



THE MERCEDES-BENZ CLK CLASS, TWO-DOOR COUPE
ENGINE: 193 HORSEPOWER; ACCELERATION: 0-60MPH
IN 8.3 SECS TOP SPEED 243 KM/H

THE OWNER:

Andrew Doong, Computer and Electronic Engineering, Year 4

HOW HE GOT THE RIDE:

"The car was meant for my mother, but I use it every day since my parents have retired."

THE EXPERIENCE:

"When I first got this car, I felt like I was driving something special. But nowadays when I go to Zouk, I feel like I'm at the bottom of the food chain," jokes Andrew, as sports cars become more common nowadays.

Though he sees himself as "just another driver on the road", he has been called names like ah-sia-kia (master's son), which he tries to shrug off.

He is certainly particular in keeping the car in shape. "Every time it rains, the first thing I do when I get home, without fail, is to clean the car. In fact, my friends think I have OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) because I clean the car so much," chuckles Andrew.

The ex-President of the NTU Motoring Club pays visits to Pasir Gudang, a racetrack in Malaysia to hone his skills. Donuts, the art of spinning the car round in circles, is just one of the many tricks this seasoned driver has up his sleeve.

He once took a two-day BMW Intermediate Driver's Course with his best friend up in Malaysia. The instructor was shocked. "We wore out the tyres by the second day," he recalled.

"Had it been other cars, I don't think I could have made it."



2002 PORSCHE 996 C4S; TWO-DOOR REAR ENGINE ALL-WHEEL DRIVE; ENGINE: 320 HORSEPOWER ACCELERATION: 0-60MPH IN 6.8 SECS TOP SPEED 280 KM/H

THE OWNER:

A/P Rowena Jong

HOW SHE GOT THE RIDE:

A mother of three, A/P Jong still drives in the fast lane with her Porsche Carrera 996. "It's like having a personal relationship with the car," she said. "After you've driven it for long, you know what it can give you and what it cannot."

THE EXPERIENCE:

She grew attached to the car after an accident along Nanyang Avenue where her Porsche's high-response braking system saved her life. AP

Jong still remembers the incident clearly: the car she was overtaking turned into her path, forcing her to swerve onto the pavement where her Porsche ended up inches away from falling into the canal by Hall 11.

"I closed my eyes and stepped hard on the brakes," she said. "Had it been other cars, I don't think I could have made it." Porsches are known for their braking system for safe high-speed driving.

In school, her car has fallen victim to vandalism. Just three weeks ago, nails were driven into her tyres when she parked near a construction site. Another time, she returned to find a big scratch, about a forearm's length, on her car door.

On the other hand, her number plate number is eye-catching. "The cleaning lady in the South Spine once said to me, 'Your car must be very inexpensive. Noone wants to buy a car with the plate number 911 on it, how unlucky!'"

Besides style, she says the Porsche is about function too. Being an all-wheel drive it provides extra stability on bends and corners. The low body and firm grip tyres ensures the car holds well on wet roads.

"My children don't like sitting in my Porsche though, and they always complain they have to squeeze in the back," said AP Jong.

"I like gadgets and this is a bigger gadget," she said. "A lot more alertness and a quick reaction is required when driving the Porsche at an enjoyable speed. As long as my senses can support me, I'll still buy a Porsche."

THE NISSAN 350Z, TWO-DOOR CONVERTIBLE
ENGINE: 280 HORSEPOWER ACCELERATION: 0-60MPH IN 5.4 SECS TOP SPEED 240KM/H

THE OWNER:

Walter Ong, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Year 3

HOW HE GOT THE RIDE:

The sporty roadster is his father's property, and Walter gets to drive it around three days a week, when dad takes the other car to work.

THE EXPERIENCE:

While Walter Ong takes pride in the orange roadster, he admits it is a love-hate relationship with the attention it brings.

"I've had tailgaters that tried to race me," says Walter. To stay safe, he ignores the attention as he prefers being a "sleeper" rather than "over the top" in case it gets him into trouble.

The attention garnered by his 350Z did help Walter as the President of the NTU Motoring Club. During this year's ECA fair, some freshies expressed interest in his car parked near the fairgrounds - the perfect chance for him to tell them about the club.

The right kind of attention often makes his day too, and when drivers give him the thumbs up at traffic lights or compliment him for his car in carparks it brings a smile to Walter's face. "People do give me interesting comments from time to time like 'I seldom see a young man in a fast car, I mostly see an old man behind the wheel.'"

Since the stylish exterior is what Walter loves most about his car, he takes special care to keep it in shape, and takes it for monthly visits to "the beautician's". In fact, he polishes this car more often than his own.

Off the roads, the hardcore Manchester United fan likes engaging in a game of soccer. Though he has the athletic looks to go with a good-looking car, to Walter, the image of his 350Z matters more than his own. "I prefer it when the attention is on the car, not the driver."

Groovy Moves

Ever wondered who these cool rides belong to? **Cheong Kah Shin** meets the people behind the wheel

THE 2007 JDM HONDA CIVIC TYPE-R, TWO-DOOR FRONT WHEEL DRIVE
ENGINE: 220 HORSEPOWER; ACCELERATION: 0-60MPH IN 6.4 SECS
TOP SPEED 235 KM/H

THE OWNER:

Virnice Tan, HSS (Psychology), Year 2

HOW SHE GOT THE RIDE:

"It was a surprise from my dad. He did mention he was getting another car, but he didn't mention he was getting this. One day I just came home, saw this, and I was really lost for words."

THE EXPERIENCE:

She knows her car's specs by heart. Her white Honda Civic looks like a normal saloon car, but houses a V-TEC

performance engine that turns most car enthusiasts on. "Once it crosses 5100 rpm, you can actually hear the engine whirring. I get this adrenaline rush," says Virnice who inherited her love for cars from her dad who chairs the Singapore Motor Sports Association (SMSA).

Her knowledge of cars serves her well in everyday life. "It's rare for a girl to be so interested in cars,

so it makes a good conversation starter when strangers find out." Yet Virnice says her car also attracts attention in the racing world so she gets tailgated rather often. "The fact that you are a P-plater and a female, they tend to bully you on the roads even more."

She admits that maintaining a white car is troublesome, especially as the tyres are prone to collecting brake dust. Just cleaning the rims alone can take a good 45 minutes for a serious car lover like her.

Cars are second nature to Virnice, who grew up around them. Her dad is an ex-racer, and often takes her to races and racetracks overseas. "I suspect he might be trying to groom me into a racer too," she laughs. Her mother has no objections and is very supportive.

With Formula One coming to Singapore soon, perhaps we'll see Virnice in the stands, or even better, on the tracks.

THE TOYOTA MR-S, TWO-DOOR CONVERTIBLE, MID-ENGINE, REAR-WHEEL DRIVE. ENGINE: 140 HORSEPOWER; ACCELERATION: 0-60MPH IN 8 SECS. TOP SPEED 170KM/H

THE OWNER:

Benny Kwek, Electronic and Electrical Engineering, Year 4

HOW HE GOT THE RIDE:

Benny got this car as a gift for his 22nd birthday, despite doing some "serious damage" to his first Hyundai Coupe.

THE EXPERIENCE:

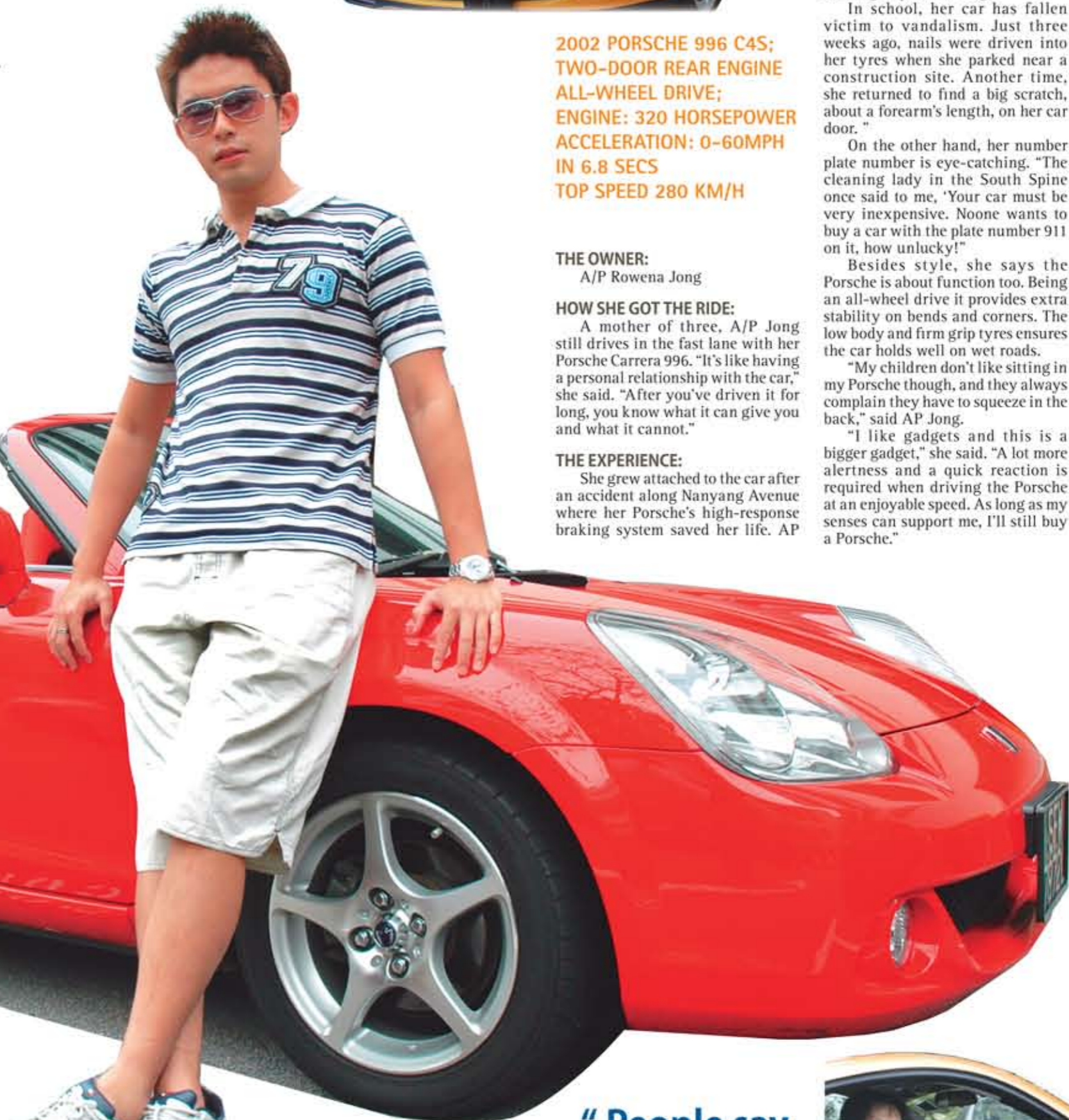
A red sports car - now that spells classic beauty at its best.

Owner Benny is no stranger to privileges that come with an eye-

catching car. He parks on hotel driveways instead of the usual basement carpark. The car attracts more attention from valets who fight for a spot in the driver's seat.

"That said, the traffic police spot you a lot more easily as well," joked Benny.

Aware that his car is hardly inconspicuous, Benny does not drive it into Malaysia or other places where



which cost \$400 to repair.

Contrary to popular belief, Benny wasn't born with a silver spoon in his mouth. "In fact, my family started off as a small seafood import business. We have been through our share of bad times," he said.

Despite owning a fast car, Benny is modest about speeding. "My mother always tells me that I have a long way to go, it's not worthwhile doing something like that. Speeding not only harms myself but harms others on the road as well."

safety is a problem. "I wouldn't want to return with just the four wheels," he laughed.

Though he makes it a point to keep watch of his car when he can, accidents happen. Once, he parked in the Canteen A carpark and returned to find a dent on his left car door

"People say, 'I seldom see a young man in a fast car. It's mostly old men' "

