

GAME Changer

Following in the footsteps of the top spec Mega Busa and SEiGHT, Westfield's latest Mega S2000 brings all the chassis sophistication of the company's turnkey Sport Turbo to the kit car masses, and then some.

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Westfield's Sport Turbo has been stealing the headlines for the last year or two, but the reality remains that you can only buy a factory built example, and most are heading into Europe. Make no mistake, the Sport Turbo is the best Westfield we've ever driven, but its lack of kit form availability has meant the traditional SEi models have taken a back seat when it comes to publicity.

To bring the focus firmly back to Westfield's roots, the company showed off a Honda S2000 engined kit form Westie at several of last year's shows. But only now has the car been IVA'd and registered, and CKC is first behind the wheel.

What we can reveal right here, right now, is that this is far more than just an engine upgrade... what you are looking at is perhaps the most important new kit form Westfield to come out of the factory in decades.

Why? Because in much the same way as F1 tech can trickle down into our daily runabouts, so some of the engineering know-how that went into the all new Sport Turbo is now finding its way back into Westfield's kit cars...

The front suspension is now the same as the turnkey car, being all new geometry and, on this car, featuring upgraded lightweight Reynolds tubing and improved coil-over dampers. And while the rear IRS suspension is the same as that found on the Ford based SEi, the chassis continues to evolve with many of the production car tweaks developed for the turnkey model. Indeed, expect much of what's found on this chassis to trickle further across the kit car range, so that eventually all models will utilise the same tech.

But somehow the S2000, despite the

stripped back racer styling seen here, owes yet more to the time and money that the factory has invested in the Sport Turbo. Everything fits, it's neatly installed, clean and tidy and retains a production feel despite the minimalism. All Westfield models will benefit from this experience and, as the factory is keen to point out, whether you buy a base body/chassis kit or a top-end Sport Turbo, the body and chassis are created by the same guys, to the same standards.

OK, so much of what you see here is already to be found on other kit models





Left: Specially rated dampers and springs have been designed specifically for the Westfield.

Right: Suspension on this example uses optional lightweight Reynolds tubing with standard cast alloy uprights. It works a treat.



within the range, but the Mega S2000 isn't called something different for no reason. The Mega tagline line is there to link this derivative firmly with earlier incarnations, such as the bike powered MegaBusa. While road legal, the Mega range is perhaps the company's most extreme variant, before heading into full blown race specifications. Obvious features include the aeroscreen and utterly minimalist interior. Further Mega upgrades can include anti-roll bars, limited slip differential, big brake kit, full roll cage and various track day focused wheel and tyre packages, among a long list of other options.

And then there's the S2000 denomination. This is an easier and more obvious one to pin down, with Westfield installing Honda's acclaimed 2-litre VTEC Type R engine under the bonnet. Using the unit from the S2000 means an already in-line configuration (as opposed to transversely located units in the Civic Type R etc) and a terrific 6-speed gearbox transmitting power to the rear wheels.

It's an engine that justifies all the acclaim that heads its way. Naturally aspirated, it delivers around 240bhp with a maximum rev limit at a heady 8000rpm. It is still the most powerful naturally aspirated 2-litre engine to reach regular production, ever!

Below: Honda VTEC 2-litre S2000 delivers 240bhp and is one of the most charismatic and entertaining engines on the market. Period.

While it is possible to retain the Honda ECU (as Westfield's Australian agent has done on several occasions), for the factory's production requirements, a more dedicated solution was required, so regular kits will feature an Omex developed ECU which plugs straight into a bespoke wiring loom... one advantage of which is that the engine management has been designed to Westfield's requirements, not Honda's constraints, part of which is now a VTEC which kicks in lower in the rev range.

Because of the height of the new engine, all S2000 kits require the bonnet scoop originally designed for the V8 SEiGHT model, and it means this car features an unusual mix of traditional SEi nosecone (and bonnet) with later FW rear end and sides. The scuttle is a universal fitment across the

range and, where bonnet height requirements aren't an issue, customers can mix and match panels from either FW or SEi derivatives... they have all been designed to be interchangeable.

Lift the SEiGHT bonnet away and the new installation is simplicity itself. If the Sport Turbo is a feat of packaging wizardry, here there's little to distract your eyes from the bold VTEC wording emblazoned on the cam cover. Apart from a header tank and fuses found on the bulkhead, there's almost no visible wiring or complicated plumbing. It looks brilliantly minimal...

Which is a feature reflected in the interior. Powdercoated black aluminium panelling is left untrimmed, save for rubber matting on the floor. The dash is a simple carbon effect flat panel with two rocker switches, three toggle switches and some small buttons to control the Race Technology dash unit (badged Potenza here and bringing up the words Westfield Sportscars every time the car is started). But it's not all stark simplicity – where untrimmed fibreglass bucket seats might seem logical, the factory has fitted its Sport Turbo seats, which are fantastically comfortable and supportive.

Once installed in the cockpit, initial impressions are focused on the generous cockpit length (we need to bring the seat forward several notches), wide footwell and consequently well-spaced pedals. A tall gear lever falls beautifully to hand, just a palm width away from the steering wheel.

One option not fitted to this car is a full windscreen, the aeroscreen being the standard fitment on a car with such obvious track day potential. But it means eye protection in the form of goggles or a full helmet is a must, with the latter offering obvious safety advantages when it comes to stones being flicked up by other cars.



The Honda engine sounds smooth and contained at tick-over, exiting through a catalysed exhaust system (included in the main kit package) that's IVA friendly but pleasingly throaty.

The engine is unmodified from its donor, save an oil change and the fitment of a Westfield baffled sump (only really needed for when it heads trackside). Complete with the stock 6-speed gearbox, it's typically a £2500 second-hand purchase which usually includes the original ECU.

Apart from the sensation that the engine might stall at initial pick-up, the Omex ECU runs the engine sweetly (some final mapping is still to be done on this first example before production kits will be offered). It's more than happy to potter through the Kingswinford shopping area

on our way to more interesting blacktop. But even here there are things to learn.

For starters, the ride... here's yet another trickle down advantage for kit owners from the massive development put into the production Sport Turbo... the ride is sublime. It's an effortless mix of soft and supple comfort that seemingly has no detrimental effect on handling when pushing on later. The lightweight Reynolds tubing, high quality dampers and well chosen spring rates all combine to superlative effect that's largely unmatched by other sevenesque competitors. We'd say it's unquestionably one of the defining features of the new chassis package, regardless of what's under the bonnet.

But what's under the bonnet is pretty special. You might think that a cocktail of stratospheric revs and a naturally aspirated 2-litre engine would result in a lacklustre performance at the lower

end of the scale... a car that only gets up and goes when you're working it hard. It's rather better than that...

Even at low revs the VTEC sounds great and pulls with obvious potential – you're very aware of what this car can do.



Above: Driving position is excellent and Sport Turbo seats are worth the premium.

Going through town there's a worry that the 6-speed box is so low geared as to make first and second redundant... you can cruise in sixth from seemingly very low speeds. But it all makes sense when you are in the clear. Out in the countryside there's always a gear to match your requirements. The lever has a short throw from one cog to the next, and its location so close to the steering wheel is an utter joy.

And back to the engine... wow, it's super quick and deliciously powerful – a constant wave of propulsion that sees you take advantage of every opportunity the roads may bring. It's mighty, and possibly the fastest production Westfield we've ever experienced.

Left: Race Technology Dash2 unit branded for Potenza. It works very well.

Below: Dash ultra simple in this example, but you could specify trim level to suit your needs.



WESTFIELD MEGA S2000

Specifications

Engine as tested: 2-litre Honda VTEC Type R, Omex ECU, 237bhp.

Engine options: Mega S2000 is bespoke to the Honda VTEC, but other models accommodate most common engine options... Ford, Mazda etc.

Chassis: Multi-tubular spaceframe chassis, optional lightweight Reynolds tubing and wide-track wishbones on test car.

Bodywork: All fibreglass pre-coloured panels.

Suspension: Front and rear – Double wishbones, outboard coil-over dampers, cast alloy uprights. Various options, including anti-roll bars and wide track front wishbones.

Steering: Westfield rack and column.

Brakes: Front 4-pot front calipers and vented calipers, rear calipers with handbrake facility, no servo.

Kit price: Starter kit: £4250 inclusive VAT. Standard kit: £13,999 inclusive with just engine and gearbox, plus wheels and tyres to add.

Factory Built: From £21,500.

Budget build cost: From £17,500.

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And that's only made possible by the complete assurance given to the driver by the chassis, suspension, steering and brakes. The latter feature Westfield's optional upgrade package, meaning aftermarket 4-pot calipers and larger grooved discs. Complete with fancy pads, they offer a firm pedal and complete confidence when used firmly... the S2000 pulls up straight and true, with no

Above right: Big grooved discs and 4-pot calipers offer massive and predictable braking performance.

Below: This example features FW rear bodywork, but the car will come with conventional SEI bodywork as standard.



dramatics – a vital ingredient if you want to go quickly.

The steering too, is a strong feature of this car. Ultra sticky Toyo Proxes R1-R tyres are turned by what appears to be a particularly quick steering rack and while that makes the steering surprisingly heavy at slow speeds, it's a great combo when pushing on. The S2000 brims with grippy confidence, turns in with complete accuracy and offers extraordinary levels of grip.

It all combines to great effect, making the Westfield super quick at all times, whether reeling in a long straight or

carving through some challenging twisty bits. It's great fun.

As we potter back into town and head to the factory there's time to consider the S2000 as an ownership proposition. The engine is a dream and the easiest component to sum up... once you've experienced it, nothing else will do – end of. And the kit itself is also an easy one to place... it's the best Westfield we've driven – ever. It succeeds perfectly in taking the essential components from the Sport Turbo which relate to the driving experience, and refining them into a more focused package that's ideally suited to the kit car builder.



And the vital thing to remember is that you can tailor your Westfield Mega S2000 to suit your own style and needs. Don't like the FW bodywork? The SEi clothing is available. Need more daily practicality? A full screen and soft-top will fit perfectly. Want a more developed interior? Then choose from the factory's wide choice of carpet, trim and gauge options.

But at the core of what you buy, will always be that chassis, that suspension, that ride quality, that fit and finish that makes Westfield a company we can all feel justifiably proud of.

And what about cost. It's expensive, right? Starter kits for the S2000 begin at £4250, rising to £13,999 (both inclusive of VAT) for a comprehensive kit requiring just wheels/tyres and your Honda engine and gearbox. It means a Mega S2000 could be on the road from around £17,500... that's a largely brand new car with 240bhp and a level of quality that's hard to match. We reckon that's great value.

Of course, there are still the company's more affordable options, in the form of the Single Donor Vehicle (SDV) packages for either Ford or Mazda donors. The latter means that for just £8445 you can have absolutely every last nut and bolt you need to build a car after you've added your Mazda donor. And we know how cheap the Mazda can be to source. Alternatively, head for a Classic Special Edition kit and you'll get everything brand new (Zetec engine, gearbox... everything) for £15,499.



For £3000 more, Westfield will build it for you.

It has been another impressive visit to the UK's largest kit car manufacturer. Once again, we've been bowled over by the professionalism of the company and the production quality of the kits. But now we can see tangible advantages for kit car enthusiasts, from Westfield's foray into the production car world... the components

Above: This is just a small area within the hugely impressive Westfield factory. **Below:** Latest S2000 Westie doesn't have to be a stripped back track day car. Add screen, soft top and interior trim and it's as practical as any car of this type.

and what they bring to the driving experience are better than ever. And there's something else. The Honda S2000 brings with it what can only be described as a lust factor. Where the original Rover V8 engined Westfield SEiGHT took the product into another dimension in 1991, so the Mega S2000 has done it in 2013. Here's another model that leaves you thinking... I really want that! **CKC**

