



NEWS FLASH

Datsun 240Zs swept to a one/two victory in the world's toughest and fastest rally, the 4000-mile East African Safari.

Provisional results (released as we go to press) list Kenyan Edgar Herrmann and his co-driver Hans Schuller as winners, with Ugandans Shekhar Mehtar and Mike Doughty second.

The Safari victory is indicative of the intensive development Nissan is pouring into the car to establish it firmly in world-wide competition, and to increase its sophistication as a mass-appeal road car.

Meanwhile, Nissan Australia has just released an updated model here.

It has 14 improvements, mainly to interior fittings and layout, that eliminate some of the car's current failings.

The most important change is to the ventilation system. There are new fresh air dash outlets, and two new, finned ducts in the centre console to direct large volumes of fresh air to both driver and passenger.

The speed of the windscreen wipers has been increased, and the ignition key is now double-edged for easy operation.

The sun visors have been widened, and a pocket (for maps, memos etc) added to the back of them.

Driver and passenger comfort is improved by a new tilt mechanism on the seat squabs that allows better adjustment.

The driving instruments have been improved marginally — the speedometer is now graduated every five mph, and the oil pressure gauge has an increased sweep for easier reading.

Other modifications include a new map lamp, and new steering wheel with drilled spokes.

The price remains at \$4666.

Just about the only thing missing in Datsun's 240Z is real precision — otherwise, it's

JAPANESE GT GENIUS

Mel Nichols took the car touring and filed this report:

GAUGING THE APPEAL of Datsun's 240Z is easy when you see blokes like the one we spotted winding through the backstreets of Sydney's North Shore.

He was out Sunday driving in his freshly-polished 240Z, and we watched with awe as he made an incredible botch of the whole process.

He wasn't aware how badly he was driving — poking the stubby stick up through five slots, oggling the dials and lights and switches and knobs in front of him, twirling that woodrim wheel (well, imitation wood) and peering enraptured down that long, phallic bonnet, he was oblivious to everything else in the world right then. Particularly his wife and kids.

We followed for a while, and it wasn't hard to see his wife was unimpressed and bored. But she wasn't as unhappy as the two kids — about five and seven — crouching in the back where there are no seats, only a carpeted luggage area intended for a bloke and a bird's luggage on a weekend away.

It was a classic case of the wrong car for the job. What the man obviously needed was a four-door sedan, or at very least a comfortable 2+2 (and you'd get a pretty good one for the \$4666 he'd spent on the 240Z).

But such is the appeal of the 240Z, the world's first real

mass-production GT coupe, that all practicality had been forgotten. It was long and lean and reeked of power and 007 and weekends in Monte Carlo — the ultimate piece of one-upmanship in the suburbs — and he just had to have it.

This story won't be true of most people in the queues at the doors of Capitol Motors, the NSW Datsun distributors, and other Nissan agents throughout the country, but it illustrates the impact the 240Z is having, both here and in the US where it's a raging, barn-storming success — easily the biggest-selling sports car on the market.

Does the 240Z deserve its incredible, and rapidly accelerating success? How does it compare with Europe's two-people GTs?

First, Nissan gets a hearty thump on the back, for while the Z has detail faults and lacks the precision of the European GTs, it is remarkably good for a manufacturer's first attempt at a real GT coupe. To get so many things right

Above right: Datsun gets plenty punch from its 2.4-litre engine storm hills like this — but no front end float and wander prevent full use of performance.

Z's interior is a lesson in ultimate usage of available space. No squabs are adjustable for rear occupants don't lay back fully, but look a occupants very well.





Above: Birdcatcher: 240Z is among top pose gear available in Australia at the moment; and as weekend transport for guy and girl it rates extremely well

Below: Long bonnet flips forward to reveal 151 bhp engine — the punchy Datsun 1600 cc mill with two extra pots. Extremely simple layout means good accessibility.

Below right: Slingback styling allows good interior room considering overall dimensions and car's purpose. This shot reveals the long spring travel engineers gave the car to achieve the soft ride.

first time is a considerable achievement.

The 240Z is a brand new car from Nissan, although it does use many bits from the huge Datsun parts store. For example, the engine is merely the smooth 1600 cc single overhead camshaft power unit with two extra pots, the front suspension is borrowed from the Laurel (we don't see it here, but it's much like the 1600 cc sedan), and the five-speed gearbox is from the 2000 sports.

The 151 bhp engine gets its horses at 5600 rpm from bore, stroke, pistons, rods, bearings, valves and valve gear and overall layout identical to the 1600 cc engine.

The block is cast iron with seven main bearings, and there's an aluminium head with a single stage chain cam drive, and two Hitachi SU-type carbies. It all means a respectable 145.7 ft/lb of torque at 4400 rpm to go with those 151 neddies, and smooth, quiet and exceedingly rapid performance.

The car uses McPherson struts all round in the suspension. Lower trailing links and an anti-roll bar completes the front end layout, and at the back the struts are teamed with wide-based A-arms that serve as the lower links — much the same as on the Lotus Elan.

And it all works very well, for the car achieves good, if not inspiring, handling with a ride that sets new standards in two-seater comfort.

The styling, naturally, is the big



grabber. Wherever the car is parked it draws crowds to the windows, stooping, with hands cupped around their eyes to peer inside.

And were they to slide in behind the three-spoked, imitation wood-rim wheel, the big 8000 rpm tach and 160 mph speedo, with the five-speed shifter beneath their left hand, they wouldn't be disappointed because Nissan's designers have done their job well.

The driving position is exceptionally good, the seats are comfortable, accurately positioned and all the instruments and controls (except the gear stick which is too far to the left) are well placed.

Considering the compact 90.7-inch wheelbase and the styling, the interior room is magnificent, and it's worth just sitting in the driver's bucket and peering around the cockpit for five minutes to see how well the designers have used every last fraction of an inch and laid out the equipment.

The tall-backed buckets travel through a distance no-one would have expected from a sporty Japanese car until now, so that all drivers can position the seat at exactly their favorite distance from the wheel, which is perfectly raked for comfortable long arm driving.

The squabs of the buckets are adjustable by a knurled knob through a small range that should be adequate for most people (but they don't lay back — there's no room anyway). One of their nicest features is the integrated headrests — they're among the few that are

really comfortable and usable while driving.

Set deeply into the foam-padded dashboard, the tach and speedo — the two big dials right in front of the driver — are calibrated for snap reading. Then, in a neat row cresting the centre of the dash are the oil pressure/water temperature, fuel/ampere gauges and a clock.

The dash dips at its centre to the transmission tunnel, forming a console that houses the gear lever and a myriad of other gadgetry like a small interior light (there's another in the roof too), variable direction fresh air vent, three-speed fan and elaborate heater controls, push button radio with automatic tuning and a power aerial, cigarette lighter and ashtray and the fuses (they're hidden neatly under a plastic cover that flips out for excellent access).

Just behind the gearstick are two aircraft-type levers for the choke and handthrottle: no they're not just gimmicky — they're the best warm-up controls we've yet encountered.

The wipers (two speed, but "fast" is far too slow), washers and light switch gear is all on a thick, stubby stalk jutting from the left of the steering column.

So the car is set-up internally as a true GT should be — but statements like that relating to its road performance cannot be made so easily, for in handling it feels far more like a sedan than a two-seater, and must be strong-armed accordingly.

Considerable thought has obviously gone into the suspension's qualities, and this is borne out by unanimous agreement among critics that it is outstanding for such a car — or any car.

But in a long test in touring conditions we found the softness detracts from the handling and stability. It limits the car's cruising speeds on Australian roads to little more than 100 mph.

The main problem is instability, front end float, and wander.

Cresting a hill (even a small one) at speed brings nasty nose wobble that can be frightening the first time, and disconcerting even with familiarity.

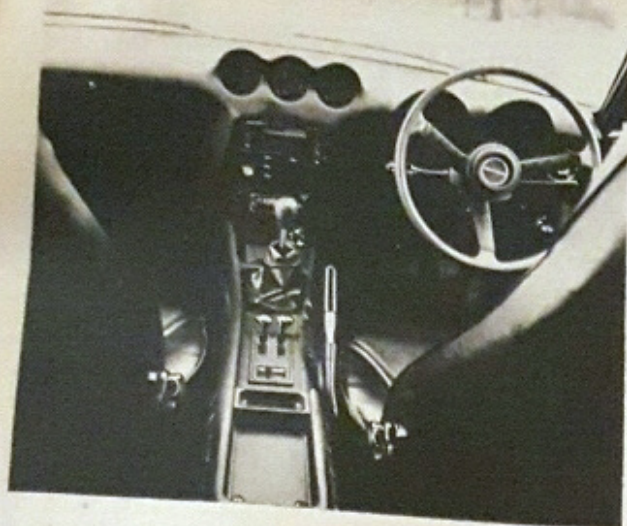
On roads with little more than long sweepers, cruising at more than 95 mph brings problems: the nose twitches and dips annoyingly as the driver backs off and begins to turn the wheel ready to enter the bend.

This trait increases with speed, and is enough to discourage most drivers from trying to stay much above the ton.

On winding roads, where considerably lower speeds but more rpm will be used, this problem does not arise, and it is here that drivers discover the real benefit of the magnificently-designed rear end. Going hard into bends brings gentle initial understeer that changes progressively to oversteer as the power is applied through the bend.

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Interior is fine example of functional layout, with all controls except under-dash aeroflow on/off lever easy to reach. Two canted levers just behind gear stick are hand throttle and choke controls.

well that accidental selection is an utter impossibility, it is hard to settle for less.

True GT enthusiasts will turn up an eyebrow at the Z's brakes — 10.7-inch discs at the front and nine-inch drums at the rear — and claim that it should have four-wheel discs.

But the power-assisted discs/drums, coupled with the tyres' excellent traction, do their job well, resisting fade on mountain descents and pulling the car up in three seconds from 60 mph if correctly applied. The pedal pressure is reasonable, but has a rather dead feel, making fast driving a little harder than it should be.

The Z's best angle: smooth flowing flanks hopping over rear wheel arch, long power-bulge bonnet.

Like the E-type Jaguar, the 240Z's rear door opens up to reveal a carpeted luggage area capable of swallowing quite a healthy load. The luggage space is interrupted at the sides by the upper posts of the long rear suspension struts, but there is still enough flat floor space to take large suitcases. They're held in place by rubber straps anchored at each end of the "boot", and loading the gear is easy through the big door, which thoughtfully has a hydraulic counter balance.

Engine accessibility is brilliant: the long six squats in the snout with plenty of room to spare, so owners will have little trouble fiddling with the car to change the oil cleaner and so on.

There are many other detail points that have obviously received much careful thought, but by the same token some important features normally considered essential to a GT car are missing — light flashers, air horns, heated rear window (it mists up surprisingly quickly and takes aeons to clear).

The ventilation is powerful, and would be more than adequate in a sedan, but it doesn't stop stuffiness in the confined, all-black 240Z cabin.

The headlights are also far below standard for a car like this — in fact, they're atrocious. Twisty roads at night will have the driver peering desperately to see where he's going. On one excellent piece of road, we found the lights kept the car's speed down to about two-thirds of what would otherwise have been a breeze for the suspension and engine.

Discerning buyers, familiar with the excellence of cars like Alfa, BMW, Lancia or Volvo, will be unhappy with the Datsun's trim. It's quality does not match the car's image or market, and our test car had poorly fitting carpets and head trim.

Otherwise, the Z is a credit to Nissan as its first attempt at a GT car. It does lack the precision of the European machinery, and there is no feel of quality or thoroughbred breeding that you find in, say, a Fiat 124 Sport Coupe, an Alfa or BMW.

But the car is still a pace-setter: the beginning of what may be an exciting trend towards mass-produced personalised GT cars — and anyone who cares about motoring should welcome that with open arms. *

TECHNICAL DETAILS OVER PAGE





TECHNICAL DETAILS

MAKE	Datsun
MODEL	240 Z
BODY TYPE	2-door Coupe
PRICE	\$4666
COLOR	Green/Black trim
MILEAGE START	6572
MILEAGE FINISH	7381
WEIGHT	2260 lb
DISTRIBUTION F to R:	52.4/46.6
FUEL CONSUMPTION:	
Overall	(8.7 kpl) 20.8 mpg
Cruising	(10 kpl) 24 mpg
TEST CONDITIONS:	
Weather	hot, humid
Load	2 persons
Surface	hot mix
Fuel	premium
SPEEDOMETER ERROR (mph):	
Indicated	30 40 50 60 70 80 90
Actual	30.8 39.8 48.6 57.3 67.1 78.2 86.5

PERFORMANCE

Piston speed at max bhp	(929.6 m/min) 3042.7 ft/min
Top gear mph at 1000 rpm	(35.4 kph) 22.3
Engine rpm at max speed	5300
Lbs (laden) per gross bhp (power-to-weight)	16

MAXIMUM SPEEDS:

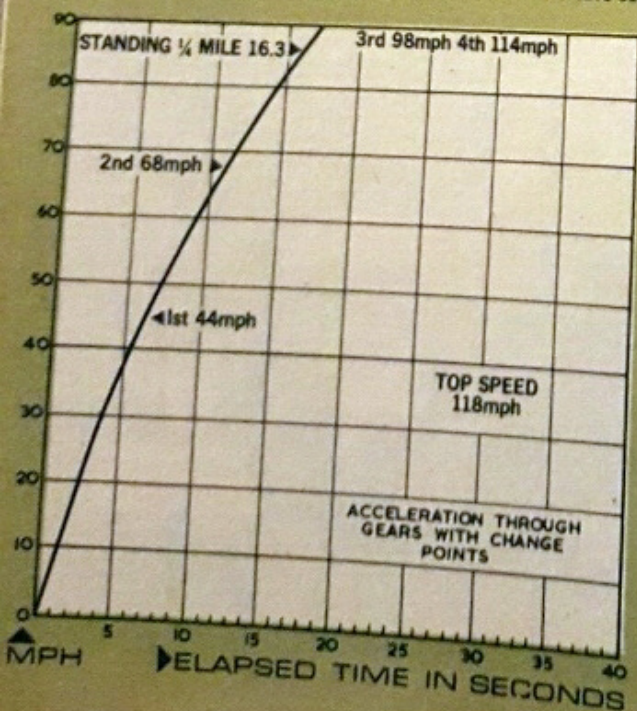
Fastest run	(189 kph) 118 mph
Average of all runs	(189 kph) 118 mph
Speedometer indication, fastest run	(196 kph) 122 mph

IN GEARS:

1st	(70.8 kph)	44 (7000 rpm)
2nd	(109 kph)	68.3 (7000 rpm)
3rd	(156 kph)	98 (7000 rpm)
4th	(183 kph)	114 (6200 rpm)
5th	(189 kph)	118 (5300 rpm)

ACCELERATION (through gears):

0-30 mph	.3.6 sec
0-40 mph	.5.3 sec



0-50 mph	6.9 sec
0-60 mph	9.1 sec
0-70 mph	11.3 sec
0-80 mph	14.4 sec
0-90 mph	17.8 sec
0-100 mph	22.9 sec

	2nd gear	3rd gear	4th gear	5th gear
30-50 mph	2.8	4.8	6.2	9.3
40-60 mph	3.4	4.6	6.1	9.3
50-70 mph	4.4	4.4	6.5	9.4

STANDING QUARTER MILE:

Fastest run	16.3 sec
Average all runs	16.3 sec

BRAKING:

From 30 mph to 0	1.5 sec
From 60 mph to 0	3.0 sec

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE:

Cylinders	6, in line
Bore and stroke	83 mm (3.26 in.) x 73.7 (2.9 in.)
Cubic capacity	2398 cc (146 cu in.)
Compression ratio	9 to 1
Valves	single overhead cam
Carburettor	two Hitachi SU-type side draughts
Fuel pump	mechanical
Oil filter	full flow
Power at rpm	151 bhp at 5600 rpm
Torque at rpm	(215 kg/m) 145.7 lb/ft at 4400 rpm

TRANSMISSION:

Type	5-speed manual, all synchro
Clutch	SDP
Gear lever location	floor

RATIOS:

	Direct	Overall
1st	2.957	11.532
2nd	1.858	7.246
3rd	1.311	5.113
4th	1.000	8.900
5th	0.852	3.323
Final drive	3.90	

CHASSIS AND RUNNING GEAR:

Construction	unitary
Suspension, front	McPherson struts, lower trailing links, anti-roll bar
Suspension, rear	independent, McPherson struts, lower A-arms
Shock absorbers	telescopic
Steering type	rack and pinion, 17.8 to 1
Turns l to l	2.8
Turning circle	(9.5 m) 31.4 ft
Steering wheel diameter	(35.7 cm) 14.8 in.
Brakes, type	disc/drum
Dimensions	discs 10.7 in. (27.2 cm) drums 9 in.

DIMENSIONS:

Wheelbase	90.7 in. (230.4 cm)
Track, front	53.3 in. (135.4 cm)
Track, rear	53 in. (134.6 cm)
Length	13 ft 5 in. (313.4 cm)
Width	5 ft 4.1 in. (162.5 cm)
Height	4 ft 2.6 in. (128.5 cm)
Fuel tank capacity	13.2 gallons (60 litres)

TYRES:

Size	175 HR 14
Pressures	32 psi (2.3 kg/cm ²)

GROUND CLEARANCE:

Registered	Dunlop SP Sport
	6.5 in. (16.5 cm)