

Driven by Passion: Engineers Igniting a Generation

Japanese Cars and Motorcycles of the 1980s-1990s



Leaflet Introduction

1980s-1990s.
It was a passionate era when young people were captivated by cars and motorcycles.

What stirred their excitement was the very embodiment of the engineers' passion-machines created through relentless efforts to achieve breakthroughs in existing technologies.

In Driven by Passion: Engineers Igniting a Generation, we focus on high-performance vehicles.
With the cooperation of eight manufacturers, the exhibition brings together seventeen remarkable cars and motorcycles that are still celebrated today.

This leaflet also includes descriptions of each vehicle prepared by the manufacturers themselves.
We hope you will take it with you as a memento of your visit, and as a reminder of the excitement that the engineers of that era inspired in a generation of young enthusiasts.

April 2026
Toyota Automobile Museum

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Honda Collection Hall

MAZDA MUSEUM

Subaru Visitor Center

MITSUBISHI AUTO GALLERY

Yamaha Motor Communication Plaza

SUZUKI PLAZA

Kawasaki Good Times World



■ Production Year: 1993
■ Overall Length/Width/Height (mm): 4,520/1,810/1,275
■ Wheelbase (mm): 2,550 ■ Vehicle Curb Weight (kg): 1,490
■ Engine Type: Inline 6 DOHC turbo
■ Engine Displacement (cm³): 2,997
■ Max Power (kW/PS/min⁻¹): 206/280/5,600

The Supra (JZA80), released in 1993, featured a 3.0-liter inline-six engine, double wishbone suspension on all four wheels, and a lightweight, high-rigidity body. It is a sports car that achieves an exceptional balance of handling performance, safety, environmental consideration, and comfort.



■ Production Year: 2000
■ Overall Length/Width/Height (mm): 4,600/1,785/1,360
■ Wheelbase (mm): 2,665 ■ Vehicle Curb Weight (kg): 1,560
■ Engine Type: Inline 6 DOHC turbo
■ Engine Displacement (cm³): 2,568
■ Max Power (kW/PS/min⁻¹): 206/280/6,800

The R34 Skyline GT-R debuted in 1999. The V-spec II, introduced in August of the following year, featured elements such as a carbon hood with a NACA duct, giving it a distinctly more Spartan character. The exhibit vehicle is a special example finished in the exclusive Bayside Blue color



■ Production Year: 1991
■ Overall Length/Width/Height (mm): 4,430/1,810/1,170
■ Wheelbase (mm): 2,530 ■ Vehicle Curb Weight (kg): 1,350
■ Engine Type: V6 DOHC
■ Engine Displacement (cm³): 2,977
■ Max Power (kW/PS/min⁻¹): 206/280/7,300

The NSX was developed under the concept of a “comfortable F1,” embodying a human-centered approach that achieves both high performance and comfort at an exceptional level. It features the world’s first all-aluminum monocoque body for a production car and the mid-ship layout, marking it as a new-generation sports car.



■ Production Year: 1990
■ Overall Length/Width/Height (mm): 4,815/1,795/1,305
■ Wheelbase (mm): 2,750 ■ Vehicle Curb Weight (kg): 1,590
■ Engine Type: Inline 3 rotor turbo
■ Engine Displacement (cm³): 654 × 3
■ Max Power (kW/PS/min⁻¹): 206/280/6,500

The Eunos Cosmo was a premium personal coupe created with the aim of becoming “the greatest rotary-powered car in history.” Its three-rotor engine—the first of its kind in mass production—was paired with a sequential twin-turbo system, delivering overwhelming performance and a level of smoothness comparable to that of a V12 engine.



■ Production Year: 1985
■ Overall Length/Width/Height (mm): 4,310/1,690/1,270
■ Wheelbase (mm): 2,430 ■ Vehicle Curb Weight (kg): 1,240
■ Engine Type: Inline 2 rotor turbo
■ Engine Displacement (cm³): 654 × 2
■ Max Power (kW/PS/min⁻¹): 136/185/6,500

The FC-generation Savanna RX-7 was the first full redesign of the model, featuring packaging that took full advantage of the rotary engine's compact size and high output. It was well received, particularly in the North American market. Aimed at being a genuine sports car for mature drivers, the FC generation achieved an advanced balance between “driving performance” and “comfort.”



■ Production Year: 1997
■ Overall Length/Width/Height (mm): 4,680/1,695/1,490
■ Wheelbase (mm): 2,630 ■ Vehicle Curb Weight (kg): 1,490
■ Engine Type: Flat 4 DOHC turbo
■ Engine Displacement (cm³): 1,994
■ Max Power (kW/PS/min⁻¹): 191/260/6,500

The Legacy Touring Wagon GT-B is a model that elevated the value of the sport wagon category. Its twin-turbo engine delivers excellent acceleration with high torque available from low rpm. Combined with Bilstein dampers and SUBARU's traditional AWD layout, it offers enhanced vehicle stability and provides a confident driving experience on all types of roads.



■ Production Year: 1996
■ Overall Length/Width/Height (mm): 4,600/1,840/1,280
■ Wheelbase (mm): 2,470 ■ Vehicle Curb Weight (kg): 1,670
■ Engine Type: V6 DOHC turbo
■ Engine Displacement (cm³): 2,972
■ Max Power (kW/PS/min⁻¹): 206/280/6,000

GTO is a model that inherits the innovative technologies of the advanced study model, the HSR. Designed under the concept of a “sports car anyone can drive,” it achieves ideal driving performance through AWC (All Wheel Control). It features advanced technologies such as a 280-ps twin-turbo engine and active aerodynamics. Its low and wide styling is also a distinctive characteristic.

クルマの図書室 AUTOMOBILE DISCOVERY LIBRARY



The “Automobile Discovery Library” on the 3rd floor of the Cultural Gallery is holding a limited-time book exhibition linked to the “Driven by Passion” special exhibition.
We have a wide collection of automotive materials, ranging from car catalogs to picture books for children. Please be sure to visit us as well.

Driven by Passion: Engineers Igniting a Generation

Japanese Cars and Motorcycles of the 1980s-1990s



HONDA VFR750R(RC30)

■ Production Year:	1987
■ Overall Length/Width/Height (mm):	2,045/700/1,100
■ Wheelbase (mm):	1,410
■ Dry mass (kg):	180
■ Engine Type:	Liquid-cooled, 4-stroke V-type Four, DOHC, 16-valves camgear train
■ Engine Displacement (cc):	748
■ Max Power (kW/PS/min ⁻¹):	57/77/9,500 (JPN model)

The RC30 is the ultimate racer replica, based on the VFR 750F engine and equipped with high-end, high-precision components such as titanium connecting rods and chromoly camshafts, as well as the same suspension system used on the race-only RVF. Only 1,000 units were sold in Japan.

※The exhibit model is the Japan-spec model.



HONDA CBR1100XX Super Blackbird

■ Production Year:	1996
■ Overall Length/Width/Height (mm):	2,160/720/1,170
■ Wheelbase (mm):	1,490
■ Dry mass (kg):	223
■ Engine Type:	Liquid-cooled, 4-stroke In-line Four, DOHC, 16-valves
■ Engine Displacement (cc):	1,137
■ Max Power (kW/PS/min ⁻¹):	121/164/10,000

The CBR1100XX is the culmination of the high-speed touring series that had been popular in Europe since the release of the CBR1000F in 1987. Its 164-horsepower monster engine is wrapped in an aerodynamically designed body inspired by a stealth fighter, and it became the first production motorcycle to achieve the legendary top speed of 300 km/h.



YAMAHA VMAX

■ Production Year:	1990
■ Overall Length/Width/Height (mm):	2,300/785/1,175
■ Wheelbase (mm):	1,590
■ Dry mass (kg):	264
■ Engine Type:	Liquid-cooled, 4-stroke V-type Four, DOHC, 16-valves
■ Engine Displacement (cc):	1,197
■ Max Power (kW/PS/min ⁻¹):	71/97/7,000 (JPN model)

The VMAX was developed with inspiration from American drag racing and the short-distance acceleration contests enjoyed by young riders there. When it was released in the United States in 1985, it became an instant hit thanks to its overwhelming 145-horsepower performance, explosive acceleration, and unmistakably dynamic styling. The model went on to be loved by fans around the world for the next two decades.

※The exhibit model is the Japan-spec model.



SUZUKI GSX1100S KATANA

■ Production Year:	1984
■ Overall Length/Width/Height (mm):	2,260/715/1,205
■ Wheelbase (mm):	1,520
■ Dry mass (kg):	232
■ Engine Type:	Air-cooled, 4-stroke In-line Four, DOHC, 16-valves
■ Engine Displacement (cc):	1,074
■ Max Power (kW/PS/min ⁻¹):	82/111/8,500

Unveiled at the 1980 Cologne Motor Show in Germany, distinctive design of the GSX1100S KATANA—modeled after a Japanese katana—was hailed as the “Cologne Shock” and drew widespread attention. Its futuristic styling had a significant impact on motorcycle design, and the model went on to become a long-selling favorite among riders, remaining in production until 2000.



SUZUKI GSX1300R Hayabusa

■ Production Year:	1999
■ Overall Length/Width/Height (mm):	2,140/740/1,155
■ Wheelbase (mm):	1,485
■ Dry mass (kg):	215
■ Engine Type:	Liquid-cooled, 4-stroke In-line Four, DOHC, 16-valves
■ Engine Displacement (cc):	1,298
■ Max Power (kW/PS/min ⁻¹):	129/175/9,500

Developed under the concept of creating “the ultimate sport bike for public roads,” the GSX1300R Hayabusa is instantly recognizable with its vertically arranged twin headlights and advanced, aerodynamically refined design. As Suzuki’s flagship model, its outstanding performance earned high praise from riders around the world.



KAWASAKI ZXR400R

■ Production Year:	1989
■ Overall Length/Width/Height (mm):	2,025/705/1,125
■ Wheelbase (mm):	1,395
■ Dry mass (kg):	160
■ Engine Type:	Liquid-cooled, 4-stroke In-line Four, DOHC, 16-valves
■ Engine Displacement (cc):	398
■ Max Power (kW/PS/min ⁻¹):	43/59/12,000

The ZXR400R is the sport-production version of the ZXR400, introduced in 1989. Equipped with FCR carburetors, an engine featuring a close-ratio transmission, a high-rigidity aluminum twin-spar frame, adjustable suspension, and an FRP single seat, it was truly a race-focused machine. In 1990, it went on to win the All Japan Road Race Championship TT-F3 class.

※The exhibit model is the Japan-spec model.



HONDA CBR900RR Fireblade

■ Production Year:	1992
■ Overall Length/Width/Height (mm):	2,055/685/1,115
■ Wheelbase (mm):	1,405
■ Dry mass (kg):	185
■ Engine Type:	Liquid-cooled, 4-stroke In-line Four, DOHC, 16-valves
■ Engine Displacement (cc):	893
■ Max Power (kW/PS/min ⁻¹):	91/124/10,500

The Fireblade is a supersport machine that brought innovation to the liter-class segment by scaling up a previously pre-developed inline-4 750cc engine to 900cc and fitting it into a body as light as a 600cc model. This combination delivers acceleration that surpasses 1000cc models and handling that responds precisely to the rider’s input.



YAMAHA RZV500R

■ Production Year:	1984
■ Overall Length/Width/Height (mm):	2,085/685/1,145
■ Wheelbase (mm):	1,375
■ Dry mass (kg):	173
■ Engine Type:	Liquid-cooled, 2-stroke V-type Four
■ Engine Displacement (cc):	499
■ Max Power (kW/PS/min ⁻¹):	47/64/8,500 (JPN model)

The RZV500R is an iconic model that symbolizes the “racer-replica boom,” created by Yamaha using technologies derived from the YZR500 Grand Prix machine. While rival manufacturers released 400cc models that could be ridden with a mid-class license, Yamaha remained committed to the original 500cc displacement. The RZV500R attracted such passionate fans that many young riders went so far as to attend training schools to obtain the highly difficult license exemption required to ride it.

※The exhibit model is the Japan-spec model.



YAMAHA YZF-R1

■ Production Year:	1998
■ Overall Length/Width/Height (mm):	2,035/695/1,095
■ Wheelbase (mm):	1,395
■ Dry mass (kg):	177
■ Engine Type:	Liquid-cooled, 4-stroke In-line Four, DOHC, 20-valves
■ Engine Displacement (cc):	998
■ Max Power (kW/PS/min ⁻¹):	110/150/10,000

The YZF-R1 is a model that revolutionized the world of sports motorcycles with a concept focused on delivering “the ultimate excitement” on winding roads. Its lightweight and compact 1,000cc inline-four engine produces powerful yet highly manageable torque and power, and features such as the DeltaBox II frame, which achieves an ideal chassis layout, made it truly groundbreaking. This machine ushered in a new era for the supersport category, which had previously centered around 750cc engines in race-inspired models.



SUZUKI RG400Γ

■ Production Year:	1985
■ Overall Length/Width/Height (mm):	2,100/695/1,185
■ Wheelbase (mm):	1,425
■ Dry mass (kg):	153
■ Engine Type:	Liquid-cooled, 2-stroke Square-type Four
■ Engine Displacement (cc):	397
■ Max Power (kW/PS/min ⁻¹):	43/59/9,000

Incorporating technologies from the RΓ1, which won the manufacturers’ championship in the 500cc World Grand Prix for seven consecutive years, the RG400Γ features a distinctive “square-four” engine layout with four cylinders arranged in a square formation, along with a lightweight and highly rigid aluminum-alloy frame. These advanced technologies enabled the machine to achieve impressive agility and performance despite its compact and lightweight construction, earning it high acclaim.



KAWASAKI GPZ900R
(North America model name: Ninja)

■ Production Year:	1984
■ Overall Length/Width/Height (mm):	2,200/750/1,215
■ Wheelbase (mm):	1,495
■ Dry mass (kg):	228
■ Engine Type:	Liquid-cooled, 4-stroke In-line Four, DOHC, 16-valves
■ Engine Displacement (cc):	908
■ Max Power (kW/PS/min ⁻¹):	85/115/9,500

After extensive trial and error to surpass the Z1 introduced in 1972, Kawasaki ultimately arrived at a liquid-cooled, inline-four DOHC 16-valve engine. The innovative styling incorporates aerodynamic elements, newly introduced engine with side-mounted cam chain, while the chassis—constructed around a diamond frame that integrates the engine as a structural component—achieves both high riding performance and ease of handling.



KAWASAKI ZZ-R1100
(North America model name: Ninja ZX-11)

■ Production Year:	1990
■ Overall Length/Width/Height (mm):	2,165/720/1,210
■ Wheelbase (mm):	1,480
■ Dry mass (kg):	228
■ Engine Type:	Liquid-cooled, 4-stroke In-line Four, DOHC, 16-valves
■ Engine Displacement (cc):	1,052
■ Max Power (kW/PS/min ⁻¹):	108/147/10,500

Beginning with the GPZ900R, Kawasaki’s line of high-power machines continued to evolve through the GPZ1000RX and the ZX-10, ultimately leading to the birth of the ZZ-R1100. Based on the ZX-10 engine—refined around the cylinder head to reach 137 PS—the displacement was further increased, raising output to 147 PS. With the addition of a ram-air system, this model marked Kawasaki’s bold entry into the realm of 300 km/h performance.

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Japanese Cars and Motorcycles of the 1980s-1990s

物語

MONOGATARI ~STORIES~



トヨタ博物館
TOYOTA AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM

Introduction

Thank you for visiting Driven by Passion: Engineers Igniting a Generation-Japanese Cars and Motorcycles of the 1980s and 1990s. We hope you enjoyed the exhibition and sensed the quiet yet intense passion of the engineers who shaped that remarkable era.

This leaflet was created with the cooperation of the participating manufacturers, who kindly shared firsthand accounts from their development teams at the time. Gathered here as a collection of stories, these accounts reveal how the legendary machines that captivated a generation were born-what the engineers aimed to achieve, and how they viewed their rivals.

Before turning to these stories, we would like to briefly introduce the historical context of the era, which may help you appreciate them even more.

Cars

The 1970s was the decade when Japanese automobiles entered the global market with their reliability, fuel efficiency, and competitive pricing. At the same time, however, the reduction of exhaust emissions had become a major challenge. Sports cars gradually lost much of their appeal with each successive model change.

Once Japanese manufacturers had technically overcome strict emissions regulations, the domestic market entered a new phase in the 1980s-an era defined by a fierce competition for power. Engines grew larger, multivalve technology became widespread, and turbochargers appeared on more and more models. With each new generation of vehicles, catalog performance figures rose dramatically, and some cars tested by magazines were capable of exceeding 200 km/h. At development sites, a new ambition began to emerge: “Not only fuel economy and quality, but driving performance as well—let us challenge the world.”

Yet the global benchmark proved far more formidable than expected. When high-performance cars that performed well in the domestic market were taken onto Germany’s Autobahn, drivers found themselves unable to push them to higher speeds with confidence. Stability at speed was inadequate, and even windshield wipers struggled to function properly. On the Nürburgring circuit, where European competitors conducted repeated testing, some cars could not even complete a full lap.

It was from this point that their true challenge began.

Motorcycles

The emissions regulations introduced in 1978 had a profound impact on motorcycles as well. Compact and powerful two-stroke engines faced structural difficulties in achieving cleaner emissions, and many believed that the era of the two-stroke engine had come to an end.

In response, engineers introduced innovations such as water cooling and improved intake and exhaust control systems. In the 1980s, these breakthroughs gave rise in Japan to a major boom in 250cc two-stroke racer-replica motorcycles. The engineers’ technological breakthroughs created a powerful wave in the domestic market.

Meanwhile, large-displacement motorcycles produced in Japan primarily for export continued to gain prominence throughout the 1980s. Performance competition increasingly became a contest among Japanese manufacturers themselves. Advances in aerodynamics and refined design further enhanced their reputation. From this environment emerged a new rivalry—the race to create the world’s fastest motorcycle.

With this background in mind, we hope the stories that follow will offer a deeper appreciation of the passion and determination of the engineers behind each manufacturer’s achievements.

TOYOTA

A80 Supra THE SPORTS OF TOYOTA

“I want to control a car exactly as I intend.”

The A80 Supra was developed in direct response to this fundamental human desire. At the core of the project was the philosophy of Chief Engineer Isao Tsuzuki : to connect the driver’s input and the car’s response as directly as possible. Electronic control devices such as electronically controlled suspensions—technologies that many manufacturers were eagerly adopting at the time—were deliberately avoided. Instead, the development team focused on refining the fundamentals: reducing weight by approximately 100 kilograms and achieving ideal aerodynamic characteristics. What this car pursued was not speed alone. It sought a truly authentic sports-car experience: steering feedback that a driver could feel through the palms of the hands, and a firm, communicative brake feel transmitted through the soles of the feet—driving in which car and driver become one. The project began with a fundamental question: who should evaluate the car? Drivers capable of pushing the world’s leading sports cars to their limits and translating those insights into engineering design were selected as DPs (Designated Panelists) and rigorously trained in demanding environments such as the Nürburgring. A car in which the driver’s intention and the vehicle’s response are connected without the slightest delay. Embodiment of that philosophy, the Supra was later adopted as a driver training vehicle within Toyota, where for many years it continued to refine the driving skills and sensibilities of engineers. THE SPORTS OF TOYOTA, carried forward by these engineers, would live on in the next generation of Toyota sports cars.



NISSAN

From Performance to Emotion
A Breakthrough in the Pursuit of the Ultimate

What exactly was Nissan’s P901 project?

Often referred to simply as the “901 Activity,” those who were involved describe it as a project initiative with a clear objective: to achieve the world’s best chassis performance by 1990. One of the vehicles that embodied the results of this project was the R32 Skyline GT-R, introduced in 1989. Equipped with a 2.6-liter inline six-cylinder twin-cam twin-turbo engine, the electronically controlled torque-split 4WD system ATTESA E-TS, and a four-wheel multi-link suspension, the model carried the GT-R tradition of proving performance through racing. Nissan’s decision to use Germany’s Nürburgring as a test field would later influence many manufacturers around the world. Following the Chief Engineer Naganori Ito, Kozo Watanabe led the development of the R33 and R34 models. As Watanabe and the team worked to surpass high-performance German sports cars, they reached a conclusion “The GT-R’s true rival is the GT-R itself.” As each generation of the GT-R embodied the philosophy of performance through the most advanced technology of its era, focus expanded beyond lap times to the pursuit of ultimate driving pleasure. This moment marked a breakthrough—when Japanese automobiles moved beyond chasing European performance to pursuing the emotional value of the driving experience. That philosophy continued into the R35 NISSAN GT-R, remaining a defining principle until production ended in August 2025. The breakthroughs achieved in this evolution have become part of the DNA of the GT-R and will continue to live on.



HONDA

Honda’s Super Sports Car Guided by the MM Concept

At the foundation of Honda’s automobile design lies the MM concept—Man Maximum, Machine Minimum.

The first-generation NSX was developed to bring this human-centered philosophy into the realm of high-performance sports cars.

At the time, super sports cars emphasized maximum power and top speed. The NSX reversed this thinking and focused instead on predictable responses to driver inputs.

Despite its mid-engine layout, the NSX secured excellent forward visibility through a low cowl height and slim A-pillars while achieving a natural driving position.

The body featured the world’s first mass-produced all-aluminum monocoque structure, keeping weight to approximately 1,350 kg.

Its 3.0-liter V6 DOHC VTEC engine (C30A) produced 280 ps and revved beyond 8,000 rpm while maintaining smooth throttle response.

During development, Ayrton Senna pointed out insufficient body rigidity. Testing at the Nürburgring led to improvements increasing rigidity by about 30 percent.

Completed in 1990, the NSX redefined the super sports car-not a machine to fear, but one that inspires confidence.

It proved that Honda’s human-centered philosophy could achieve world-class performance.



MAZDA

“Something Different,
Something Distinctive,
Something Innovative”

With this rallying cry from the head of research and development, Mazda’s surge in car-making during the 1980s began.

Kenichi Yamamoto, who became Mazda’s sixth president, advocated the corporate philosophy of “Automotive Culture.” He believed that the automobile should be closely connected with everyday life and enrich the culture of living. To achieve this, Mazda committed itself to pursuing new technologies and innovation.

At a time when Japanese cars were sweeping the world with their high quality and competitive pricing, Mazda asked a deeper question: what should a car be for people? The company sought to create vehicles that resonated with drivers’ emotions and sensibilities, building a brand with a strong presence in both engineering and design. Engineers were inspired to take on the challenge of proposing entirely new values.

In developing the Savanna RX-7, Mazda conducted extensive market research to identify the image of the ideal sports car. The result was a concept that emphasized a unity between driver and machine, allowing drivers to control the car directly rather than relying on electronic devices.

Mazda also believed that earning strong trust from customers required continuous refinement of driving performance even after launch. Throughout its six-year model life, improved versions and special editions were introduced one after another. Through this process, Mazda established an unwritten rule for building sports cars.

The Cosmo, conceived as the ultimate rotary-powered specialty car, incorporated the latest technologies symbolized by the world’s first mass-produced three-rotor engine, along with an array of luxurious equipment. It debuted under Eunos, a new sales channel created to expand Mazda’s domestic presence.

Driven by the vision of creating a culture of the automobile, Mazda’s engineers pursued originality in planning, technology, and design. Their passion and the results of their efforts continue to inspire admiration even today.



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SUBARU

LEGACY — Elevating a Wagon to the Family's First Choice

With the capability to meet every need from everyday commuting to long family trips, the overall excellence of the second-generation Legacy elevated a wagon into the car chosen by families.

Its development centered on the concept of "inheritance and refinement." Building on the first generation's innovations, Subaru faithfully preserved the compact "five-number" dimensions ideal at that time while further advancing the car's overall refinement and maturity.

A revised packaging layout extended the interior length by 135mm, giving owners the sense that even with family aboard the cabin felt comfortably spacious, while still providing ample room for luggage. Enhancements in body rigidity and quietness improved stability on highways while also reducing fatigue during long-distance driving.

The Legacy was always part of everyday family life, loved by those who lived with it. At the same time, it made no compromises in driving performance.

The two-stage twin-turbo engine delivered strong power on highways while also offering easy handling in city driving, achieving comfortable performance across every situation. Combined with all-wheel drive, the vehicle maintained stable behavior even in harsh weather conditions, allowing drivers to remain calm and confident behind the wheel.

The Legacy's achievement of both family-car practicality and exceptional driving performance was proved by setting a world record: 249,981 km/h, certified by the FIA, making it the world's fastest wagon.

With a later update, the second-generation Legacy achieved the Japanese voluntary limit of 280 PS (manual transmission), a first for any mass-produced 2.0-liter engine.

Furthermore, with the adoption of Bilstein inverted dampers and increased body rigidity, the vehicle's overall maturity was further elevated.

These enhancements were intended to achieve driving that was more enjoyable and more reassuring, rather than merely to pursue speed.

Born from the pride and passion of engineers striving to create ever-better cars, the second-generation Legacy redefined a wagon as the car chosen by families, and remains an enduring icon of its era.



MITSUBISHI

MITSUBISHI GTO An "All-Weather Sports Car" That Pioneered the Future with Advanced Technology

In 1990, during Japan's economic bubble, domestic automobile manufacturers were pouring their dreams and technologies into the development of sports cars. It was in this era that MITSUBISHI GTO made its debut.

Rather than flaunting its speed, its core engineering philosophy focused on enabling stable, controllable performance even on wet, snowy, or uneven roads.

To achieve this goal, MITSUBISHI engineers developed a system known as "Active Four."

Originally explored in the futuristic concept cars HSR and HSR-II, the technology was introduced into a production vehicle.

The system integrated full-time for-wheel drives, four-wheel steering, four-wheel ABS, electronically controlled suspension, and active aerodynamics. With these advanced technologies working together, GTO was engineered so that drivers of various skill levels could operate the car safely and confidently.

This concept later evolved into MITSUBISHI's All Wheel Control (AWC) philosophy, which would become a defining feature of vehicles such as LANCER EVOLUTION. Of course, there were trade-offs.

The adoption of four-wheel drive made the drivetrain more complex, and inevitably increased vehicle weight.

To compensate, GTO was equipped with a 3.0-liter V6 twin-turbo engine, producing 42.5 kg-m of torque from just 2,500 rpm, enabling powerful performance that masked the vehicle's weight.

Although the front-rear weight distribution was 60:40, reflecting its front-engine-based architecture, engineers conducted extensive testing and tuned the torque distribution to 45:55, improving overall handling stability.

Regardless of weather or road conditions, GTO allowed drivers to travel quickly and with confidence.

Its uniqueness as an "wide range of environment sports car" lies in how consistently this philosophy was pursued.



HONDA

Two Super Sports Motorcycles Created by Honda

The CBR900RR FireBlade was introduced in 1992 as a super sports motorcycle developed to maximize the joy of riding through the concept of "Total Control."

Rather than pursuing higher output figures, the development team prioritized reducing mass and inertia. The engine was made more compact, mass was concentrated as much as possible, the cross-sectional structure of the aluminum frame was optimized, and even the weight of paint and body stripes was carefully controlled.

Through these efforts, the FireBlade achieved a vehicle weight comparable to that of a 750cc-class machine.

Since then, the philosophy of "Total Control" has continued to evolve and be passed down through generations for more than 30 years.

The CBR1100XX, introduced in 1996, was developed as a flagship sports motorcycle aimed at achieving stability at extremely high speeds in the full-size class.

Its 1,137cc inline four-cylinder engine, equipped with a dual-shaft balancer, reduced vibration under high load and high-speed conditions while ensuring durability.

Combined with an aerodynamically refined body shaped through extensive wind tunnel testing and chassis geometry designed for high-speed riding, the motorcycle achieved an unprecedented level of rider comfort and stability at extreme speeds.

While the CBR900RR FireBlade opened a new world of super sports motorcycles through relentless weight reduction, the CBR1100XX established itself as a full-size sports motorcycle that achieved exceptional comfort in the highest speed ranges.

These two models pursued their respective optimal solutions through different engineering approaches—lightweight design and high-speed stability—demonstrating Honda's technological capability to deliver new value to riders.



YAMAHA

The Trigger That Continues to Be Told — YZF-R1

The YZF-R1 made its debut at the 1997 Milan Show, developed as a model that would allow riders to experience true "excitement" while aiming to be the fastest machine on winding roads filled with tight corners. It was released in Europe and North America as a 1998 model.

In the late 1990s, when the development project began, key members responsible for engine design, chassis design, testing, and styling traveled to Europe. From their respective perspectives, they listened to riders and observed how motorcycles were used in real riding environments.

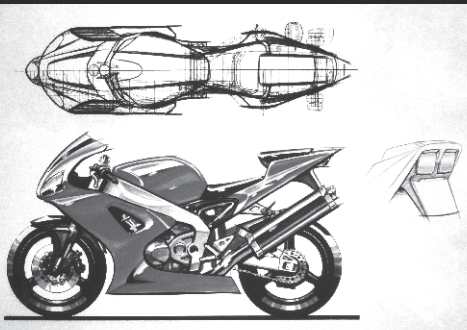
By integrating these insights, the team arrived at a defining keyword that would become the DNA of the YZF-R1 and continue to guide its development: "excitement." When the model was launched in 1998, it immediately captivated riders. The project leader of the first-generation development team explained:

"The real thrill of a new supersport motorcycle lies in the rider actively controlling the machine while attacking winding roads.

Rather than simply letting the bike follow the rider's line of sight, the rider brakes, leans the machine into the corner, follows the intended line, and accelerates out through precise throttle control.

The joy of controlling this entire sequence through one's own will—that is the excitement created by the YZF-R1."

As manufacturers introduced new 1000cc inline-four supersport motorcycles, the market quickly became energized. Yet it was the YZF-R1, embodying the concept of excitement, that unmistakably set this movement in motion.



SUZUKI

A Legend Born with Its Rivals — GSX1300R Hayabusa

In 1999, a motorcycle destined to be etched forever in the history of motorcycling was born.

The GSX1300R Hayabusa was the culmination of Suzuki's challenge to create an unparalleled sports motorcycle—the "Ultimate sport."

At the time, Suzuki held a firm belief: Hayabusa had to be number one.

The project was not limited to a single department. Planning, development, and production teams across Suzuki worked together as one. In addition, many partner companies—including suppliers of tires and electrical components—shared the vision and cooperated in achieving the goal.

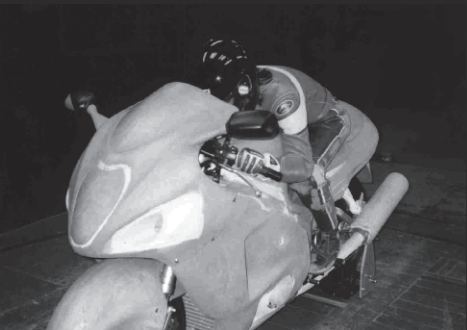
Why was it possible?

Because powerful rivals existed.

The Kawasaki ZZ-R1100 and the Honda CBR1100XX Super Blackbird were both legendary machines competing for the title of the world's fastest motorcycle. During development, there were moments when Suzuki's engineers were astonished by the extraordinary performance of these rivals. Yet it was precisely this challenge that fueled their determination to become number one. Hayabusa was born because those rivals existed.

In 2024, Hayabusa celebrated its 25th anniversary, with cumulative production surpassing 200,000 units.

Even after two full model changes, the motorcycle continues to be loved by riders around the world. This enduring appeal is not due solely to its impressive specifications. Behind it lies the passionate determination of Suzuki engineers and partner companies united by the desire to surpass their great rivals.



KAWASAKI

*Always One Step Ahead of Its Time
The Pursuit of the Ultimate Motorcycle*

In 1984, Kawasaki unveiled a revolutionary motorcycle to the world: the GPZ900R, known in North America as the Ninja.

Driven by the mission to surpass conventional thinking, the development team started from scratch. Engineers explored multiple configurations—including V4 and in-line six engines—before arriving at Kawasaki's first liquid-cooled in-line four DOHC 16-valve engine.

Innovations were introduced throughout the motorcycle: a compact engine layout made possible by Kawasaki's first side-mounted cam chain system, a chassis structure that utilized the engine as a stressed member, and a fairing design refined through extensive wind tunnel testing.

By striving for every aspect of "ultimate" performance and integrating groundbreaking technologies without compromise, Kawasaki created a machine whose capabilities set a new benchmark for large-displacement sport models.

Kawasaki continued its pursuit of ultimate speed.

The GPZ1000RX increased displacement while reducing aerodynamic drag, and the ZX-10 adopted an aluminum frame to achieve lighter weight and sharper handling.

And in 1990, a motorcycle emerged that stunned the world: the ZZ-R1100, known in North America as the Ninja ZX-11.

Engine displacement expanded to 1,052 cm³, producing 147 PS. With the introduction of the ram-air system, which forces pressurized air into the air cleaner while riding, the motorcycle achieved even greater performance at high speeds.

The quest for top speed reached a symbolic milestone—the speedometer now displayed 320 km/h.

These motorcycles defined the cutting edge of their era. Yet Kawasaki never focused solely on absolute performance.

Ease of control and Fun to Ride were always considered essential.

That the GPZ900R was embraced by riders worldwide and remained in production for an unprecedented 19 years is testament to this achievement.

This design philosophy continues to shape Kawasaki motorcycles today.

