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ENGINE AND SUSPENSION CLINIC

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written by Steve Bijok,

(Co- Author "Training WRX" currently with *MRT Performance* for implementation of "new projects")

Wakefield Park Raceway with MRT Performance and Whiteline Automotive



Monday afternoon this week saw the MRT test team of Brett Middleton, Paul Fisher and Steve Bijok load up the trusty MRT Rally Truck for the two hour drive, South, for an overnight stop at Mittagong in rural NSW, before heading off for Goulburn and Wakefield Park Raceway bright and early the next morning for a day of intensive track testing.

Along with MRT Personnel Jim GuriEFF and Wojtek from Whiteline Automotive were along for the day. Aside from on-going MRT and Whiteline development programmes, a select group of clients from both companies made the trek from Sydney and as far away as Melbourne by invitation for some track time, to benefit from the concentration of engine and suspension technical support. An added bonus was the promise of virtually unlimited laps of the challenging Wakefield Park race circuit.

Weather over week prior to the track day across the Sydney area has been dismal to say the least, with almost non-stop rain and unfortunately the morning of the 23rd at Wakefield Park was to be no different. Needless to say all in attendance were thankful for the large amount of undercover garage space at the racetrack as conditions alternated between heavy and light rain.

After an initial drivers briefing and registration, first out on the track were a pair of heavy hitting highly modified Impreza's, including a 260 Wheel KW 2.2ltr Garrett Turbo and Link ECU MY94 and a freshly completed 4 door STi, a veritable fire breathing 350 Wheel KW 2.5ltr Garrett Turbo and EcuTeK Tuned MY99 STi. In addition to all of the extra fruit under the bonnet, both cars also featured heavily modified brakes, suspension, differentials and Dog gear sets. Given the levels of performance and a soaking wet track 4wd was never going to be enough and the 2.2ltr MY94 took the award for being first off the track and into the infield for some wet weather ploughing of the grass.





Next to hit the track was another super speedy 250 Wheel KW 2.2ltr MY02 STi EcuTeK Impreza and a recently completed 240Wheel KW EcuTeK Tommy Makinen EVO 6.5 Lancer that is entered in the upcoming Dutton's Rally series. Also out at the same time was an extensively modified, but stock engine internals MY02 STi from Melbourne making the long trek to the race track with the aim of fine tuning EcuTeK and suspension setup. This MY02 Impreza works hard for its living competing on a weekly basis and is fitted out with one of the biggest carbon fibre splitters to be seen on the front of a WRX this side of a German DTM car.

Rounding out the above cars was a Tarmac Rally spec EcuTeK MY04 STi, MRT's P-25 STi concept car, a Hard driven 2.0ltr Twin-Scroll Turbo GT Liberty wagon, Whiteline's Turbo Astra and a couple of 2WD Turbo Falcons a lone LS1 engined turbo'd V8 Commodore and last but not least a FWD Renault Clio. Appalling on track conditions meant the Big-banger RWD cars spent most of the day under cover in the pit garages, while the Clio buzzed around the track gamely ploughing through the sheets of running water over the track.

Probably the only ones smiling despite the soggy racetrack were Whiteline and their project Astra, who had on site a university mecha-tronics graduate and were engaged in some heavy research. When not out on the track lapping, the Whiteline test team spent plenty of time hunched over computer screens reviewing data logs and other highly classified information!.



And so the day continued, with MRT and Whiteline staff alternating between cars, datalogging engine and suspension performance, with conversation over lunchbreak dominated by talk of roll-centres, spring rates, exhaust Lambda readings, knock correction, bump and rebound shock settings and turbo boost pressures.

Highlights of the day included a spectacular lose by the MY94 at the end of Wakefield's main straight, going a long way off the track (with Brett as passenger!) and into the kitty litter, requiring a tow truck to pull out the stranded Impreza marooned up to its door sills in gravel. Thankfully no damage was done, the drivers ego notwithstanding. No less spectacular to watch were some hot laps By Brett Middleton in the 350Kw 2.5 STi and MRT's P-25 concept car.

Results of some pretty heavy track work on the P-25 concept car were satisfying for both Whiteline and MRT Performance. In the week leading up to the track test day a large amount of work went into improving bottom end torque and this was immediately evident around the track meaning the car could be driven on its torque and still put in some hot lap times. Granted that a wet track is not the best test of a suspension package, but immediately the P-25 felt at home on the track, and went the whole day with minor shock adjustments only and no spannering of major suspension components.



All too quickly it was time to pack up the truck and battle traffic on the 3 ½ hour journey back to Sydney, content with the amount of track time and data gained, while equally pleased that the day had been a success, passing without any major incidents and only a couple of minor mechanical gremlins.

Roll on the dry weather for next time!

MORE INFORMATION:

- To find out how you can join MRT at a track day, contact us or refer the web site.
http://www.mrtrally.com.au/performance/Training_Clinic.htm



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