

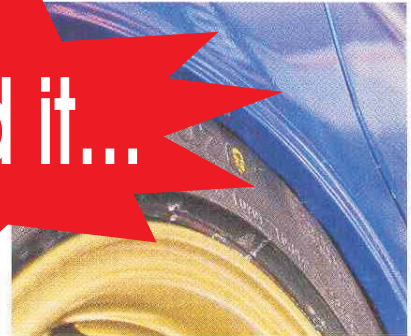


Whiteline's steering rack bushings make such a shocking improvement in steering feel..

shipped to Fuji Heavy Industries. The two power steering lines that run below the bushing make installation difficult. We found it easiest to just use a bit of brute force to bend the lines out of the way for a few minutes, then bend them back when we're done.



Prodrive GC 010 wheels are gorgeous, light (16.5 pounds) and presumably very strong. The 43mm offset is 10mm outboard of the stock wheels, though, which causes torque steer and tire clearance issues.



This won't happen if you use Subaru's recommended alignment settings, but if you try to run a 43mm offset wheel and 0.5 degrees of rear camber, like we did, the rear tire will smash into the fender. The same will happen if you try running wider tires and conventional alignment with this offset.



They said it...

Hotchkis front and rear bars and adjustable rear lateral links works brilliantly. Ride quality in Sport mode, which is the mode we usually drive in, is good. With the rear bar on its medium setting, handling numbers aren't that spectacular. The car understeers at the limit, pulls 0.92g on the skidpad and runs the slalom at 70.4 mph (stock was 0.91g and 70.7 mph), but put the rear bar on stiff and the car wakes up. Skidpad grip jumps to 0.98 g (still on stock tires) and slalom speed creeps up to 71 mph. (The difference in slalom speed is negligible, so let's just say all three were the same.)

It wasn't until after testing that we discovered a tweak that should have a large impact on slalom speeds and is, subjectively, the single biggest improvement in handling precision and driving enjoyment of anything we've done...

All Subarus have vague, sloppy steering at turn-in. Once you've committed to a corner, the steering is usually very linear and direct, but that first moment when you're picking your line is fraught with uncertainty. At the speeds the STi is capable of, this trait is downright frightening. The problem is that the steering rack is mounted in bushings that appear to be made of a proprietary mix of Teflon and KY Jelly. Turn the steering wheel right and the first thing that happens is the

settles into place does steering feel return. The stickier your tires, or the older your car's steering rack bushings, the worse this problem gets.

A simple set of polyurethane steering rack bushings from Whiteline (#KSR202) makes a ridiculous difference in how the car drives. Steering precision is vastly improved and turn-in is so much sharper, we almost ran over the curb on the inside of the first corner we went around. There is no down side. Is

Finally, our new rolling stock. The same jackhole who stole our front struts without bothering to spend the four hours it would have taken to steal the rest of the suspension, also took our wheels. At this point he'll be able to sell the wheels.

Since we wanted to finish testing on stock tires, we got a new set of 17s. (We also convinced 18-inch wheels look cool on Subarus, but we're all like 30 years old, so maybe you shouldn't trust us on that.)

Looking at every wheel Prodrive offered we couldn't find one we wouldn't kill to have on our car, so we just called and asked them to send whatever 17-inch wheel they wanted. What we got was this GC 010. Not only are they gorgeous, they're lightweight at 16.5 pounds, and since they're forged in Japan by Rays Engineering, we're pretty sure they're strong, too.

RE070s (the stock tire) shipped from the Tire Rack, and had them mounted at Shoreline Motoring in Huntington Beach, Calif. Luckily for us, Shoreline is run by longtime SCC contributor Dan Barnes, one of the most anal tech geeks we've ever met.

He immediately told us to throw away the pretty metal valve stems that came with the wheels. The valve stems are secured to the wheel with two nuts (one to tighten, the other to jam the first in place) on the inside of the wheel. Problem is, the nuts stick out right on the part of the wheel the bead has to slide on when it's

