

spotlight



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passenger side looks no worse and is certainly more affordable. Despite the fixed position of the seat, the driving position is fine although I could almost have done with moving the seat forward a touch.

SSC's new floor-mounted pedals (another recent development) are well spaced and feel good, although one of the chassis rails on the floor limits the position of my heel in relation to operating the throttle (forcing me to 'lean' my foot over). The relative position of steering wheel to gear lever etc is all good, with most controls relocated to a one-off switch panel on the right of the driver (because, I suspect, you can't reach the dashboard when fully strapped into the harnesses). A Custom Autotech digital dash is positioned behind the steering wheel and can provide all the vital details, as well as offering change-up lights and other race-style gizmos.

The 5-speed Type 9 gearbox has been beefed up with Quaife internals to cope with the power on tap and provide cogs more suited to a trackday onslaught. Being straight cut, most of the gears are extremely noisy in action – with only fourth strangely providing a welcome moment of peace. And the sense that this is a competition car which has only just been driven off the circuit is something that crops up again and again as my drive continues.

The tyres are ultra sticky Avon CR500s which always help to give the steering an added sense of weight and precision. Dial in an Escort Mk2 quick rack (just 2.9 turns to the stops) and the RT feels every inch the surgical tool with which to dissect your favourite track. And with the highly tuned steering there's a tightly controlled suspension package. The coil-overs on this car have been chosen precisely for track use and SSC recommends softer springs on road cars, so it inevitably feels overly firm for back lane blasts (but well tuned for smoother A-roads). Finally, the all-round disc braking set-up benefits from vented and grooved front discs and Willwood 4-pot callipers, but the full race pads simply never get to working temperature on a freezing cold day, with slippery roads in mid-winter.

The result is a car which is too compromised for road use but is just begging for really serious trackday abuse. And despite what might appear to be criticism of this RT, it's not meant to be. All these compromises in terms of road use, have been deliberate in terms of SSC's regular use of the car. On the track this would be an awesome tool. And finally, one