

PILGRIMAGE: JOHN MORAN'S TRIP TO JAPAN

# ZCCM

Z CAR CLUB MAGAZINE



**From** *Dreams*  
**to** **Reality**

Scott D. Hibbeler's 1990 300ZX

**INSIDE:**  
Z1 MOTORSPORT'S  
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firmed that not only was it real, but he had 4 other real GT-Rs on the premises. We were off to a good start! Watanabe-san invited us into the showroom and his wife of 29 years welcomed us with some green tea. As I looked around, I could see three of the real GT-Rs, a corner with some of Nissan's coolest engines on stands, and even a few motorcycles. We exchanged gifts and Watanabe-san could not have been more generous, especially with his time. We spent almost two hours looking at Zs and Skylines and talking with

# Rocky Auto



Watanabe-san. He said he had been doing this for 30 years, but his passion for these cars still seemed strong.

We were given the go-ahead to take as many pictures as we wanted, and before he could finish the sentence, I was snapping shots of his gorgeous black Kenmeri Skyline with an RB30 block, RB26 head, and ITBs. I posted a short



video of this engine running at [www.facebook.com/inlandempirez](http://www.facebook.com/inlandempirez) and it got thousands of views. The number of Zs and Skylines was impressive and with 3 other storage facilities, Rocky Auto has around 250 cars for sale. Just behind

the Kenmeri was Rocky Auto's S31Z in GT-R SpecV limited Ultimate Black Opal. The Work 3-piece wheels and huge wing definitely get people's attention, but it is the RB26 with TO4Z turbo putting out almost 600HP that really got my interest. Outside there were more Zs with Rocky Auto touches like the '74 "Carbon Z" with an RB30 block, RB26 head, and triple carbs and the '71 240ZG with an RB25 Turbo and paddle shifters. Both cars were on Volk Rays. The lot also had many potential cars, including many Skylines, S130s, Z31s, Z32s, and even a few LHD S30s from the States. I thought LHDs might have some novelty appeal, but he said there isn't much demand for them; however, he can convert them to RHD if the customer prefers. The impression I got was that he wanted to build cars that people would feel comfortable in, but when they pressed the gas, they knew they were driving something special. Check.

Back in Yokohama and I had a few days to look around and do some shopping. For me, shopping primarily consisted of die-cast cars. I picked up a couple of Nismo cars as souvenirs at the Nissan Global Headquarters, but found Bic Camera and Yodobashi Camera to be a little easier on my wallet. These are large electronics stores, which are usually easy to find outside train stations, and some of the locations have a decent selection of Tomica and Choro-

# Die-cast stores



Q. I heard that the Yodobashi in Akihabara was particularly good. I didn't make it to that one, but I did make a stop in Akihabara, which is a paradise for electronics and anime otaku (fanatics). I found a great selection of used die-cast cars there at a store called Liberty #11. The first floor was good, but it was the third floor that was very dangerous for me. I spent more than I could rationalize, but if my wife weren't with me, who's to say if my daughter's college fund would still be intact. Another good spot was the Tomica store in Nagoya. Prices were full retail, but they had some cool collector box sets, including one of my favorite finds, a Nissan Gloria and Cedric from *Seibu Police*. This was a '70s cop show that had more chases and stunts than the *Dukes of Hazard*, *Chips*, and *Starsky and Hutch* combined!

Back to the full size cars, or at least part of them. The next stop was the Nissan Engine Museum. We arrived around 10:30 on a rainy morning and saw a very solid looking rectangular building that used to be Nissan's original head office back around 1933. This is where Nissan started. Now, the two-story museum houses some of the coolest engines on the planet. As soon as I walked in, I was greeted by a staff member and she directed me to a robotic arm right near the door. The arm used to be a welder, but now had a second life drawing Z cars for guests, including Mr. K and Carlos Ghosn. As I started to move forward, a group tour came from the other direction, so I skipped ahead to the main display room for the engines. Some engines that caught my eye included the S20 previously noted, VG30DETT used in the Z32, and RB26DETT used in three generations of GT-Rs from R32 - R34. I even came across an L20ET which was used in many cars, including my former R30 Skyline GT. In addition to the engines, this room also had trophies from *Autoworld* for the 10 Best Engines, which the VQ won for 14 consecutive years!

Up to the second floor and there were two large rooms filled with elabo-

# Nissan Engine Museum