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NISSAN SKYLINE 2000GT-R 1969-1972

1st generation Skyline 2000GT-R

Model	KPGC10
Engine Name	S20
Displacement	1989cc
Maximum Output	160ps/7000rpm
Maximum Torque	18.0kg-m/5600rpm
Overall Length	4330mm
Overall Width	1665mm
Overall Height	1370mm
Wheelbase	2570mm
Vehicle Weight	1100kg



The two-door hardtop, which appeared one year and eight months after the release of the first-generation four-door sedan, is a popular model known by the model name "KPGC10."



This is the early four-door sedan with the vehicle model "PGC10." The front grille and headlamp area are separate, and they were integrated in a subsequent minor change.



The impressive rear view of the four-door sedan, known for its boxy shape, earned it the nickname "Hakosuka."



While the Skyline GT featured a "blue badge," the GT-R's body proudly displayed a "red badge," symbolizing its high performance.





As a wolf in sheep's clothing, continuing its legendary legacy.

As Japan's representative super sports car, the "GT-R" has captivated car enthusiasts worldwide. Its origin dates back to February 1969 with the debut of the first-generation Skyline 2000GT-R. The model designation for the early version is PGC 10, and the later version is KPGC 10. Known initially as "C 10 (Si-Ten) GT-R," it later became popularly referred to as "Hakosuka GT-R."

The birth of the 2000GT-R has a "prehistory," rooted in the existence of the Skyline 2000GT, which was manufactured and sold by Prince Motor Company at that time. Winning races was directly linked to sales performance, and it was under these circumstances that the second-generation Skyline was fitted with the Gloria's 6-cylinder engine to create a race-spec model — an idea conceived by Shinichiro Sakurai, the creator of the Skyline.

Standing in the way of the race-born 2000GT was the Porsche 904. The battle between the two at the second Japan Grand Prix GT-II class held at Suzuka on May 2nd and 3rd, 1964, remains legendary. The Skyline GT, which looked like a

regular production car, managed to overtake the pure race car Porsche 904 and lead for over a lap. This marked the beginning of the legend.

The legend was further elevated when the 2000GT-R, bearing the racing "R," appeared as a derivative of the third-generation Skyline.

What Led to the Birth of the 2000GT-R

The birth of the 2000GT-R was shaped by significant changes in the automotive industry at the time.

In the mid-1960s, as pressures from the United States for market liberalization increased, Japanese automakers needed to bolster their strength to compete with foreign manufacturers. This urgency for industry restructuring led to the merger of Nissan, the second-largest company, and Prince Motor Company, the fourth-largest.

The two companies signed the merger agreement in May 1965, and it was officially established in August of the following year, with the new name being Nissan. Essentially, this was Nissan absorbing Prince. Against this backdrop, the development of the third-generation Skyline, which would eventually lead to the first 2000GT-R, was underway.

In August 1968, the Skyline

underwent a full model change to become the third generation. In October of that year, the GT series was introduced, featuring the L-type engine used in the Cedric, with the suspension shared with the Bluebird and Laurel models. This marked the Skyline's transition into a true Nissan vehicle.

Amidst this flow, the 2000GT-R was unveiled in February of the following year. It was equipped with the S20 engine, which carried on the lineage of Prince, differing from other 6-cylinder engines in terms of heritage.

A high-performance engine with an output of 160ps that continued to serve as a benchmark thereafter.

The S20 engine was a detuned version of the 2L 6-cylinder DOHC engine used in the Prince R380 prototype race car, achieving an impressive output of 160ps at 7000rpm and a maximum torque of 18.0kg-m at 5600rpm. This power figure became a long-standing benchmark for Japanese cars, only to be surpassed with the arrival of the Toyota Soarer 2800GT in February 1981, amid increasing emissions regulations.

The S20 was revolutionary for its time, featuring 24 valves with two



The rear view of the hardtop features square four-lamp tail lights, which are unique to the first-generation GT-R among all models.



The instrument panel area shows that the hardtop has a six-gauge cluster behind the steering wheel. In the sedan version, two gauges were distributed across the center console.

intake and exhaust valves per cylinder — an innovative design not yet seen in race cars. It was equipped with three double-choke Solex N40PHH carburetors, which could be upgraded to achieve around 200ps with race modifications, indicating significant performance potential. The stated output of 160ps was actually conservative, considering public road usage. Additionally, it was designed with full transistor ignition from the outset to comply with racing regulations without requiring replacement.

Robustness was another characteristic of the S20, featuring a crankshaft secured by two vertical and two horizontal bolts to enhance engine block rigidity. The cylinder head and pistons were made from aluminum alloy castings, while the crankshaft was crafted from special alloy forgings, ensuring durability — reportedly, it could rev up to 9000rpm without failure.

Everything was designed to win races, resulting in high performance but with minimal equipment.

The 2000GT-R was not only distinguished by its powerful engine but also by its race-ready specifications. The transmission was

a full-synchronized type, offering two high gearing options for competition, showcasing its racing-oriented design.

The suspension mirrored that of the base 2000GT, featuring front struts and a rear semi-trailing arm, but with a stiffer spring rate — approximately 30% stronger in the front and around 10% in the rear. The braking system remained consistent with the 2000GT, utilizing front disc brakes and rear leading-trailing drum brakes, though it lacked a master brake booster for better control. The tread was widened, with measurements of 1370mm in the front and 1365mm in the rear.

In contrast, the interior was stripped down to the bare essentials. All glass was clear, and there were no rear defrosters, trim, or wheel covers, and even the radio was optional without an antenna. Notably, the rust-resistant coating — valued throughout the Skyline's history — was also optional. Inside, the seats did not recline, and there were no heaters.

This intense focus on racing resulted in an impressive power-to-weight ratio of 7.0 kg/ps, a top speed of 200 km/h, and a quarter-mile acceleration time of 16.1 seconds with five passengers

onboard. The price of 1.5 million yen marked a 600,000 yen increase over the earlier Skyline GT-B, reflecting the significant investment in performance enhancements.

The need for such high performance stemmed partly from regulatory changes.

During the 1966 season, the GT-B Works machine utilized the modified GR7B engine for racing but was forced to switch to a standard model in 1967.



The driver and passenger seats feature fixed-back bucket seats. In the hardtop, the front seats can be tilted forward along with the seat cushion to allow access to the rear seats.



The upper section features the optional AM radio, while the lower section shows the control panel for the air conditioning, which became standard in the hardtop and includes heater functionality.

Developing a model capable of winning under these regulations with minimal modifications was crucial, leading to the creation of a street-legal racing car.

The legendary 49 race wins.

In May 1969, during the JAF Grand Prix Touring Car Race, which marked the race debut of the first generation 2000GT-R, regulations prohibited Works drivers from taking the wheel. Despite this, the car secured pole position and dominated the top three spots in qualifying. In the final, while it allowed the Toyota 1600GT to take the lead, it ultimately won due to the 1600GT's disqualification.

From the next race onwards, the 2000GT-R steadily accumulated victories, and in October of the same year, equipped with Lucas fuel injection similar to its sister car R380, it achieved a remarkable 1-8 finish in the preliminary race of the Japanese Grand Prix.

Continuing to excel in the touring car category, the 2000GT-R faced a new rival: Mazda's rotary engine cars, starting with the Familia Rotary Coupe, followed by the Savanna GT (RX-3).

This represented the challenge of the newcomer rotary cars against the strongest reciprocating engine GTR, marking a brilliant period in Japan's motorsport history.

In October 1971, the 2000GT-R achieved an unprecedented 49 consecutive wins at the Fuji GC Masters 250 km race. Although it lost to the RX-3 in the subsequent Fuji TT 500-mile race, it ultimately amassed a total of 52 victories, reigning as the undisputed champion on the circuit for about three years since its first win.

The hardtop KPGC10 that defined the image of the GT-R

Originally released as a sedan, the 2000GT-R underwent minor changes in October of its debut year, coinciding with a facelift of the entire Skyline series. The three-part grille was replaced with a one-piece grille, the chrome-finished fender mirrors were changed to matte black, and the steering wheel was switched from wood to synthetic rubber.

In October 1970, during its second facelift, a two-door hardtop was added, resulting in the discontinuation of the four-door sedan and the transition to the hardtop-only KPGC10 model. This change included a 70mm reduction in wheelbase, improving cornering performance, while also achieving a 20kg weight reduction without compromising frame rigidity, enhancing its combat capabilities further.

The exterior featured a grille devoid of ornamentation exclusive to the 2000GT-R, and rear FRP overfenders were added to accommodate wider tires. The overall width was increased by 55mm, and an optional rear wing was made available. At this time, an emblem with an "R" placed below the "GT" was introduced, which has since become the iconic symbol of the GT-R.

Designed with racing in mind, the 2000GT-R also showcased its high performance on public roads. Common for high-performance cars, the clutch was heavy, and starting the S20 engine required a light throttle blip before engaging the starter, adding to the driving experience. Moreover, it received acclaim for its overwhelming acceleration, with engine RPM at just 3000 during a 100km/h cruise in fifth gear. At the time, it was noted for its unparalleled acceleration, even better than the Jaguar E-Type.

In September 1972, the Skyline underwent a model change, passing the baton to the second generation (with the second generation GT-R debuting the following January). The total production numbers were 832 units of the early PGC10 sedan and 1197 units of the later KPGC10 hardtop.



The catalog from the time of the release of the four-door sedan prominently features the "Grand Sports" equipped with a high-performance engine, emphasizing the joy of driving. It provides detailed information about the powerful S20 engine and the luxurious interior specifications.



The S20 engine in the first-generation 2000GT-R delivers performance akin to a "racing engine for public roads," reportedly accounting for half of the vehicle's price. Notably, the hood features front hinges and opens from the back to the front.



The stainless steel equal-length exhaust manifold, combining three cylinders into one, features intricate curves.



The triple Solex carburetors feature two throttle valves per unit, totaling six throttle valves, showcasing specifications comparable to racing cars.



The device seen in the upper right corner of the photo is the brake booster, which amplifies braking force and was available as an option.

Rival that sparked rotary development for the GT-R.

The first-generation 2000GT-R was born to win races, facing rivals such as the Toyota 1600GT, Mazda's Familia Rotary Coupe, and later the Savanna GT (RX-3).

The Toyota 1600GT, equipped with a DOHC engine in the third-generation Corona Hardtop, was positioned as a younger sibling to the Toyota 2000GT. It competed in races since the prototype Toyota RTX era, dominating touring car races with its agility, light weight, and high power. In the 1968 Japanese Grand Prix, it defeated the Skyline 2000GTB and led the newly launched Skyline GT-R

in the following year's event, although it was disqualified for track interference.

Similarly, the Mazda Rotary Coupe, like the Skyline 2000GT and Toyota 1600GT, was a "wolf in sheep's clothing" based on a family car. In 1968, it was introduced in the Familia 1000/1200 series with a rotary engine. Leveraging its overseas racing experience and a compact body with a small frontal area, it posed a challenge to the 2000GT-R.

The Savanna GT (RX-3) was the car that stopped the 2000GT-R achieving a run of 50 consecutive victories. During this period, the Japanese touring car

racing scene was characterized by a "Nissan vs. Mazda" rivalry, leading Nissan to consider rotary engine development as well.



The Mazda Savanna GT ignited Nissan's competitive spirit in engine development, having been a formidable rival.