



The Alpha prototype of 1959. European influence is obvious here, although the tail's styling looks rather odd from this angle. (Courtesy Heitatsu Igarashi)

Cover from the 1962 brochure for the SPL213 – the second car to wear the Fairlady badge. The first was the similar-looking SPL212, introduced in January 1960.



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**DATSUN FAIR LADY 1500**

1500 CC - 80 P S  
55 1/2 mile - 18.7 sec.

*The 240ZG was much more than a standard Z with a few bolt-on goodies – in fact, true ZGs carried a different chassis designation.*



*A rear view of the ZG.  
Note the coloured bumpers, rear spoiler and badging; the so-called over-fenders were riveted to the body.*

Fuchu Police Force for high speed pursuit work on the Chuo Expressway in Tokyo.

The range now consisted of the Fairlady 240ZG, 240Z-L, 240Z, and the Fairlady Z-L and Z. The two-litre cars were left unchanged, but, of course, the 2.4 litre models were new to Japan, so deserve at least a brief description.

enthusiasts, the Z chassis and S20 engine were, in fact, not a particularly good combination for road use.

Although no longer listed, 23 Z432 models were produced in 1972 and 1973. The bulk of the 420 sold in the end were produced in 1970, when records show that 299 were built. Of these, four were used by the

The Fairlady 240ZG featured a number of items that Nissan wanted to homologate for racing. The most prominent feature was the extended glassfibre 'aero-dyna' nose section, which extended to cover

"This latest sporting Datsun is an immensely satisfying car to drive; at £2895 it represents to me the most covetable sporting car produced by a major manufacturer below the Porsche or Ferrari Dino class, and it should be an object lesson to British Leyland, who could surely do even better if they so wished."

The first car (chassis 0014) arrived in Britain in January 1974. Power and torque figures were officially quoted as the same as those for America (except California, that is), but European models had a 3.7:1 final-drive (instead of 3.9:1), and slightly different gearing to those sold in America to make full use of the five-speed gearbox.

*Motor* carried an article on the 260Z two-seater in 1974, the magazine's own figures noting that the 260Z

*Powered by the 2.6 litre L26 engine, this is the two-seater 260Z as sold in 1hd European markets ...*

was slower than the old 240. Fuel consumption suffered by as much as 25 per cent on the 'touring' figures, and the longer stroke and new breathing arrangements did little to endear the L26 unit: "Although maximum power occurs at 5600rpm, the red-line on the tachometer is much higher at 7000rpm, which means, effectively, that anything much over 6000rpm or so is really only for show, as power is then dropping off quite rapidly; engine noise and roughness at such revs would deter most owners from using them anyway."

The testers were not overly happy with the

*... and (below) this is the 1974 2+2 version, again in mainland European specification. The 2+2 opened up a whole new market for the Z-car, whilst the larger engine capacity helped to compensate for the power drain caused by ever-stricter American emissions regulations.*



*Mehta on his way to victory on the 1973 Safari Rally. This was the second – and sadly, last – international rally win for the Z.*



*More action from the East African Safari. Lightweight 7J x 14 magnesium alloy wheels were employed on the works cars; occasionally, narrower Z432 wheels were used on the front for loose surface work, identified by the four main spokes being filled (as seen here) rather than open.*

*Shekhar Mehta (left) and Lofty Drews (in spotty tie) after the 1973 Safari. Incidentally, Mehta would win this important event four more times for Nissan, partnered on each occasion by Mike Doughty.*



that the ZX had moved so far away from its sporting pretensions to give more emphasis to luxury. Even so, sales remained very encouraging – 64,459 Z-cars were sold in 1978 (the vast majority of them were the old 280Z, of course), a figure which rose to 71,983 in 1979.

### **The ZX in Britain**

The 280ZX first appeared in Europe at the Paris Salon in October 1978, although with sales not due to start

until the spring, the 2+2 model on display was not given any prominence. A couple of weeks later, across the Channel the car was exhibited at the first motor show at the NEC near Birmingham.

The initial batch of cars arrived in the UK in March 1979, both two-seater and 2+2 body styles being available. These were powered by the L28E unit, so British models once again had a similar engine to those in the States (the European market retained the L26 after the Americans moved on to the L28).

*An early 280ZX publicity picture from a French catalogue. Later cars would sport a far cleaner bumper design.*

