

Smokey Nagata's Top Secret

Speed, Innovation, and Infamy



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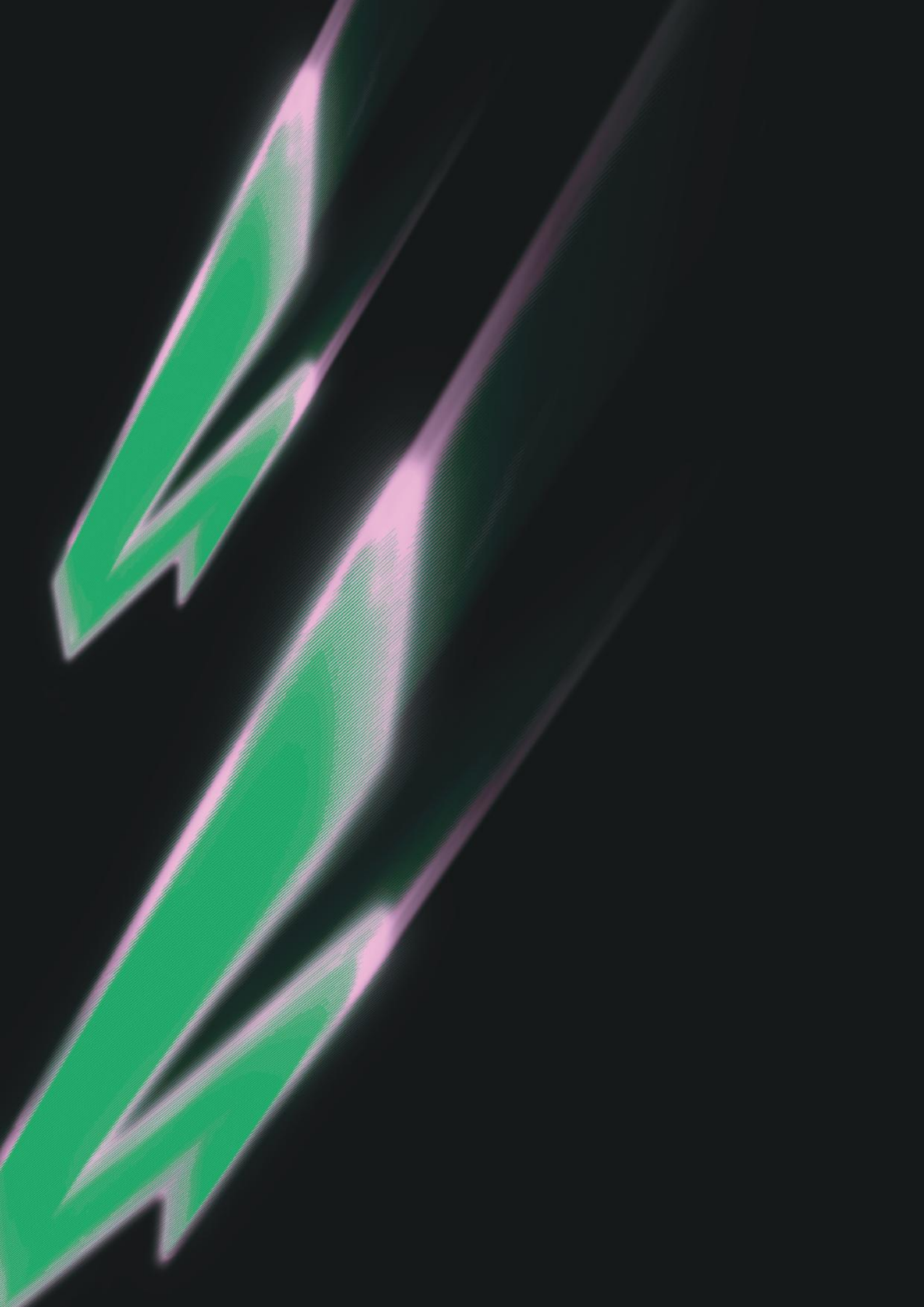


BELLEVUE PLAZA

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The man behind the wheels

Smokey Nagata.



One of the most enigmatic figures in the JDM tuning scene, Kazuhiko "Smokey" Nagata's nickname came from the clouds of tire smoke his cars would leave in their wake when reaching unthinkable speeds, often on public roads. His exploits in both Japan and abroad were well documented by magazines in the '90s and '00s, which propelled him to international stardom.

The tale of a Japanese farmer's son who became an internationally renowned speed demon is an unlikely one, but then again, Nagata's entire career has been anything but ordinary.

Although his days of high-profile (and highly illegal) stunts are seemingly behind him, Nagata is still just as active as ever in the tuning scene, helming his infamous Top Secret outfit from its long-established headquarters in Chiba. He doesn't give many interviews, as he generally prefers to let his cars do the talking. There are many of them over the years, he's worked on a large variety of JDM cars, but there are a few that remain particularly of interest to him.

One of Nagata's most comprehensive interviews comes courtesy of Top Gear, where he explained how he got into cars from an early age. His parents worked on a farm in the northern Japanese prefecture of Hokkaido a far cry from the bustling metropolis of Tokyo where he would eventually make his name. Rural Hokkaido is most famous for its snow-capped mountains and traditional culture, which didn't have much appeal to Nagata as a young man.

*1970 Mitsubishi
Galant GTO*



An interest in cars ran in his family and so, while still too young to legally drive, a 16-year-old Nagata bought himself a Mitsubishi Galant GTO and fixed it with the help of a local Toyota executive. His illegal driving led him to be kicked out of school, although shortly after, he was offered a job at the same Toyota dealership that had helped him fix his car.

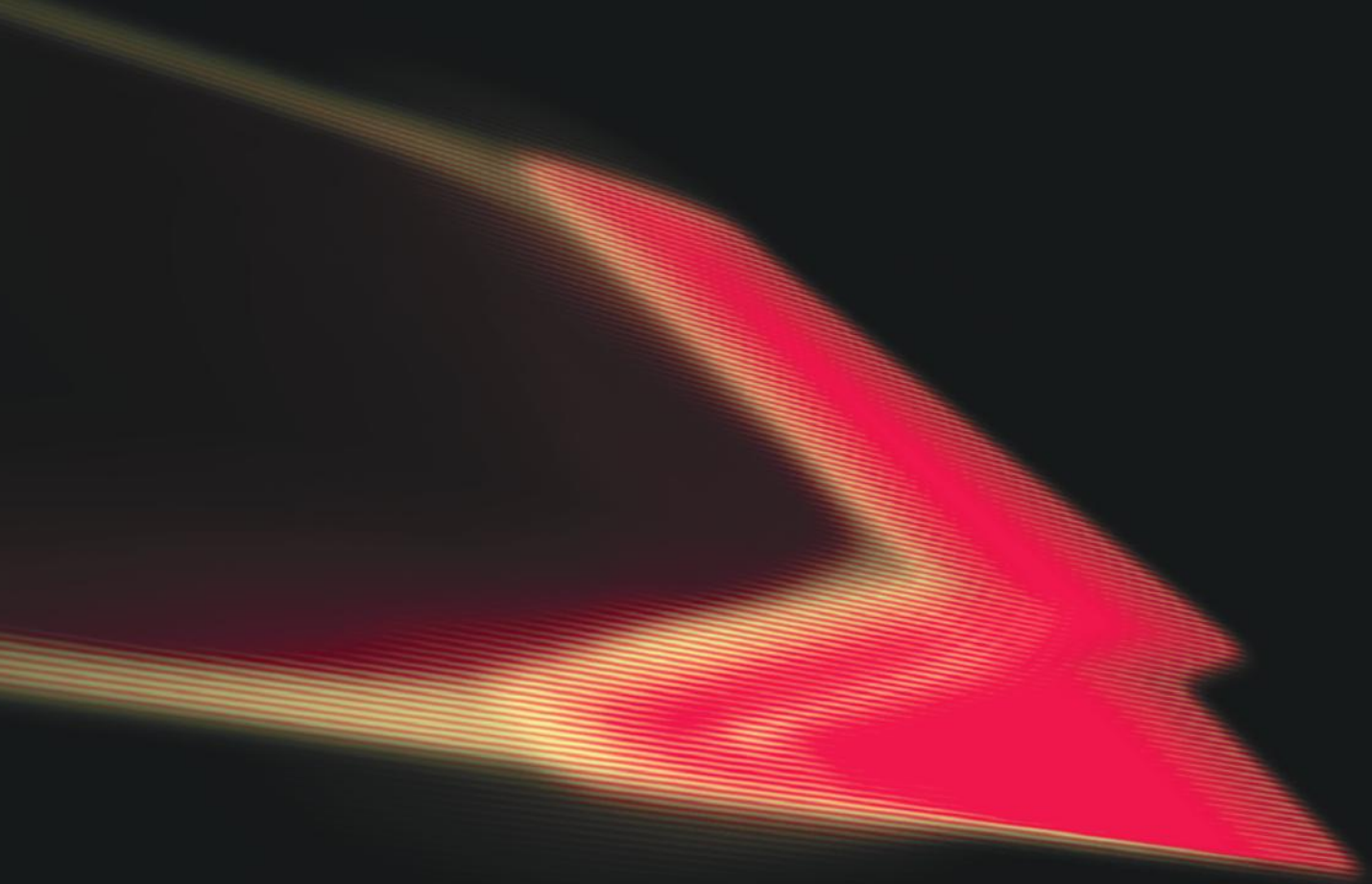
He lasted several years in the job but was caught using working hours to modify his own car and was promptly fired, leaving him with no income and no school qualifications either.

With few opportunities to progress his car modification skills and even fewer places to actually test out his projects, Nagata decided to leave Hokkaido and move across Japan to Tokyo. There, he managed to get his foot in the door at Trust, the company behind the GReddy brand. Talking to Speedhunters, Nagata said that his first job at the firm was packaging parts to be shipped to customers.

It was hardly his ideal job, but after he demonstrated his considerable skill to bosses at Trust's racing division, he was given a more hands-on role in assisting the race team.

Through his promotion, Nagata was able to learn how to make his own racing parts and often crafted them after working hours behind his bosses' backs.

His hobby of making his cars faster soon caught the attention of others, and before long, his secret parts-making operation was churning out upgrades for both his own and other street racers' cars. Eventually, his bosses found out about the illicit aftermarket outfit that Nagata was running but decided to turn a blind eye as he was a valuable employee.



By now, you were probably wondering how did Smokey get his nickname? Well, Kazuhaki Nagata is quite a childish fellow, one who won't miss doing a burnout whenever he sits behind the steering wheel. In that sense, he is almost like an anti-hero from a manga comic: a silent, non-assuming guy during the day but a driving maniac during the night.

His shenanigans might not bode well with law-abiding citizens, but his character definitely attracts a particular octane-loving audience.

In an interview with DSPORT, he said the inspiration for his brand came directly from this incident: his after-hours projects were from then on referred to by both parties as "top secret."



The British Motorway incident

Worldwide Criminal.



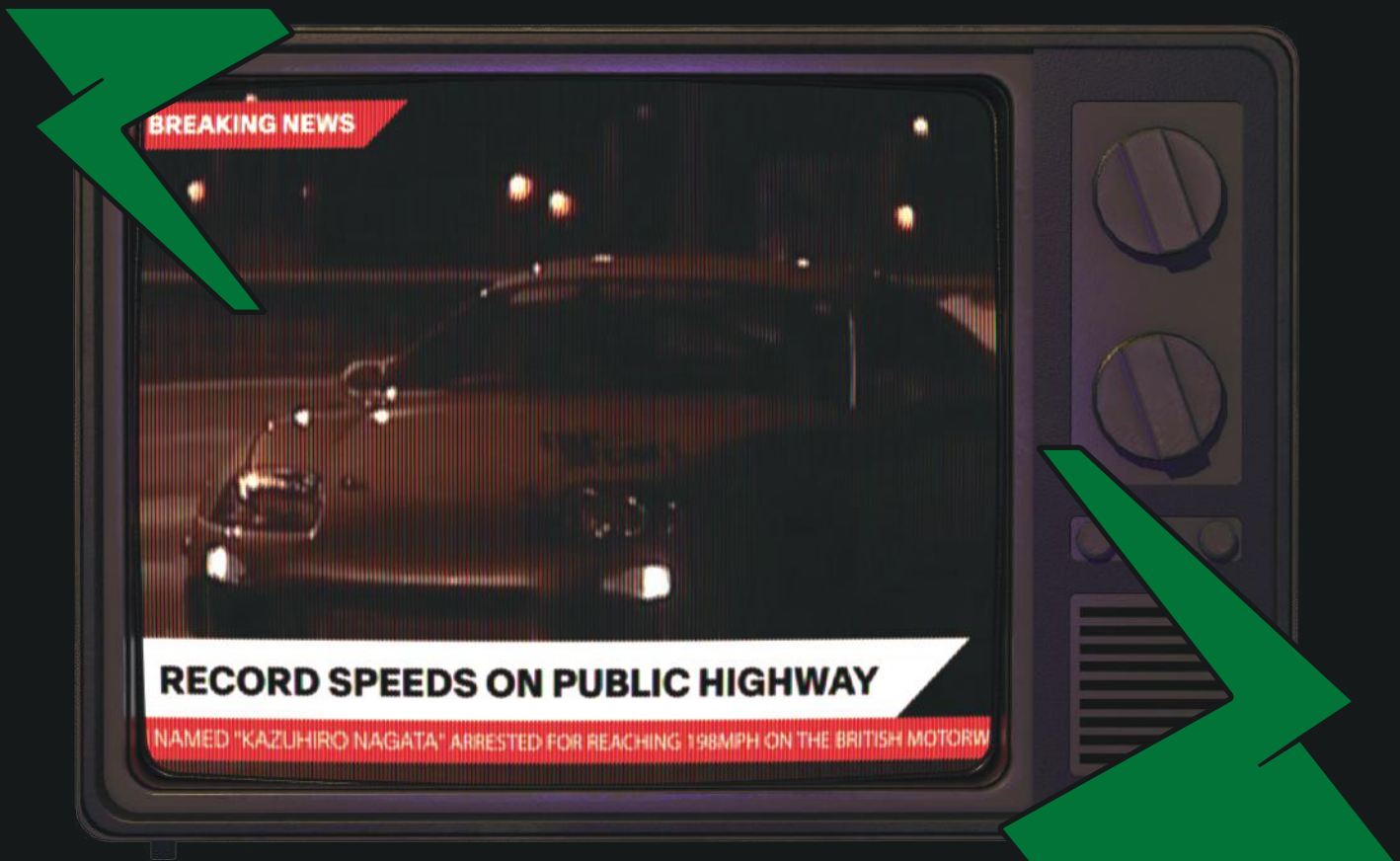
In the early hours of November 4, 1998, at approximately 4am, Kazuhiko 'Smokey' Nagata embarked on a daring and highly illegal speed run on the A1(M) motorway in the United Kingdom. Maneuvering his vehicle from the hard shoulder into lane two, Nagata brought his car to a complete halt, setting the stage for what would become one of the most notorious incidents in automotive history.

Despite the less than ideal conditions a light drizzle falling and temperatures barely above freezing Nagata was undeterred. With a dramatic flair befitting his reputation, he engaged the throttle and released the clutch, unleashing a spectacular burnout that filled the air with thick plumes of tire smoke.

This theatrical display served not only to warm his tires but also to announce his presence on the deserted motorway.

At the heart of this audacious endeavor was Nagata's pride and joy: a heavily modified, gold-painted Toyota Supra. This was no ordinary sports car; it was a finely-tuned beast boasting an astonishing 1,003 brake horsepower. Imported directly from Japan, this Supra represented the pinnacle of Nagata's engineering prowess and his unwavering pursuit of speed. His goal that night was clear and ambitious: to break the 200mph barrier on a public road.

However, the path to glory is seldom smooth, and Nagata's attempt was no exception.



His first run was hampered by the engine running lean, a potentially dangerous condition that could have led to catastrophic failure. Undeterred, he tried again, only to face a new challenge as the car's bonnet threatened to detach at speeds approaching 190mph. These setbacks forced Nagata to make multiple attempts, each one a high-stakes gamble with both his life and his prized vehicle.

Despite his best efforts and the raw power at his disposal, Nagata ultimately fell short of his 200mph goal. Nevertheless, his top speed of 194mph was nothing short of extraordinary, unofficially claiming the dubious and dangerous record for the fastest speed ever achieved by a car on a UK public highway.

The illicit nature of Nagata's speed run did not go unnoticed for long. As he concluded his final attempt, the winter darkness was suddenly illuminated by the flashing blue lights of law enforcement. A police pursuit ensued, culminating in Nagata's arrest. His punishment, a single night in custody, was remarkably lenient by today's standards and would likely result in much more severe consequences if attempted in the present day.

Far from damaging his reputation, Nagata's audacious stunt catapulted him to legendary status within the automotive tuning community. The incident served as an unconventional yet highly effective promotional tool for Top Secret, cementing the company's reputation for producing extraordinarily powerful and capable vehicles.

Not One, Not Two, But Three.

Smokey's iconic Supras.



Think about a wild car, and there is probably one in Japan. So vibrant is the Japanese tuning scene that it literally conquered the world and the Toyota Supra and its renowned 2JZ engine are at the front of the pack.

However, the most unique and probably best Supra ever doesn't have a 2JZ under the bonnet! Enter the Smokey Nagata Toyota Supra a car so wild that even the most creative enthusiasts couldn't imagine. It was born from a man's stubborn ambition to break speed records and his pure love for cars and engineering.

The first Smokey Nagata Supra had a four-cylinder turbo

The Supra and its 2JZ engine set the bar for performance in 1994 when Toyota introduced its most advanced sports car. Meanwhile, the tuning scene started learning about the tough 2JZ-GTE engine and its extraordinary potential just a few years later.

Contrary to popular opinion, the "Smokey Nagata Toyota Supra" isn't just one car. There are three, each with a unique engine and exterior design. However, every Smokey Nagata Supra was developed with the same quest: more speed! Still, the Supras are just a tiny part of the portfolio of Nagata's company

However, instead of meddling with the now mythical powerplant, Nagata went on a different path a four cylinder engine. Some might consider it heresy, but that was not your ordinary inline-4. It was the same unit that powered the Celica GT-Four, Toyota's rally-inspired street racer. Codenamed 3S-GTE, the 2.0-liter turbocharged unit produced 255 hp in its original form.

To satisfy Smokey's appetite for speed, the engine required quite a lot of modification. Nagata stroked it to 2.2 liters, installed beefier internal parts, and replaced the stock turbocharger with a much larger Trust/GReddy T88-34D one.

The first Smokey Nagata Supra also featured suspension, body, and brake system upgrades from brands such as RAYS, Alcorn, and Öhlins. The six-speed Getrag transmission was almost stock, though it was geared differently.

The result was a 700-hp widebody all-Japanese monster that reached more than 186 mph while having two more gears to work with. Quite impressive considering the number of cylinders; however, this Top Secret Supra was only the beginning.



The second version used the celebrated engine from Nissan's Skyline GT-R

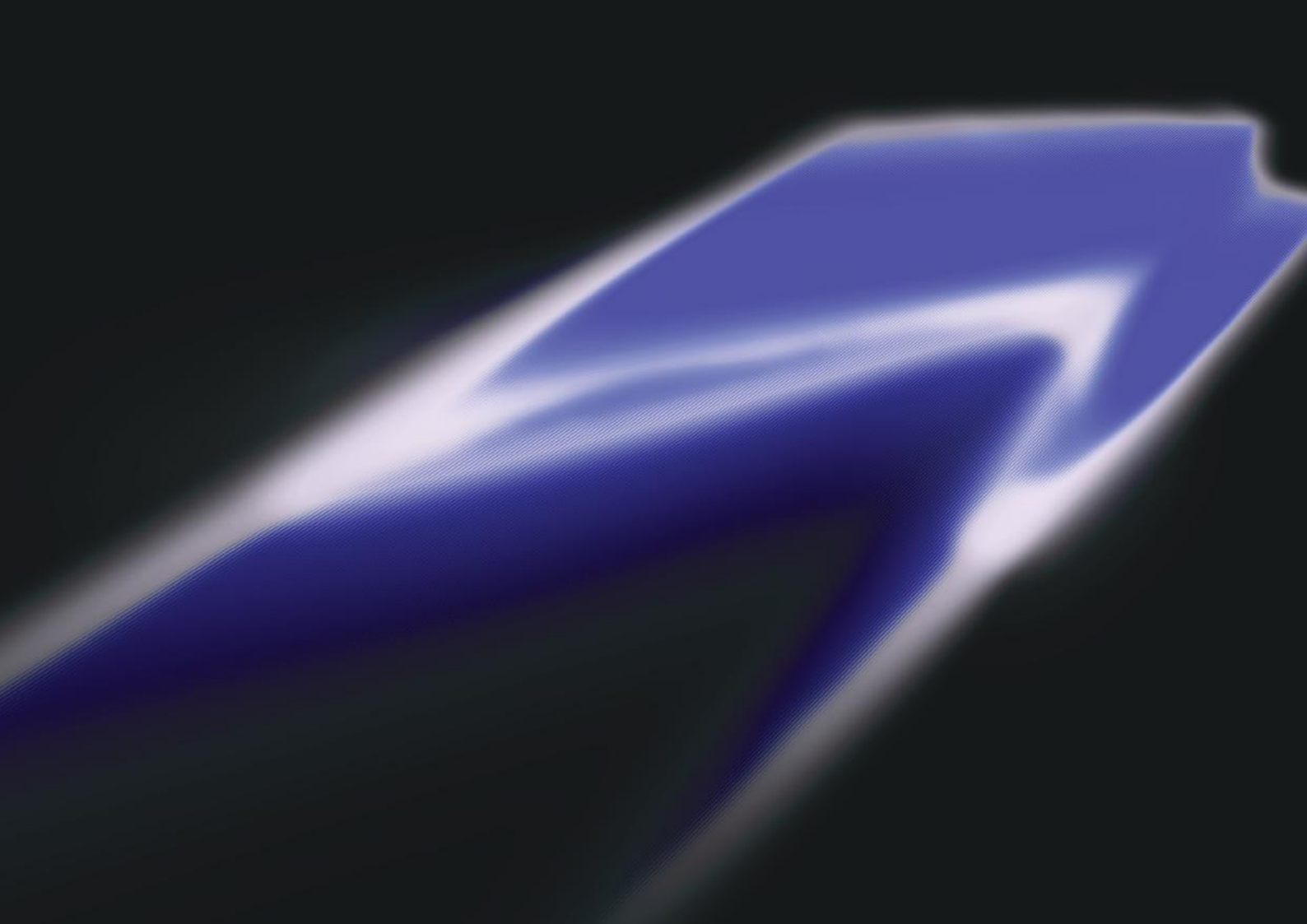
For his second Toyota Supra, Smokey Nagata made the bold decision to eschew the iconic 2JZ engine in favor of its formidable rival, Nissan's RB26DETT the very same powerplant that propels the legendary R34 Skyline GT-R.

This unconventional choice was reportedly driven by Nagata's belief that the RB26's superior high-end power characteristics would prove more advantageous than the 2JZ's renowned torque when pursuing extreme velocities. This decision not only showcased Nagata's willingness to think outside the box but also highlighted his unwavering commitment to pushing the boundaries of automotive performance, even if it meant crossing manufacturer lines in pursuit of speed supremacy.

Meanwhile, Supra's body was more aerodynamically efficient than Skyline's, so that combination would have worked best in his eyes. It might have also been a desire to create something unique – not unusual for Nagata. Either way, the second Top Secret "Nissan" Supra, first seen in 1999, had more than enough power to go way past legal speeds.

While the exact specifications of Nagata's RB26DETT-powered Supra remain shrouded in mystery, automotive experts speculate that the engine underwent extensive modifications.





These likely included the installation of forged internals to withstand increased boost pressures, a significantly larger turbocharger to generate more power, an enhanced cooling system to manage the additional heat generated, and a meticulously tuned ECU to optimize performance.

Visual evidence from photographs and video footage of the second Smokey Nagata Supra reveals a more aerodynamically refined body design and a noticeably lowered suspension setup, both crucial elements for achieving and maintaining high speeds.

These comprehensive modifications resulted in a machine capable of surpassing the 200 mph (320 km/h) threshold with apparent ease.

However, it's worth noting that Nagata never conducted an official top speed test for this particular build. Instead, he gained notoriety and a dedicated following by pushing the limits of his creation on public roads, a practice that, while undeniably dangerous and illegal, only served to further cement his legendary status within the automotive community.



The V12 Unicorn

While Nagata's first two Supra creations were already causing waves in the tuning community, he was diligently working on an even more ambitious and extraordinary Supra project. This iteration would feature something truly unprecedented: Toyota's and Japan's sole V12 engine, meticulously modified and enhanced with a twin-turbo configuration to push the boundaries of automotive engineering.

The fruit of Nagata's labor was nothing short of automotive alchemy: a speed demon that blazed across Nardo's circular test track in Italy, achieving a breathtaking top speed of 222.4 mph.

Although the 5.0-liter V12 Supra might not have significantly outpaced its RB26DETT powered predecessor in terms of raw speed, it possessed an unparalleled allure and prestige.

The integration of a Japanese V12 engine into a tuned Japanese car was a groundbreaking feat, never before attempted, and the aural symphony produced by twelve cylinders in perfect harmony was simply unmatched. At the heart of this mechanical marvel, the V12 Smokey Nagata Supra boasted an awe-inspiring 930 hp and 745 lb ft (1,010 Nm) of torque figures that were nothing short of revolutionary for a vehicle unveiled in 2007.



The V12 Supra

However, achieving such monumental performance figures was no small feat for Nagata and his team at Top Secret. The original engine, designed primarily for smooth operation in luxury vehicles, required extensive modifications to unleash its full potential.

The transformation involved the installation of two HKS GT2540 turbines, carefully calibrated to deliver 17 psi of boost. To complement this forced induction setup, Top Secret engineered a bespoke intake system featuring 80 mm throttle bodies for each cylinder bank, ensuring optimal air flow and throttle response.

A cutting-edge cooling system was also implemented to manage the increased thermal output effectively.

The engine's electronic brain consisted of dual HKS F-CON V Pro ECUs, meticulously programmed to orchestrate the complex symphony of mechanical components.

As a final touch, a nitrous oxide system was integrated, serving as the proverbial cherry on top of this high-performance cake, ready to provide an extra burst of power when needed.





Toyota Century



It borrowed the V12 from the Toyota Century

The Japanese automotive culture is best known for its smaller yet powerful engines. Still, that's not to say these talented automakers didn't flirt with higher displacements and more cylinders. In the case of the third Smokey Nagata Supra, the 1GZ-FE 5.0-liter V12 engine comes from the JDM Toyota Century hyper-luxurious limo made for the super-rich and politicians.

Just like its smaller brother, the 2JZ-GTE, Toyota's V12 is also designed to stand the test of time. It is so well-engineered that even if the ECU for one bank of cylinders fails, the engine can continue to run on only six cylinders. As such, it is a great platform for tuning, and as Nagata showed us in his third Supra, it could go north of 1,000 hp.



V12-powered Japanese cars are rare due to design constraints and limited engine availability. Nagata's V12 Supra, unveiled in 2007, remains a crowd-pleaser for its uniqueness and engineering feat. The Century's V12 fits perfectly in the Supra, accommodating twin turbos and a custom intake.

To manage the increased heat, Nagata installed radiators in the trunk, using four electronic water pumps and complex plumbing. Rear spoiler ducts guide air to the radiators, improving cooling and aerodynamics.

Nagata, understanding that power alone doesn't ensure speed, focused on aerodynamics. He implemented the Top Secret Super G-Force Wangan widebody kit, featuring a lower rear wing and redesigned nose.

The V12 Supra also uses Top Secret coilovers with Roberuta Cup kit for improved stability at high speeds. Despite lacking Bugatti's resources, Nagata's V12 Supra achieved an impressive 229 mph, showcasing his engineering prowess and innovative approach to high-performance tuning.



Broken Records



Top Secret's famous speed records.

Smokey Nagata's relentless pursuit of speed and his knack for creating some of the world's fastest street-legal cars have solidified his status as a legend in automotive history. His groundbreaking records continue to inspire the tuning community, pushing them to explore the limits of what's achievable with modified vehicles.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Car</i>	<i>Engine</i>	<i>Power</i>	<i>Achievement</i>
1998	Top Secret Toyota Supra GT-300	2.2 litre turbo "3G-STE" Inline-4	780 hp	197mph (317 kph)
1999	Top Secret Nissan R-33 Skyline GTR	2.8 litre "RB26DETT" Inline-6	1200 hp	205 mph (330kph)
2003	Top Secret 350Gt Skyline	4.5 litre "VK45DE" V8	702 hp	212 mph (341kph)
2003	Top Secret Fusion RR R34 Skyline	2.6 litre "RB26DETT" Inline-6	854hp	57.914 seconds lap on Tsukuba Circuit, Japan
2008	Top Secret V12 Supra	5 litre "1GZ-FE" V12	942 hp	222 mph (358kph)
2010	Top Secret V12 Supra	5 litre "1GZ-FE" V12	1000+ hp	229 mph (370kph)
2013	Top Secret Nissan R-35 GTR	4 litre "VR38" V6	1200 hp	205 mph (330kph)

Gold Standard

Alongside their tire-shredding power outputs, one of the most distinctive elements of Top Secret's cars is their gold paint job. However, not just any modified car gets to wear gold only those that have Nagata's personal seal of approval.

The small handful of approved projects tend to be those that the Top Secret founder has personally used at some point, including a 1,100 horsepower R35 Nissan GT-R that clocked 234 mph during testing at the Nardo Ring.



The Top Secret Silvia is a heavily modified S15 Silvia that competed in the Japanese D1 Grand Prix drifting series. It was prominently driven in the 2004 D1 Grand Prix season by Ryuji Miki, whom became the championship winner of the 2004 season.

Ryuji Miki's Silvia S15



The GT-R 650R Gold was designed to be a street-legal car that doesn't boast any Frankenstein engine swap under its hood. Instead it keeps the RB26DETT, enlarged to 2.8 liters and fitted with top-shelf JDM engine components: HKS pistons and crank, NISMO bearings, and Tomei camshafts.

Top Secret GTR 650R Gold



Nagata's quest continues.

The Mission Endures.



While we may not witness another Top Secret Supra MK4 in the future, Smokey Nagata's passion for speed remains undiminished. This legendary tuner's relentless pursuit of automotive excellence continues unabated, as evidenced by one of his latest masterpieces: a formidable 1,100 horsepower R35 Nissan GT-R.

With this cutting-edge creation, Nagata sets his sights on an ambitious goal – to shatter the elusive 400 km/h (250 mph) barrier, a feat that would place him in the rarefied company of automotive giants such as Bugatti, Koenigsegg, and Hennessey.

Nagata's journey towards this lofty aspiration has already yielded impressive results. In 2013, he piloted the Top Secret GT-R to a breathtaking 377.2 km/h (234.4 mph) at the Nardo High-Speed Challenge, emerging victorious and inching ever closer to his ultimate objective. However, the path to 250 mph is fraught with exponential challenges.

The final 15 mph separating Nagata from his dream prove to be a formidable adversary, as the physics of high-speed travel conspire against him.

At these extreme velocities, the aerodynamic drag increases dramatically, necessitating disproportionately larger power increments to achieve even the smallest gains in speed.

Undeterred by these obstacles, Nagata has employed an array of innovative aerodynamic solutions to extract every last ounce of performance from his GT-R. Among his most notable implementations is an F1-inspired Drag Reduction System (DRS).

This sophisticated mechanism dynamically adjusts the angle of the rear spoiler, allowing the car to seamlessly transition between high-speed, low-drag configurations for straight-line velocity and high-downforce setups for cornering stability.

This marriage of cutting-edge technology and Nagata's unparalleled tuning expertise exemplifies the relentless innovation that has defined his illustrious career in the pursuit of automotive perfection.

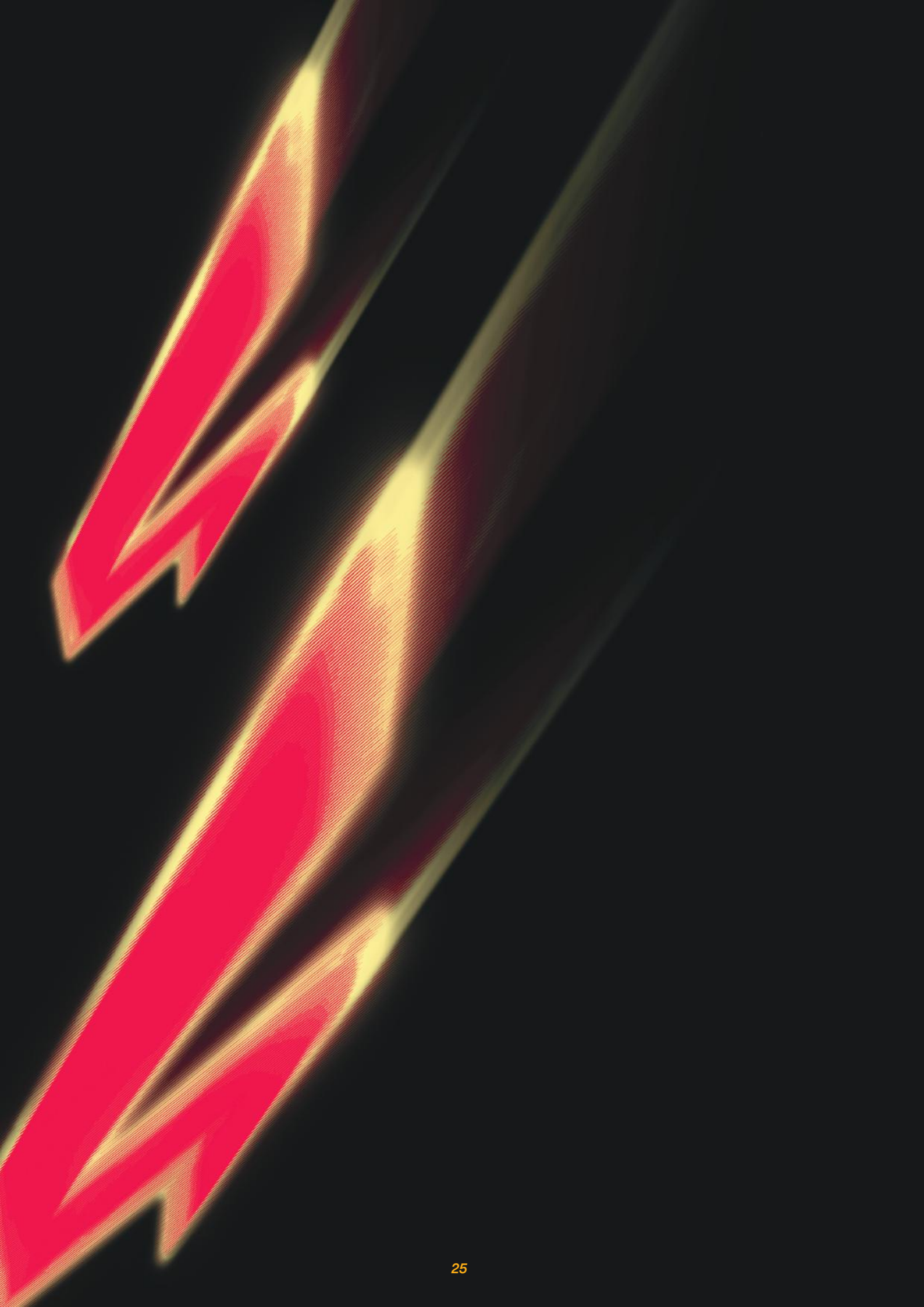
The vibrant and dynamic Japanese car culture of the 1980s and 1990s was profoundly shaped by the adrenaline-fueled world of street racing, where daring drivers pushed their meticulously tuned machines to the absolute limit in a fierce competition to claim the coveted title of the fastest on the streets.

These high-octane showdowns frequently unfolded on public roads, transforming ordinary streets into impromptu racetracks under the cover of night. However, the increasing frequency and intensity of these illegal races inevitably led to a significant escalation in police enforcement efforts, as authorities scrambled to curb the dangerous practice.

This crackdown catalyzed a pivotal shift in the racing landscape, spurring the development and popularization of dedicated private circuits such as the renowned Ebisu Circuit and the legendary Tsukuba Circuit.

These purpose-built facilities provided a sanctioned and controlled environment where passionate drivers could safely push





In this fiercely competitive arena, many of the most prominent drivers found themselves backed by deep-pocketed parts manufacturers or professional racing teams, benefiting from state-of-the-art equipment and expert support. However, Smokey Nagata stood out as a remarkable exception to this trend.

Despite operating without the backing of major sponsors, Nagata's custom-built machines consistently outperformed those of professional racers, leaving the automotive world in awe of his achievements.

The secret to Nagata's unprecedented success lay in his extraordinary talent for engineering and tuning, coupled with an innovative spirit that knew no bounds.

His approach to vehicle modification was characterized by a willingness to push beyond conventional wisdom, often incorporating cutting-edge components and pioneering techniques that had never before been attempted in automotive applications.

This fearless experimentation and unparalleled technical acumen allowed Nagata to extract levels of performance from his vehicles that were previously thought impossible, cementing his status as a true legend in the world of high-performance tuning and racing.

Smoky
magister.



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