

Story Mick Rigney Images Tony Rabbitte





FORESTER

This Forester GT combines potent performance with awesome entertainment.



The Subaru Forester could be thought of as the conservative big brother to its sportier sibling, the venerable Impreza WRX. For a practical sports touring wagon, the Forester can also be considered somewhat fun and sporty itself, particularly the turbocharged GT variant. Good as it may be from the factory, when John Iconomidis took delivery of his Forester GT he was already formulating plans to upgrade certain components inside and out, to meet his particular specifications. These plans included choice go-fast-bits for the drive train, bling for the body and a complete interior makeover including a tasty audiovisual system. Needless to say, this is no longer your average Forester GT.

planting the seed

Although the Forester may appear utilitarian according to a rather squat and chunky physique, its heritage as a sports touring wagon means it's not nearly as tall and awkward as most sports utility vehicles congesting the roads today. Thus, it's arguably much easier to use

round and plenty of room inside, John had the perfect base for his new supreme entertainment system.

sowing the crop

The team at Kev's Kustoms is making a name for itself producing high quality car audio installations and word got to John that Kev's team would be an ideal specialist dealer to do the job for him. The designers at Kev's Kustoms can build complete systems from the dash through to the boot with everything customised to the owner's specifications. Their designs take into account the type of vehicle, original interior, planned theme and overall concept, only limited by your imagination. Likewise, the range of materials employed by the guys at Kev's Kustoms is limited only by your budget. Whether it's the

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this vehicle to its full potential, whether it involves loading equipment onto the roof racks or piling it deep inside the cabin. Another advantage of the Forester over an SUV is the superior seating positions, closer to the ground and comparable to most large sedans. Needless to say, this lower centre of gravity offers substantially better handling than one might expect from an SUV. This is obvious from the driver's seat of a Forester GT, which is very comfortable yet also offers good support. With a solid vehicle to start off with, comfortable seating all

finest quality leather or any other specialist material that you require, they'll source it for you. Awesome audio installs are also a speciality at this workshop and the crew lives by the mantra that they can turn any ordinary car into a mind-blowing show stopper if that's what the owner wants.

The equipment used in John's Forester GT was all supplied by Option Audio, a company that specialises in audio and visual equipment for

car entertainment systems. Established in 2001, Option Audio was founded to develop unique and stylish car audio and visual products that they felt were lacking from the market. In 2005 the new visual range of products was released featuring a range of roof-mounted LCD screens, stand-alone and head-rest monitors and motorised screen receivers. After checking out the range and hearing some fantastic testimonies from existing customers, John knew he had made the right choice of both install team and equipment to be used in his car.

fully optioned

A Pioneer motorised monitor and DVD receiver with a 6.5-inch folding LCD has been installed as the main source unit from which this system functions. This provides the front passenger with a monitor for watching their favourite movie while being driven around the countryside. Providing crystal clear quality sound are two pairs of OA SQ6.5 Titan 6.5-inch component speakers – front and rear – ensuring that the music is heard exactly as it was intended. Two Boschmann BM Lab 700-watt four-channel amplifiers are bridged to provide big power to each set of speakers.

One big decision that had to be made during this installation was to decide how many subwoofers were to be used? How many is too many and how many is not enough? The final decision generally lies with the owner of the car and with what intensity he wants the bass to be punched out. Foregoing the ample boot space, in John's Forester GT there are four 12-inch single voice coil subwoofers rated at 1000-watts each, matched to four 1000-watt four-channel Boschmann amplifiers. The integrated enclosure for the subs is totally sealed and covered in light lemon suede that helps brighten the interior.

For rear passenger visual entertainment a pair of OA 6.5HDS 6.5-inch LCD monitors was installed with one mounted into each of the front seat head-rests. Making good use of the great picture quality produced from these little screens is a slimline Playstation 2 packed in the glove box, which provides both games as well as another DVD/CD source. To keep the system ticking over nicely the factory battery was upgraded to an Optima 550CCA.

forester ablaze

With the added weight of his new fully optioned entertainment system, John's attention focussed on improving the performance of the GT. This didn't mean just bolting on a few go-fast-bits; rather John replaced the whole EJ20 engine and transmission with those from a 2000 Impreza WRX STI version 6. Not content with the standard power of the otherwise beastly STI drive train, John replaced the factory turbo with a larger VF34 unit and added a custom front-mounted intercooler with 3-inch piping along with a 3-inch double dump exhaust system. A K&N cold air intake kit sucks in the cool air while a GFB blow-off valve ensures the turbo is lag-free and always ready to spool. To obtain optimum performance from this new setup, John replaced the factory ECU with a UniChip including boost module.

To stop the Forester GT as well as it now launches, John also had the brakes upgraded with Impreza WRX STI callipers on DBA slotted discs. These hide behind the big 19-inch triple-chrome-plated Alba Banks wheels that are shod with sticky Falken 225/35/19 tyres. The handling of the Forester was also substantially improved, albeit now with a much firmer ride thanks to the Fulcrum fully adjustable coilover suspension and Whiteline anti-sway bars. All of these performance upgrades spell out a very handsome 190kW at all four wheels, capable of pulling 13.8@103mph. As we said previously, this is hardly your average Forester GT.





subtle and strong

The exterior plan was to keep it simple and subtle yet still make it striking and this was achieved with only a few minor touches. These included a custom front bar as well as 2004 WRX STi bonnet scoop, coated along with the body in custom black paint with prismatic speckles. The flaming window tint adds further individuality to the Forester and offers a nice transition to the interior, which was retrimmed in copious amounts of beach leather. This extended from the steering wheel to the gear boot and door trims. A MOMO gear knob sits atop a short shift kit while the beach leather treatment was also given to the additional cluster of AutoMeter gauges.

The complete cost of both the entertainment system products and installation was a surprisingly low \$4000 with John absolutely stoked by the work performed by the team at Kev's Kustoms. Visit their website at www.kevskustoms.com.au if you would like to check out any more of their great work. For more information about Option Audio please visit www.teamoa.com.au for details about their products and audio-visual systems. Thanks to Mark from Option Audio and the trimmers and installers from Kev's Kustom Motor Trimming. <<<

INCAR INFO

Owner: John Iconomidis

Vehicle: 2000 Subaru Forester GT

Engine: EJ20 from 2000 WRX STi version 6

Mods: VF34 Turbo, UniChip with boost module, K&N cold air intake, GFB blow off valve, custom front-mount intercooler, 3-inch stainless piping, 3-inch exhaust with double dump

Brakes: DBA slotted discs with STi callipers

Suspension: Fulcrum adjustable coilovers, Whiteline anti-sway bars

Transmission: 2000 WRX STi version 6, short shift kit

Wheels and Tyres: 19-inch triple chrome plated Alba Banks wheels with Falken 225/35/19 tyres

Bodywork: 2004 WRX STi bonnet scoop, black paint with prismatic speckles, custom front bar, flame window tint

Interior: Interior re-trimmed in beach leather, MOMO gear knob, AutoMeter gauges, custom sub box trimmed in lemon suede

SYSTEM

Source Unit: Pioneer DVD Monitor Receiver

Front and Rear Speakers: OA Titan SQ6.5 6.5-inch component speakers

Speaker Amplifiers: 2 x Boschmann BM700 four-channel 700W amplifiers

Subwoofers: 4 x OA 12-inch SVC subwoofers

Subwoofer Amplifiers: 4 x Boschmann BM1000 four-channel 1000W amplifiers

Monitors: 4 x OA 6.5HDS 6.5-inch LCD head-rest monitors

Console: PS2 slimline

Battery: Optima 550CCA

Wiring: 8-gauge speaker wire; 4-gauge power and earth wire

Installation: Kev's Kustom Motor Trimming

Total Cost: \$4500