

WIZARDS OF OZZ

AUSTRALIANS
BENNY AND JIMMY
TRAN CONJURED
UP THIS GIANT-
KILLING EG CIVIC
TIME ATTACKER IN
THEIR BACKYARD
WORKSHOP –
CRIKEY, MATE!

Story **David Pratte** Photos **Peter Tarach**

If you've ever visited the land Down Under, where Japanese dream machines like the Nissan Skyline GT-R and Mitsubishi EVO are as commonplace as kangaroos and didgeridoos, you may have noticed that modified Hondas aren't nearly as prevalent as they are here in North America. But Sydney natives Benny and Jimmy Tran have turned their EG Civic hatchback into one of the most recognizable Hondas in the world of time attack, thanks to their surprising blend of American go-fast goodies and an impressive performance at the World Time Attack Challenge at Eastern Creek Raceway, just a stone's throw from their backyard workshop.

The Tran brothers have always been car guys, having owned an impressive array of high-performance iron, including an R34 Skyline GT-R and an EVO VII as well as a more-Australian-than-Crocodile-Dundee Holden Commodore V-8. But they've also owned some FWD pocket rockets like a Suzuki Swift and several Honda Integras, so they had a very solid foundation to build upon. In 2005, they acquired this '92 Civic hatchback and started building it as a show car and occasional track day mule.

According to Benny, "We started by putting in a B18c Type-R engine, which was the start of things to come. That was our first engine swap, learned purely off Internet resources. Once the transplant was completed, we slowly began modding the car, starting with simple bolt-ons to the suspension. That's when I attended a club track day and fell in love with the car even more."

Now officially and completely hooked on the go-fast crack pipe, Benny and the Backyard Performance crew began looking for ways to improve their EG's performance enough so they could stake their claim to the title of Australia's fastest time attack Honda. This led to the inevitable K-series engine swap, which combined with continued development of the suspension, aero and chassis gave them a potent time attack machine that was already putting a scare into the local AWD turbo crowd.

But for the kind of violent forward thrust required to achieve their lofty goal, Benny turned to Oscar Jackson and Oscar Jr. at Kraftwerks USA for one of their Rotrex supercharger K-Race kits. According to Benny, "One of the main reasons we built this car was to have fun. Me and Jimmy discussed a built NA motor for the car initially, but when it comes down to the fun factor – the thrill of going fast – a forced induction motor was much more appealing. We spent some time reading reviews of forced induction options for a FWD time attack car and came to the conclusion that a supercharger would best suit our application. After a few consultation calls to Oscar Jr. at Kraftwerks, the kit was purchased and installed within a three-week period." ¶





Asking the front wheels to put 350 or so ponies to the pavement while also handling turning duties meant the BYP team had to think long and hard about gearing and final drive ratios. "We had to do something to better match the gearing of the K20 6-speed to the supercharged K24/K20, and thanks to Jeff at Special Project Motorsports we were the first Australian car to use a Gear-X close ratio K-series gearset," Benny says. "We then lowered the final drive to 4.3 to achieve the gearing and top speed we required for our local circuit."

With a fully sorted chassis and suspension package that includes Öhlins coilovers, spherical bearings in place of rubber OE bushings, a custom welded-in 6-point rollcage, as well as their own BYP front splitter and rear wing mounts, Benny threw down some seriously quick laps during the World Time Attack Challenge at Eastern Creek in May. In fact, the BYP Civic recorded a 1:41.236 lap, good for tenth quickest in the Open class and second fastest among the FWD competitors, not to mention quicker than a whole flock of GT-Rs, EVOs and STIs. For video evidence of Benny's skills behind the wheel, search YouTube for "BYP Honda Civic 1:41.2 Lap WTAC" and enjoy the HD goodness (youtube.com/watch?v=fcdwOMfCig).

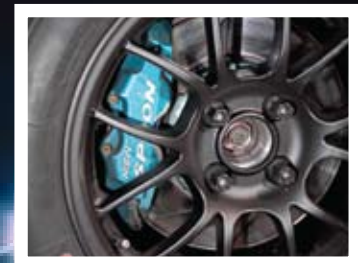
Having now made a name for themselves in Australia and abroad, the BYP crew is enjoying a new level of notoriety within the Honda scene. "We've been able to show our fellow Aussies that a Honda can be a very capable track car. Our build thread on ozhonda.com has over 75,000 views, which is a substantial amount considering the size of the forum," Benny says. "I hope we'll see more Hondas hitting the circuits [in Australia] like we do. It would be awesome to see a fleet of Hondas out here with us and we're definitely keeping those AWD Turbo cars honest in the meantime!"

Given that Benny and Jimmy have recently been hard at work in their backyard making their EG even more powerful, thanks to a K20 Type-R head swap and a set of cams from BluePrint Racing, there's little question the BYP boys from Down Under will continue to pursue their dream of being the fastest time attack Honda in Oz. As to their preference for American go-fast goods, here's what Benny had to say:

"The typical modified Honda here in Australia has been built using JDM parts. Over the last couple of years, cars like mine that use American products have demonstrated the capabilities of aftermarket Honda products from the States that cost a fraction of JDM parts. More and more vendors here are stocking aftermarket U.S. products, which is great for the Honda scene in both the U.S. and Australia. I personally like U.S. products because it's easy to call the manufacturer



Exterior
BYP custom front splitter, canards, rear spoiler brackets & generic wing; Spoon style mirrors, flared, rolled & spaced front fenders; Lexan windows



Specs & Details
'92 HONDA CIVIC SI

Engine 2.4-liter K20/K24 inline-4
Engine Modifications Kraftwerks C38-61 Supercharger Kit; Blueprint Racing Stage 2 cams & upgraded valve-train; K20 oil pump; JDMyard baffled oil pan; Skunk2 74mm throttle body; port-matched RBC intake manifold; 1000cc ID fuel injectors; ASP 4-1 budget big tube header; Liverpool Exhaust 3" exhaust system
Engine Management Hondadata K-Pro, BYP tuned for E85 fuel
Drivetrain Gear-X close ratio 6-speed gearset, ATS LSD, Honda 4.3 FD
Suspension & Chassis Öhlins coilovers, ITR sway bars (f/r), ASR reinforcement brace (r), Function 7 rear LCAs, PCI tailing arm bearing (r), Cusco strut brace (f), Hardrace camber arms (f), camber kit (r) & toe link adjuster (r), Special Projects control arm bronze bushing kit (f), custom 6-point rollcage, seam-welded chassis
Interior Cobra race seat, 6-point Willians harness; BYP custom dash plate, start panel & Braille battery holder; GPX Pro lap timer; TunerView LCD display; TechEdge O2 sensor gauge; Shadow oil pressure & oil temp gauges
Sponsors JDMyard, Kraftwerks USA, Special Projects Motorsports, Liverpool Exhaust, BluePrint Racing, Hybrid Racing, Bel Garage, Advanced Street Performance, MX5 Centre

Wheels, Tires & Brakes

949 Racing 15x9" (f) & 15x8 (r) wheels, Spoon 4-pot calipers (f), Project Mu rotors (f), Ferodo DS2500 brake pads (f), Willwood BBK (r), Yokohama Advan A050 225/50R15 (f) & 205/50R15 (r) tires





directly since we speak the same language, prices are fair, there's great tech support and their products have been proven to work. I've just been very fortunate that U.S. companies like Kraftwerks, Special Projects, Hybrid Racing and BluePrint have all helped me achieve my goals and ambition. Without them, I wouldn't have had gotten this far."

From the humble beginnings of doing a B18c swap in their backyard workshop to running with the big dogs at the World



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Time Attack Challenge, Benny and Jimmy Tran have come a long way over the last five years. With future plans that include a few suspension tweaks, more power (fine-tuning the ECU and perhaps a built motor), a rear diffuser, redesigned canards, extended side skirts and racing slicks, expect to hear more from these backyard wizards as they continue to take the Australian time attack scene by storm. As they say in Oz, "You little ripper!" **m**

