



# PORSCHE TOTTY

MARK HEDLEY TAKES CLUB GT'S ULTIMATE PERFORMANCE  
PORSCHE FOR A SPIN (NOT LITERALLY, THANK GOD)

PHOTOS BY BARRY HEDLEY

The Porsche GT3 put through its paces on Buckinghamshire's B-roads



**H**UMANS aren't meant to breathe underwater. That's why we look so stupid in scuba gear. We aren't meant to fly into space, and that's why astronauts have to look like marshmallows with elephantitis to get anywhere near. And likewise, cars aren't meant to have engines mounted in the rear. Yet somehow, the Porsche manages to do it, and look good. Damn good.

Porsches have been challenging the laws of gravity, physics and sense since Ferdinand Porsche decided to fit the powerplant back-to-front. And no iteration of this hare-brained idea has been such a fingers-up to common sense as well as the GT3.

In older models, Porsche had even resorted to balancing the rear weight by squeezing lumps of lead into the front bumpers. Fortunately, the GT3 incorporates a slightly more sophisticated solution - a lightweight engine. In fact, everything has been made lighter. It's the ultimate stripped-out GT car. No sunroof, no soundproofing, no rear seats. All this leads to a phenomenal power-to-weight ratio. One that was proved at the Nürburgring when the GT3 became the first production car to lap the northern circuit in less than eight minutes.

The winding roads of south Buckinghamshire don't quite provide the same rigorous testing ground as the Nordschleife. But only one sunny hour's drive from the car's home in Marylebone, it felt a world away from the cluttered roads of the capital. The open road appears as a glint in the GT3's eye-line. A toe slide on the throttle, and the engine opens up to the tune of 7800 wonderful revs per minute. Hurling along the empty B-roads, the only fear is of potholes, and policemen. Oh, and rain, of course.

After spending a weekend in the Porsche, my only complaint was of a sore backside. Rock hard suspension, low profile tyres and bumpy bitumen are not an ideal combination. But this car is not one for the

faint-hearted (or bony-arsed). In fact, you swiftly learn to treat the car with respect. After a while, it wasn't the car's fault - it was mine for not going to the gym more often. You become subservient to the GT3 whilst it shows you just what it's capable of. A capability which often exceeds that of the driver.

As with all Porsches, handling is somewhat counter-intuitive. When you feel the back end beginning to lose grip you need to accelerate. This pushes the weight backwards and allows the car to regain rear traction. It makes sense, really. So does nuclear power, but I don't always trust it. Once you begin to have faith, and the balls, just to accept that it works, then results are returned.

One of the few problems with the GT3 is its rarity. Even the new RS was sold out before the first carbon-fibre spoiler had been fitted.

So there really is only one way to experience it: as a member of a performance car club. The same applies for a host of classic sports cars: the Ferrari F355 GTB, Honda NSX, Lancia Delta Integrale Evo, to name but a few.

So it's just as well there's one club in London that has them all. CLUBGT is not just any old supercar club. It concentrates solely on drivers' cars: pure blood GT racers. As with all car clubs, you bypass the drawbacks of depreciation, maintenance and garaging. These are replaced with variety, service and endless opportunities to make your friends jealous. To join you'll need to pay the initial fee of £250 which includes a day's driver training on the road. After that, the £3750 annual membership fee will buy you between 20 and 50 driving days depending on what car you take and when you take it.

All the cars in Club GT are prestigious. They have heritage and history. And unlike scuba diving or space travel, they're sure to make you look good. ■ [www.clubgt.co.uk](http://www.clubgt.co.uk), 020 7935 8485

## ESSENTIALS

MAKE: Porsche > MODEL: GT3 > ENGINE: 3.6ltr 6-cylinder > POWER: 360bhp@7200 rpm > TORQUE: 273lb@5000rpm > TOP SPEED: 188mph > 0-60MPH: 4.5secs > PRICE: £85,000