

Precision instrument

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01/06/2018 Mark Webber has put the new GT3 RS to the test on the Nürburgring Grand Prix circuit. You can read his conclusion here.

Not so long ago I was waxing lyrical about my first proper blast in the new GT3 RS. And I seem to remember suggesting a little trip to the track might be in order. I've been a tad busy, as have our GT3s you may have noticed, but the planets aligned and there we were: a closed Nürburgring Grand Prix circuit, unbroken sunshine and a GT3 RS all to myself.

Now this place is pretty special to me, as it's where I won my first F1 Grand Prix back in 2009. It's always good to be back, but it's especially good when you have a device that's going to the surroundings justice.

The GT3 RS has borrowed heavily from our race car programmes, and the fact that the underpinnings are now all rose jointed, and that it's running such massive downforce, is testament to how seriously the

GT division in Weissach have approached this car. No stone has been left unturned in improving traction and handling or reducing weight. This particular car also came equipped with the Weissach pack, which swaps in carbon fibre anti-roll bars and roof, a titanium roll cage and even thinner carpets. That all saves another 18kg, and I'll take that any day of the week.

You all know how proud I was of the GT2 RS last year, and with that Nordschleife lap record now safely under its belt, you'd be forgiven for thinking there was nowhere left to go. But you'd be reckoning without my buddy Andreas Preuninger and his very busy little team.

The GT3 RS lapped the Nordschleife in well under seven minutes

The GT3 RS is a different animal, more closely related to the 911 GT3 R with its normally aspirated flat-six. And that lack of forced induction gives it a genuine edge in places. This machine is 180hp down on the GT2, but it still lapped the Nordschleife in well under seven minutes (911 GT3 RS: Fuel consumption combined 12.8 l/100 km; CO2 emissions 291 g/km). That's pretty astounding however you frame it.

This day, mind you, was not about the stopwatch. It was about exploring the real depths of what may well be the closest thing to a true race car for the road that Porsche has ever built. And it didn't exactly disappoint.

Climbing aboard, the first thing you notice is that full cage in the back. A convincing calling card if ever there was one. Lower yourself into that deep bucket seat, fingers light around the Alcantara wheel, and it's like being back in the office. Proper motor sport DNA is everywhere you look.

Stupendous performance for a road car

Fire it up and that bellow from the back immediately raises the heart rate. There's reduced sound-deadening in here, and even at idle you get the feeling that what's burbling behind the bulkhead is going to do strange things to your senses.

Every GT3 RS comes with PDK, which is the right choice for a car with such a serious focus on track work, so a flick of the carbon fibre paddle and we're off and running. For such an uncompromising creature, the RS is incredibly tractable off the line. Smooth as silk as the revs build and slick and addictive as you pull another gear, and another, and another.

The needle nudges 9,000rpm every time, a stupendous redline for a road car, and the sound in the cabin without a lid to muffle it is nothing short of insane.

Lean on those brakes and the GT3 RS pulls up sharp and hard time and again. This car uses the same NACA ducts as the GT2 RS, which massively improves cooling of those huge front discs. This means

you get the same performance corner after corner, lap after lap. Which gives you incredible confidence to push.

“I feel like I can really lean on this car“

As does the stability and grip at speed. I feel like I can really lean on this car, take it right to its limits – which on a dry day with fresh rubber takes plenty of commitment. The G-forces you can generate with the GT3 RS in the fastest corners of the Nürburgring are like no other road car I've driven here.

Even in the slower stuff, it's so nimble and balanced, and you can be so precise, that you just gel with this car straight away. It's a brutal little weapon, but such a predictable one that you really want to explore its limits. And you can.

Another great job by the GT team, finding that extra power and precision where you'd scarcely believe there was room for more. This has got to be one of the most rewarding and exhilarating road cars I have ever driven. Time to make some space in my garage.

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