

The GT3 is immediately recognizable thanks to a wide body, a signature fixed rear wing and a front fascia with large air dams for better cooling.

In addition to looking the part, the GT3, through its sport exhaust, also sounds like a proper track car. Pilgrim's piper-like first buzz down the front straight draws everyone from the pits to the wall for an earful of screaming boxer running toward that 9,000-rpm redline.

Pilgrim soon cruises down pit road. The 991's behavior surprises him. "The GT3 went to charm school; there's less rattle and hum inside. It feels much more like a daily driver" compared to old GT3s and the Z/28, he says.

Pilgrim gives the GT3's transmission and brakes high marks, but the car proves to be more of a handful at the limit. "The rear end is trickier, but the traction and stability control work well. It feels slower through the corners due to more tread squirm and less mechanical grip. The Porsche is quick down the straights, but the Z/28 sticks better in the corners and feels more like a race car. It's going to be close."

As if on cue, here come the Camaro boys and their bag of timing equipment. After some laps Pilgrim describes as "edgy," the data shows 1:35.76—0.53-second quicker than the Z/28. Further data dissection shows the one area where the GT3 is making up time on the Camaro: down the straights. On the front straight, it's 6 mph faster, no doubt thanks to its lighter curb weight (3,153 pounds), slipperier body and quicker shifts.

### A Winning Pair

Surprised by any of this? Don't be. These are two vastly different cars serving a wide audience, getting the job done in contrasting ways. Which one you might deem "better" depends on what you value and, of course, your budget.

The GT3 is not only quick on-track but far more street friendly than before, thanks to cushier interior confines—nice on the way back from a long track day. However, tapping its full track potential is more difficult than with the Camaro. "Simply put, less mechanical grip and the need for more rear downforce in the GT3 equals more sliding and longer slide-recovery times," offers Pilgrim, "and this would be more uncomfortable for average track-day warriors."

The Z/28 is a track-ready car developed in the same vein as Porsche's RS models; hardcore weekend warriors will appreciate its better-lap-times-at-all-costs personality, with 50-treadwear rated tires that you will be lucky to get 2,000 miles out of, a dearth of amenities and what Pilgrim considers more easily reachable limits. "I can say it's easier for me to go fast in the Z/28, and if I owned one, I'd sure go looking for GT3s to play with at any track day."

Go for the Z/28 over the GT3 and you'll have a spare \$56,000 to buy more Trofeo R tires. It's a difficult formula to beat. As Pilgrim says, "These cars are immensely capable and have state-of-the-art stability and traction control for track-day novices. But, if both of these are in my garage, it would be GT3 for the street and Z/28 for the track, every time." 🍌



## TRACK TIPS FROM A PRO

ANDY PILGRIM HAD NEVER driven Barber Motorsports Park, but he was up to speed in five laps—a top racer's hallmark. You (and we) might not possess his talent and experience, but his method for learning new circuits will benefit any track-day enthusiast.

- Watch onboard videos—YouTube is a great resource—before you arrive. But watch people who know what they're doing so you learn the correct driving line.
- For tracks like Barber with significant elevation changes, also watch videos of motorcycles. It's easier to hear bikes wheelieing over crests, lifting or feathering the gas, or spinning rear tires.
- Walk the track. This gives you a better idea of lines, turn-in points, reference points for blind entries, patches, surface changes, etc.
- After running a few laps, ask a track expert for input.
- If you have vehicle data, overlay it with another driver's but make sure they know the circuit.
- Concentrate first on correct turn-in points. I late-apex first and stay off the curbs initially. I then pull the apexes back and figure out brake points next. If you don't know turn-in points, you can't work on braking at the limit. I also check which curbs I can use safely.
- Walk the course again for reference points and nuances you missed the first time.

—ANDY PILGRIM

