

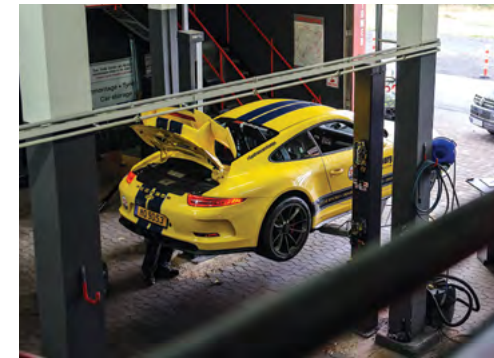
RSR

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Behind the scenes at the company offering road, track and racing experiences at the world's most inspiring venues



RSR's Ron Simons talks through the advantages of his 'Standard Vs Modified' programme at Spa. Meanwhile at the 'Ring, we get some practice in with RSR's race simulator as the real cars are prepared



For any petrolhead, it's very likely the most scintillating moment of driving nirvana you could wish to experience: piloting a truly exquisite sports car on some of the world's most renowned roads and racetracks. Of course, as a Porsche owner, the majority reading this fine publication will already have that aforementioned sports car in the bag. However, unless you live near to the famous Nürburgring Nordschleife or Spa Francorchamps circuits, that illustrious driving utopia cannot quite be completed – and that's where RSR come in.

RSR is otherwise known as Ron Simons Racing, an eponymous company dating back to 1995, when Ron himself helped develop suspensions for sports cars while racing an Alfa GTV6 and gulf-liveried Ferrari 308 GTB. Ron's impressive résumé doesn't end there though, the Dutchman also instructing for both Porsche and Ferrari in the 1990s before writing a book, *The Petrolhead Planet Nürburgring*, which is a tour guide of the Green Hell as much as it is a track index. RSR itself quickly developed into the leading specialists for sports car hire, driving tuition, taxi laps and even private trackday access at the Nordschleife.

Expanding RSRNurburg in 2009 by creating RSRSpa, which offers identical services at Belgium's world-famous track, the business has

also opened RSRiberia, for thrilling driving adventures at Portugal's Portimão circuit.

It is clear, then, that Ron's attitude to business is much like his endeavours on the racetrack, as the Dutchman evidently doesn't hang around. This striving to evolve his customers' experiences has seen the birth of RSR's latest and most interesting driving programme yet, known as Standard Vs Modified.

The concept is as brilliant as it is straightforward: take a factory example of a Porsche 911 GT3 for a drive on track or thrilling roads (or both!) and then hop straight into an example that's been tastefully modified by the experts at RSR. Aftermarket upgrades bestowed upon the modified car include coilover suspension, lightweight alloy wheels, semi-slick tyres and even full exhaust systems. The programme allows you to test and experience these carefully hand-picked upgrades first hand, providing a platform for those interested in upgrading their own Porsche to put these products to the test for themselves before buying. As Ron neatly surmises to us: "If you're going to modify your car, why simply choose your upgrades by word of mouth?"

RSR's Standard Vs Modified remit covers a variety of cars from Renault Megane RS265s to BMW M235is and E92 M3s, yet it is the 991 GT3 programme we are going to try here, with both

road and track drives. We begin at RSRNurburg for the road comparison (road tests can be done on routes around either Spa or the Nürburgring, with the track test exclusive to RSRSpa). The programme involves a back-to-back test of both a standard and modified GT3 during a three-hour guided tour of the best roads in the area, with fuel included. There are many great routes to savour around the Nürburgring, our tour taking in surviving corners of the Sudschleife circuit and Porsche's unmarked Nordschleife base. The twisty roads help unmask the differences between both GT3s, too; the modified car's KW suspension and more aggressive geo setup provides a firmer, more focussed ride that transcends more information from the road through the chassis, offering a much sharper turn-in to corners.

However, a track always provides a real acid test for any car and its modifications, and few present a bigger challenge than the beautiful Spa Francorchamps. The programme here involves six laps in both a standard and modified car on an RSR Premium Track Day, with an instructor, fuel and entry fees all included in the package price. Again, our car is the 991 GT3, with Ron himself our instructor for the hot laps. We take to the track in the standard car first, which provides the yardstick for excellence. With Ron advising us on the best line around Spa, our six laps remind us just how accomplished Porsche's latest GT3



RSR's 'Standard Vs Modified' programme is available as a road or track test. We tried both, pitting 991 GT3s head to head on roads around the Nürburgring (bottom) before the track test at Spa (main)



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is. How can this possibly be beaten? We’re soon to find out. We call into the pits and swap cars, RSR’s team already having warmed the car up and suitably adjusted tyre pressures. As well as the KW Clubsport three-way coilovers (including top mounts) and tweaked geo, the modified GT3 features an Akrapovic titanium exhaust, lightweight BBS wheels, semi-slick Michelin tyres, and a half roll cage, though RSR says its overall power output is the same as factory.

We get back out on track and the modified GT3 wastes little time in highlighting the differences that ensures it slashes an incredible six seconds off the factory car’s Spa lap time, a reduction any 991 GT3 RS driver would be proud of. The GT3’s chassis feels like it has come alive: it’s now much sharper right from its nose, displays less body roll, and the car noticeably reacts to even small driver inputs. This is supported by a wealth of information now transcending between car and driver – while the standard GT3 filters a lot of chassis movement by comparison, the modified

car is constantly feeding this through at an astounding rate. What a difference a few choice modifications can make!

If the chassis of the GT3 on steroids doesn’t awaken you, the shriek of that Akrapovic exhaust past 7,500rpm certainly will, its raucous metallic rasp enough to make the hairs on the back of your neck stand on end. The modified GT3 is positively enlivening and, better still, we don’t feel like we’ve got anywhere near the limits that this GT3 is capable of. Can we have another go?

Calling into the pits and placing the cars side by side, we take stock of the entire experience. If your mission is high-octane thrills, look no further. Standard Vs Modified lets you experience the best Porsche has to offer in one of the most exquisite environments on earth. As a subjective exercise too, nothing comes close – the 991 GT3 is a car with huge modifying potential, and RSR can show you how to unlock the best of it. This may well be our new favourite driving experience for the discerning Porsche connoisseur. **911**

Company profile

- **Founder:** Ron Simons
- **First opened:** 1995
- **Location:** Nürburg, Spa, Iberia
- **Best Porsche on fleet for hire:** 991 GT3 RS or modified 991 GT3
- **Current Standard Vs Modified partners:** KW, Michelin, BBS, Akrapovic, Recaro, Race Navigator, DTE Chip Tuning
- **Interesting fact about the business:** RSR hosted the launch of the Nissan GTR at the Nürburgring racetrack in 2008

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