

TUNA MAG

NO CRUST

Issue 002 Feb 2020



ISSUE 002 FEB 2020

BNBLEATHER.COM

It's funny, isn't it, when you see a dog who looks exactly like their owner. More often than not, our pets are a reflection of us, mimicking our movements and facial expressions - an extension of our energy levels and enthusiasm for life. You can almost shortlist and hazard a guess as to what type of breed one's dog is. The same may hold true with cars.

If we are to profile the owner of this stunning 260Z, taking the car's characteristics to develop a theoretical image of them, what would they look like? What would their interests be?

Let's begin with the lean, athletic body of the Z. It's long nose delicately transitioning to the muscular rear fastback styling of this Japanese wonder. The interior is a neat combination of comfort and class - tasteful modern enhancements scatter the cabin and whilst not wholly original, remaining true to it's time period. A wooden steering wheel gives an organic and emotive 'feel', indicating a vehicle empowered by an emotional experience over lap-times. A new engine. Happy to purr along, coming to life in a buzz of harmonic tones as the tachometer climbs, ready for action.

Taking what we know about this 260, the owner is likely to be an athletic type, strong and lean. They would appreciate the finer things in life, yet eagerly get their hands dirty when needed. Track days may well be on their agenda, but it would be about the 'feel' of the lap rather than the times. Competitive to the core but displaying sportsmanship above all else - one who would walk from the crease if they knew the ball had knicked the bat. Gracious in defeat, yet even more gracious as a winner, congratulating their opponent on a game well played.

Ben Hardman, the owner of this Fairlady 260Z, is a perfect mirror image of his car. A long, athletic figure approaches me as we meet up to chat more about his latest project...

"I have always loved Datsun's, always had a soft spot for them."

- Ben Hardman, Owner



BNB: Ben, thanks for sitting down with us! Tell us a little bit about your passion for cars...

So, I've always been into my cars, from my very first car – a TA22 1974 Celica – which I bought for six hundred bucks and spent about a year or so learning all about cars. I rebuilt the thing from scratch, spent thousands on it and did the interior trim myself, did the engine myself and then I think it got stolen about 2 years later.

They eventually found it but it wasn't insured. It was just trashed, they had bent the chassis rails and smashed the whole front end in. It sadly sat out the back of mum's house for a couple of years before I was ready to get cracking again and then life sort of got in the way... My career kind of took off and the car just sat there. I ended up giving it to a friend for parts, as a parts car, to build an absolute winner of a TA22.

BNB: What have you previously owned?

My whole life has basically been small Japanese cars, from the Celica, I went to a 1990 Corolla (a GTI or an SX or something) with a 4age in it. It was full Jap-spec, dumped on its' guts and had awful handling but it was heaps of fun! The next car was an S2000, which I had a little bit of work done to. I didn't do much to the engine but it had coil overs. I had that for a few years, then you know, had a family, things change and got a few trucks and stuff.

BNB: Have you always had a thing for JDM cars, and why the Z, more specifically the 260z?

I have always loved the Datsun's, always had a soft spot for them. I had always kind of wanted a Z. I guess it started about 3 or 4 years ago when I started looking for one. It took a while to find the right one (being as old as they are), they are prone to rust. I ended up finding one that had been on the market for 3 days, paid cash for it on the spot. It was a great car. The previous owner was meticulous, he was a fabricator / welder himself and he had done all the bodywork so it was too hard to pass up! One thing led to another, and many thousands of dollars later I have my Z.

BNB: Can you run through a bit of your build journey?

So, since I have had the car, it had a full rebuild from a chassis and body perspective under Mick (the previous owner). The engine had been built by a guy called Len Brennan. It had a pretty mild worked L28 in it but Len used to race targa Tasmania and I think he is about 90 now, and he built to customer specs and did a heap to the rest of the car – like dampeners, custom weight fluids, those sort of things. From a handling perspective, it already had the real basics there. When I got it, I was like, okay, so where to from here... I wanted to change the intake system, fuel delivery and I really wanted to keep it Japanese (as opposed to the Italian carbies that were on there). I sourced some 44mm Mikuni Solexes from Japan, had them cleaned up and they came out amazing. I took them to one of the best Datsun guys in the world, Les Collins – people from the US, Europe, Asia send their engines to him. Being a guru, I took it to him and we ran a couple of tests on the Brennan engine and saw it was a little bit tired, a bit old, and so umm, thirty thousand dollars later I got a brand new engine in there! Which you know, it's fast enough!



BNB: We are very thankful that you trusted in us to revive the Z's tired interior. What made you choose BNB?

I think you and I had a conversation one day, when we were out on the bike or something, and I ended up getting introduced to Dave. I was like, okay, let's get into this! He was amazing at understanding the brief I wanted to do, I wanted to keep really close to original, not quite a resto mod style, but incorporate some little details that made it my own.

BNB: We thoroughly enjoyed the design process, working with you to realise your vision. How did you find the process?

I wanted to incorporate things that, I felt, Datsun had missed. The car being a '77, it's got timber trim in the doors, but that was the only timber bits in the car yet the early 240's had a timber steering wheel and gear knob and all these sorts of things. I wanted to incorporate all of the best bits from the S30 series – the 240, 260, 280 and bring them into one interior and what BnB did, hit the brief absolutely on the head. Things like the eyelets on the seats, whilst they weren't on the later 260 seats, they worked really, really well sitting in these seats, being a slightly different shape to the 240's. The door panels and that super clean rear area, I wanted a stereo that was a modern stereo but looked completely original for the time, one that just fitted in nicely. You absolutely nailed the brief in terms of that and I couldn't be happier.



BNB: I know that you're a demon on the mountain bike, what would be your ultimate adventure car? One that could do it all!

Well, I've kind of got it at the moment! I have a 2019 Ranger Raptor. I do a lot of camping, we are pretty outdoorsy, and I can stick my dirtbikes on the back. I saw that ad when they first came out where they were jumping it and I thought 'got-ta give that a crack'! It's got Fox Racing coilovers all around, you know, it's pretty good – there's not much more I would wanna do to it. In terms of an adventure car, it's pretty good.

BNB: Anything else left to do on the Z?

Not really, It's pretty much done now. I have been considering painting it again, but then you are biting off a big chunk then. Maybe I'll just change the wheels and put on the ZG flares, changing it to a different colour, flares in black. Who knows?! I do have the car up for sale actually, ready for the next project...

BNB: What comes next for Ben Hardman???

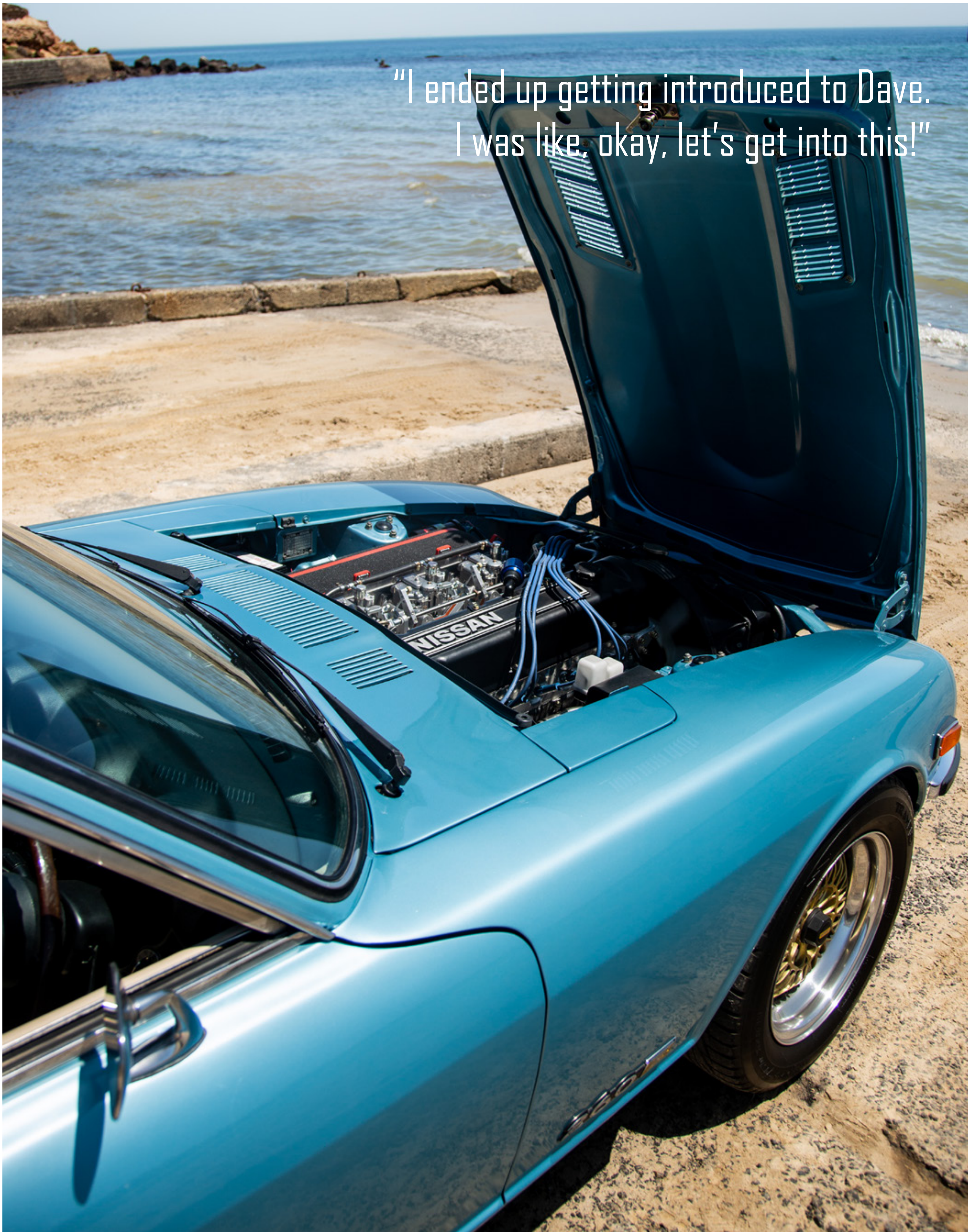
Well, haha, I bought another Datsun! A '66 fairlady roadster, so that's going to be the next project...



" Things like the eyelets on the seats, whilst they weren't on the later 260 seats, they worked really, really well sitting in these



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: 1. The original seats include 'fairlady Z' embroidery and sporty eyelets, taking inspiration from earlier 240Z models. 2. A good way to spend 30 grand is on a brand new engine for your 260Z. 3. Great move to add in the Timber steering wheel and gear knob. 4. A door to a better life...



"I ended up getting introduced to Dave. I was like, okay, let's get into this!"



"Well, haha, I bought another Datsun! A '66 fairlady roadster, so that's going to be the next project...."



Here are our TOP6 features in Ben’s build. Ben has style. You can too...



ORIGINAL SEAT RESTORATION

Original Z seats, restored by sandblasting the frame and adding new foams to ensure comfort and durability. Seats are trimmed in Italian Nappa leather with embroidered “Fairlady Z” logo and black eyelets.

RRP \$3,899 (installed)



CUSTOM STYLED BOOT TRIM

Using inspiration from the original design, our team took the boot area to new levels. Carefully templated panels ensure an elite finish.

RRP \$2,499



DESIGN CONSULTATION

1 hour consultation with BNB head of design, Naish Chapman. Discuss the vision for your car and be educated as to what is possible – you will be surprised with how far imagination can take you!

From \$250



SEAMLESS AUDIO ENHANCMENT

Enhance the audio in your retro car with our custom made sound bar and bluetooth audio. You won’t see the difference but your ears will thank you later. Seamless integration. Alpine audio system with Audison speakers.

RRP \$2,499 (installed)



CARPETS

Following the original design of the 260Z, these custom made carpets bring the car into a new life. Easy to clean, durable and look great.

RRP \$1,350 (installed)



SOUND DEADENING

Car Builders Sound Deadener is a vibration (sound) dampening mat. The material consists of an anti-drum noise absorption layer, combined with an aluminium top layer forming a heat and acoustic barrier.

RRP \$1,250 (installed)

A close-up photograph of the interior of a blue sports car. The focus is on the tan leather seats, which feature a perforated texture and horizontal stitching. The driver's seat has a "Fairlady Z" logo embroidered on the upper backrest. The car's body is a vibrant blue, and the window frame is visible on the left. The text "THIS VEHICLE WAS BUILT BY" is overlaid in white, uppercase letters.

THIS VEHICLE WAS BUILT BY

INTERIOR & AUDIO

BNB PRODUCTS
1/61 Frankston Gardens Dve, Carrum Downs, VIC
email: david.bbproducts@gmail.com
www.bnbleather.com

ENGINE

LES COLLINS RACING
8 Olympic St, Warragul VIC 3820
Tel. 613 5623 3108
[www. http://lescollinsracing.com](http://www.lescollinsracing.com)