



A sports car for the masses

Quirky open top motoring for peanuts

NISSAN 100NX: 1990 – 1995

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The concept was simple; bring the sports car feel to the masses for very little development cost. Take an existing successful 'shopping trolley' model i.e. the Sunny; cloth it in a pretty coupe style body and hey presto the 100NX was born. The 100NX was effectively an evolution of the Nissan Pulsar NX also known as the EXA produced from 1987 – 1990. Designed in California, the 100NX was an approach that many manufacturers of the time attempted to achieve. Honda released the CRX, Toyota with the MR2 and Mazda the MX3 and the MX5 to name a few. The 100NX fitted nicely into the 200SX and 300ZX family as the little brother. While it could never be called a market leader in sales (5000 models sold in the UK from 1990 – 1995), it has attained a

devout following even among ex-owners who still fondly remember their old model.

'Even the best 100NX's are reasonably priced'

BODY WORK

Rust proofing is comparable with other cars of its day. Adequate, but with newest cars now over 10 years old, rusty examples are becoming increasingly common. The NX shell is very good at hiding severe structural rot. The first area to inspect of any potential purchase is the rear wheel arches, right up in the strut tower, both on the inside and out. The rot found here is so well hidden it's very often missed - even by MOT inspectors. The strut

tower is a highly stressed area taking the full compressive forces of the attached road spring - the first time some owners find out they have corroded rear inner arches is when the springing mount gives way with devastating results. Repairs are possible without having to disturb the outer arches by removing the strut towers from inside to gain access to the inner arch panels. However it is not a straight forward operation and patch repairs are rarely satisfactory – you would better to walk away and find a rot free example. The NX sports a full length body which is can hide all sorts of nasties. The body kit panels are attached directly to the body work with a combination of screws and clips, providing plenty of places for corrosion to take hold. If the example you are looking at shows signs of loose body kit ask the

vendor for an explanation, if the answer is anything but plausible, it could be that fixings are no longer gripping sound steel, again walk away. Next have a look at the bottom of the doors and rear hatch check for corrosion and evidence of blocked drainage holes. The NX's front doors are fairly heavy causing flexing of the 'A' pillar; the flexing causes the paint to crack around the seams allowing water to get in and the inevitable corrosion. Strips clipped to the door tops can suffer from plastic disease resulting in a crazed texture, new ones are available but are expensive. Most owner unclip them and paint with a matching colour. The rear hatch lower panel below the spoiler has a tendency to trap water, bubbling paint is the result. Also the gas rams are probably weak allowing the lid to drop. New ones are available on e-bay. Check that the T-top roof locking mechanisms work and check the condition of the sealing rubbers. The sealing rubbers are still available from Nissan Japan but are very expensive. Fear not however, as long as the rubber is not physically damaged such as a cut or gash, most seals can be revived using one of the many rubber revival treatment products available from restoration specialists.

ENGINES

The 100 Nx was released in Europe with a choice of two engines: the 1.6 litre GA16Ds and the larger two litre SR20DE, which was available on special order. Early 1.6 95bhp engines featured conventional vacuum operated fuel and



ignition systems that were quickly superseded by the less successful 90bhp catalyst friendly electronically controlled version in late '91. By the end of 1993 power had crept back up to a more respectable 102 b.h.p. with the phasing out of the problematic carburettor cars and the introduction of full multipoint injection. Don't be surprised if the air intake heater relay is missing out of the fuse box on carburettor cars, it is a recognised 'modification' that improves fuel economy. Official 2 litre cars are as rare as hen's teeth. Only 5 were registered new when available although a few Jap spec 2 litre models have since being imported. Engines are extremely reliable. Expect to at least 150,000 miles from the 1.6 before expensive rebuilds are required, as long as the 9,000 mile service intervals are adhered to.

One thing the engine will not tolerate is the use of cheap engine oils; the cause of many a stretched timing chain, which are expensive to replace and an awkward DIY repair. Either use Nissan's own oil or a good quality semi synthetic.

STEERING AND SUSPENSION

The NX's rack and pinion steering is obedient and light, if lacking in feel due to the power steering. The driving experience is not exactly sporty, but holds the road well, its character being more like long distance tourer than a street screaming banshee. The car is easy to drive but soon reaches its limits with plenty of warning. Body flex is noticeable without the roof, as is the wind noise over 50 mph. Front end knocking from the front is usually caused by worn suspension bushes or ball joints. Listen out for clonks

on full lock indicating worn CV joints or track rod ends. Clonks from the rear end are usually caused by failed shock absorbers, budget at least £200 to have these replaced. The suspension boasts four-point adjustability, check tire wear for uneven tracking. Pay special attention to uneven wear on the rear tires, anything untoward found here could just be a maladjusted wishbone arms or the tell-tail beginnings of strut tower failure.

WHEELS AND BRAKES

Steel wheels were available on the NX but most owners opted for the 14" tear drop alloy wheels. They are not the most attractive but are well made. Many owners have ditched the original alloys in favour of slightly larger and wider aftermarket items. It seems universally accepted that a 15" wheel clothed with 6" rubber seems to be the optimum combination. If the car you're looking at sports aftermarket ask for evidence that the alloys have the correct offset, as the wheel bearings do not like constant side loads. Braking ability is adequate for all but the most spirited of driving, but remember, the car is based

on the Nissan Sunny and shares its braking components. Seized front callipers are a common problem, replacement seals and pistons are available, but it is easier and more satisfactory to replace with reconditioned items. Carb' versions came with rear drums the later injections, disks. Both systems are reliable if serviced according to the manufactures instructions.

'Engine and transmission is bullet proof'

TRIM

The NX's interior is typical 90's Japanese – acres' of plastic. The dash board could have been built to a slightly better quality, but to be fair nothing drops off. Heater vents and switch gear are made from ABS which could have done with a few more screws to prevent the materials natural tendency to creak. Controls are easy to use and well laid out, except for the electric window switches which are not illuminated and subsequently awkward to operate at night. The NX officially seats four, but realistically



SPOT THE GROT

1. The engine is extremely reliable, but check for untoward rattles and oil leaks indicating abuse or neglect.
2. Check wheel arches, sills and seams for evidence of rot and T-top mechanism and seals
3. Check all electrics including switch gear illumination.

BUYERS GUIDE: Nissan 100NX

anybody over the age of nine will be uncomfortable in the back. Front seats are reasonably comfortable, if a little lacking in lumbar support, but are perfectly adequate when negotiating the twisty bits at speed. Soft furnishings are a little fragile, especially the drivers seat that inevitably suffers the most. Bolsters have a tendency to split on high mileage cars, especially if the occupants have a tendency slide across the seat when alighting. They can be repaired but it would be easier to substitute the

foam squabs from a passenger seat in good condition as they are interchangeable. The boot is fairly large and the rear seat folds down for extra space. Beware of cars that have carried pets, the plastics used on the quarter panels are easily scratched, however damage can be easily repaired using a 'smart solutions' dash repair kit. Seatbelts can be slow leading to the clip being trapped upon closure of the door and chipping of the paint. Check the upper guide loop, and check for sticky residues if found it be can be easily cleaned off – the cause of most seat belt

retraction problems.

ELECTRICS

Generally the electrics are reliable; anything that goes wrong is usually down to wear and tear. The NX has electric mirrors and window winders as standard. The electric window switches are of good quality, although by now the auto driver's side switch will have lost its click, 'They all do that Sir' – they do to. Window motors were on the weak side from new, so don't expect the speediest of action. Overly slow or reluctant window mechanism could indicate tight guide channels or dry grease on the mechanism. If

not, the motor field windings are tired and the whole unit will need replacing. The windows are frameless and have a tendency to rattle when wound half way down; the problem is easily cured however and d.i.y. fixes are well documented. Alternators are strong and should cover at least 100,000 miles, drive belt tension is important though, too tight and the bearings will suffer leading to early failure. If you're potential purchase requires a new one budget around £100 pounds for a recon unit. Nissan belts are reasonably priced and are superior to pattern

NEED TO KNOW

What are they like to drive?

Fun, and with the roof off you will feel a million dollars. Expect passers by to remark 'that's a nice car' but not be sure what it is.

Will I fit behind the wheel?

The NX is a compact car so drivers over 6" may find it a bit of a squeeze. However the steering wheel is adjustable as is a limited amount of seat rake adjustment.

What bodes should I look for?

- Rotten rear arches that have been poorly repaired
- Loose body kit stuck on with 'no nails'
- Siliconed T-tops.

What should I pay?

A rough car can be yours for as little as £100, while a restoration project that runs reliably with an MOT can be bought between £500 - £800. Average cars can be obtained for £1000 - £1500 depending on age and condition. Superb cars in every respect struggle to command anymore than £3000.

What about insurance?

For some reason the NX can command silly quotes, so it pays to shop around: Comprehensive cover, male, 22 years of age for a car worth £1000. 1 years NCB £750 Adrien Flux Comprehensive cover, male, 29 years of age for a car worth £1000. 2 years NCB £250 More Than

What about spares prices

Many of the service items are common to other Nissan models so are reasonably price. I replacing major components consider purchasing re-manufactured components are they will considerably cheaper then buying new from Nissan.

Can they cope with unleaded?

Yes.

Where are the identifying marks

Under the bonnet at the top of the bulkhead

Which owners club should I join?

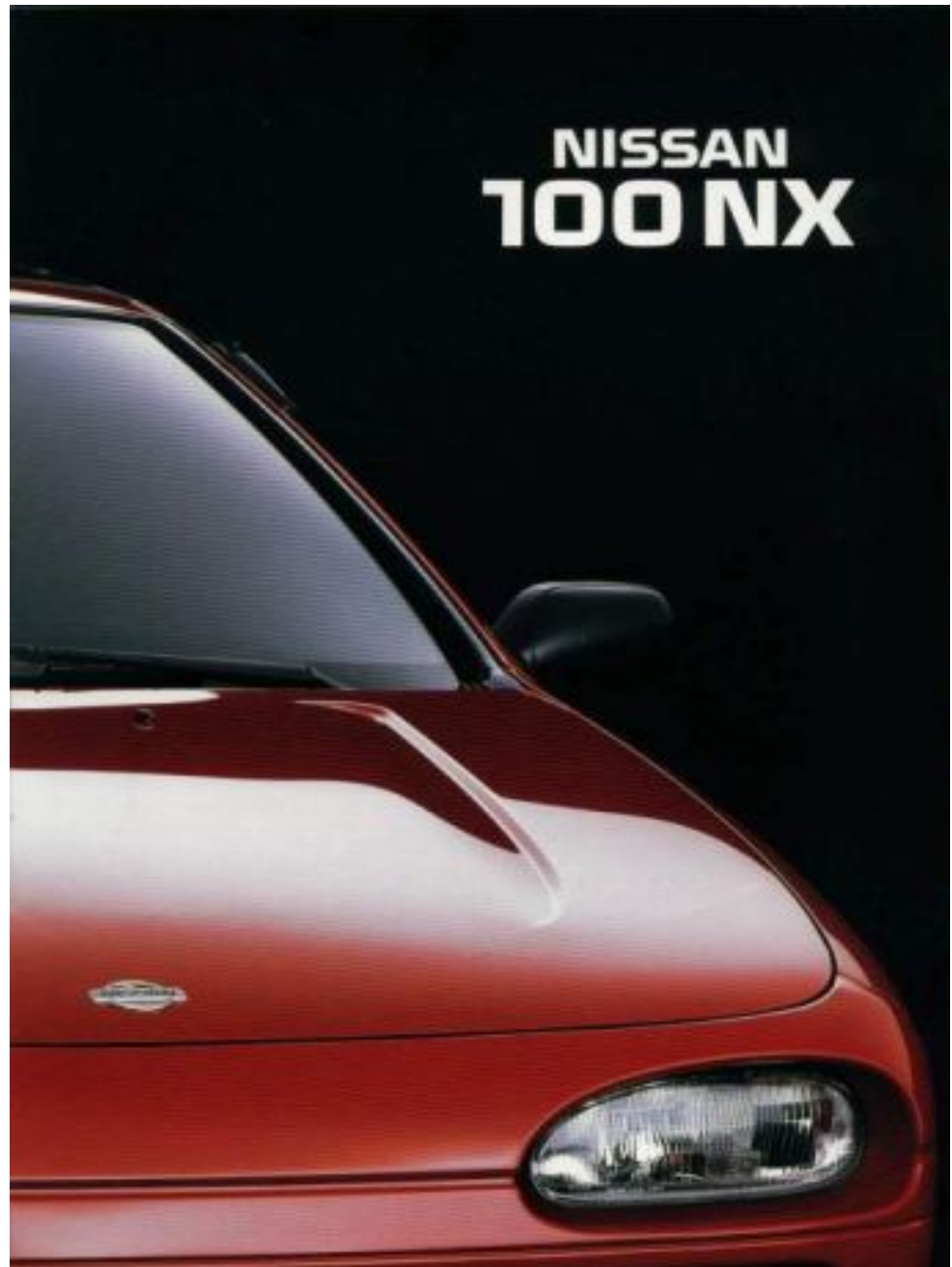
The 100NXC club of course. It's a free to join Internet forum based club. National and local meets are arranged on an as and when basis.

BUYERS GUIDE: Nissan 100NX

replacements don't use anything else. Dashboard bulbs are an odd voltage (13.5v) but normal 12 volt bulbs will do the job just as well. Clock removal requires the speedo cable to be loosened which has a habit of being awkward to unbolt from the engine.

CONCLUSION

If your potential purchase is a high miler don't worry. Expensive repairs revolving the swapping of major assemblies are thankfully rare. Most problems you will experience on cars over 100,000 miles will be irritating niggles that are easily fixed. Many of the problematic carburettor cars will have been sorted by now usually by the conversion to a Weber set-up. In standard form the NX is more show than go, which is unfair because the car deserves better. The NX is not for you if you have a growing family but they do make an utterly useable 2nd car classic thanks to their comfort and build quality. Ask the vendor for evidence of regular servicing, i.e. a fully stamped book and you won't go far wrong. The Nx is serviced by a growing band of dedicated enthusiasts and a number of specialist suppliers. Parts can still be obtained from Nissan but are a little expensive as many have to be imported from Japan. Even the best examples of the NX are reasonably priced so you don't need to skimp when buying one that's fun to drive and easy to maintain.



Technical	1.6 VAC 1990 - 1992	1.6 ECU cat 1991-1993	1.6 INJ 1993 -1995	2.0 INJ 1991 - 1995
ENGINE	GA16DS	GA16DS	GA16DE	
POWER	95bhp@	90bhp@	102bhp@	
TORQUE				
GEARBOX	5-spd man	5-spd man	5-spd man	5-spd man/auto
TOP SPEED				
0-60 mph				
MPG				
LENGTH	4,135mm	4,135mm	4,135mm	4,135mm
WIDTH	1,680mm	1,680mm	1,680mm	1,680mm
WEIGHT				