striking design detail, are GT3 RS-style wing vents. On the factory Rennsport 991s these vents not only help cool the car's brakes but they also produce downforce akin to having a couple of heavy blokes sat on each of the front wings. It's a fair assumption that TechArt's versions act in a very similar, if not identical, fashion but the specifics remain a closely guarded secret. Horizontal corner vanes integrated into the front bumper also add an extra element of downforce and aid drag reduction. The lightweight bonnet is made from carbon fibre and bears the TechArt insignia on its underside to prove its credentials. Carbon wheel arch extensions, reminiscent of a vehicle from the 1980s (in a good way, think Mk2 Golf GTI), help accommodate immense 9.5x20-inch (front) and 12x20-inch (rear) TechArt Formula IV Race centre locking wheels (forged), wrapped in the aforementioned 265/35 (front) and 325/30 (rear) Michelin rubber. Larger



(and purportedly lighter) 21-inch versions of the same wheels can be fitted on request. Colour and finish options are boundless on either set of rims.

Visually linking the aerodynamic additions at the front end, including those arch extensions, you'll find carbon fibre side skirts, drawing the eye toward the (equally extended) rear arches and carbon outlined air intakes on the car's hips. All this leads to the real drama: the rear aspect of this car – surely its most spectacular angle. Those rear arches sweep into a carbon fibre rear panel that incorporates the modern 911's three-dimensional light clusters. Below, the rear bumper and diffuser sit not one or two but four centrally-located titanium exhaust pipes. The system itself is switchable, working on a pneumatic valve allowing the modulation of tone in the same vein as a standard 911 would. At its loudest the system is full of bass and presence; at its quietest it's surprisingly subtle and unobtrusive. Cruising on the motorway would not leave one hard of hearing.

And that just leaves us with that carbon rear wing, which is rather difficult to ignore. Like the aero setup at the front end the rear wing too is an active affair, the top most section extends and retracts within a 15-degree window of operation in unison with the movement occurring with the active front splitter. It adds both downforce to

the car's rump and directs air primarily into TechArt's carbon rear intake scoop that, in turn, helps the engine to breathe a fuller supply of air. With its winglets and contoured planes reaching for the sky, subtle is not a word you'd associate with this rear wing but as with every addition on this car it is fully functional, purposeful, and performance-orientated.

Stepping inside this GTstreet R can reveal one of two different interior specifications: Exclusive and Clubsport. The former lavishes leather trim upon the cabin, while the latter takes a more race-led approach, with Alcantara highlights, a colour-matched roll-cage, six-point harnesses, and fabric door straps in place of traditional handles. 'Our' car is finished in Clubsport spec but both options make a point of recovering swathes of the car's original interior in fresh material (dashboard, centre console, headlining and door pillars amongst them). As you'd expect the seats match the rest of the theme, but what you might not predict is the attention to detail elsewhere. TechArt has colour-coded and lacquered some of the trim surrounds and details including inside the air vents, the rotary mode dial, the gear lever surround, and in other places of note, too. Even the instrument faces are finished in the same colourway as the rest of the car. It lends a real quality, factory finish to the GTstreet R's touch





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points. There are several embossed areas, such as the floor mats and the glove compartment frontage which feature the GTstreet logo. Those details are mirrored by a matching carpet set in the nose. There's even a crash helmet and tailored overnight bag stowed in the rear of the cabin. You might argue that some of this, and perhaps the graphics plastered over this car, are a touch too brazen but let's remember for a second that we're talking about a demo car here that is designed to turn heads and raise eyebrows. It does.

Essentially, though, once you've slipped inside those fixed-back bucket seats and grabbed hold of TechArt's new ergonomic Type 7 steering wheel (using the 911's optional GT Sport steering wheel as its basis), it all somehow gradually fades away. What you're left with is a fast, capable (albeit rather conspicuous) 911 underneath you with a ribbon of unblemished winding Tarmac stretching out ahead. Perfect. And it's here, away from all those luxury touches and subliminal marketing messages, where this car is really able to shed the pleasantries and come into its own. TechArt has been building cars for three-decades now (it celebrates its 30th anniversary this year) so it shouldn't surprise us that its cars are well engineered and that they drive accordingly.

We gently get the GTstreet R rolling, straighten it up, and begin to gingerly feed in the power, carefully as it's sopping wet outside and we've more than 700hp underfoot, gradually it comes alive. If the pace of a standard 911 Turbo S, with

its 580hp feels barely legal, then someone should lock up this bright green machine immediately and dispose of the key for it is nothing other than extraordinarily quick. It's not that launching it provides a noticeable improvement over a factory Turbo S, for in the real world detecting the difference between a car hitting 62mph in 2.7 seconds and one doing so in 2.9 seconds without a stopwatch in hand is the stuff of utter fiction. Rather it's the ferocity of the acceleration stage that impresses. The power translates to the road well enough (even in these conditions) and it just keeps on coming like a torrent as the speedometer rises. The car will surge on to 124mph in 8.5 seconds (1.4 seconds quicker than the factory Turbo S book figure), and through to 186mph in 23.3 seconds. Scrolling through the different driving modes on the wheel-mounted rotary switch works in just the same way as it does on your factory Porsche, and at each step up the action gets faster and more frantic. In Sport mode it offers all the fun of the fair; Sport Plus provides more of the same – only it's the kind of fair you wouldn't want to take your children to.

The car hunkers down onto the road with absolute composure as you click up through the seven speed PDK 'box using its paddle shifters. TechArt has developed its own unique software for the PDK gearbox here, so in this car cycling through gears is both faster and slicker. Perhaps it's the aero kit aiding that feel of stability. It's possible, although it reality those aero additions

require much more speed to really function to full effect. Both hardware and software have been modified to good effect on this car, affording the six-cylinder boxer engine an extra lease of life. Precisely what has been done under the skin here TechArt is unlikely to reveal, but it's safe to say that any increases inputted via a laptop have been accompanied by uprated TechArt VTG turbochargers, too. One thing is for sure; there's not really any need for a Turbo S to feel faster than it does straight out-of-the-box and yet this car does. And that, it seems, is a very good thing.

TechArt's powerkits, termed 'Techtronic' are largely led by ECU software upgrades, each new variant receiving a unique engine map developed both on and off the track. Switching from 'Normal' driving modes to 'Sport' and 'Sport Plus' activates the Techtronic technology and alters the car's driving characteristics accordingly. Techtronic takes data from not only the car's boost and manifold pressure but every possible source of monitored data throughout its engine and drivetrain systems. TechArt says this allows it to understand how much power to provide and when, without affecting the vehicle's factory diagnostic and self-defence systems.

Back on the road a hard stab of the brake pedal scrubs off any excess speed accrued to send the nose directly into whichever corner next approaches. Balance the throttle pedal through the turn and there's barely any lateral movement from the suspension. Any bumps in its path are





Left: TechArt developed the GTstreet R's aero kit in the wind tunnel, so it is fully functional, not frivolous...

absorbed without upsetting the car one iota. There doesn't seem to be any tramlining as you so often get with cars on large aftermarket wheels. Pointing straight once more you're free to reapply the power for the next blast ahead. In these conditions it would be foolish to play around too much in this car, especially out of corners on this rubber, but there's enough space and time to appreciate that the GTstreet R is, like its predecessors from TechArt, the real deal and that it would be best explored to its limits on track – a dry one! Without doubt this is a well-engineered 911, not simply an exercise in styling and remapping, and it comes with a price tag that reflects this. A second-generation 991 Turbo S retails new at £145,773 in base trim. To bring the model up to GTstreet R specification you're looking at prices starting at around €85,000. At today's exchange rates that's approximately £72,000 (without VAT) so, all told, a GTstreet R will set you back more than £217,000. That price buys you a 911 in the 640hp state of tune and includes the Powerkit, aerokit, exhaust, wheels, interior package (with steering wheel), several GTstreet R stitching details, and is inclusive of installation. It's a serious price tag for a rather serious car. Whether it's the visual aspects playing tricks or not, there certainly is a feel of GT3 RS about this car, a kind of best of both worlds in terms of the useable power delivery and everyday driveability that its reworked 3.8-litre force-induced motor provides, and the balls-out race track refugee appeal of the RS. That's what TechArt was aiming for with the GTstreet R and that's exactly what it has achieved. In its press materials TechArt states that the GTstreet R's design is distinctive and its performance overwhelming. I'd have to say that I'm in full agreement ○

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