

# Japanese Super cars

If you want a seriously fast and exclusive car for not much money, this section is for you! Some of the cars listed below can be bought for as little as £3000 / R40 000 in the UK...

None of these cars listed below were officially sold in South Africa, although there are quite a few of them on South Africa's roads. They were brought in as "grey imports" or as a one-of batch by the South African parent company seeking publicity in the motoring media.

If you mention the name of any of these cars to a petrol-head in South Africa - or anywhere in the world for that matter - you will get a jealous, respectful or fearful reaction, as all of these cars are performance legends!

Most of these cars would also be regarded as "collectors vehicles" which means that a South African citizen can import one to South Africa without the usual requirement of having to have owned the car for a certain period in the country of export.

\*Please read the "notes" section on the last page, which is applicable on all of these cars listed!

**In alphabetical order these cars are:**

# Honda NSX

(1990-2005)



Rumours have it that there are only twelve of these Top Gear-loved super cars in South Africa. Many people still mourn today about the seize of production in 2005. Ayrton Senna, deceased F1 driver for Honda, assisted with the development of the NSX, and the guys from Top Gear keep on raving about the handling and performance of the NSX! "It is the first everyday super car". Even Gordon Murray (creator of the McLaren F1 super-car) owned one for seven years, and he made no secret of the fact that he used the NSX as target for the McLaren F1's ride / handling combination.



The first generation versions were equipped with a 3.0 V6 VTEC (0-100km/h in 5.3 sec) while later models were fitted with a 3.2 V6 (0-100km/h in 4.9 sec). The 3.0 V6 was only available in a coupe, but the 3.2 V6 had the option of a targa-type convertible.

These cars are not cheap however. Because Honda decided not to go ahead with a replacement car, the Honda NSX is very collectable in any country of the world. Prices in the UK start at £10 000 and can go up to £30 000 for a late model 3.2.



Nice Japanese cop car!

# Mazda RX-7 (1992-2002)



Although the RX-7 was launched in 1978, it was only in 1992 when Mazda launched a RX-7 which had super car performance. It was so impressive that it won (among many other titles) the 1993 Playboy Magazine's Car Of The Year award!

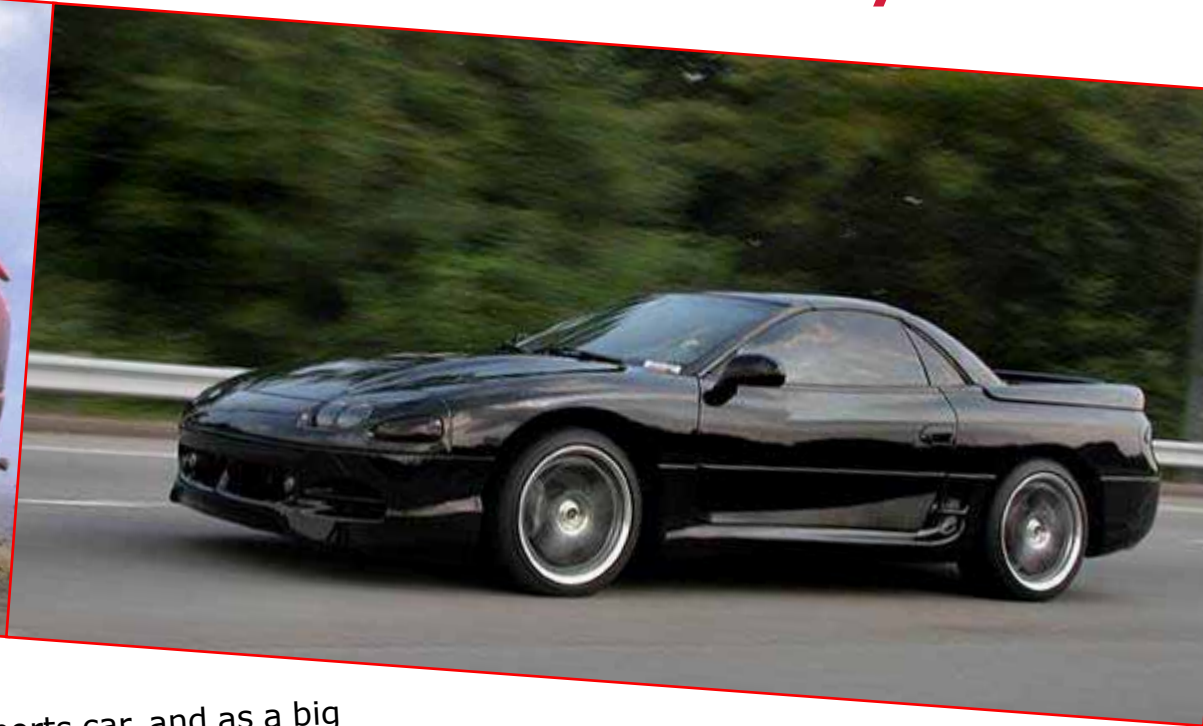
The design was described "very futuristic" when it was launched, and it is still good looking today. Various specification levels were available, ranging from basic track versions to models that had luxuries such as Bose Sound, leather and a sunroof.

Power came from a very unique, 1300cc Twin Turbo Rotary engine that managed to do a bloody quick 0-100km/h sprint in 5.0 – 5.4 seconds, depending on the version and equipment. Most versions had a limited slip diff.

When buying, take note of its 3000mile / 5000km oil changes in the service history. When the car had a hard life worn rotor tips can be an expensive problem. This should be picked up by blue smoke from the exhaust, and any other colour smoke also spell turbo problems.

Prices start at around £3000 and low mileage examples will cost around £6000. Do note that some "Jap spec" RX-7's are badged as an Elfini.

# Mitsubishi 3000GT / GTO



This car is more of a GT (Grand Turismo) than a hard core sports car, and as a big GT it was so impressive that Dodge asked Mitsubishi to manufacture it for then in Japan as the Dodge Stealth to be sold in the USA, where the car was used as a pace car for the Indianapolis 500 race.

Standard equipment levels are high, and so are comfort levels. It was mainly sold as a coupe, but a handful of convertibles were also built. Avoid the under-powered 3.0 V6 non-turbo, and do consider the 3.0V6 Twin-Turbo which is good for 0-100km/h in 5.5sec. An interesting fact about this car is that most of them are four-wheel-drive (4WD) and four-wheel-steer (4WS) which give it brilliant handling.

Prices for a twin-turbo start at £2500 for a GTO (being a grey import) and £5000 for a 3000GT (being UK-supplied). Before you buy this car, do note that they are extremely scarce in South Africa, and unlike e.g. a RX-7 / Supra / 300XZ you'll have more difficulty to find a specialist that has worked on a 3000GT / GTO before.

# Nissan 300ZX

Now this is a seriously credible Nissan. More kind of a super-coupe than a super-car. The good news is that there are quite a few (figure unknown) of them around in South Africa as Nissan SA imported a couple in the early 90's, and then there are also some grey imports around. The 300ZX was regarded as "good value for money", and this can be seen in its sales success.



Prices for high-miler twin turbo's start at £2000 and go up to £5000 for mint-condition examples.

# Toyota Supra

## (1993-2002)

**When Toyota launched the fourth-generation Supra in 1993 it was clear that Toyota wanted to take on the serious high performance market. "Look-at-me!" styling was very eccentric and the performance of the twin-turbo versions mind-blowing for such a big, super-coupe.**

It is worth mentioning that the Supra played a big role in the movie "The Fast and The Furious". The role was given to the orange Supra because of its popularity in the American drag-race scene. The Supra also made a couple of appearances on various video games. It says a lot of the Supra!

Power came from a 3.0V6 twin-turbo (usually referred to as just "turbo") and a non-turbo 3.0 V6. The latter should please be avoided! The Turbo's 0-100km/h sprint took between 4.6sec and 5.6sec, depending on the version and gearbox.

Prices for the pre-1993 Supra Turbo's (worth a look if you are on a tight budget) start at around £1000. The later 1993+ Supra Turbo's start at around £2500 and an original and untampered, low mile-aged versions go for about £6000. Prices can however stretch up to £13 000, but you really do not need to look at this price bracket unless you are looking for a seriously souped-up Supra.



## Notes on the above mentioned vehicles:

-Remember that these cars need specialist maintenance, meaning that it is not the kind of car that can be DIY-maintained. Service history is very important!

-Running costs are not cheap, but being Japanese it should not break the bank.

-Replacement engines are freely available for these cars in South Africa for R5000-R15 000 (excludes the Mitsubishi 3000GT / GTO and Honda NSX) which is very cheap for a high-performance vehicle! These engines can be sourced from "Jap engine importers", and there are plenty of these shops all over South Africa.

-Check for accident damage. You really do not want a car like this with a bent chassis!

-The reason why I did not quote engine power / top speed figures is because most of these cars are grey imports from Japan. This means that they were governed to 280hp and a top speed of 112mph / 180km/h by Japanese law. Needless to say, most of the examples available in the UK (and rest of the world) had their governors removed. This means that top speeds of 280km/h / 175mph and even faster is possible.

-Please do some further research on the vehicle you are interest in to find out the exact performance figures. Also have a look on the internet with the key word such as "XXX car used buyers guide" or "XXX car buying used" to get tips on what to look for on that specific car range you are interested in. The information available on the internet is just too much

for me to process and put it on the web page.

-If the car is turbo charged pay special attention to ANY colour of exhaust smoke. Ask someone to blip the throttle to high engine revs repeatedly (when engine is warm) while you stand behind the car. If you see blue smoke you can be certain that the engine's lifespan is very short.

Even grey or black smoke is not a good sign, but it can be a good bargaining point!