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TEST DRIVE

Tofu shop rebirth

2012 Toyota GT86

I've waited with bated breath for the GT86 for years. This was a homage to the greatest Toyota FR cars of the past: the 2000GT and cult classic AE86. Toyota had a reputation for building dull cars over the past decade. So dull that if you could distill a Corolla and put it into a syringe, you could sedate a charging mad rhinoceros.

The design mandate was a car with enough power, lightness and skinny tyres, meant to elicit entertainment similar to a Mazda Miata. It looks stunning from every angle. Those classic



had a few 86's trickle into the country after the last budget revision dropped the prices. The car suddenly became delicious like a cheesecake behind a baker's window.

The car is visually low, but you can wave your arm about underneath. Speed bumps aren't really a problem since this car pretty much rolls over them in stock form. A politician with a small brain can be safely run over without damage to politician or car.

The moment I stepped inside, I felt at home. The low seating makes you feel like you are sitting on a child's stool while inside a bus. There's a lot of dark black leather, plastic and cloth. It's like a slightly plastic Batcave in here.

going for a ride; although the auto shifts extremely quickly, the manual is just as easy to drive. If your primary concern is leg cramps, then you should go buy an Allion and sit in the back. And sleep.

Many internet forum enthusiasts have raised a complaint about this car: not enough BHP. That's like saying Gal Gadot doesn't have enough assets. Sometimes, enough is perfect. It is no GTR, it was never intended to be. Its not a speed freak although it will get up to speed remarkably quick.

There I am pootling about in traffic and then suddenly I find gaps, press the magic pedal the car warbles in that typical boxer growl. 100kmph comes in a little over 7 seconds. That is not blistering fast but the car always feels fast without potentially killing you from a bhp overdose. The steering is distinctly alive. You know exactly what is going on at all times. When you point, the precision is that of a robotic surgeon. The only way you can really screw things up here is if you have your eyes closed. Or you think you are Takumi from the Initial D anime. This car merges the trifecta of being light, having terrific handling and a decent dose of power to weight ratio. It has low speed handling that will entertain because low speed is where you will be most of the time. In the Initial D anime, the AE86 celebrated those specific three attributes and the modern incarnation is a perfect reflection of that.

Base prices start a little over 40, you can add all sorts of wings and spoilers but the naked hump looks amazing on its own right. My only gripe is with those plain-Jane rims. They look duller than boiled noodles. Should you have one? Yes, before the prices go up again.

This particular car comes with the TRD bodykit and RSR lowering springs and costs 49 lakh Taka, available at JZ Automobiles Ltd. Look online for an extended feature.

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PHOTOS: TASDID H. CHOWDHURY



proportions are what sports cars should be. The Celica, Supra, Trueno 86, and the mid-engine MR2 all had long sloping hoods and short behinds that kids love to draw in class while the teacher mumbles about Pythagoras' pizza slice.

When a friend called up and said he had the key to a MANUAL transmission GT86, I dropped everything for the day. The GT86 initially wasn't considered a hot import. Some outright dismissed it because like Americans, they thought BHP is everything. But then we

The engineers opted for a Subaru boxer because it's compact size allowed a lower placement of the engine in the bay, giving it a lower centre of gravity. The 6-speed automatic is quick but the manual is a joy to row through. It's an on-off switch with a seductively short throw from neutral to first. You don't so much as push it into gear as flick your wrist gently. The clutch is deliciously soft without being over bearing, although the gearshifts were occasionally a little notchy. If you want the automatic, we advise trying to find a manual and

COLLECTIBLES



MAISTO

Mini sized cars

Maisto is a common and popular name for collectors in Bangladesh. They provide a hit and miss list of both great and terrible scale model cars. Maisto occasionally produces gems worth having, such as the 1:18 Datsun 240z. They own the Italian brand Bburago. There isn't much difference between what was made then and what is made now except for certain trim that has been reduced to save costs. Then there is the telltale 'Made in China' badges stamped below instead of the previous Italian name. Maisto's greatest hit of this year is their exclusive Ferrari deal.

Visit our site www.thedailystar.net/shift this weekend for more on this.



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ONLINE EXCLUSIVE



On the subject of standing out, it is in the inherent nature of us humans to go to farfetched lengths. What we want to talk about is the bewildering concept of 'Built NOT Bought' in the local and international tuning culture. Standard cars are ripped off their OEM power plants and steroid injected with power and torque juice by performance enthusiasts. Self-proclaimed racer high school kids have bizarrely loud mufflers sticking out and aero wings that weigh down already heavy family cars. Both the groups love to slap 'Built NOT Bought' decals on their vehicles. Certainly then, the degree of modification or parts installed does not play a part in justifying this 'Built NOT Bought' craze. For the full rant and in-depth analysis of this bold statement, check out our online special feature this Friday at www.thedailystar.net/shift.

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GAME REVIEW

PROJECT CARS

No, not our regular section for locally built custom cars. The simulation racing game.



Racing simulators seem to be popping up everywhere these days. PC gamers are being treated to a flurry of racing sims which vary in style and delivery, but offer mostly the same deal in terms of driving experience. The latest, Project Cars, recently arrived with much fanfare and hype. Is it any good?

From the get go, it promises a lot. With a whole range of steering wheel support for those with serious gaming rigs and a taste for realism, Project Cars represents a PC alternative to the tried and tested racing simulators on other platforms, namely Gran Turismo on PlayStation and Forza Motorsport on Xbox. While it would be unfair to compare the PC game with its console based rivals, the latter options are the yardsticks to which all other simulators have been compared over the last decade.

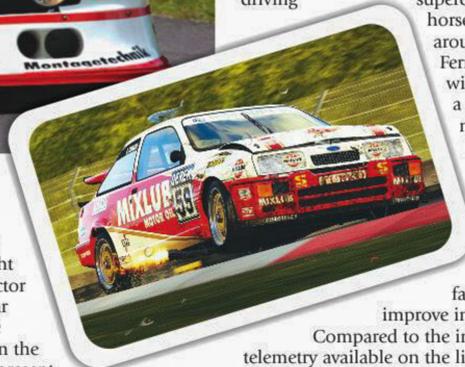
The driving dynamics are quite realistic, accurately recreating the severe understeer and torque steer characteristics of the Ford Focus RS while cornering, for example. While the road cars are quite accurately represented, the hypercars and race cars in the roster are the main attraction and the game's brand of realism sadly render these cars un-drivable till you've progressed beyond a certain skill level. The main complaint with the driving dynamics in the game would be the "weightlessness" that afflicts quite a few of the PC based racing simulators: enter a corner hard with a

rear-wheel drive car and prepare to do some major steering adjustments because you couldn't predict the weight transfer. Its difficult to factor in the weight shift of a car when you can't "feel" the weight of the car when on the move, something that is present

Project Cars features a host of Ford's finest, including roadgoing cars like the Focus RS, and iconic racecars like the Zakspeed Capri, Escort Cosworth and GT40.

and can clearly be noticed with simulators such as Aspetto Corsa or Gran Turismo.

The career progression is open-ended, allowing you to go straight to LMP1 or GT1 class racing, or start with karting competitions if you prefer. All the cars in the impressively varied cars list are unlocked in Solo mode, so pick a car and head to a track. The



racing is intense and rewarding because it is difficult to win if you're not relying on any of the electronic nannies in the game and have the realism options cranked to max. The tyres wear out, fuel depletes, damage to mechanical bits will leave you crippled, and the opponents react to your driving style with aggressiveness or reserved respect returned equally. It's not a game for the ham-fisted and the impatient.

The downsides? It'll have you strung up taut on a wire, which makes it hard to enjoy the drive. You might think all simulators would do that when driving

supercars with many horsepower, but one spin around Monza in a La Ferrari on Aspetto Corsa will tell you that its more a fault of the simulation mechanics and twitchy handling than the nature of simulators themselves. Another complaint comes from the race telemetry system, which is an important factor in helping you

improve in any discipline. Compared to the incredibly detailed telemetry available on the likes of Aspetto Corsa and Gran Turismo, Project Cars features a scant and slightly bland on-the-fly telemetry system which is neither very useful nor very informative. Then there's the rift between the name and the customisation options in the game; many expected Project Cars to feature full on customisation, whereas it offers detailed component tuning and pre-set liveries. It doesn't really make sense when the cars are outwardly stock but can be tuned for race-spec aerodynamics.

Overall, Project Cars is a decent game, considering it happens to be a crowd-funded effort. The menus are polished and really nice to look at, the graphics is incredibly detailed even on lowest settings, and the gameplay is not bad for the budget the developers had access to. A worthy effort at providing alternatives to established simulators.

SHAHER REAZ