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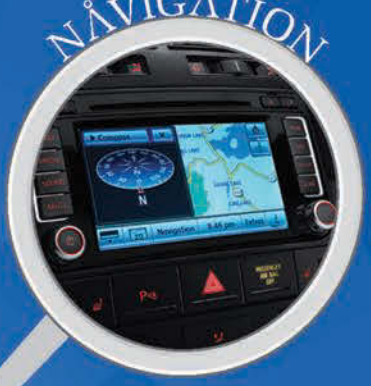
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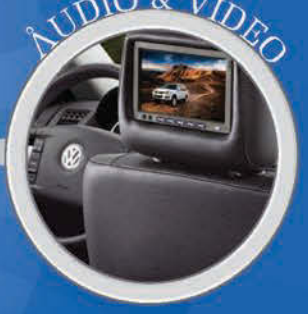
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FIRST WORD

IT IS NOT OFTEN that we devote so much space in one issue to a particular model type, let alone a very specific model within the range, but we've made an exception for the latest Golf R, such is the current level of interest in and general appreciation for this latest 'hot hatch'.

I can still clearly remember when the previous Golf R came out, the Mk 6, back in late 2009, with a high-performance four-cylinder 2.0 turbo engine replacing the previous 3.2 vee-six. In all honesty, we were rather lukewarm about it at first, until we finished the first road test and realised that it was not only faster but more fuel-efficient, it handled better without the weight of that V6 hanging out front, and it was technically a much better car all round. Our road test in the May 2010 issue raved about it, and it didn't take long for the enthusiasts to catch on.

OK, so the four-pot R lacked the very special engine noise that you only get with a silky six, but that was really only relevant for the guys who cruise down the high street with their windows wound down. I'd hesitate to ever call it a posers' car, because it was far much more than that, but the Mk 5 R32 had lost the hard-edged dynamics of the original R32 and it didn't really have the extra performance that was needed to take things forward as a hardcore driver's car.

But now we have the new 7R, so much better than the 6R because it is based on the MQB chassis. As many owners – some featured in this issue – will attest, it really is an amazing all-rounder; equally capable of serving as a comfortable, practical family hack as it is of blowing away all but the most severe of supercars. Throw in some very attractive lease deals and it's easy to see why it is now dominating the hot hatch market. Indeed, does anyone buy a Golf GTI any more?

And, if the Golf 7R isn't quite good enough in standard form, then there are already a great many very effective performance upgrades available, as our features in this issue will show.

AS WELL AS this special issue of the monthly magazine, and its digital version with extra pictorial content, we've also compiled all our previous articles on the Golf R – both 6R and 7R – into a digital portfolio that you can download from *www.pocketmags.com* With over 96 pages of exclusive Golf R features, it's well worth a look!

THE GENEVA MOTOR SHOW also gave us plenty to write about this month, but aside from the R Estate, which we saw previously at the Detroit Show, the only thing missing was any evidence of a Golf R400. Hopefully, that is still to come...

It was the first time I've actually been to the Geneva Show myself, largely thanks to the opportunity afforded by a press trip just across the border, up in the French Alps, that same week, to test drive Michelin's amazing new CrossClimate tyre. Too close to our deadline and with not enough pages left for a full feature, you can read about it on page 67, and there's much more to come next month.

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GENEVA SHOW



Passat voted Europe's Car of the Year

EUROPE'S 'Car of the Year 2015' is a Volkswagen. Announced on Monday March 2, on the afternoon before the Geneva International Motor Show, the new Passat has won this year's prestigious award, which is decided every year by the international 'Car of the Year' jury comprising top motoring journalists from all over Europe.

'We are extremely proud of this accolade,' explained Prof. Martin Winterkorn, CEO of Volkswagen AG, at the prize-giving ceremony in Geneva. 'In the new Passat, we have again succeeded in developing a car that sets the standards for its class in terms of technology and quality. This honour is a tremendous confirmation for the work of our engineers, designers and the entire team. The new Passat shows that the Volkswagen brand has the right answers to the challenges of our time.'

Hakan Matson, president of the Jury, handed the trophy to Heinz-Jakob Neusser, Member of the Board of Management Volkswagen Brand for the Development Division who commented: 'We are delighted by the honour of Car of the Year 2015. This accolade has a very special significance for us because it is awarded by independent international trade journalists. In addition, the honour is known to have a high standing for our customers.'

One of the oldest and most well-known awards in Europe, 'Car of the Year' has been honouring the best new releases in the car industry every year since 1964. The jury, consisting of 58 European motoring journalists from 22 countries, had nominated seven candidates which were then subjected to detailed testing, comparisons and evaluations based on criteria such as economy, comfort, safety, driving characteristics, functionality, design and technical progress.

The new Passat clearly triumphed over its six rivals in the final, with a total score of 340 points, well ahead of the runner-up Citroën C4 Cactus (248 points). The other finalists were: Mercedes C-class (221 points), Ford Mondeo (203), Nissan Qashqai (160), BMW 2-series Active Tourer (154) and Renault Twingo (124).

'In the new Passat, we have again succeeded in developing a car that sets the standards for its class in terms of technology and quality...'



After 41 years on the market, the Passat has become the most popular model in the current range, with the new 2015 Passat a completely new model built on Volkswagen's acclaimed MQB platform; lighter in weight than the outgoing model while at the same time improved in terms of body stiffness, slightly smaller in overall dimensions while more roomy inside and offering the biggest luggage space in its class.

In our March issue, we reviewed the current UK Passat range, soon to be supplemented by a new Passat Alltrack version, based on the Estate, as well as the new plug-in hybrid Passat GTE with its a combination of petrol and electric power providing an overall power output of 218 PS and claimed to be capable of outstanding fuel efficiency.

Sport Coupé Concept GTE



THE PASSAT may well have achieved the Car of the Year award but it was all but sidelined by the presentation of the Sport Coupé Concept GTE in a world premiere at the Geneva International Motor Show.

Clearly a further development of the concept that we first saw with the SUV/crossover Cross Coupé GTE at the NAIAS Detroit Show in January, featured in our March issue, the Sport Coupé Concept GTE is a stylish four-door coupé that will be positioned above the current VW CC and which may well lend some features to a forthcoming new Phaeton.

Based on the modular transverse matrix (MQB) platform, it is longer (4870 mm), wider (1865 mm) and lower (1407 mm) than the current Passat, with a longer wheelbase (2841 mm), and comes with ample front and rear headroom and a large 480-litre luggage capacity.

'The Sport Coupé Concept GTE is a stylish four-door coupé that will be positioned above the current VW CC...'

Developing the current styling trend with its horizontally-emphasis even further, the radiator grille, headlights and VW badge are all merged to form a completely new front end, while the roofline rises up from behind a very long bonnet, with the A-pillar forming the front of a flattened curve extending further back into the rear body. Dominating the rear part of the profile is a low-set C-pillar integrating seamlessly into the roofline.

The Sport Coupé Concept GTE also sets new standards with 'the clear design and ergonomic perfection of its interior', with a wide and lengthy centre console and new interactive interfaces between driver and car using a series of digital displays and touchscreens.

The plug-in hybrid GTE is powered by the combination of a 3.0 V6 TSI petrol engine and two electric motors (one at the front and one at the rear) developing a total of 380 PS / 279 kW. In conjunction with a 6-speed DSG transmission, this produces maximum acceleration of 0-62 mph in 5.0 seconds and a top speed of 155 mph,

Photos: Neil Birkitt





as well as an average combined cycle fuel consumption figure of 2.0 l/100 km (141 mpg) and an overall range of 746 miles. The twin electric motors provide the vehicle with on-demand four-wheel drive.

Dr Heinz-Jakob Neusser, Volkswagen Brand Board Member for Development, explained the new Coupé Concept GTE: 'This concept car is a breathtakingly dynamic coupé, destined to set standards in this class. Thanks to the design in the style of an exclusive sports car combined with the added functionality of a large boot, we see an impressive alternative to the classic saloons of the B and C segments in this four-seater.'

'Dominating the rear part of the profile is a low-set C-pillar integrating seamlessly into the roofline...'

GENEVA SHOW



New Touran

GENEVA ALSO saw the world premiere of the new Touran, the first MPV to be based on the new MQB platform. Despite an overall increase in length of 130 mm, and a 113 mm longer wheelbase, with more interior space than before, the new MQB construction methods mean that the overall vehicle weight has been reduced by 62 kg.

Described as 'a miracle of space in the world of compact MPVs', the five-seater version has the biggest luggage compartment in its class (1040 litres) and a newly developed seating system, with the second row of seats now much lighter and able to fold flat with the rear luggage space. Loaded up to the front seat backrests, the total volume increases to 1980 litres, with equivalent figures for the 7-seater Touran of 917 and 1857 litres. Volkswagen also claims a total of 47 different storage compartments within the interior.

Styling has been improved by a three-bar grille and sleeker headlamps, restyled bumpers and fog lamps, with top-spec models having all-new LED headlight and tail-light units, but overall the visual changes are modest, more evolution than revolution. Klaus Bischoff, VW's head designer said: 'We refined the design concept, re-inventing it in places to give a sharper look while retaining a strong underlying continuity. What emerges is an original with a much enhanced light and sporty look, thanks to the long side windows and precise lines.'

Inside, the new Touran has the same touchscreen controls as the new Golf and Passat, with a modular infotainment system with screen sizes ranging from five to eight inches, plus the availability of an optional Dynaudio sound system. For the first time, Volkswagen will also offer Mirrorlink capability with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

'We refined the design concept, re-inventing it in places to give a sharper look while retaining a strong underlying continuity'

Equipment levels range from the basic S, through SE to the range-topping SE-L, with the further possibility of a new R Line trim with sportier styling from its new bumpers and subtle R badging, plus R Line upholstery. The white R-Line example shown at Geneva was particularly striking.

The UK market will get a choice of 110 PS 1.2 and 150 PS 1.4 TSI petrol engines, or three TDI diesels – a 110 PS 1.6 TDI and a pair of 2.0 TDIs, with either 150 PS or and 190 PS. Fuel economy is said to be improved throughout the range, as a result of improved engine efficiency, excellent aerodynamics and lighter weight, with the 1.6 TDI DSG claimed to be capable of returning nearly 69 mpg, and the 1.4 TSI good for 52.3 mpg.

The new Touran will be launched on the European market from September, with UK models due in November.



Photos: Neil Birkitt

REVISED SHARAN

GENEVA ALSO saw the presentation of what is described as 'the technically updated Sharan'. Featuring new convenience and assistance systems as well as a wide range of infotainment systems with full connectivity to many smartphones and tablets, the fuel efficiency of the engines has been improved by up to 15 per cent and all conform to the Euro-6 emissions standard.

The two TSI engines now produce 150 PS and 220 PS, while TDI diesel engines range from 115 PS and 150 PS to 184 PS. All (except the 115 PS TDI) may be combined with 6-speed DSG transmission, which now also provides the fuel-saving coasting function.

As well as Automatic Post-Collision Braking System, a number of optional assistance systems are now available including Front Assist with integrated City Emergency Braking, the Lane Assist, Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC), third generation Park Assist and the Blind Spot Monitor.

The second generation of the modular infotainment platform offers a maximum level of connectivity and the Sharan is one of the first Volkswagen vehicles to be equipped with 'App Connect'; thanks to MirrorLinkTM, Android Auto (Google) and Car Play (Apple), a wide variety of apps can be fed into the new infotainment systems.

The interior has also been upgraded with new accents and materials, and the instrument cluster enhanced, while the rear of the Sharan now also has LED tail lights. The updated Sharan will arrive on the German market this summer.



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GENEVA SHOW

Passat Alltrack

THE LATEST generation of the Passat Alltrack also made its debut at the Geneva Show. Based on the new Passat Estate, the Alltrack is presented as an independent model within the series, readily distinguished by exterior features such as the modified bumpers with an underbody guard, wheelarch extensions and side sill mouldings, anodised silver roof rails, 'Alltrack' badges on the grille and tailgate, and custom 17-inch alloys, with 18- and 19-inch wheel options.

Not just for show, its 27.5 mm raised suspension gives better ground clearance for mild off-road use and it comes with 4Motion all-wheel drive with EDS and XDS+ as well as a special off-road driving program. An ideal towing vehicle, it can pull a load of up to 2200 kg (braked) on a 12 per cent gradient and has Trailer Assist as an option.

Engine options comprise 150 PS and 220 PS TSI petrol units, and 2.0 TDI diesels with 150 PS, 190 PS or 240 PS (bi-turbo), all Euro-6 emissions compliant and with stop-start and battery regeneration as standard.

A huge range of driver assistance and infotainment systems include Active Information Display digital instrumentation, head-up display, Media Control rear seat entertainment system for tablet computers, Front Assist, Emergency Assist, Traffic Jam Assist, Rear Traffic Alert and Trailer Assist.

Infotainment is a high priority, with five radio and radio-navigation units available, with various interfaces including connection to smartphones via App Connect which consists of applications like Mirror Link™, Car Play (Apple) and Android Auto (Google), for integration of nearly all smartphones and an enormous bandwidth of apps.



NEW CADDY MAXI

FOLLOWING THE world premiere of the new Caddy van in the Polish city of Poznań, Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles chose the Geneva Show to present the latest generation of the people-carrying Maxi, now with revised front and rear styling, an updated interior and additional specification and options.

New safety features comprise side and curtain airbags, the multi-collision braking system and Front Assist including City Emergency Braking, while Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC), Light Assist and Driver Alert systems are now available as options.

In combination with the Composition Colour and Composition Media radios and with the Discover Media radio-navigation system, customers are able to order a reversing camera, while the new Caddy Maxi also comes with the option of Park Assist.

The Caddy Maxi features two rows of seats in the passenger compartment, which can also be folded or removed, and provides a standard load volume of 530 litres which can be expanded first to 1350 litres, and then up to 3700 litres with all the rear seats removed.

Petrol engines comprise the 1.0-litre three-cylinder TSI with 102 PS and the 1.4-litre TSI four-cylinder with 125 PS, while the three 2.0 TDI diesel versions range from 75 PS through 102 PS to 150 PS.

The new Caddy and Caddy Maxi will be launched in Germany at the end of June, with all other countries following soon after.

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NEW MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT OF VOLKSWAGEN AG

DR. HERBERT DIESS will take up his appointment as a full member of the Board of Management of Volkswagen AG at the earlier date of July 1, 2015.

The appointment comes into effect three months earlier than originally planned and is the result of an agreement between Diess and BMW AG, where Diess held the post of Member of the Board of Management responsible for Development.

In his capacity as a member of the Group Board of Management, Diess will take over as Chairman of the Volkswagen Passenger Cars brand from Prof. Dr. Martin Winterkorn, who remains Chairman of the Group Board of Management.

In the context of this appointment, the new function of 'Chairman of the Board of Management of Volkswagen Passenger Cars' is to be set up in the Group Board of Management.



VOLKSWAGEN GROUP DELIVERIES WORLDWIDE, FOR JANUARY 2015

THE VOLKSWAGEN GROUP began the year with a slight increase in deliveries of 0.7 per cent, with 817,600 vehicles delivered worldwide, compared with 811,500 in January 2014. 'The Volkswagen Group made a stable start to the year. Our premium brands Audi and Porsche, along with Škoda and SEAT, put in a particularly strong performance,' said Group Board Member for Sales Christian Klingler. 'Looking ahead to the full year we can expect the global uncertainties to continue – and 2015 will be another challenging year.'

Figures for last year show that the Volkswagen Group improved its earnings strength again and continued along its qualitative growth path, despite major economic challenges. With sales revenue of €202.5 billion (previous year: €197.0 billion) and an operating profit of €12.7 billion (€11.7 billion), the Group generated new record highs.



NEW PASSAT: ESTATE CAR OF THE YEAR

THE NEW Passat Estate has been named Estate Car of the Year in the UK Car of the Year Awards 2015, voted for by a panel of 27 professional motoring journalists.

While assessing the Passat Estate, the judges were impressed by the car's quality, prestige, space and value for money. John Challen, Managing Director of UK Car of the Year Awards, summed up: 'The ultimate estate just happens to also be a car that is comfortable, great to drive and a very pleasant place to be.'

Towcar expert and motoring journalist David Motton added: 'With sharp new styling and a huge 650-litre boot, you can't buy a better estate than the Passat for sensible money. It's spacious, economical and rivals the prestige German brands for interior quality.'

'You can't buy a better estate than the Passat for sensible money...'

VOLKSWAGEN GROUP UK LTD AWARDED TOP EMPLOYER

VOLKSWAGEN Group UK Ltd has again been awarded Top Employer status by the Top Employers Institute. Highlighted areas include its commitment to developing talent, learning and development programmes, compensation and benefits and strong culture across its five brands – Volkswagen Passenger Cars and Commercial Vehicles, Audi, SEAT and Škoda.

The annual, international research undertaken by the Top Employers Institute recognises leading employers around the world: those that provide excellent employee conditions, nurture and develop talent throughout all levels of the organisation, and which strive to optimise employment practices on an ongoing basis. The Top Employers Institute (formerly known as the CRF Institute) globally certifies excellence in the conditions that employers create for their people.

TOMTOM FOR VW GROUP

TOMTOM (TOM2) has announced a multi-year agreement to bring its traffic service to Volkswagen Group cars across Europe, beginning with Audi and Volkswagen.

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Volkswagen and Audi drivers will now benefit from the most accurate TomTom service available on the market, with over 100 million km of roads covered. Navigation systems can propose reliable alternative routes, saving hours of travel time and reducing fuel consumption.

'We're delighted to announce this important partnership with Volkswagen Group, one of the world's premier car manufacturers, strengthening our global market leadership as the trusted provider of navigation technology', said Harold Goddijn, CEO of TomTom.



SUV SPECIAL OFFERS

AVAILABLE UNTIL the end of March 2015, Volkswagen is currently offering competitive deals for buyers purchasing a Tiguan or Touareg models.

The Tiguan is available with a deposit contribution of up to £2,750, and monthly payments on Solutions PCP (Volkswagen Financial Services' personal contract plan) from £265 and 4.9 per cent APR representative, while there's a saving of up to £5,000 off the list price of the Touareg 262 PS and £3,000 off the 204 PS), which is also available on Solutions, with monthly payments from £459 with 7.0 per cent APR representative.

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Snow, snow... quick, quick snow!

After the Monte in January, it was more snow and ice – a LOT MORE snow and ice! – on Rally Sweden in mid-February…



AFTER SUCH a successful start to the 2015 World Rally Championship, with a 1-2-3 on the Monte Carlo Rally in January, the Volkswagen Motorsport team headed to Sweden (Feb 12-15) for the second round of the season – the only rally on the calendar to be held entirely on snow and ice.

Off to a good start in the free practice 'shakedown' ahead of the rally itself, Volkswagen finished first, fifth and sixth fastest. Sébastien Ogier and Julien Ingrassia were the fastest duo on the 4.30-km 'Råda' stage, followed by Robert Kubica (M-Sport-Ford), Mads Østberg and Kris Meeke (Citroën), and Volkswagen team-mates Andreas Mikkelsen/Ola Fløene and Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila.

Without having to look after the so-called Sweden spikes, the top drivers completed at least four runs – sometimes up to seven – every attempt quicker than the previous run, with conditions improving as each passing car swept the snow and slush from what at the start of the day were icy, snow-covered roads.

Jost Capito, Volkswagen Motorsport Director was suitably encouraged: 'Everybody in the WRC circus loves the Rally Sweden, as it is truly one of a kind – the only place you get to plough full-speed through the snow-covered forests on studded tyres. There is a thick layer of ice on the stages, which are nestled in a perfect winter wonderland.



However, today's Shakedown also showed us that the conditions can change quickly when the temperatures rise. Whatever happens, we'll do our best to remain unbeaten here in Sweden with the Polo R WRC'.

Day 1 proved to be a great day for the native Norwegians, with Andreas Mikkelsen and Ola Fløene topping the overall standings, finishing 19.1 seconds clear of second-placed Thierry Neuville (Hyundai) and a further 0.3 seconds ahead of Mads Østberg (Citroën).

The battle for the podium places was dominated by the Volkswagen duos for long stretches after Ogier and Ingrassia moved into the lead on stage 2, a position they held until a matter of kilometres before the end of day 1 when they became caught up in a snow bank on the ninth special stage 'Torsby'. After remaining stationary for a short time, they subsequently trailed Mikkelsen/Fløene by 24.7 seconds going into Saturday's stages, but were still well within striking distance of the front-runners.

The dream of a fourth victory in Sweden also came to an abrupt and premature end for Latvala and Anttila on 'Torsby'. They'd just moved into the lead when they crashed off the road just a few hundred metres from the end of the stage, dropping just short of a



RALLY SWEDEN

PLENTY OF ICE and snow, a picturesque winter wonderland, and ideal conditions: the Rally Sweden was the perfect winter rally. Heavy snowfalls had created very good conditions – including metre-high snow banks lining the roads, which the drivers 'bounce' their World Rally Cars off, to save time, although it's a strategy not without risks: anyone hitting the snowbanks too hard risks spinning – a typical mistake at the Rally Sweden, and one that virtually all of the top drivers fell foul of at least once over the course of the 308 km of special stages.



'Mikkelsen and Fløene showed that they had plenty of bottle with a 41-metre jump – the longest on the first run'



'Day 2 finished with Mikkelsen/Fløene and Ogier/Ingrassia second and third, and well within striking distance of overall victory...'

full nine minutes as they struggled to get the car back onto the route. The Finnish duo had previously won 'Finnskogen' on the first loop of the day.

Ogier summed it up by saying: 'It was certainly not a boring day for Julien and me. It was one with highs and lows. Everything ran superbly in the morning: we went flat-out and the conditions were perfect. The 18-km 'Röjden' stage was particularly fantastic to drive – you enjoy every metre in the cockpit on a stage like that – but things didn't run quite so smoothly for us on the second loop in the afternoon. The windscreen wiper stopped working and, in our efforts to repair it, we forgot to fasten the bonnet down, which resulted in the windscreen taking a battering later on. Then, on the ninth stage, I just braked too late and slid into a snow bank in a slow corner. By the time you put all those set-backs together, we had lost the lead. However, the rally is far from over. Anyone who knows Julien and me knows that we will keep on fighting to the very end...'

Andreas Mikkelsen was clearly pleased with his day's work: 'It is fantastic to be leading the Rally Sweden after the special stages in Norway. However, it does come as a bit of a surprise. We didn't find our rhythm straight away today. Only in the afternoon did things pan out as we had envisaged. The fans in Norway cheered us on furiously, giving



us an extra boost of motivation and it is nice to be able to present them with this result after day 1, even though we did benefit from our team-mates' misfortune. There's still a long way to go to the finish, and I am certain that Sébastien Ogier, Mads Østberg and Thierry Neuville will not give in without a fight!'

Day 2 finished with Mikkelsen/Fløene and Ogier/Ingrassia second and third, and well within striking distance of overall victory.

A thrilling three-way battle for the lead had kept spectators and teams alike on the edge of their seat, and saw the two Volkswagen duos well placed going into the final show-down. With 46.76 km against the clock on Sunday, Mikkelsen and Fløene trailed leaders Neuville and Gilsoul by just 1.5 seconds, with Ogier and Ingrassia just 8.1 seconds back in third place. After 261 of the total 308 km of special stages, the top three were within the equivalent of just 380 metres of each other!

With perfect conditions in the Värmland forests, day 2 of Rally Sweden featured roughly 135 km against the clock on ice and snow – including the classics 'Fredriksberg', 'Rämmen' and 'Vargåsen', with the infamous 'Colin's Crest' jump. Both the crest itself and the prize awarded for the furthest jump there are named after Colin McRae. Mikkelsen and Fløene showed that they had plenty of bottle with a 41-metre jump – the longest on the first run, with the sensors on the Polo R WRC registering a speed of 151.23 kph (93.97 mph) as they took off, while Sébastien Ogier left the ground at 135.87 kph (84.43 mph) and landed 34 metres down the road. The Colin's Crest Award went to Thierry Neuville (Hyundai) with a 44-metre jump on the second run.

Sébastien Ogier declared himself 'Extremely happy with my performance today. Julien and I gave it everything. We've been right on the very limit on every stage and I'm now looking forward to tomorrow, as it promises to be one of the most exciting final days in recent times. Compliments to Thierry Neuville, who was equally impressive as my team-mate Andreas Mikkelsen. However, the boys know to look out, as I am here to win!'

Mikkelsen had time to rue a couple of mistakes that cost him dear: 'That was an extremely exciting day for us at the Rally Sweden. The situation was rather unusual



'It was breath-taking action right down to the final few metres, with Ogier and Ingrassia coming through in the closest three-way battle in the history of the World Rally Championship!'

for us at first: having to defend a lead, but I made two mistakes that cost us time in the morning. The biggest of these was spinning on the 'Vargåsen' stage after planting the front of our Polo in a snow bank, losing 20 seconds. However, the afternoon was far more to my liking again, and we made up a lot of time. We made the most of our starting position and there's not much between us and first place. That remains our main goal, so it's flat out, no tactics.'

Jost Capito, Volkswagen Motorsport Director was pleased: 'A straightforward race for victory, with first and third place separated by just a few seconds – that was rallying at its very best today. The drivers couldn't employ any tactics today and just had to drive flat out right from the first metre. That is exactly what the spectators want to see. Our pairings drove fantastically in the battle for the lead. However, Thierry Neuville also deserves great respect, as he produced a fantastic performance. This three-way battle will keep us on the edge of our seats right up until the finish. For me, it is impossible to predict who will win tomorrow. It is like roulette – any number could come up trumps.'



Day 3 saw a dramatic finale resulting in a win for Ogier, ahead of Neuville and Mikkelsen but only after the closing Power Stage decided the winners and losers.

It was breath-taking action right down to the final few metres, with Ogier and Ingrassia coming through to defeat Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai) and their Volkswagen team-mates Mikkelsen and Fløene in the closest three-way battle in the history of the World Rally Championship! The three-car thriller had gathered momentum right through to just a few kilometres from the finish, with the lead changing hands regularly until the three protagonists went into the final showdown separated by just 4.6 seconds – the equivalent of just 162.84 metres – going into the closing Power Stage. It doesn't get any more exciting than this. Eventually, the final 15.84 of the total 308 km against the clock ultimately decided the three-way battle between Andreas Mikkelsen, Sébastien Ogier and Thierry Neuville that had picked up speed throughout the entire rally.

Never in the history of rallying have three drivers been so closely bunched going into the final special stage of a rally and the decisive scene came just a few hundred metres from the finish.

Sébastien Ogier had secured the stage win on the final 16-km special stage, and thus ensured that Volkswagen would emerge triumphant again, but it was Andreas Mikkelsen who led the Rally Sweden at the final split. His slender lead stood at 2.7 seconds with just 5.37 km remaining, until a slight skid and the resulting spin dashed his hopes



'Mikkelsen's slender lead stood at 2.7 seconds until a slight skid and the resulting spin dashed his hopes of a maiden WRC victory...'

of a maiden WRC victory. Thankfully, Mikkelsen was still able to rescue a second successive podium, soon back on the road and hurtling towards third place at the Rally Sweden.

In the shadow of the most exciting WRC finale of all time, a thrilling battle for the bonus points awarded to the fastest three cars on the closing Power Stage was also developing. In the end it was Ogier who came out on top in both categories and left Sweden with three extra points to his name. For Volkswagen, this was the 20th time in 27 Power Stages that one of the Wolfsburg works drivers has picked up the maximum haul of points.

So, it was WRC victory number 26 for Sébastien Ogier, now level with the legendary Carlos Sainz and third in the list of all-time greats, with Ogier and Ingrassia the only central European duo to have won the Rally Sweden twice.

After their set-back on Thursday, last year's winners Jari-Matti Latvala and Miikka Anttila ended the Rally Sweden empty-handed, and so made a joint decision with the team to bring their rally to a premature end after the closing Power Stage. The background to this decision is a rule which is intended to restrict the specification of certain car components. For Latvala/Anttila, the rallies in Sweden, Mexico and Argentina would have been linked together. Their withdrawal now gives them greater freedom when selecting components and the set-up of their Polo R WRC.

Rally Mexico is scheduled for March 5-8, just outside our production schedule for this issue (full report in the May issue) followed by Rally Argentina April 23-26 (June issue).

FIA WRC RALLY SWEDEN FINAL RESULTS

1	**Sébastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia, Volkswagen**	**2h 55m 30.5s**
2	Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul, Hyundai	+6.4s
3	**Andreas Mikkelsen/Ola Fløene, Volkswagen**	**+39.8s**
4	Ott Tänak/Raigo Mõlder, Ford	+2m 26.0s
5	Hayden Paddon/John Kennard, Hyundai	+3m 31.5s
6	Elfyn Evans/Daniel Barritt, Ford	+3m 53.0s
7	Kris Meeke/Paul Nagle, Citroën	+4m 05.8s
8	Martin Prokop/Jan Tománek, Ford	+4m 26.0s
9	Yurii Protasov/Pavlo Cherepin, Citroën	+5m 32.2s
10	Mads Østberg/Jonas Andersson, Citroën	+6m 50.9s
12	**Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila, Volkswagen**	**+9m 11.9s**

FIA WRC RALLY SWEDEN POWER STAGE RESULTS

1	**Ogier/Ingrassia, Volkswagen**	**8m 05.6s**
2	Neuville/Gilsoul, Hyundai	+4.8s
3	Tänak/Mõlder, Ford	+9.9s

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP (PTS)

1	**Sébastien Ogier**	**53**
2	**Andreas Mikkelsen**	**30**
3	Thierry Neuville	30
4	**Jari-Matti Latvala**	**19**
5	Mads Østberg	14
6	Elfyn Evans	14
7	Ott Tänak	12
8	Kris Meeke	10
9	Hayden Paddon	10
10	Dani Sordo	8

MNFRS' CHAMPIONSHIP (PTS)

1	**Volkswagen Motorsport**	**71**
2	Hyundai Motorsport	55
3	M-Sport	32
4	Citroën Total Abu Dhabi WRT	20
5	**Volkswagen Motorsport II**	**15**

COMMENT

AS THIS incredibly close Rally Sweden drew to its conclusion, two lesser-noticed twists to the tale festered away.

The first was the fact that, technically, Andreas Mikkelsen earns manufacturer points throughout the year for the 'Volkswagen II' manufacturer team entry, while Sebastien Ogier and Jarri-Matti Latvala accrue points for the main Volkswagen '1' team, because only two drivers are allowed per 'manufacturer' team. These points tot up during the year, so if Mikkelsen's finishing position exceeds Ogier's or Latvala's, this reduces the number of points earned by the two-driver and inherently stronger '1' team. It is this team which sets out to beat its Citroen, Ford and Hyundai manufacturer team '1' rivals.

So, as Mikkelsen showed his front-running form on an event which clearly suited him, all trained eyes were looking out for a team orders intervention. But it never came. From the style in which the event concluded, Volkswagen Motorsport Director Jost Capito elected to steer well clear of introducing synthetic team order influences. Either that's long-game season confidence, or sportsmanship at such an early stage in the season with wider WRC interests at heart.

'...all trained eyes were looking out for a team orders intervention. But it never came..."

The second matter was that Mikkelsen, while benefitting from a better road position than Ogier or Latvala, still only has the 2014 car at his disposal until Portugal in May. Using Latvala's former Germany and Spain 2014 car, fully rebuilt and liveried to ape those of his colleagues, it is a 'lesser' vehicle in terms of power, torque, aerodynamics and more. How much less is impossible to quantify, and snow familiarity allowed the Norwegian to excel, to produce one of the most exciting WRC event finishes in a long time.

But Ogier was ready to take advantage when the pressure of a first WRC win told on Mikkelsen and he threw it away on the last stage. A tell-tale sign of personal pressure, plus an inner knowledge of the pace Ogier sets. Just another alarming reminder of how towering an adversary the double World Champion is, and he will continue to take huge satisfaction from that when prevailing against the disadvantage he has been handed of running for two days at the front, rather than just one day in 2014.

Mikkelsen and co-driver Ola Floene will of course rue this 'one that got away', and it may be some time before they get the opportunity again to take the fight to their Volkswagen colleagues – or it could signify the turning of a corner. Only time will tell…

So far at least, the cream still rises to the top.

Chris Eyre



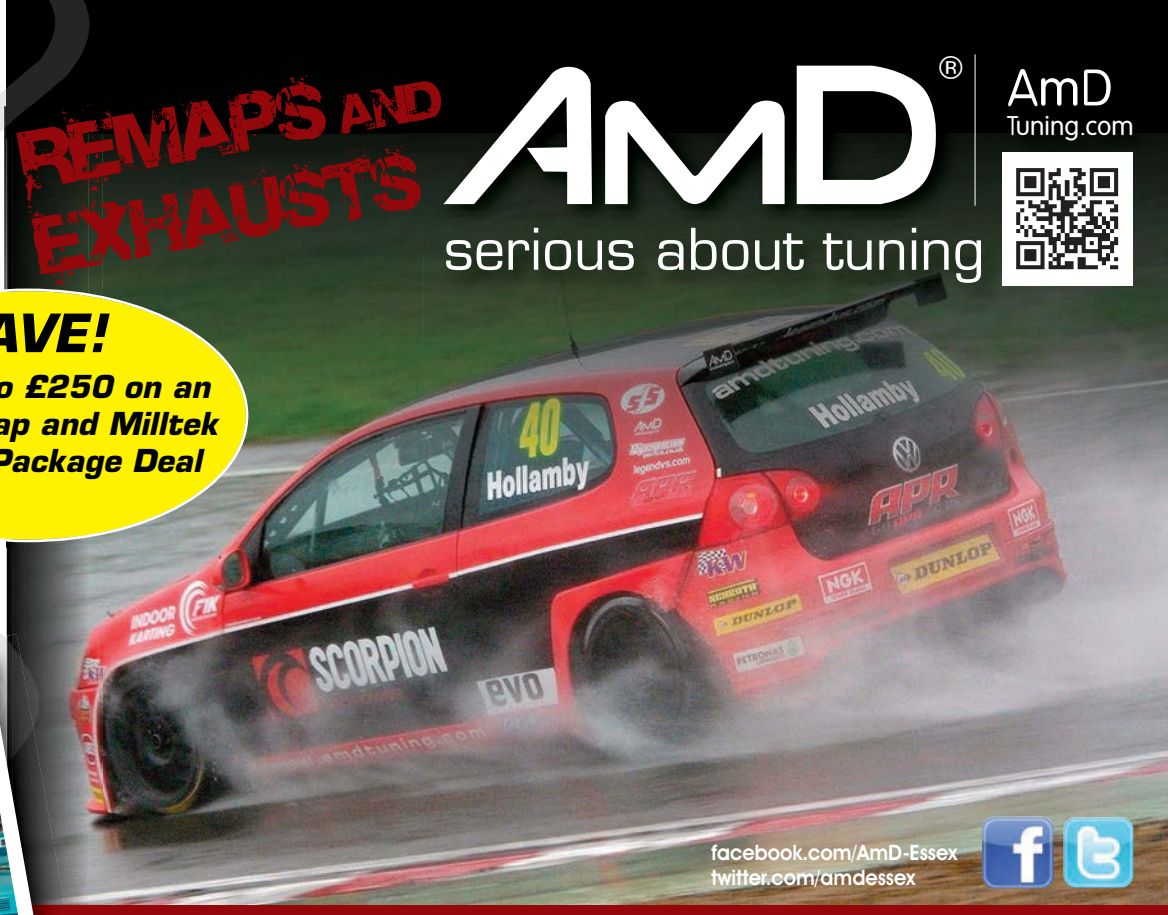
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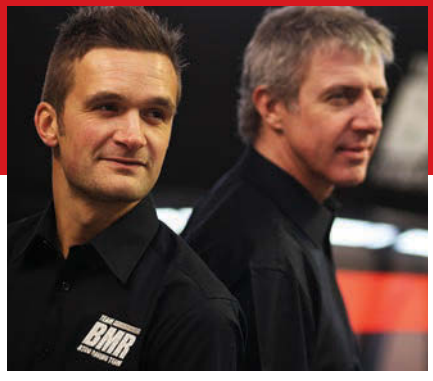
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Dream team!

Could this year's British Touring Car Championship go to a Volkswagen driver? The chances have never looked better..!



OF PARTICULAR interest to our readers, even those not quite so enthralled by motorsport in general, is that the ranks of Volkswagen drivers will see some illustrious additions this year. Two of the front-running drivers from last year's Dunlop MSA British Touring Car Championship, Colin Turkington and Jason Plato – both virtually household names – have been signed on multi-year deals to race for the same team in 2015, driving Volkswagen CCs.

Reigning champion Colin Turkington (32) will compete alongside fellow double champion and 2014 runner-up, Jason Plato (47), driving for Hertfordshire-based Team BMR. They will complete a four-man team, alongside Irishman Árón Smith (race winner with the VW CC at Oulton Park and Snetterton in 2014) and team owner Warren Scott for what is only the young team's second full season in the BTCC with NGTC machinery. They replace last year's drivers, former double-champion Alain Menu and Jack Goff.

With his previous championship wins in both 2009 and 2014 scored while driving rear-wheel-drive BMWs for West Surrey Racing, the VW CC will be the first front-wheel-drive car that Turkington has raced in the BTCC since 2006. Before his recent stint of seven years driving RWD BMWs, his last FWD crown was way back in 2001 when he won the Ford Fiesta Zetec Championship, the same year that the BTCC title was won by a certain J. Plato, driving for Vauxhall.

After early success in karting, autograss, Metros and Ford Fiesta Zetecs, the Ulsterman began his BTCC career in an MG in 2002 and has since scored a total of 32 wins behind the wheel of a BTCC car. Last season, Turkington took podium places at all 10 race meetings, wrapping up the BTCC title at the Brands Hatch finale. Colin has also competed successfully in WTCC (2007) and STCC (2010-2012), and the Superstar series in 2013. Last year he was named National Driver of the Year 2014 at the Autosport Awards and was also granted the BRDC Silver Star for the most successful BRDC member competing in UK events.

Turkington's closest rival over the past 12 months will now become his team-mate, as the series' most successful race winner of all time also moves to Team BMR. After karting and competing in F3 and Formula Renault, Jason Plato won the Renault Spider series in 1996 before joining the Williams-Renault BTCC team in 1997, finishing third in his first season and enjoying several years of success before becoming BTCC champion with Vauxhall in 2001, and later with Silverline Chevrolet in 2010, as well as finishing in the top three of the championship on 12 occasions. ➔

'As a FWD package goes, the VW CC is one of the cars to beat this season…'



Of particular interest to VW Group enthusiasts is his experience with the SEAT team between 2004 and 2008, when he became the first BTCC driver to win a race with a diesel-powered car, a SEAT Leon in 2008, before switching to Chevrolet in 2009, taking the championship in 2010 and finishing third in 2011.

In 2012 and 2013 he raced an MG for Triple Eight, finishing third both years before finishing second after scoring six wins in 2014 and increasing his BTCC tally to a record 88 race wins. Going into the final event in 2014, he was in contention to win the championship for the ninth season in succession, but was beaten to the title by Turkington at the Brands Hatch finale in October. As well as his successful career in the BTCC, Plato is also known for his competitive racing in the Bathurst 1000 and Sandown 500, and in the WTCC and ETC in 2005, and for his work as a TV presenter.

Colin Turkington said: 'I'm delighted to be defending my BTCC crown with Team BMR. Getting behind the wheel of the Volkswagen is a fresh challenge after seven seasons in rear-wheel drive machinery. I know that I'll need to work harder than ever to get up to speed, but I'm extremely motivated to succeed.

'Team BMR is still a relatively young outfit in the BTCC, however there is a strong team of experienced personnel behind the scenes working incredibly hard to make sure we can challenge at the front from the off. The collective ambition, motivation and hunger to win made this the perfect opportunity for me.



'I feel that this is the best option outside of WSR. You want to go somewhere you feel you have the chance to win'

'I knew I was in a potentially very tricky situation and I spent quite a few weeks not knowing if I would even be racing at all. That was not easy to understand, having just won the championship, but I feel that this is the best option outside of WSR. You want to go somewhere you feel you have the chance to win. Given time, there will be the possibility to do that. '

Jason Plato said: 'The decision for me to get involved with the outfit just became easier and easier. It's a fantastic team of people, it's well funded and it has the right ingredients to bake the best cake there is! It's something quite serious that Warren has put together; he's not playing games. The driver line-up is right up there, we've got two heavyweights in the same team from a technical point of view and the two guys who were the focus last year on track. I think it's going to be amazing. The performance push that both of us will give will help everybody.'



'It's a fantastic team of people, it's well funded and it has the right ingredients to bake the best cake there is!'

There are also changes in the engineering side, with Team BMR also signing

engineering heavyweights Carl Faux and Kevin Berry. Plato worked with Faux at MG while Berry, who was at Triple Eight with Plato in 2012, has been Turkington's engineer at WSR for the last two years.

Double champion Plato believes that this technical strength will fast-track the team's progression from reverse-grid race winner to championship challenger: 'It's already a race-winning car in race three, but it's still not there yet. The main thing for me is that the right people are involved in the programme. I worked with Kevin Berry in 2012 and Carl basically designed and developed the MG into the best car on the grid. Those two running the technical department is a very clear sign of how the team is going to move forward.'

Team boss Warren Scott says he has no worries about managing two of the championship's best drivers: 'I think the team has coped extremely well with the steps we've taken so far. Although we're only a two-year-old team, if you look at our years of experience we've got a wealth of it. If I was just going to play at it, I'd have only one car. With four, I'm going to do it properly...

'When the opportunities come, you've got to take them and I am eager to get started on what will be a very exciting year ahead of us in the BTCC. With the strong driver line-up that we have in place along with a superb team of engineers, mechanics and other members of the Team BMR family, I feel confident that we have the potential to be championship contenders in 2015.'

The new drivers hit the track for the first time in Team BMR colours during testing at Thruxton on Thursday February 19 as part of an intensive test programme ahead of the BTCC Season Launch at Donington Park on March 24, with the first race meeting of the 2015 season scheduled for Brands Hatch over the weekend of April 4-5.

Interviewed about developments in the team, during the test day, Árón Smith is reported to have said: 'I think it's great. It just shows the intentions of BMR, getting the number one and two drivers in the championship, the one and two engineers in the championship and a few other key personnel behind the scenes.

'This is our first test day of 2015, so it's really more of a shakedown, to make sure everything's bedded in with the car, to get our brakes sorted and run through all the systems in the car, as they've been stripped back to a bare shell and rebuilt over the winter. Nothing's gone wrong, though, so it's a good day so far. The team has taken another big step forward from last year.

'All I can do is go out and do the best I can – we did that last year and I think we did very well, out-performing Alain Menu, so that's my goal again this year. These guys are expected to come in and beat me, like last year, and I'll just give it my all, everything I can. The fact of the matter is that both Jason and Colin have absolutely everything to lose, coming up against someone like me, but I think the combination of the whole team will work, so I'm really excited.'

'I always said last year that I thought the car was at about 70 per cent of where it needed to be, now I think it's pretty close to 100 per cent. Last year it was a pretty decent package, now it's the package you want to be in. We'll have to see how the RWD cars fare – but I think that, as a FWD package goes, this is one of the cars to beat this season...



TEAM BMR

TEAM BMR was originally formed by Warren Scott, Mark Turner, Paul Martin and Stuart Wallace who are all still part of BMR today.

The team name is originally derived from Buntingford Motorcycle Racing, where Warren raced motorbikes, from club racing to national level and finally to the British Superstock and British Superbike Championship in 2004.

In 2010, when Warren's motorcycle career finally concluded following a huge crash after which he could no longer competitively race bikes, the team changed to car racing, becoming Buntingford Motor Racing. The team made their debut with a late entry into the Lotus Elise Trophy in 2011, continuing into 2012 with many podium finishes.

Higher ambitions led to their entry into the 2013 British Touring Car Championship, with Warren piloting an ex-WTCC SEAT Leon S2000, before switching to the NGTC VW CC, with Alan Cole appointed as Team Manager, and after a successful maiden year Warren and Team BMR expanded into a four car team for 2014, comprising Alain Menu, Árón Smith and Jack Goff to run alongside himself under the Chrome Edition Restart Racing banner.

Team BMR finished fourth in the Independents Team trophy, fifth in the Teams Championship and Alain finished second in the Jack Sears Trophy. Árón took wins at Snetterton and Oulton Park, while Alain finished second and third place at Rockingham and Silverstone.

For 2015, Team BMR has moved into a new factory at their original headquarters in Buntingford, Hertfordshire, with new engineers Kevin Berry and Carl Faux joining the team alongside engineers Paul Martin and Craig Owen, and Team Managers Alan Cole and Mark Turner, to face the challenge ahead.

It will be busy year, that's for sure, as Team BMR will also run a car in the 2015 Renault UK Clio Cup Championship and Warren Scott recently took over ownership of the local Rye House Speedway track.

Team BMR's partners this year include Restart (Energy drinks), Milltek Sport, Corbeau, Luke Racing Systems, Autoglym, MJ Warner Accident Repairs, Fat Goose Bespoke Catering Services and SAMCO Sport. More information about the team's activities can be found at *www.teambmr.co.uk*

THE DUNLOP MSA BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP was recently recognised by the motorsport publication *Autosport* as one of the very best tin-top championships in the world.

Seven key motorsport journalists rated the eight major touring car series in a number of key areas, in terms of both the sporting and entertainment values of each, and the BTCC was placed second overall behind only the DTM (Germany) and ahead of all others, including the FIA World Touring Car Championship and Australian V8 Supercars championship.

The intense competition in the BTCC undoubtedly adds to that entertainment factor. With a record-breaking 11 different race winners in 2014, the fight for the title came down to the season finale at Brands Hatch. Autosport recognised that it's no mean feat to win at all in this championship, let alone take the title: 'Winning a race here in the BTCC is probably one of the toughest tasks in tin-top racing!'

2015 BTCC CALENDAR

April 4 – 5	Brands Hatch (Indy)
April 19 – 19	Donington Park
May 9 – 10	Thruxton
June 6 – 7	Oulton Park (Island)
June 27 – 28	Croft
Aug 8 – 9	Snetterton
Aug 22 – 23	Knockhill
Sept 5 – 6	Rockingham
Sept 26 – 27	Silverstone
Oct 10 – 11	Brands Hatch (GP)

For more information see: www.btcc.net











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7R SPECIAL ISSUE



LEADER OF THE PACK

Often seen leading an entire field of GT race cars, Volkswagen Racing's Golf R has all the right parts to work as a safety car at all the UK's top racing circuits…

Photos: Neil Birkitt and Paz Chauhan



Jake Ebrey

ANYONE WHO watches circuit-based motorsport will be familiar with the concept of the safety car. Sometimes called a pace car, it is used to control the speed of the competing cars during a period of caution, such as a sudden onset of adverse weather conditions, when the track becomes obstructed by an accident or if a car has to be retrieved from a dangerous position just off track, but without stopping the race completely.

But there is a lot more to the safety car than just being able to drive around slowly in front of the field; in fact, it needs to be quite dynamic in its own right – able to accelerate swiftly into position ahead of the racing field and to maintain a decent pace once in position. That's particularly true with the faster race cars where slowing down too much leads to the tyres and brakes losing temperature – a potentially dangerous situation when the race rapidly resumes after the track has cleared. It also needs to be capable of dealing with adverse weather conditions; a sudden heavy downpour for instance, which might slow things for a while but without actually stopping the race completely.

That means having a safety car that can maintain a decent pace around the track ahead of a whole horde of hungry racers, without falling off the circuit itself. In fact, it almost needs to be built as if it were a race car itself, but with full concessions to comfort and practicality. It also needs to be ultra-reliable and have a suitable image for the job; after all, with worldwide live TV coverage at many events, the last thing anyone would want is for the safety car itself to fail in its duties. In fact, if you check out YouTube coverage, you can find several alarming clips of the problems that have arisen in the past when a safety car hasn't lived up to its name…

So, last year when the MSA British GT Championship, one of the UK's leading sportscar race series, needed a new safety car last season to replace the previous Nissan GTR, it chose to use a Golf 7 R modified by Volkswagen Racing. With the field comprising over 30 GT3 and GT4 sports cars from prestigious marques such as Aston Martin,



'We need every one of our VWR performance upgrades to be able to shine at high speed on track, time after time, under pressure to perform with total reliability...'

Photo: Jake Ebrey

McLaren, Ferrari and Porsche, the championship needed a suitable car with the performance necessary to safely lead them around the track in any weather conditions, reliably and safely at speed. There's also a strong association with the series anyway, with the Volkswagen Racing Cup itself running as a support race to the GT series.

So, using a new 2014 three-door Golf 7 R in 6-speed manual form as its starting point, Volkswagen Racing made use of many of its VWR performance upgrades to bring the car up to spec for its high-profile role, and the specification of the Golf R now reads like a whole chapter from the VWR parts catalogue. Unlike many modified cars, though, nothing is fitted for show; this is all about dynamic improvement and technical upgrade – it's built for serious purpose and not pose value...

As Volkswagen Racing UK MD Sam Roach explained at the time 'We need every one of our VWR performance upgrades to be able to shine at high speed on track, time after time, under pressure to perform with total reliability. Usually, that's in a race environment, so it's a great testament for our uprated Golf R to be chosen for such a high-profile and prestigious task.'

'When hurtling through Paddock Hill bend or the Craner Curves, with a full field of GT cars right behind you, the pressure to keep perfect control and a clean line is even more intense...'

The dynamic ability of the 7R is already very high, exemplary for fast road use but, as anyone who has driven fast on a track will already know, the concessions to road-going ride comfort soon make themselves felt on a race circuit. When hurtling through Paddock Hill bend or the Craner Curves, with a full field of GT cars right behind you, the pressure to keep perfect control and a clean line is even more intense.

Which is where the VWR Tracksport coil-over suspension kit comes in. Derived directly from the race-specification coil-over suspension kit, using the same lightweight damper bodies and construction, it is undeniably a stiff set-up, but not so severe that it can't also be used on the road. A significant improvement over the pure road-going VWR StreetSport kits, in particular, is that the rear dampers are also coilover, with 60 mm linear springs, providing a full range of spring travel at the rear, rather than relying on shorter springs.

The TrackSport kit has inverted front dampers, giving a much stiffer strut to avoid flex under intense load, with the damper bodies made from aluminium to save weight, and powder-coated in gloss black. Not only height-adjustable, using threaded strut bodies and adjustable spring plates, the system also provides a convenient 12-point adjustment of both bump and rebound rates.

The TrackSport kit also comes with a pair of shortened anti-roll bar drop links and uses adjustable CNC-machined solid top mounts and pillow ball bearings, not only eliminating the soft rubber mountings but also providing for accurate adjustment of front camber. Beautifully engineered, the only shame is that they aren't visible under the plastic scuttle cover.

Although somewhat more obvious to the outside world, the VWR big brake upgrade also falls into a similar category as the

'Not so severe that it can't also be used on the road...'



'Here, VWR has fitted the safety car with its big-brake upgrade using 360 mm x 32 mm fully floating two-piece front discs, in conjunction with the single billet monoblock 6-piston front callipers and steel braided hoses...'



suspension system, requiring a significant upgrade for fast track use while falling short of the harsh severity and noisy operation incurred with a full-race set-up.

Here, VWR has fitted the safety car with its big-brake upgrade using 360 mm x 32 mm fully floating two-piece front discs, with directional curved cooling vanes, and much bigger pad area, in conjunction with the single billet monoblock 6-piston front callipers which are not only much stiffer in construction but also lighter than the original callipers. They are used in conjunction with steel-braided hoses which eliminate any flex under high pressures in the hydraulic system, to provide a firm strong pedal action under heavy braking.

That is balanced by a rear disc upgrade that replaces the standard original rear ventilated discs with two-piece ventilated, grooved discs and aluminium bells. The same size as the standard rear discs (310 mm x 22 mm), they can be fitted as a simple, direct replacement disc with no other changes needed to rear callipers, pads or mounting hardware.

The final part of the rolling stock is the set of 8.5 x 19-inch Team Dynamics Pro Race alloy wheels, one of the few areas where the safety car uses parts which are bigger than the race cars, which all use the 18-inch version of this same rim to meet the race regulations.

Wheel and tyre combinations are all too frequently chosen more for their aesthetic appeal, often at the cost of dynamic or practical ability, but this is one case where form follows function and the attractive 12-spoke design finished in satin graphite grey is as good-looking as it is effective.

Weighing 10.9 kg per wheel, they are not actually the lightest possible rim combination, but the heat-treated alloy wheel crucially has the strength needed for hard road and track use and meets the required load rating, something that is all too often overlooked. With an offset of ET45, the 8.5 x 19-inch wheel fits neatly over those bigger brakes and comfortably fills out the wheel arches without overpowering them.

A tyre size of 235/35 R19 is recommended for this application and the safety car has variously used a choice of Hankook Ventus V12 evo or Dunlop Sport Maxx RT rubber, both equally respected as high-performance road tyres which border on full track capability. Bear in mind that while the race car drivers can pick and choose between slick race rubber or wet tyres according to the anticipated conditions, the safety car has to

be ready to roll at any time, at a moment's notice whatever the conditions, without the privilege of a pit stop. Its tyres must be able to cope with all weather conditions as well as provide excellent grip at high speeds on the circuit, and still be fit to drive home on at the end of the day.

Now, whether the Golf R really needed any extra performance is a moot point; after all, the car's standard 300 PS and 380 Nm torque is already good for a 0-60 time of under 5 seconds and a top speed of over 155 mph. But that sort of performance pales into the background when compared to a VW Racing Cup car, let alone a full-race GT car and when the safety car has to be able to charge into action to get out of the pit lane ahead of the field it needs all the performance it can get...

Currently running Revo Stage 1 engine management software, in conjunction with a full Milltek Sport bespoke turbo-back race exhaust and high-flow catalyst, and the new VWR R600 full intake system, it now develops nearly 360 bhp at 6500 rpm and maximum torque of 475 Nm at 5000 rpm, as measured on the Maha rolling-road dyno at Marlin Motorsport in Milton Keynes. That's enough for a 0-60 mph time of less than 4 seconds and 0-100 mph in well under 10 seconds, along with plenty of mid-range urge to surge around the circuit ahead of the following field, without any risk of slowing the full race cars to the extent that they lose temperature in their tyres and brakes.

Revo's Stage 1 re-map is actually a very good option for fast road use, as it can be flashed directly through the OBD2 diagnostic port, without having to remove the ECU, and can be used in conjunction with an ordinary pump fuel like Shell V Power, providing better driveability, tractability and increased performance throughout the rev range, whether you're on the road or leading a GT field around the race track at Silverstone.



'It now develops nearly 360 bhp at 6500 rpm and maximum torque of 475 Nm at 5000 rpm'

The Revo Stage 1 software is also switchable between four different settings, from a level of performance similar to stock (although not actually the standard software) through two performance settings, modes A and B, for use with 97 and 98 RON pump fuel in good conditions, up to a mode C for use with high-octane 100 RON fuel.

Indeed, Revo has recently introduced a Stage 2 ECU upgrade, for use in conjunction with a turbo-back exhaust, performance cold-air intake system and intercooler upgrade, which steps the performance up even further, adding over 20 bhp to the peak power and as much as an extra 45 bhp at some points in the rev range. It also removes the top speed limiter and enables left-foot braking, both of which are much more appropriate to the race track environment than for road use.

It can only be a matter of time before the VWR safety car follows suit as it already has some of the accompanying modifications, with the turbo-back Milltek Sport Cup Edition exhaust system and the recent addition of the new R600 intake system.

Again, not quite as extreme as the full race exhaust system, the Cup Edition exhaust is still a step up from the usual fast-road exhaust upgrade, replacing the stock system from the turbo back, with 3.0-inch (76 mm) bore stainless-steel tubing and a single silencer taking the place of the original two large silencer boxes. Reducing restriction to gas flow, while still retaining a 200-cell high-flow catalyst for full road-legal status, and terminating with twin titanium tailpipe trims, it is claimed to produce an extra 20 bhp in its own right, even without an ECU re-map.

The car was running the VWR Cup Edition Tri-foam open element filter intake system when we first photographed it at a test day at the Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground last year, but the new R600 intake system which made its debut at Autosport International in January is a work of art – not only highly effective but almost looking like a factory-fitted component.

Claimed to be 'the world's most sophisticated intake for MQB-platform EA888 cars' it comprises an enlarged airbox housing a much larger TriFoam™ triple-layer filter and uses twin front air intakes, from both sides of the front panel, to channel cool fresh air to the induction intake.

Manufactured from the same PU material as the original factory-fitted airbox, with the same finish and appearance as the engine cover, and installed using all the original factory mountings, the only giveaway that this might not be an OEM component is the discreet 'R' logo that is formed into the top face of the airbox casing... and the richer induction noise as the VWR Golf R accelerates up the pit lane to take the head of the field.

One last feature of the engine specification that shouldn't be overlooked is that it is fitted using uprated engine mounts. Replacing the standard rubber mountings with a combination of aluminium billet and polyurethane keeps the engine firmly in place under hard acceleration and eliminates the loose feeling to the drivetrain that is experienced when coming off and on the throttle, or during gearchanges. Inevitably, there is some additional noise in the cabin as a result, but not excessively so and it's the kind of sensation that most enthusiastic drivers will come to relish rather than resent.

'It's a good example of how a Golf R can be modified to almost race-worthy standards of dynamic performance while still remaining fully road-legal and practicable...'

Although the VWR Golf R safety car has been built for a very specific purpose, to just short of the technical specification of a race-worthy car, it still retains all the civilised comforts and practicality of a road car, without resorting to the bucket seats and roll cage that would actually make it uncomfortable and reduce accessibilty for the drivers who have to sit in it throughout race day, just in case they are called upon at a moment's notice to react to a race situation. But it's also a good example of how a Golf R can be modified to almost race-worthy standards of dynamic performance while still remaining fully road-legal and practicable. Imagine it without the light bar and graphics and you'd have one very potent and understated road car!



'The only giveaway is the discreet 'R' logo...'

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7R SPECIAL ISSUE

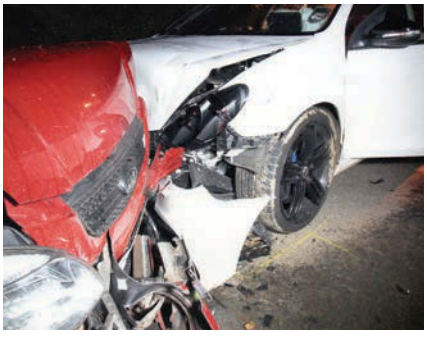


Ultimate 'dub

The latest in a long line of special VWs going back 45 years, Malcolm Keefe's Golf 7R is undoubtedly the very best yet...

HAVING OWNED three air-cooled Beetles, seven Golfs, and two Sciroccos, I suppose that I am a bit of a VW enthusiast! Way back in 1970 I bought an immaculate 1200 cc Beetle, but the 6-volt electrics were a bit of a nightmare, so that was replaced with a 1300 cc Beetle, which in turn was replaced with a 1600 cc Beetle. Then, between 2002 and the present time I have owned four Golf GTIs (a Mk 3, a Mk 4 once featured in this magazine, a Mk 5 seen advertised and sold from this magazine, and a Mk 6), as well as a Mk 5 R32, two Sciroccos (a 210 PS 2.0 TSI and a 265 PS 2.0-litre R) and two Golf Rs, a Mk 6 and the Mk 7 seen here. By the way, I still own the Mk 5 R32 and the Scirocco R. My son Adrian also owns a very tidy low-mileage white Scirocco R.

It was back in August 2013, that I first spotted details of the 'new' Mk 7 Golf R on the internet, but I never thought that I would ever own one, until a bizarre experience two months later! In October 2013, when we were many miles away from home in Devon, I was hit head-on by another car in a country lane, totally wrecking the front end of the pristine, low-mileage, white Mk 6 Golf R that I'd bought from Wayside Letchworth in March 2011, having part-exchanged a very tidy Mk 6 Golf GTI.



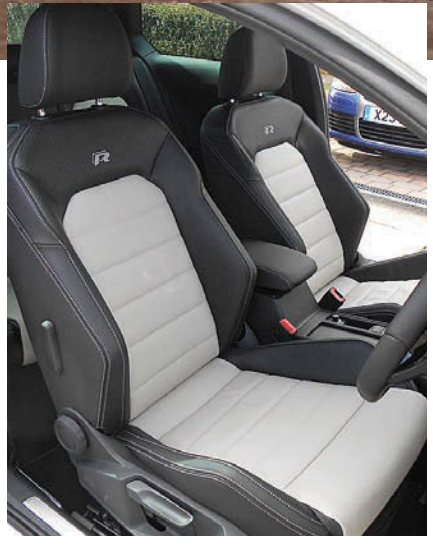
The very heavy impact happened so suddenly that I never even had time to apply my brakes and I'm certain that the airbags and the seat belts saved our lives, or at least prevented more serious injuries. Apparently, the other driver had collapsed at the wheel and was therefore out of control, on the wrong side of the road. He subsequently surrendered his driving licence to the DVLA, which is probably just as well!

Fortunately, my 'Gap' insurance was still valid and I got back the full £31,995 I paid for the GTI, which cheered me up a bit! So, in November 2013, I visited my nearest VW dealership Lancaster St. Albans (formerly Wayside St. Albans), just to enquire about the new Mk 7 Golf R which could be ordered, although there was no showroom model available for inspection at that time. I did, however, have a test drive in the Mk 7 Golf GTI with Performance pack which was probably the nearest they had for comparison. Suffice it to say that I was suitably impressed – if this was what 230 PS and front-wheel drive could do, then the 300 PS four-wheel-drive Golf R would be simply amazing!

On November 27, after careful thought, I ordered a three-door Mk 7 Golf R with DSG, in Pure white (£255) which was not a standard colour. My personal specification included the 'Cadiz' 18-inch wheels, dynamic chassis control (£815), the best quality 'Nappa' leather seats with the R logo (£2,615), the 'Supagard' protection (£299), a 3-year service plan (£299), a 3-year 'Smart' bodywork damage cover (£175), a 3-year 'Abraxas' wheel and tyre damage protection (£225), and a Cobra tracker (£780) which was to be supplied and installed by Richter Sport Ltd. I think that the salesman was almost as excited as I was! In

'On November 27, after careful thought, I ordered a three-door Mk 7 Golf R with DSG, in Pure white...'













readiness, I also purchased registration plate G7 VWR from the DVLA (for £399), and I sold my previous plate G6 VWR by advertising it in the pages of *Volkswagen Driver*.

On March 1, 2014, my son drove me to Lancaster St. Albans to collect my new 'toy'. The showroom was absolutely full of brand-new '14' plate cars, and many had already been collected. My handover appointment was at 11.30 am and my stunning white Mk 7 Golf R DSG was sitting in the corner generating a lot of interest because many of their earlier customers had never seen one before. Apparently, one chap enquired whether I would be likely to sell it to him (highly unlikely, after I'd waited three months to play with it!).

A pleasant surprise was that the two-tone leather seats are mostly black, but with white centre panels – I hadn't expected that. As an afterthought, I requested the dealership to supply and fit a pair of proper VW door sill protectors, to prevent the white paintwork getting scuffed – they were quite expensive, though, at £175.

'The external appearance of a car is very important to me, which is why I chose to have the cosmetic ABT Sportsline parts fitted...'

On my journey home, I couldn't wait to slip it into 'Race' mode, which was quite scary and my son said that it sounded like a BTCC racer when I overtook him! The stop/start engine function, and the lack of a conventional handbrake lever took a bit of getting used to, but I absolutely love everything about it now, and it has proved to be a real 'head-turner' when I am out in it. Fortunately, it is kept in a garage, unlike my other two cars, a blue R32 and a green Scirocco R, which are parked on my front drive (apologies for being greedy with three cars!).

The external appearance of a car is very important to me, which is why I chose to have three cosmetic ABT Sportsline parts supplied and fitted by Richter Sport Ltd. of Milton Keynes. I now have a pair of black carbon-effect mirror covers, a pair of white colour-coded sleek headlamp covers, and a white colour-coded tailgate strip with a black insert which compliments the gloss black diffuser below the rear bumper. ABT can also supply a £1,500 'power increasement' re-map resulting in 370 hp, but I'm not sure what my insurance company would think about it!

I really like the narrow blue ambient lighting strips in the door panels and in the





door sills (they are red in the GTI) but I wish that the brake callipers were blue (as they are red on the GTI), and I can't understand why VW chose the horizontal blue stripe extending into the headlights for the hybrid Mk 7 Golf GTE, instead of the new Golf R where it belongs!

In my opinion, another minor visual improvement for the Golf R would be a gloss black insert, to fit within the redundant 'two tier' recesses which are located on both sides of the front bumper, almost midway between the front wheel arches and the gloss black lower air intakes. A local company, Utopia Signs of Apsley here in Hemel Hempstead, specialise in vehicle graphics, and they have supplied some gloss black self adhesive inserts, after providing them with an accurate template. They also provided the white lettering for the rear windows of all of my cars. ➔









'In 'Race' mode, my son said that it sounded like a BTCC car when I overtook him!'







In this article, I have not attempted to include any technical data about performance figures or mpg, as I leave that sort of thing to the excellent road tests in *Volkswagen Driver*. When my pride and joy comes out of the garage on a dry day, I just fire it up, select one of the many driving mode options, and head off into the sunshine to enjoy it – until, that is, I replace it with a Golf R400 with inappropriate yellow brake callipers, and an inappropriate yellow horizontal stripe across the front!

I have an excellent relationship with the courteous and helpful members of staff at Lancaster VW St. Albans, and I always receive a warm welcome when I call there. All three of my cars are taken there when necessary, including the Golf R which had its first service recently at just 2,740 recorded miles. When I collected it, not only had it been washed and vacuum-cleaned, but even the tyres had been 'blacked' so that it was in showroom condition once again. I look forward to many more miles at the wheel of this Golf 7R DSG and I am sure that Lancaster VW will look after us both for many years to come...

'When my pride and joy comes out of the garage on a dry day, I just fire it up, select one of the many driving mode options, and head off into the sunshine to enjoy it...'

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MILLTEK SPORT

Main photos: Neil Birkitt

7R SPECIAL ISSUE



Track attack!

The men from Milltek show how the Golf R DSG can be modified to drive to the track, run at race pace all day and then drive home again, without feeling at all exhausted…

Photo: Jim Gaisford

MILLTEK SPORT is a company name that will be well known to anyone with interests in the business of high-performance tuning and motorsport, particularly within the Volkswagen Group scene.

With a long history going back to the days of producing stainless-steel systems for cars that are now considered classics, Milltek Sport arose to become the foremost name for high-performance exhaust upgrades for the modern generation of quality cars, with Volkswagen and Audi models at the forefront of their product range.

One of the main reasons they've stayed there is that they are invariably the first company to acquire a brand-new model and run it for some time – often for many months and thousands of miles in fact – as a prototype development and demo vehicle, rather than just borrow a car for a few days to make a few measurements.

And, of course, it only helps that Milltek Sport's founder Phil Millington and current Managing Director Steve Pound are both avid Audi and VW enthusiasts with a particular penchant for track days and motorsport. You'll find the company supporting motorsport series like the BTCC, Volkswagen Racing Cup and Time Attack, and present in some capacity at most motorsport events and track days all over the country, and abroad, quite often with either Phil or Steve behind the wheel as they charge around the race circuit. These guys apply hands-on management, in every sense of the word.

One of their current demo vehicles is this three-door Lapiz blue Golf 7R DSG and we caught up with them at an OpenTrack Events track day at Bedford Autodrome in early February, to take a closer look at the car, and experience some very fast passenger laps around the North Circuit with their regular driving coach, BTCC racing driver Tom Onslow-Cole, at the wheel.

'These guys apply hands-on management, in every sense of the word...'

Of course, the Golf R is modified somewhat, although the obvious focus of attention is the high-performance exhaust system that Milltek Sport developed for this model, and it wasn't a five-minute job... To quote from their own website: 'Milltek Sport has spent an unprecedented amount of time creating a truly impressive and comprehensive range of performance exhaust options for the Golf R and all its various sister vehicles'...

The facts are that the system uses Type-304 aircraft-grade stainless-steel pipework, with a 3-inch (76 mm) diameter that, from





extensive dyno testing and gasflow analysis, Milltek's technicians have found to provide the optimal gasflow for increased power, as well as a rich sound quality. There are two options here, with the cat-back system available with either a centre silencer (referred to as resonated) or a centre silencer delete pipe (non-resonated).

The resonated option meets EC Type Approval, a legal requirement for sale into most European and some Asian countries, which restricts the volume of noise that an aftermarket exhaust can produce. Milltek's engineers have used their acoustic expertise to produce a system that meets those restrictions while still satisfying the customer's requirements for the quality and tone of sound, but also enhancing the power output and engine response.

For customers who don't require EC Type-approval, the non-resonated version offers a more aggressive sound, but without droning at any speed, so that the Golf R can retain its comfortable cruising ability and day-to-day functionality.

For maximum performance, Milltek Sport also has a range of full turbo-back system using a large-bore downpipe which, combined with the cat-back system. Customers can choose between an ultra-high-performance 200-cell hi-flow sports catalyst, a catalyst removal section, or an EC Type-Approved high-flow sports catalyst.

The biggest dilemma, of course, is that most of the beautiful craftsmanship that goes into making a Milltek Sport exhaust system is hidden from view beneath the car, but the saving grace is the choice of a beautiful tailpipe design, available with either the shiny polished finish or the subtle and durable Cerakote black velvet.

While the Milltek Sport exhaust system for the Golf R produces a noticeable improvement in power and response in its own right, it will always benefits further from a readjustment of the engine management, and one option to fit a Steinbauer tuning module which can be installed as a simple add-on to supplement the exhaust upgrade.

Then again, the quest for more power opens up the door to the even more substantial improvement in performance that comes from a full-bore ECU re-map. Here, the guys from Milltek left the car with Ben Wardle of Shark Performance, to work his magic on the software and the result was a huge hike in power output. ➜



Photo: Rowan Harrison *www.fueltopia.co.uk*

Milltek's motorsport experience pointed them straight towards upgrading the suspension and brakes...'



The Shark Performance Stage 1 software for the 220 PS and 230 PS 2.0 TSI engines in the Mk 7 GTI increases power output to 285 bhp and torque to 450Nm, but the version for the 300 PS 2.0 TSI engine in the Golf R increases peak power to 350 bhp and torque to 475 Nm.

In the case of the Milltek car, which has also been fitted with a high-flow catalytic converter and the VWR R600 free-flow intake system, Ben has recorded exactly 371 bhp and 488 Nm on the rolling-road dyno at their Mansfield workshops.

So, plenty of power was now on tap, but two more important upgrades were needed for maximum pace around the circuits and Milltek's motorsport experience pointed them straight towards upgrading the suspension and brakes. The Golf R now wears a Bilstein B16 Ride Control suspension kit that not only provides all the conventional advantages of a top-quality coilover suspension upgrade with height-adjustable (–30 mm to –50 mm) spring perches, but also provides electronic damping adjustment, with both the bump and rebound damping rates changed together in a carefully pre-set ratio.

Controlled from a push button, in this case fitted on the dash just down to the left of the steering wheel, the 'Sport' mode offers much firmer damping for and optimum handling, while the 'Comfort' setting provides ride quality more like that of the OEM dampers. Switching between modes can be done in an instant while driving, in a manner similar to the factory-fitted Dynamic Chassis Control (DCC) system, although the Bilstein system isn't adaptive. It's not a cheap conversion, but for anyone who doesn't have





'The Bilstein system offers an aftermarket alternative to DCC, along with a considerable suspension upgrade and the ability to adjust the ride height...'



Photo: Rowan Harrison





the factory-fitted DCC option already, it offers an aftermarket alternative, along with a considerable suspension upgrade and the ability to adjust the ride height.

One final ingredient to the car's upgrades became obvious on the first fast approach to a corner when Tom-Onslow-Cole literally stamped hard on the brakes. No factory-fitted system ever slowed a car quite as dramatically as this brake set-up! Milltek took the car to Allumy Motorsport, based in Nottingham, to have it fitted with a big-brake kit supplied by Vagbremtechnic, comprising a pair of 350 mm two-piece floating discs in conjunction with Aston Martin DB9 Brembo 4-pot callipers and Project Mu H16 pads. Extremely powerful, but also civilised enough for ordinary road use, they can deal with just about anything that this BTCC racing driver could throw at them, not just once or twice, but time and time again, without a hint of fade or duress.

The final element of modification is the set of rims that the Milltek Sport Golf R rolls on for circuit use. Although it was fitted with its original 19-inch Pretoria alloys when it was displayed on the Shark Performance stand at the Autosport Show in January, for the track day it was running on a set of 8.5 x 18-inch VWR / Team Dynamics Pro-Race 12-spoke rims, shod with Continental ContiSportContact 5 tyres.

That might not sound like the best choice of rubber for a track day, but the Milltek guys were quite enthusiastic about their ability to drive all the way from Derby to the circuit, tear around the track all day and still happily drive home on them at the end of the day. Indeed, given the conditions, with a cold damp morning followed by heavy rain throughout the afternoon, those road-going Contis were probably a far better choice than the typical 'cut-slick' trackday rubber worn by many of the specialist track cars at Bedford Autodrome that day. Specialist track cars that, incidentally, were frequently passed at enormous pace by a fairly innocuous-looking Golf, even it was being piloted by a top-flight racing driver...

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Volkswagen DRIVER

Photo: Jim Gaisford




MI-Tek
SPORT



'DANNO', VWROC.COM MEMBER

7R SPECIAL ISSUE

GOLF 7R DRIVERS

I'VE ALWAYS loved a fast Golf and my love affair with the über Golf started on the autobahns of Germany in the mid-'90s…

Over a pint one evening, a friend and I had worked out a surefire money-making idea. The exchange rate with the then Deutschmark was three to one against the Pound; allied to this, my friend could speak fluent German, but most importantly of all, the E30 M3 BMW was only available in left-hand drive in the UK. This meant that the old adage of 'left hook, half book' didn't apply and an instant trebling of our money if we could bring them back from the Fatherland. And bring them back we did – I think it was six in total, including some of the limited edition ones, like a Misano red Johnny Cecotto in mint condition, a limited edition with only 236 ever produced.

But it was a pretty random and disorganised venture. We'd just decide that 'today was the day' and we'd go and drive down to get another one. We'd set off at any time of the day or night in my Mk 2 Golf GTI, get to a large city like Frankfurt or Stuttgart, buy the local 'Autotrader' and get on the phone. Sleeping in the car and getting up to no good in the evenings were par for the course, as was the obligatory detour back through Amsterdam to get 'lost' for a week – well, I was young, so do you blame me?!

Why is this story relevant to a feature about the Golf R, you may well ask? Because it was on those very hectic trips to Germany that I fell in love with the Golf Rallye, the grandfather of the Golf R… Genesis in fact. Despite shopping for M3s we were also looking for a Rallye, although we never found one worth bringing home. I wish we had. Like I wish we'd kept hold of the Johnny Cecotto. This car, in top condition, would now be worth well over £100,000 and we were buying them virtually brand-new back then for about £6,000!

Many years later and now with a sensible job, I got myself a Deep black pearl metallic Mk 5 GTI, one of the first 500 off the boat. I ordered it in November 2004 and it finally arrived in April 2005. The wait was unbearable, but is something that VW early adopters just have to get used to. This was a fabulous car – the GTI was back to its former glory. The amount of attention it received was actually slightly worrying. Sometimes you don't want to come out of Tesco's and find a group of hoodies leering over your pride and joy. I was smitten, and harking back to my younger escapades across Europe, the driving holidays began again in earnest. The F1 at Spa and a trip to Vienna were both done in the late summer of 2005.

However, later that year, I was rudely interrupted by an article in the *Sunday Times*. They'd just announced the Mk 5 R32 and it was even faster and better than my GTI. I was a bit annoyed, to tell the truth. If only I'd waited another six months I could have ordered that instead. Oh well, I thought, next time it's going to be the R32…

Wind on to December 2009. The new Mk 6 R was announced, but this time it wasn't a 3.2-litre V6 up front, but only a turbo'd 2.0-litre four-cylinder – damn! Oh well – according to the reviews, it was lighter, more powerful, faster, more fuel-efficient and it handled better, so I was having my Golf R this time if it killed me!

It was about this time that I happened to join the world of online forums. I joined a Golf GTI forum and myself and a number of other members on the site started posting about ordering our new Golf Rs. We were much derided and told that it wasn't really a proper R because it didn't have six cylinders so, after many months of abuse, one of the

'According to the reviews, the Mk 6 R was lighter, more powerful, faster, more fuel-efficient and it handled better, so I was having my Golf R this time if it killed me...'



members got fed up and decided to set up his own forum dedicated to all things R. The *www.rforum.co.uk* was born and I was one of its first members.

It was in this friendly R oasis that I could dream away in peace and quiet about my newly-ordered car, with all the other equally excited members. Rising blue was the order of the day, but because the options on a lease car were so expensive I kept it to the basics: leather, 19-inch wheels, the RCD 510 stereo and Adaptive Chassis Control.

This car was great and over the four years of ownership I drove it to Italy every year. Lots of camping trips, stuffed to the gunwales with the best-quality camping gear money could buy. The trick to camping is to cram everything in the boot, leaving the interior spotlessly clean and empty; then the R's refined cabin feels like a bit of luxury wherever you go.

I remember, one year, deliberately hunting out all of the mountain passes over the Alps. However, even I began to get car sick after about six hours of the relentless Dolomite hairpins – and I was driving!

The Mk 6 R was great, but it had its little foibles. Push it too hard, too early in a bend, and it would understeer. Where were the lovely heavy doors that the 2-door Mk 5 had? These new ones were nowhere near as satisfying to close, and the fuel pump used to have a woodpecker living in it! The ACC was rubbish and in truth, the Mk 6 was really only a face-lifted Mk 5 Golf. It certainly wasn't as ground-breaking as the Mk 5 had been, compared to the Mk 4. It was evolution, not revolution…

I did, however, love its 4WD grip. That combination of grip and power never got boring, much to the detriment of my tyres – I'd get through a set every 7,000 miles, and all of the edges would be heavily 'feathered'!

Wind on to 2013. Rumours started about the new Mk 7 Golf R and mule test cars were spied on the Nurburgring. Much debate raged on the R Forum about how it looked. Even I was marginally disparaging about its beaky-looking, European pedestrian-friendly designed bonnet. First impressions were that it looked less aggressive and less purposeful – even more like a bog-standard Golf than it normally does. I mean, the R is the epitome of subtle isn't it. Most normal, well-adjusted people wouldn't be able to tell the difference between an R and a 1.6 TSI. But, slowly, I began to realise that this new one had some great lines. It looked more up-to-date. Sharper more angular lines replaced the more rounded, organic features of the Mk 6. It was growing on me!

Times move on, things change. Evolve or die! Even the R Forum evolved to become the Volkswagen R Owners Club (*www.vwroc.com*). The time had come to replace my Mk 6 R. An Audi RS 4 Avant was considered and even signed off by the wife, but frankly it was very expensive to buy, and to run. It also looks a bit flash when run through the company books. A Golf is discreet and modest; it's all things to all men, and the company bean-counters didn't bat an eyelid signing it off – little did they know!

So, my new Oryx white 7R was born – this time with all the trimmings! A plethora of cheap lease deals meant that I could tick 99 per cent of the option boxes and it was still costing 40p less a month than my last model…

Another pan-European trip was quickly arranged, driving down to Italy. The wife





was pregnant at this stage so a gentle, scenic route was planned. It would be our last swansong as a couple before all hell broke loose at home. Our three-night Last Tango in Paris was followed by an overnight stop in Munich, finishing with a last punch over the Julian Alps to Gemona del Friuli.

We have a little place there, nestled at the foothills of the mountains, and most of the time it's delightful in summer. The problem was that they were having the worst summer they'd had in 10 years and when the weather is bad in the mountains, it's seriously bad! Undeterred, we holed up in a café, surfed the weather websites and planned a 'run to the sun'. 'It's sunny in Croatia' the wife chirped up, so we packed up that very afternoon and headed down through Slovenia to Croatia along one of the best driving roads I've ever encountered. Definitely one for the guys on *Top Gear* to feature one day.

After the weather cheered up, we returned to Italy for a few nights, and then stupidly planned to get back to the UK in one day – no mean feat! The new 7R has Adaptive Cruise Control and it munches miles like no other car I've ever had – a true Grand Tourer. That's what I love about this new Mk 7 R. It really is a car with split personalities, especially when paired with the DSG transmission.

Fancy a soft, comfortable motorway cruise with the pregnant wife? – no problem, stick the DPS in Eco or Comfort and set the Adaptive Cruise Control to a sensible distance. Fancy showing the Italians a thing or two about safe distances on the AutoStrada – no problem, switch it up to Race mode and leave them for dust!

The handling of the Mk 7 is phenomenal. A beautifully balanced chassis allows driving right on the raggedy edge, but with total responsiveness and control. And as for cornering ability, compared to the Mk 6, it's frighteningly good. So much so, that I had to back off on the steering when I first went for a test drive, as the new Haldex 5.0 4WD system and XDS program proactively tightened my line!

So, did we make it back from Italy in a day? Yes, but with a pregnant wife it involved a great many toilet breaks! We covered at total of 926 miles in just under 17 hours (blame the state of French autoroute toilets) at an overall average speed of 54 mph and still recorded an average of 32.8 mpg!

But, as we approached our home town, I started to hear a funny noise from the engine. This turned out to be the first revision turbo that was about to let go and see my car off the road for two weeks, while Volkswagen stripped the engine into a thousand tiny pieces. But that's another story, for another day!



NAV DARR, BLACKBURN



HAVING BEEN a car enthusiast for many years and also an avid fan of F1, I always saw myself driving something a bit 'special' one day. After all, none of us are getting any younger and I don't want to look back with too much reticence so I've ticked off a couple of long desired activities in the last few years, such as the British Grand Prix at Silverstone in 2012 and I also spent a full day racing at the Bedford Autodrome, both of which I enjoyed immensely.

In the past I had enjoyed ownership of Japanese sports coupes, big-engined Audis and BMWs with enough performance to keep me content, but my lifestyle has changed and priorities inevitably have altered. Until last year that is, when I decided that I was now ready to bring back the enthusiast lurking in me which had been tamed for too long, due to the commitments to my humble abode commanding most of my energy and earnings.

My initial thoughts were to go back to an Audi or BMW and get the best possible combination of practicality, looks, performance and desirability. Until, that is, the VW Golf R came to the fore when I test-drove it one day. I was simply blown away and hooked both at the same time – this was the car for me, no doubts, no second thoughts and no question!

I spent weeks waiting with great anticipation before collecting the car. After I signed up to the VW order tracker it was good fun impatiently checking the order status on the website; receiving e-mails every time the vehicle passed from one stage to the next was exciting as well as annoying, especially when progress



seemed to freeze. I eventually received the vehicle in just over 12 weeks after initially expecting a 20-week wait, so – in the end – I did feel quite fortunate. It seemed to take forever being ready to be shipped, though this was mainly due to the Festive period. I made use of the time by signing up to the VWROC forum which gave plenty of insight and interesting bits of information, with lots of other customers in the same boat, and the enthusiasm and sense of expectation was shared by all. Highly recommended.

The big day arrived and everything was taken care of really well by Mark from VW Lookers in Preston. He was patient and helpful in answering all my questions and made sure that I left content. Seeing my car on the day was a great joy and sitting inside and then driving off was a great feeling – worth every minute of the wait!

Well, no real surprises here – the car is rapid enough when you are in the mood, or if you want to just potter around this also works fine. I find Normal mode to be more than adequate, Eco mode does what it says although I haven't experienced a major difference in fuel efficiency as of yet, but Race mode in town is a bit like a guard dog barking like mad, desperate to snap its leash and attack without hesitation! The engine sound amplifier does sound great, although it gives the feeling that the car is travelling faster than it actually is. It would have been great if the sound was replicated for real outside the car with a sweeter and beefier exhaust note.

Having said that, you do make progress quickly and silly speeds are only a light foot away. Speed is relative, I guess, and I have got used to it, but further up the rev range ➔

it does feel a little wanting, almost like it runs out of breath a bit. Again, though, this is to be expected with a 2-litre turbo 4-pot and I'm sure something like a performance box or ECU re-map would satisfy those wanting the extra muscle across a broader power band. Overall, though, I am more than happy with the performance – after all, how much real-world power do you really need?

I never really considered the implications of fuel economy, and this wasn't a factor for me anyway. Travelling only a few miles per day, I deduced that I would probably not get the full benefits of a diesel so was happy to go petrol. It's clear, though, that short journeys are not good for any engine or fuel efficiency, so no surprise here really. Locally, I average about 18 mpg and on a recent long trip down to the far south I averaged 30 mpg, which is acceptable I guess. The long-term average is currently at 23 mpg so far, but I'm not too concerned as driving habits and short distances obviously are the main contributors. I have filled up with Shell V Power since the start and will continue to do so, although I can't say it really makes a massive difference compared to 95 RON fuel.

I opted for the DSG gearbox, first and foremost because I fancied a change and to be able to relax a bit more while driving, especially in heavy traffic as this seems to be a major issue everywhere on our roads these days. However, with the manual mode and paddles I can still have the involvement when I want it, as I often do. Variety is the spice of life, and DSG really ticks the 'box' for me here. It has taken a bit of getting used to, mind you, as in Sport and Race modes it seems to redline too easily, but on the whole it's a really good experience and the more miles I accumulate the more logical it becomes. Would I go back to a manual? I very much doubt it – for me, this is clearly the way forward and the technology and implementation can only get better and better.

The Bridgestone S001 tyres on 18-inch Cadiz alloys have so far performed well up to the job. On a heavy rain-drenched M25, these tyres were very reassuring and secure as I changed lanes to try and avoid the huge water sprays from vehicles in front. The ride seems fine, apart from a little road hum, and I have suffered very little slip when pushing on so far. For me, this wheel and tyre size combination seems to provide the right balance. As expected, the handling is solid, safe and secure, with all four corners sticking to the road convincingly enough during enthusiastic driving and inspiring confidence in the twisty bits. Nothing wanting here, although I haven't tested it too far as I'm more than content to drive within my own limits. For now anyway…



The paintwork marks a little too easily, as already discovered with a small chip on the bonnet that has taken off the top coat. Swirls are in abundance, showing up in strong light but then that's Black for you, so I can't really complain. This has to be the most disappointing aspect as I've had black cars before, but I'm pretty sure the paint was not as delicate. Would I have made a different colour choice? Perhaps, if there was a Daytona grey/Platinum option, but I personally think that black looks best, when it is fully polished up and waxed.

The car seems to have a fatal attraction with dirt and muck, but that's just the price you pay – the rear bumper where it meets the rear hatch gets filthy almost as fast as the car accelerates as water accumulates and sits on the rear ledge with nowhere to filter away. A slight redesign here would easily fix this small but annoying issue.

The interior is a great place to be, in many respects. I'm normally a fan of leather, but I do love the cloth seats and I hope the wear rate isn't too drastic, especially with the seat bolsters. The only slight drawback is that they weren't overly comfy on my long trip to

'Would I go back to a manual? I very much doubt it – for me, this is clearly the way forward and the technology and implementation can only get better and better...'



'Space in the back seats is just about enough for my three kids...'



the south coast; maybe I'm getting old – a few hours is fine, but four or five hours was a little too much for the old back and bum and the adjustments didn't do much to help.

Design-wise, I'm quite partial to Audi interiors as I feel they are a little higher quality, but in terms of cabin layout, I much prefer the 7R, so I have to commend VW for their execution as it's much more interesting inside than the S3 for example. The multifunction display is neatly designed and user-friendly on the whole, but it can take your eyes off the road a little too much sometimes. The Mode buttons are on the wrong side of the centre console and it would've made more sense for them to be in view and closer to the driver's side of the centre console. Everyone loves the blue LED lights, it's just a shame they aren't on the rear doors as well. It would have been great if these could be optioned with contrasting colours to give a much more varied ambience. Space in the back seats is just about enough for my three kids, although due to the 4Motion the boot space is not so vast and could cause a minor irritation if not travelling light.

I have to admit that I only tried the Adaptive Cruise Control while on a recent long journey; I found it a bit unnerving at first, as I didn't like the distance before the car braked, so I played around with the settings to find a slightly more natural and progressive reaction. This felt a little better – after a while, it does make sense and you do eventually appreciate what is going on around you and I actually enjoyed the car braking and accelerating itself up to the set speed. If I spent a lot of time commuting on motorways and dual carriageways on a regular basis then this would probably be one of the best features installed in the car. Explaining to the wife and kids that the car was virtually driving itself drew looks of bemusement at first, but then I guess driverless cars will eventually become more common in the future.

Keyless entry is probably my favourite feature on the car and I'm so glad I chose it as the convenience and novelty it brings in terms of a start button is worth it and it means one less set of keys/ fob to worry about placing in and out of pockets. This fits with my preference of just jumping in and out of the car with little fuss, and together with the DSG transmission it complements the seamless experience while adding to the sense of occasion. I'll almost definitely specify keyless with my next car.

Overall, so far, I've really enjoyed the ability of the Golf R to satisfy several requirements. It's a small to medium family car which can accommodate the kids comfortably, as well as a hot hatchback with the ability to drive briskly when wanting to quench a thirst for fun and sportier driving, along with the ability to carry you safely in all weather conditions with 4Motion. It is a really nice to sit in the driver's seat, with cool LED blue light strips on the front doors and sills, plenty of creature comforts and tech such as ACC, and with susch a great-looking exterior with cool LED rear lights, quad exhaust pipes which show intent it's almost a wolf in sheep's clothing, with understated looks with just enough presence, and the performance to keep many fast cars out there more than honest. A great and inspired choice? Absolutely yes!

'It's almost a wolf in sheep's clothing, with understated looks and the performance to keep many fast cars out there more than honest...'



JAMES SOUTHALL, DUDLEY, WEST MIDLANDS

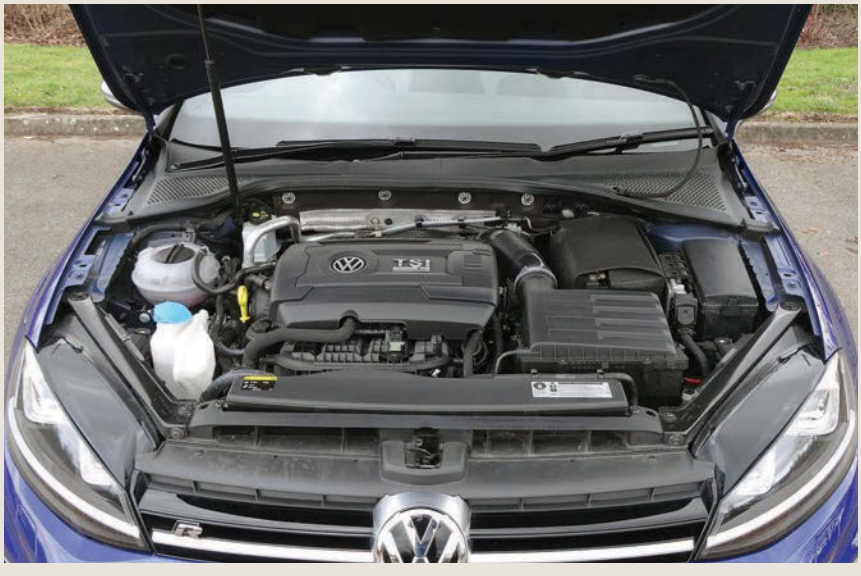
7R SPECIAL ISSUE



I HAVE HAD MY Golf 7R DSG for nine months now and have covered just over 6,500 miles, mostly to and from work (about five miles each way), with the occasional long run and fun drive thrown in for good measure. So, what is this car like to live with, I hear you ask?

Let's start with the basics – the 7R is good, very good! It as quick in a straight line as a Porsche Carrera S and goes round corners and roundabouts as if it is on rails. It really does have all the performance, and more, that you will ever need on public roads. Indeed, it is deceptively quick – take your eye off the speedo and you'll find yourself exceeding the speed limits very quickly, without realising. It really is a blast on smaller A and B roads, helped by the fact that the ride quality is surprisingly comfortable on the 18-inch Cadiz wheels, it's just a shame we didn't get the 19-inch Cadiz alloys in the UK.

In Lapiz blue the 7R looks sporty, but without the 'in your face' chavtastic styling of some hot hatches. This colour looks amazing and really 'pops' in the sunshine, and I especially love how it seems to be a different colour in different lighting. It also seems to stay relatively clean between weekly washes, the exception being the boot – which is dirty almost as soon as I pull off my drive – and the 7R's four exhaust tailpipes! These are the only real external giveaway of what the 7R is capable of, so keeping them gleaming is a must.



The DSG gearbox is silky smooth around town and it works seamlessly with the adaptive cruise control, which really eats up those motorway miles, practically allowing the R to drive itself. But one thing that would have been nice is an extra (7th) gear, because cruising along at motorway speeds holds the revs a bit high and can be a bit of a drone. I also think this would help with real-world fuel economy. For the record, my long-term average is about 25 mpg while longer trips will see 35 mpg – not bad for a 300 PS super-hatch.

While the steering wheel gearchange paddles feel good and give a nice 'click' when pressed, they are just not big enough, some paddle extenders might be required if you plan on using them regularly. Also, as seems to be the case with most DSG gearboxes, gear up and gear down seem back to front when using the stickshift. In sports mode, under heavy acceleration, ➔

you get a lovely DSG 'fart' on the upshift – this never gets old!

The interior of the R is just a nice place to be, with the blue lights on the doors and on the door sills being just some of the special little touches that remind me that I am in something that little bit special. The (faked) sound in the cabin while driving is like music to my ears, which is good as when I ordered there was no stereo upgrade available and while the standard system is OK, it's a far cry from the Bose system I had in my Audi A1. The basic media system works well and most things can be controlled from the steering wheel, I just wish they'd moved the volume buttons to the right-hand side.

The cloth seats are comfortable and hold me reasonably well; I found it easy to get into a comfortable driving position and visibility is good all round. There is plenty of storage dotted around, great for keeping bits out of the glovebox and more to hand. The shiny black plastic is a dust and fingerprint magnet, though – it's a shame they didn't continue the carbon effect plastic throughout.

'I ordered the R without seeing one. It was a total gamble, but one that has paid off. I seriously don't think there is a better all-rounder than the Golf 7R'

One of the best features has to be the Haldex 4-wheel drive system, with which it is very well planted indeed. It drives almost as well in heavy rain as it does in the dry and inspires confidence even in icy and snowy condition. And if you're on a track (or feeling a bit naughty) you can switch the ESC completely off and the R becomes a different animal altogether!

Occasionally, I need to use the 7R to transport things about, and in this respect it's just as practical as any other Golf. This is not just limited to the boot space, as four adult passengers will fit in comfortably if need be.

Running costs are a little on the high side, but luckily petrol has come down in price recently, although insurance seems to have taken a jump up just recently. Also, at just over the 5,000-mile mark the check oil light came on, so it looks as if the 7R likes a drink of oil to wash down all that petrol!

Some 6,000 miles in, I got a huge chip on the windscreen about the size of a 50p, so that needed replacing; upon closer inspection, there were also a few very small chips in the glass, this is the first time I've had a car where the windscreen chips so easily – or maybe it's something to do with the speeds it travels at…

I ordered the R without seeing one, let alone taking one for a test drive. It was a total gamble, but one that has paid off. I seriously don't think there is a better all-rounder than the Golf 7R.







7R SPECIAL ISSUE

www.vwroc.com

Vivian Lacey-Johnson recalls the story of the new Volkswagen R Owners' Club…

IN JUNE 2012 four men went camping, for four days, in a field in France. The youngest was 26, the oldest over 60 and they'd met on the internet. What could possibly go wrong? Yes, on the face of it the answer could have been 'a lot' but there were at least two things the dentist, property developer, pharmaceuticals sales manager and business owner had in common.



They all owned Volkswagen Golf Rs and were members of an online car forum called *RForum.co.uk*. But the potential for bonding went deeper than that. The field in France was on the inside of the famous Le Mans race circuit and they were there to watch the 24-hour race. In other words, these four men are confirmed petrolheads.

A lot happened over the four days. There was (apparently) an endurance car race that lasted a noisy 24 hours. Audi won overall – again. There were a few crashes, at least one of which was spectacular. An enormous amount of alcohol was consumed, and Peter Cook and Dudley Moore's '*Derek and Clive Live*' was played on a continuous loop, draining nearly all the power out of the battery of one of the Golf Rs. The camping party was pretty much like an extended stag-do but without the annoying distraction of a stripper. The four not only bonded, they became firm 'carfriends' and ardent users of the sometimes irritating but highly infectious WhatsApp.

Despite drunken-haze promises for a return to Le Mans in 2013, there was a strong possibility that when the four got back to their day jobs the WhatsApp banter, and even the online *R Forum* jousting, would wane. However as testament to the strength of the bond forged under canvas in the French field, nothing could be further from the truth. Those who had the misfortune to not open WhatsApp on their smartphone for an hour or two could easily find over 100 missed messages when they did!

Some two months later, in August 2012, when the hangovers had almost been forgotten, the founding member and owner of *R Forum* posted saying that he was interested in selling.

Immediately there was a dramatic increase in WhatsApp and email communication between the 'Le Mans Four'. Should they buy it? Of course they should. Four car-friends, each owning a Golf R, each with different skill-sets, each already spending many hours a week posting on *R Forum*, why on earth not? In fact it was a no-brainer. The deal was done.

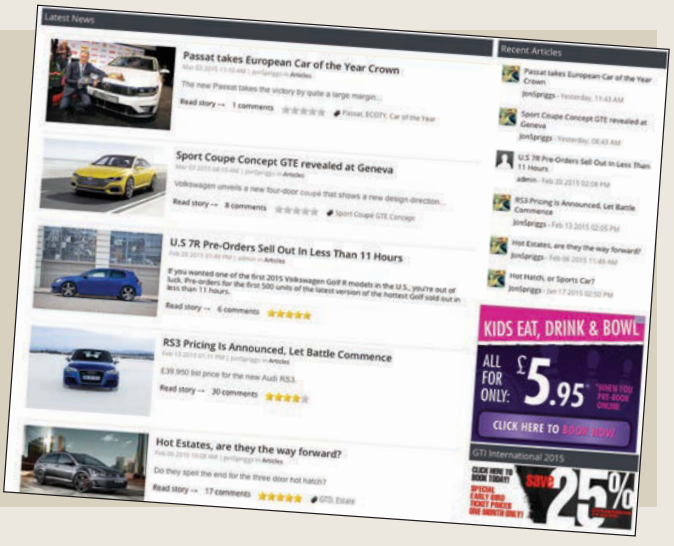
'Should they buy it? Of course they should. Four car-friends, each owning a Golf R, each with different skill-sets, each already spending many hours a week posting on R Forum, why on earth not?'

At this point there were approximately 700 registered members of the forum, with only 50 or so being active or regular users. As online forums go, it was a relatively calm and nice place for Golf and Scirocco R owners to hang out. It was a good place to exchange views, give and receive tips, post photos, discuss what cars members had owned in the past, and what they planned to buy in the future. But it was, the new owners thought, just a little bit too cliquey and quiet. Like its most elderly owner partner, it needed a facelift.

The initial aim was to change the forum software and try to recruit new, more active members. Despite having a co.uk designated URL, the member list included a number of R model owners from around the world including the USA, South Africa, Switzerland and Sweden, so a decision was made to improve the chances of 'going global' by choosing a .com URL. The problem then was whether to stick to just Volkswagen R models or widen the appeal by opening up to other models.

Practical issues needed addressing first in the form of funding and IT expertise. A decision was made to seek sponsorship





'The forum, albeit now a successful one, was still just another online car chat room. Something was needed to take it a little more up-market and go properly 'global'...'

type paid advertising in order to cover costs. As an online forum the hosting, design layout, and technical know-how required a level of IT knowledge none of the four partners had to any sufficient degree so the four began the search for a fifth partner.

This was a tricky one. A classified ad might have read 'Happily married foursome seeks additional partner/ housekeeper with IT skills. Remuneration doubtful. Must own a VW R, like *Derek and Clive Live*, GSOH etc'. How on earth could someone with the right qualifications be found?

Apart from the first Le Mans trip which was initiated on an *R Forum* thread, group meetings were proving to be quite successful and on a blustery but sunny Saturday in April 2013, eight Golf Rs and a single white Scirocco R met in Sheffield. Three of the four *R Forum* owners were there and, as it transpired, so was an IT professional who owned one of the Golf Rs. A bit of surreptitious vetting followed. It was ascertained that he had petrol in his veins judging by his well-modified R and talk of different turbo boost settings, and he appeared reasonably well house-trained and unlikely to want to drink tea and go to bed early if camping in France. An approach was made and fairly shortly afterwards the Le Mans Four became the *R Forum* Five.

In August 2013 the *R Forum* got its facelift with a new design and better features but essentially the only other major change was sponsor advertising. However the five owner partners were still looking for a way to increase the forum's appeal and widen the membership base. Volkswagen unwittingly obliged towards the end of 2013 by opening up the order books for the new Mk 7 Golf R. Page views, new threads, visitors, membership – all began to grow, despite the fact that the new car was not due in the UK until the Spring of 2014.

Once deliveries began and the motoring press got hold of the new Mk 7 R, the reviews became accolades for what has been hailed as not only the best Golf ever, but simply the best car in its class. It was like the floodgates opening for the *R Forum*, helped also by some 'too good to be true' leasing deals which made the number of daily page views and posts sky-rocket. But for the forum owners it still wasn't enough. The forum, albeit now a successful one, was still just another online car chat room. Something was needed to take it a little more up-market and go properly 'global'.

Proving that not all IT professionals have just zeros and ones in their brains, a suggestion came from the newest recruit. Why not create the Volkswagen R Owners Club? The suggestion was warmly received by all partners, so it seemed a perfect excuse for a board meeting to discuss the matter further. As the owners had met 'on the internet', their home locations spread from North Yorkshire to East Sussex so the unsuspecting town of Northampton was chosen for the meeting on November 8, 2014. Hardly Le Mans, but then they were there to discuss business, right? Well sort of...

Yes of course a lot of important decisions were made during the following 12 hours or so of intense discussion. But what happened later that evening proved yet again how strong the bond had become between these five R-loving petrol-heads. It would be remiss of the author to go into any detail but let's just say that the 'spirit' of Le Mans was very much in evidence!

A lot of hard work and extensive use of *Skype* followed, and on 14 December 2014 the now happily married fivesome gave birth to The Volkswagen R Owners Club. The switch-over from the former *rforum.co.uk* URL to *vwroc.com* meant that despite there being a completely new logo and page design, all stored bookmarks and historical links went straight to the new VWROC forum page. The main addition was a new 'News' page, already populated with interesting Volkswagen R-related news stories from around the world, with contributions from some well known online motoring journalists.

The new-look site was extremely well received by the majority of existing *R Forum* members. Site traffic, membership, page views, new topics and posts have since continued to rise to the point where the VWROC site as a whole is now getting over one million page views a month.

Membership has grown to over 2,300 (February 2015) and it's anticipated that it will continue to grow as more and more 'R' drivers from around the world become acquainted with the site, not to mention of course the excellent product that is the Volkswagen R brand.

Of course, the story does not end here. The next phase of development of the Volkswagen R Owners' Club includes an online shop for VWROC-specific merchandise, a proper Classified Advertising section, and some VWROC organised sprints and track days. Naturally there is another trip to Le Mans already booked for 2015 and for the five R-loving petrolheads it will be another opportunity to engage in some sensible, intelligent debate about who might win the endurance race. Or, perhaps more likely, some other things...



SHAHBEAR HUSSAIN, BRISTOL



I AM IN THE very fortunate position to have both the Golf 7R and a BMW M135i at the moment, due to the great lease deals available last year. The Golf is a recent addition as it only arrived in November 2014, whereas I've had the M135i since March 2014. There was lots of positive press about these two cars last year, with the Golf taking the top honours. As you can appreciate, I was therefore particularly excited about the arrival of the Golf to see for myself, as it was called a 'game-changer' by some top journalists.

My Golf 7R is a 5-door manual in Red, a colour which I think looks fantastic. I particularly like the look of the lights at both front and rear, which give the car a unique appearance. The design touches inside, with the blue door sills, and outside with the subtle body kit make the car stand out from the crowd, but not too much…

Regarding the engine note, the Golf is very Subaru-like to me as it is has a guttural sound which seemed bizarre at first, as it's a Golf. I now enjoy the noise when accelerating as it sounds like it means business, but it is not a sound I adore. The M135i with the engine and auto gearbox combination just sounds sweeter and makes a sound like it's coming from a more expensive car (which relatively speaking it's not), even though in reality both use artificial sound actuators in the speakers.

Moving on to the handling and the Golf 7R soaks up the bumps on an everyday drive with ease, so meeting the hot hatch requirement of being an easy everyday drive, but one with a wild side…

When you take the Golf by the scruff of the neck it certainly has that wild and exciting side. It has phenomenal and usable traction; you can just throw it around bends and it takes it all in its stride. It flatters you as a driver as it has minimal body roll, a great engine and it just feels planted. The Golf can also be adjustable when cornering, but you have to reduce the driver aids and you'd need weather like we have at the moment, otherwise you will need a track to access this part of its performance envelope in a safe way.

Is it a quick car? Well, absolutely, as it has 300 bhp and 4-wheel drive, but the problem is that with all that stability it doesn't *feel* particularly fast sometimes, so you need to look at the speedo to realise just how fast you are going!

Thinking about point-to-point speed, if I was driving my M135i I would need lots of commitment to keep up with a Golf 7R on a challenging country road. In reality, on anything other than a perfect day and a straight road, the Golf would just pull away.

Does that mean the M135i it is less fun and engaging… I think not. Both are fun for an everyday driver like me. The M135i in reality feels faster (even though they are within just a few tenths of each other) as it has less outright traction and is therefore more exciting at lower speeds.

Is the Golf the better handling car? The reality is that I will never drive either car fast enough to feel the difference of the final two tenths. If you're looking for a bit of excitement or drama, then the M135i will provide that at a lower speed than the Golf. If you are looking for outright traction and a more usable everyday car then the Golf R is the clear winner.

Regarding 'specialness'… the cars are based on a Golf and a 1 Series! To be honest, neither feels particularly 'special' unless you are using all the power and really pushing the car. Otherwise, they feel pretty ordinary which is what I suppose they are designed to be, as they are everyday cars.

In my opinion, both cars have really added to the excitement in this sector and the best thing of all is that you don't need £50,000-100,000 to have a fast and exciting car. If you have the M135i or Golf 7R I don't think that you will feel short-changed at this price point, unless you wanted a purely weekend toy. I'm glad I have both to use and have put that thought about one being better than the other to bed.

They are both very good, but in different ways – ridiculously fast and too fast on some occasions. Right now, though, if I had to choose a new car it would be the Golf 7R purely based on cost as you can still find some very tempting lease deals.



7R SPECIAL ISSUE



LUBRICATION

With a high-performance engine like the 300 PS 2.0 turbo in the Golf R, increasing the frequency of oil changes can only be a good thing, as *Andrew Chapple* demonstrates…

HAVING OWNED my Golf 7R from brand-new in March 2014, with no mechanical issues to report and no discernible oil consumption, I decided that I'd like to keep it that way by performing oil changes more frequently than the standard recommendation.

Having felt a very tight new engine get a lot looser in the first 900 miles or so, I was confident that an early oil change would be a wise move. BMW has always insisted on this with the E46 M3 and I feel that if a manufacturer doesn't recommend it, it's not because it isn't a good idea...

With my own car, I have already carried out two oil and filter changes, first at exactly 989 miles and then again at 4,994 miles, after which I will stick to regular 5,000-mile oil-change intervals in addition to the standard servicing regime.

At around £40 for a VW oil filter and six litres of Longlife III 5W/30, it's an inexpensive way of protecting this very high specific output engine from the rigours of extended oil-change intervals. Also, with this being the first R engine to use timing chains rather than a cambelt, oil quality will be more crucial than ever, and – with a power output of 300 PS from just 2.0 litres – it's going to have to dissipate a lot of heat. Mitsubishi Evos with this sort of power output used to need 3,000-mile oil changes!

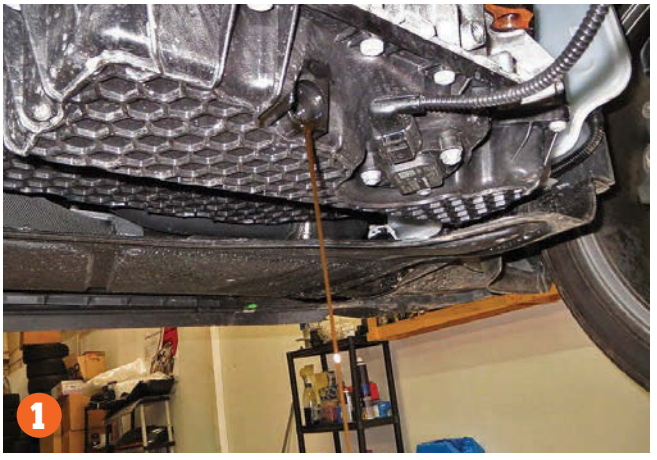
The Golf 7R is also one of the easiest VWs of recent times to perform an oil-change on, as the following guide will show. As usual with any oil change, it helps to warm the



engine oil up first with a short trip around the block; not too far or fast, though, or you could end up scalding yourself!

Please use common sense when following this guide and, if jacking the vehicle up, make sure it is securely supported. ➜











With just a short undertray, access to the sump plug requires no dismantling. However, faced with a plastic sump for the first time I was a bit unsure, at first, exactly how to get the drain plug out – at that time, even my Master Tech contact at the local VW main dealership had yet to come across one of these, and there was nothing on the internet.

A careful inspection of the drain plug revealed a slot seemingly designed for a flat-blade screwdriver and very little effort is needed to undo it, once the retaining notch has been passed.

1. With the oil filler cap in the engine bay removed, to allow air in, and the sump plug removed, leave the oil to drain into a suitable container with a volume of at least 6 litres. Even after only 987 miles, the oil was already quite dirty!

2. The paper oil filter element is held within this plastic case, which is loosened using a 32 mm socket. It's not at all tight, having been torqued correctly at the factory. You can then wind it off by hand – it takes quite a few turns and around halfway you will hear the oil start to drain out, which prevents any mess once the cover comes off.

3. For comparison, this is the new filter and the old one still within its case.

4. This is the new oil filter in the case. Much like the early 1.9 TDI PD engines, there are two smaller O-rings at the very top of the shaft but, unlike those filters, they aren't included with the new filter, which is rather strange.

5. The big O-ring is included, however, so make sure it's oiled before carefully sliding it on, otherwise it could snag on installation and cause a leak.

6. This is an old Porsche habit, but I thought it would be interesting to see how much metal had been floating around in the oil by inspecting the filter – as you can see, there was already a fair bit of fine metal trapped there.

7. Once the filter is installed in the housing and with a new O-ring, carefully thread it back on, nipping it up gently with the socket. I didn't have the exact torque setting but I suspect that hand tight would be pretty much perfect, so don't overtighten if using a ratchet or bar.

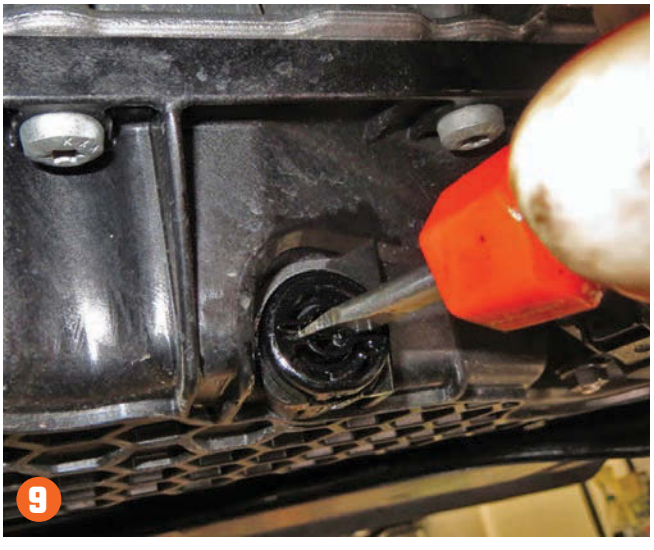


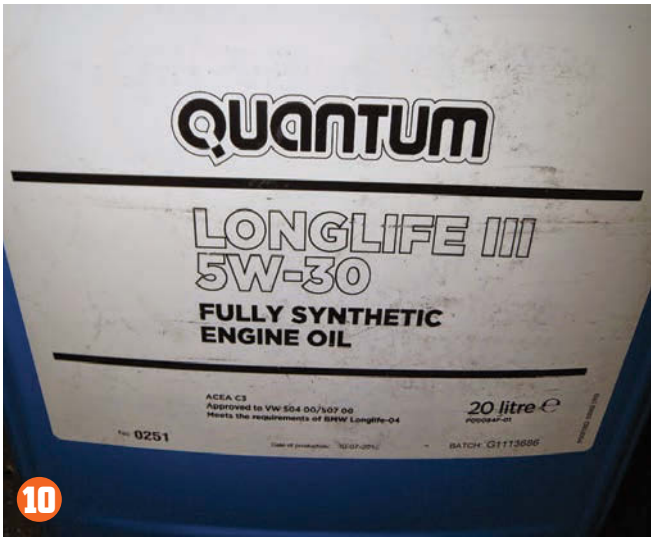




7


8


9



10

'The handbook doesn't give a definitive volume, so it was a case of slowly adding more and more...'



8. With the oil drained out, it's time to get the sump plug back in. The O-ring seal on the plug is not available separately from VW, so a complete new plug is required. The part number is 06L 103 801, priced at £3.56 + VAT (July 2014).

9. Carefully wind back in the sump plug. You don't need to worry about torque here – once the notch on the plug has passed over the locking notch, that's it. Please check for leaks.

10. Having checked the oil specification in the handbook, it was no surprise to learn that VW's Quantum Long Life III 5W-30 was the right stuff, thanks to its VW 504.00 approval

As for how much to put in, the owner's handbook has dumbed down and doesn't give a definitive volume, so it was a case of slowly adding more and more. The usual 4.5 litres barely got it up to the minimum mark on the dipstick and it was even lower after the engine had been fired up, to circulate the oil through the new filter, and then shut down and left to settle.

Knowing that the difference between minimum and maximum is 1.0 litre, I put this much extra in and got it up to around halfway up the dipstick, then added more until it was up to the maximum mark. That's a lot of oil, totalling nearly six litres*, and that's no bad thing, but be very careful to avoid the possibility of overfilling with oil as this can result in damage to the catalytic converter.

Finally, check carefully for leaks from the sump plug and oil filter. Thereafter, always maintain regular checks on the oil level – at least once a week and especially before any long journeys – with the engine stone cold and parked on a level surface.

** Audi publishes an official figure for the S3, which has this same 2.0 TSI engine, of 5.7 litres including filter.*

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Nino Farrugia, Bridgend, South Wales
Mk 4 Golf R32

MY LOVE FOR Volkswagens started when I first passed my test when I was 22 (yes, I was a late bloomer). My cousin Angelo Farrugia owned a modified 52-plate Mk 4 Golf GT TDI and I instantly fell in love with the Mk 4, although I couldn't afford such a lovely car at the time, as they were not very old.

I shared my cousin's love for cars, and with his help we managed to find a very good example for my first car. It was a P-reg Mk 3 Golf GL (1.8) for a mere £350! Although I loved it, it wasn't a Mk 4...

I had a couple of other cars over the years, including a horrible Ford Focus, before I finally bought my first Mk 4 Golf, a 1.8 20-valve turbo GTI. I spent an enormous amount of hard-earned money on that car, mainly on repair work – once I went over a speed bump in first gear, as slow as can be, but the engine mount snapped!

With a lot of hard work, and more money, I turned that car into a show-standard creation which included a chrome-plated engine, full Recaro leathers and more, but something was missing. Being a Mk 4 owner for such a length of time, I was naturally wanting to move on to something all Mk 4 owners aspire to – an R32.

I still remember the day that I was in a position to even consider that I could buy an



'I was naturally wanting to move on to something all Mk 4 owners aspire to – an R32...'

R32. I remember thinking to myself, this is madness, it is the best Mk 4 VW ever made and now I could actually own one!

I set off looking into them, including all the normal *Google* searches: 'what to look for when buying a VW R32?' and 'R32 common faults'. Armed with my new-found knowledge and determined to ensure that I didn't buy a lemon, I had very set goals in my mind. It must have full service history, including Haldex oil changes, be less than 100,000 miles, with full leather, and not modified in any way.



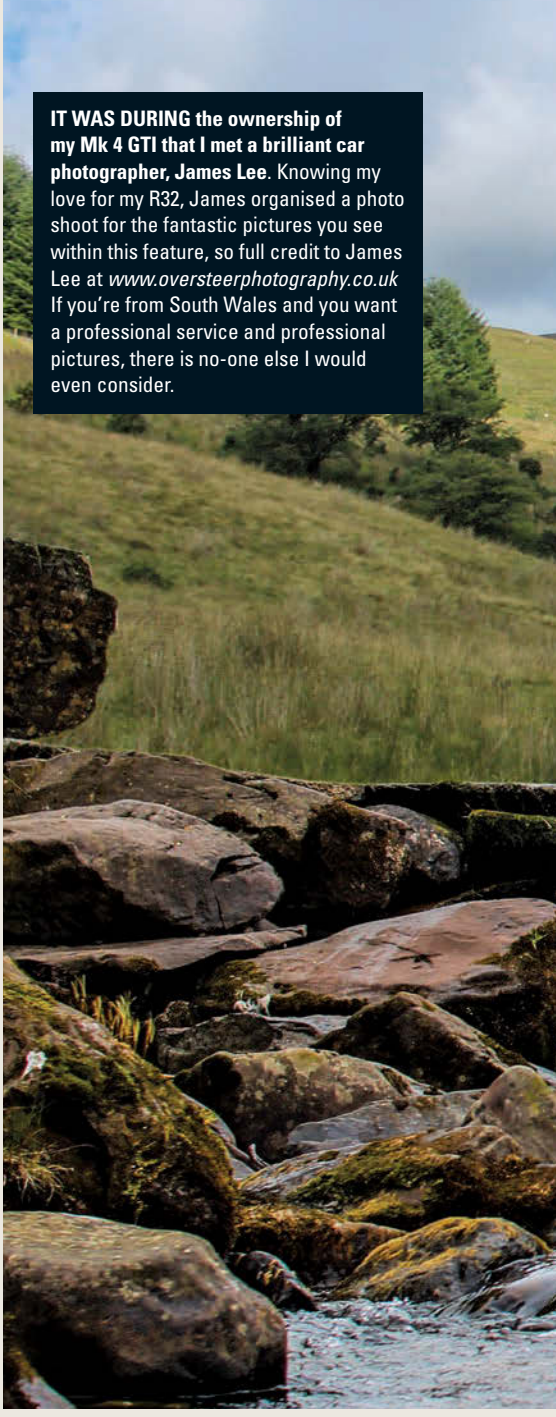
I spotted my first R32 quite local to me, in a dealership that specialises in top end cars, and I still remember when I saw it, thinking 'Great, another Silver car!' (every car I have ever had has been silver), but what attracted me to this one was that the mileage was under 100,000, it was advertised with full VW service history and it even had a full Milltek Sport exhaust, a modification that I could happily live with.

Off I set, but boy was I disappointed – the engine bay was a complete mess, the heated seats didn't work, the fans didn't work, and to my horror I discovered that the car did *not* have a full service history. In fact, it'd had to have a replacement Haldex system, due to not being correctly serviced. Needless to say, I walked away from a very clear lemon.

After searched for a few weeks more, I then spotted a Black 5-door R32, from a







IT WAS DURING the ownership of my Mk 4 GTI that I met a brilliant car photographer, James Lee. Knowing my love for my R32, James organised a photo shoot for the fantastic pictures you see within this feature, so full credit to James Lee at *www.oversteerphotography.co.uk* If you're from South Wales and you want a professional service and professional pictures, there is no-one else I would even consider.

'Only 755 were made in black, of which only 10 per cent were 5-door models, which makes this one of only 75 ever made for the UK!'

private seller in Bristol. I remember getting slightly excited for two reasons; it wasn't silver, and knowing what I knew, I believe that only 75 were made in 5-door, in black. For any of you that do not know, back in 2002-2004, Volkswagen made a total of 30,000 Golf Mk 4 R32s with 10,000 each for UK, Europe and USA. Only 755 were made in black, of which only 10 per cent were 5-door models, which makes this one of only 75 ever made for the UK!

So, one sunny day in May, my cousin Angelo and I set off in my GTI, bound for Bristol. I remember turning up and I instantly loved it, although I wasn't impressed that the paintwork had so many swirls. I knew that it would require some serious detailing, something I knew my cousin and I would be more than happy to do as we both enjoy detailing as a hobby. The R32 also had a few bits missing – the engine cover, the R32 pedals, no mats and it had a well-worn looking gearknob, and was due a major service. This R32 clearly needed some TLC, but I didn't mind that.

So, a few hours later, she was home. Because she was in need of a service, I decided that I would park her up and book her in with my local VW specialist Euro Performance, based in Rhondda Cynon Taff, South Wales. I'd heard great things about them. What killed me was the two-week wait to get my R32 seen to; due to the reputation of Euro Performance, they were always busy, and in the meantime I continued to use my GTI.

The day finally came to get the R32 in, and I opted for a full major service, including – just for good measure, a brake fluid change, gearbox oil-change, power steering fluid change, a Forte engine oil flush and the Haldex serviced. The total works, and more, cost me a whopping £721 but I wanted to ensure that the car was looked after. They even did a 51-point check for me.

The owner of the garage, Gareth Davies, used to personally own a R32, so he was happy to report to me that I owned one of the best R32s he had seen in a very long while. If you're from South Wales and have been looking for a garage that cares, I couldn't recommend Euro Performance enough, you can contact them on 01443 230 018 or via their website (*www.euro-performance.co.uk*) You can even see a sneaky picture of Gareth's previously owned black R32 on the front page.

The next day it was straight into my cousin's garage and 10 hours later, about three machine polishing pads and a bottle of cutting agent later, we had ourselves a



very different looking R32. Over the coming months, I ensured that, from that point on, the car was looked after and washed correctly, no more roadside hand-washes for this beauty!

I have since spent a huge fortune over the year and have collected a multitude of very good detailing products from some of the UK and US leading detailers, Autoglym, Meguiar's, Poorboys, and Auto Finesse, to name a few. I also ensured that the car was, without fail, snow-foamed and washed weekly.

Now that I had the R32 exactly how I wanted it, it was time to get a new engine cover, gearknob and R mats, this proved hard because I discovered that Volkswagen no longer make R mats, but not to worry as I managed to get them tailor-made.

Now I could enjoy the R32, finally! The first thing that struck me was that fantastic V6 burble – nothing I have ever driven or seen could turn heads like this! I found myself driving around with the windows down, and driving at 30 mph in third gear as opposed to fourth so that I could hear it more – this car was certainly 'smiles per gallon' as opposed to miles per gallon! The throttle response was pitch perfect, it didn't miss a single beat at all!

The other feature that completely blew me away was the handling – I just could not get over how well she handled. I knew she was a different car, even though it was still a Mk 4 Golf platform. I knew it would handle better, due to the 4WD, but it seemed like I was driving a completely different car altogether (compared with my Mk 4 GTI turbo). The R32's lowered suspension as standard, with Koni springs and Bilstein shocks, was the perfect set-up. Well done VW, you nailed it!

The styling of the R32 was another area where I believe VW had yet again outdone themselves, the designer was clearly on some serious pay. The rear bumper is completely smooth and complemented by two rear exhaust pipes – whenever you look at the back of an R32 you know it means business!

The front of the car has an extremely well-known 'open mouth' bumper which many Mk 4 owners buy replicas of when modifying their Mk 4s. The other exterior differences include side skirts, Bi-Xenon headlights, and a rather nice 'R32' badge in the centre of the grille.

The R32 also came with some nice factory-fitted upgrades – cruise control, full heated Konig leather seats, auto dimming rear-view mirror and even auto-wipers, on a Mk 4 Golf!

Since owning the R32, I have only ever run it on Shell V-Power due to the manual advising 98 RON fuel. With a 66-litre fuel tank, the R32 in the summer was costing me around £80 to fill the tank as I'm not one for £20 here and there – I fill the tank, and refill when the light appears. In the summer, I would only be getting around 280-290 miles per tank of fuel, but when you consider that it is a 240 PS 3.2-litre V6, it was never going to be an affordable hot hatch. The saying comes into play again here – 'smiles per gallon'. With the current winter months we have



'Coupled with the cruise control, I can very easily achieve 30 mpg on a motorway run..'

been seeing, mpg has dropped and I generally only see around 240-260 mile per tankful which again, considering the performance, I think is extremely good.

Coupled with the cruise control, I can very easily achieve 30 mpg on a motorway run, and back last summer I even saw 33! But rest assured, you need to really feather the throttle and do a decent amount of miles to get it up into the 30s. I generally cover about 7 miles each way to work and back and it's a mixture of driving that sees between 21-26 mpg depending on weather. I change gear at around 2,000 rpm.

I have now owned this car for almost a year and I love it; even to this very day, I smile when I drive it, the attention she gets is unreal, but being a VW owner I always get the unwritten VW nod as I drive past fellow 'dubbers.

In terms of future plans for the R32, there are none other than to keep it as a pure standard example if possible, with there now being so few left. She is currently sitting on 91,658 miles and with full service history – 95 per cent of which is VW or VW specialist – I intend to ensure that she continues to only gets serviced by the best; after all, with the growing rarity of these lovely cars, I see this as a future investment.



Overall, I would say that the R32 is a greatly refined car – it handles like a train on rails and is brilliant in the wet too, thanks to the 4WD system and a set of Michelin Pilot Super Sport 3 tyres. It also sounds like nothing you will ever forget – you will know if you ever hear one, as the sound stays with you forever.

If you are reading this and personally thinking of buying one of these amazing machines, take my advice and do your home-work – make sure that you drive a couple to get the feel for them, as there are many lemon examples out there. Do what I did, find out the common faults and look for them.

'In terms of future plans for the R32, there are none other than to keep it as a pure standard example if possible, with there now being so few left...'

To name a few, the fans on the radiator can fail, so to check they are working how they should, start the car and turn on the climate control to 'Auto' then open the bonnet and check that the fans are spinning, there are two. If they are not running, that can very easily cost £400-£500 to fix.

Check for flat spots between 3,000-5,000 rpm, if it's got them, it is very likely that the R32 has not yet been back to VW for its recall, as they require a software update, but don't worry as it's completely free.

Most important, above anything else, is the service history – if it does not have a full service history, I strongly recommend that you walk away, as you especially want to ensure that the Haldex (4WD system) has been serviced every 40,000 miles.

In conclusion, I am really glad that I made the move to the R32, and it is very likely I will only ever own a VW for as long as I drive.

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Email:
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For more information Contact Simon:
email: macvwnut@btinternet.com Tel: 07941 132681

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EIBACH PRO-KIT FOR GOLF 7R

EIBACH has already developed one of its renowned uprated high-performance Pro-kits, comprising a set of lowering springs, for the MQB chassis Golf 7R.

Along with an uprated anti-roll bar kit, still in development, this will offer a chassis upgrade package which will sharpen both the appearance and handling of this cult classic in the making.

The award-winning Eibach Pro-kit reduces the ride height of the Golf R by 10-15 mm all round, enhancing the naturally aggressive stance of the vehicle, while the lower centre of gravity causes the Golf R to feel more 'planted' and reduces body roll on hard cornering.

Made from the same grade high-tensile steel that Eibach uses to produce Formula 1 springs, and computer matched to the factory-fitted dampers, these progressively wound springs work hard to maintain excellent ride quality.

With full TÜV approval and a 5-year warranty, the Eibach Pro-kit for Golf 7R (Part No. E10-85-041-01-22) costs £185 + VAT. For more information call 01455 285 850 or visit *www.eibach.com*



FORGE MOTORSPORT GOLF 7R ENGINE CAP UPGRADES

FORGE MOTORSPORT's expertly machined CNC-milled engine caps for the latest Golf R certainly look a lot nicer than the original factory-fitted parts ever did!

Designed to fit directly onto or replace the existing factory caps, they add a touch of under-bonnet glamour while keeping the OEM caps in their rightful place.

Two finishes are available – tough, anodised black for those favouring a more 'OEM+' appearance and highly polished aluminium for owners looking a more overt visual appeal.

They are available for the oil filler cap and water reservoir cap as well as the brake fluid cap and washer bottle cap. For more information, call 01452 380 999 or visit *www.forgemotorsport.co.uk*



MOMO HYPERSTAR EVO

The new MOMO Hyperstar Evo alloy wheel is a classic 5-spoke design wheel featuring a combination of matt anthracite and diamond-cut spokes.

Bearing the iconic MOMO name cast into one of the spokes and repeated on the centre cap, the Hyperstar Evo is available in sizes from 15- to 18-inch diamater and in 4- or 5-stud fitment making it ideal for modern cars and for fitting low-profile tyres to classics. The Hyperstar Evo is Run-Flat and TPMS compatible in all sizes. For more details contact Momo UK on 01268 764 411 or visit *www.momo-uk.co.uk*

WAGNER TUNING GOLF 7 GTI/R COMPETITION INTERCOOLER KIT

WAGNER TUNING claims that this competition intercooler upgrade is the best choice when it comes to reducing intake temperatures and improving the performance of the Mk 7 Golf GTI and Golf R, as well as other related VW Group models*.

With a core size of 640 mm x 410 mm x 65 mm and a 17-litre charge air volume, while weighing just 9.3 kg, the new competition high-speed core and cast aluminium end tanks give this intercooler excellent cooling properties.

With its design optimised by CAD, flow analyses and simulations were created to perfect the design for best possible internal airflow, with even less pressure drop than the OEM sintercooler which it directly replaces. It also has an anti-corrosion protective coating with perfect thermal heat-dissipating characteristics.

Priced at £710 inc VAT, the kit comes complete with charge air cooler, silicone hoses and hose clamps ready for installation as a 100 per cent perfect fit. For more details, contact Wagner Tuning on 01252 750 630 or visit the website at *www.wagner-tuning.co.uk*



*The Wagner Tuning competition intercooler kit is made for the VW Group 1.8 TSI - 2.0 TSI engine in the VW Golf 7 GTI 2.0 TSI 220 & 230 PS and the Golf 7 R 2.0 TSI (300 PS) as well as the Audi A3 8V 1.8 TSI (180 PS) and S3 8V 2.0 TSI (300 PS) plus SEAT Leon 5F 1.8 TSI (180 PS), Leon 5F Cupra 2.0 TSI (280 PS) and Skoda Octavia 5E 1.8 TSI (180 PS) and Octavia 5E RS 2.0 TSI (220 PS).



WIN A VIP TRIP TO AUTOSTADT!

JUST KAMPERS and the Autostadt have teamed up to offer the chance to win a fabulous expenses-paid VIP trip for two, to the Autostadt at Wolfsburg.

Just Kampers is taking care of the cost of the air flights and two nights accommodation at one of the best hotels in Wolfsburg, while the Autostadt team will give you the VIP treatment with a guide to take you around the amazing Zeithaus museum, and to the special pavilions dedicated to all the Volkswagen Group brands from VW, Audi, SEAT and Skoda through to Porsche, Lamborghini and Bugatti.

You'll also be able to enjoy a driving experience, either on the off-road track or on the skidpan and, as if that wasn't enough, Autostadt will then take you up the famous 48-metre high Car Towers. Just Kampers Insurance will also keep you covered by giving you some spending money.

The prize draw will take place on March 30, 2015, with the trip to be taken by September 30, 2015. The competition is open to UK residents only. Terms and conditions apply.

For more information and to enter online, see *www.justkampers.com/competitions/index/view/id/13/*

K&N CABIN AIR FILTERS

K&N FILTERS has released the first-of-its-kind washable and re-usable line of automotive cabin air filters. Integrated into the cabin ventilation intake or air-conditioning system, these air filters trap dust, pollen, debris and other pollutants that might otherwise make it into a vehicle's passenger compartment through the ventilation system.

The limited efficiency of the standard paper element filter can be improved upon significantly by replacing it with K&N's washable and re-usable filter, which uses a single layer of thermally bonded non-woven synthetic media as a barrier to trap any dust, debris and bacteria.

Electrostatically charged to capture most mould, mildew, pollen, spores, fungus and germs , it also refreshes the incoming air using a combination of an advanced synthetic filter media and the application of K&N Refresher™ spray.

Washable and re-usable , K&N cabin air filters are designed to be cleaned and re-used over and over again, with K&N recommending a minimum cleaning interval of 12,000 miles. Priced from £49.99, the K&N cabin air filter comes with a 10-year/100,000-mile limited warranty.



For more details and an application finder, visit *www.knfilters.co.uk/cabin-air-filter.aspx*



MEYLE-HD WATER PUMPS

WULF GAERTNER AUTOPARTS AG has recently presented a completely revised programme of water pumps, including six newly developed MEYLE-HD water pumps for various Volkswagen Group models.

Made in Germany, they claim to have been significantly improved with a new high-quality material design for the mechanical seal which – by contrast with the OEM parts – is perfectly attuned to the demands faced by used vehicles. Garages can thus give their customers a four-year warranty on the MEYLE-HD water pumps and at the same time can rule out repeat repairs which often lead to dissatisfied customers.

Technology Manager Sven Nielsen explains that since the sealing ring plays such a big part in the durability of a water pump, Wulf Gaertner Autoparts is using Silicon Carbide/Silicon Carbide seal faces (SiC/SiC) as well as a high-quality bearing for its new MEYLE-HD water pumps: 'This combination is primarily designed for the stresses found in used vehicles, in which the cooling system already shows signs of wear and corrosion, and where the cooling agent may also be contaminated', says Nielsen.

'The mechanical seal with the SiC/SiC face seals is significantly more resistant to abrasive substances such as dirt and various cooling agent additives. The secondary seal consists of peroxide-cured HNBR that has very high resistance to temperature and weathering. Thanks to these product characteristics, permanently high operating temperatures of up to 130°C have no adverse effect on the water pumps'.

With the six new MEYLE-HD water pumps, available since January 2015, Wulf Gaertner Autoparts now covers the following VW Group models, among others:

113 220 0018/HD (For VW diesel engines 1.9-2.0 TDI)
113 012 0042/HD (For VW diesel engines 2.5 TDI
113 220 0005/HD (For VW diesel engines 2.5 TDI)
113 012 0033/HD (For VW petrol engines 1.6i, 1.8i & 2.0i)
113 220 0023/HD (For VW petrol engines 1.8 TSI & 2.0 TSI)
113 220 0011/HD (For VW petrol engines 2.0 TFSI)

Contact MEYLE UK Ltd. at 47 Dolphin Road, Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex BN43 6PB Tel. 0845 4506 510 or visit the website at *www.meyle.co.uk*

'They claim to have been significantly improved with a new high-quality material design for the mechanical seal...'



DESTINATION NÜRBURGRING 2015 DATES

DESTINATION NÜRBURGRING, the premier trackday operator for the world's most famous circuit, has announced the 2015 dates for its closed session, open pitlane Nordschleife experience days. Three dates are available to allow petrolheads to sample the charms of this iconic and demanding circuit, free from the distractions so commonly associated with the Touristenfahrten days.

April 1 - 2 Full VLN layout will be available on both days
July 22 - 23 Full VLN layout will be available on both days
Sept 30 - Oct 1 Nordschleife, or 'North Loop' layout

Destination Nürburgring is also offering a strictly limited 'Ringmeister' ticket that gives access to all three 2015 events at a special discount price.

All these events offer totally unlimited, un-sessioned track access on all days with flying laps, as well as the availability of free tuition from some of the region's most experienced racing drivers. Each guest will receive free photography from Frozenspeed. Interested parties should book at *www.destination-nurburgring.com* or call +44 131 20832 66.

WESTFALIA PINPOINTPAL

WESTFALIA, one of the world's leading suppliers of towbars and vehicle-specific wiring kits, has partnered with pinpointpal to offer a highly innovative and affordable GPS Tracker.

Designed and developed in Britain by experts in mobile communications, the pinpointpal GPS Tracker will help keep your vehicle and equipment safe. Easy to install, the pinpointpal GPS Tracker connects to a free downloadable app on any Apple or Android device to provide real-time information on your vehicle's location every minute of every day.

Included within the service are free movement alerts that send a notification direct to you if the vehicle has been moved outside of the 'geofence' boundary you have set. If this is because the vehicle has been stolen, you can then notify the police immediately and inform them of its current location so that a swift recovery can be made.

Pinpointpal costs £250 and provides unlimited real-time tracking for 2 years, including unlimited searches and alerts both in the UK and abroad. After the first two years, coverage costs just £25 per year (that's 7p per day) with no hidden extras.

For more information call 0117 955 1011/1022 or e-mail btc@westfalia-automotive.com



'pinpointpal GPS Tracker will help keep your vehicle and equipment safe...'

PRODUCT REVIEW



LAUNCH MINI POWER PACK

LAUNCH UK has released a new portable power pack which will not only re-charge electronic devices, but is also capable of jump-starting a vehicle.

As well as using it to recharge phones, (iOS and Android devices), tablets, PSP, MP3/MP4, cameras, satnavs, and any other 5V DC devices, the 12000 mAh high-capacity battery provides major support for vehicle emergency starts and breakdown assistance.

Providing an enormous 200-400 amps of cranking power, it is claimed to be capable of making up to 20 vehicle starts of about 10 seconds duration each, before needing to be recharged. Thoroughly tested on cars, motorcycles and small boats, the power pack features advanced safety and security systems to protect against over current, possible short-circuit and overload of voltage or current, as well as an overcharge protection.

Supplied as a complete kit, in a sturdy plastic case (approx 280 mm x 240 m x 60 mm), with all relevant connectors and a charging unit with mains plug, or cigarette lighter charging plug, it has two USB ports (5V output), which can be used to charge two devices at the same time, and it comes with adapters for iPhone 4 and 5, as well as Micro USB, Mini USB and PSP, and a USB adapter cable.

But don't think that this is some sort of heavyweight battery pack that needs a trolley to cart it around – the battery unit itself is deceptively small, almost pocket-sized at 165 mm x 75 mm x 30 mm and weighs only 420 grams.

The Launch Mini Power Pack is equally useful for camping and outdoor activities as it also incorporates a strong LED light. Capable of projecting 86 lumens of light output as far as 100 metres, it features several different lighting modes: Steady, flashing on and off and sending an SOS distress signal capable of lasting for up to 120 hours from fully charged.

A full recharge of the unit itself takes from 2 to 3 hours and it can be left on standby for 3 to 6 months, although it is recommended that it is recharged every 3 months to prolong its service life. A set of five indicator lights show the current state of charge when it is switched on, counting down from five for full, and all five will flash when capacity is down to 10 per cent.

We've used the unit ourselves, on a couple of occasions, to jump-start our Mk 4 Golf, after it has been left standing dormant for a couple of weeks, and have been thoroughly impressed at how easy and effective it is to use. Even better is that the whole kit is compact enough to store in a seatback pocket, and the battery pack and jump-start cables alone could even be kept in a glovebox or door pocket.

Thoroughly recommended, the Launch Mini Power Pack has a retail price of £144 inc VAT and can be ordered online at *www.launchtech.co.uk* or call 01752 344 989.

PRODUCT REVIEW



COBRA ELECTRONICS DRIVE HD DASH CAMS

COBRA ELECTRONICS has recently introduced a new line of Drive HD Dash Cams, designed for 'for advanced vehicle security, safety and on-the-road connectivity'.

Available from Argos online, with prices ranging from £79.99 to £229.99, the Cobra Drive HD™ Dash Cam Series comprises the CDR-820, CDR-840 and CDR 900, all of which continuously record video footage of the view ahead of your car.

Providing perfect 'eyewitness' evidence in the event of road traffic incidents or accidents, giving peace of mind and an extra sense of security for drivers, the recorded footage can also serve as a straightforward video record of a journey along a favourite driving road, or to analyse personal driving standards for training and assessment e.g. IAM training.

We've recently spent some time with the CDR 900 Drive HD Dash Cam from Cobra. Like the other Drive HD Dash Cams by Cobra, the CDR 900 utilizes Continuous Loop Recording, which automatically overwrites the oldest footage when the memory card gets full. It also features a G-Sensor, which reacts to sudden acceleration or collisions to automatically capture and protect critical footage surrounding an accident.

The CDR 900 comes with an 8GB memory card so that it is ready to use straight out of the box, although it can also support up to 64 GB Micro SD cards. It has two recording modes: Dash Cam, which shoots continuous loop in 3-minute segments and emergency videos (30 seconds before and after an incident) and Action Cam which shoots normal videos of unlimited duration (dependent on the memory card size). If selected, a microphone also records sound and commentary throughout. Emergency recording can also be triggered manually by selecting the record switch during normal loop recording. A motion detector setting can also be enabled to record footage if movement is detected in the camera view, while the car is parked for instance.

A display shows the current date and time down to the second, and the recording time remaining on the SD card. Once the card is full, the camera will continuously over-write the oldest footage recorded, although emergency footage is saved to a protect file.

With an ultra-wide 160-degree viewing angle that films the entire road and peripherals without edge distortion, the CDR 900 captures 1296P Super HD or 1080P HD video using an Ambarella™ A7LA chipset to ensure high-quality imaging, even during darkness. Videos are recorded in the MP4 format and the footage can also be played back on the 2.0-inch LCD screen, or can be viewed and managed using the Drive HD App or on a computer, using the USB to Micro-USB cable included in the kit, or on a TV using an HDMI cable (not included).

The Wi-Fi enabled CDR 900 also lets you share and view the footage from your smartphone, through the free Cobra Drive HD App, allowing the user to connect and stream live and recorded footage directly to the user's iOS or Android device. Through the Cobra Drive HD App, users can remotely command their CDR 900 to start recording, as well as control its settings through the app's menus. Through Cloud Mode, users can also view their camera footage in real-time from their smartphone anywhere in the world.

For more information about the Cobra Electronics range, visit the website at *www.cobra.com*

'It also features a G-Sensor, which reacts to sudden acceleration or collisions to automatically capture and protect critical footage surrounding an accident...'



FIDANZA LIGHTWEIGHT FLYWHEEL FOR MK 4 R32

FIDANZA IS NOW offering a lightweight aluminium flywheel for the Mk 4 Golf R32 (2004-2005).

Constructed of 6061 T6 aluminium, it is not only light in weight but supremely strong, the reduction in weight relieving strain on the crankshaft and allowing the engine to rev faster. It is claimed to deliver faster acceleration, quicker throttle response, better vehicle braking, increased clutch efficiency, and durability.

Featuring a precision-machined, Rockwell-hardened ring gear, along with a replaceable friction surface, this flywheel should never require resurfacing or total replacement. When the friction surface wears, it can be replaced alone, saving both time and money. For more information visit *www.fidanza.com*



WHEEL PROTECTOR

AUTOGLYM has recently launched a new spray-on Wheel Protector product that is claimed to last up to 30 per cent longer than its competitors.

Developed and tested in conjunction with Status Grand Prix in Abu Dhabi, to trial the coating in the most extreme conditions, as well as Rimstock, the largest manufacturer of alloy wheels in Europe, Autoglym Wheel Protector repels brake dust and dirt for up to 6 weeks.

Not just a sealant, Autoglym's Wheel Protector has a new formulation that imparts a hydrophobic film onto the wheel, making it difficult for dirt particles and water to stick to the surface. When it rains or the wheel is hosed down, the water will bead and roll off the surface taking dirt particles away with it, so it's easier to keep wheels clean. In particular, the product greatly reduces the onerous task of cleaning complex multi-spoke alloys.

Priced at £9.99 for a 300 ml aerosol, Autoglym Wheel Protector is available from motor accessory and car care retailers, including Halfords, or by mail-order from the Autoglym website. To view the full Autoglym range, visit *www.autoglym.com*



MICHELIN CROSSCLIMATE

RECENTLY REVEALED to the motoring press at an international launch based in the French Alps near Geneva, Michelin's new CrossClimate tyre offers virtually all the advantages of a summer tyre in terms of dry braking, longevity and fuel efficiency, along with the full advantages of a winter tyre with respect to traction and braking on cold and slippery surfaces.

With an 'A' rating for wet braking performance, it is the first ever summer tyre that has achieved winter certification with a 3PMSF (3 peaks mountain snowflake) marking for its performance on snow.

Using a unique new mix of rubber compounds to provide excellent grip in all weather conditions, and a new three-angle V-shaped tread pattern with bevel-edged tread blocks in conjunction with higher-performing sipes, it provides excellent dry braking and performance close to that of a premium summer tyre along with strong cold weather capability and excellent traction in snow.

Most importantly, its all-round performance significantly exceeds that of existing All-Weather tyres, with better braking in both wet and dry, superior roadholding in the wet and greater ability on snow-covered roads.

Available from the beginning of May 2015 in 22 sizes, from 185/65 R15 up to 225/45 R17, you can find out more online at: *www.michelin.co.uk*

We recently experienced the abilities of the Michelin CrossClimate at first hand, in a variety of comparative driving tests using a fleet of Golf TSIs and will be reporting in much greater detail in the next issue.



REARGUARDS
BUMPER TOP PAINT PROTECTORS



"Every VW driver should have RGM Rearguards to protect their painted rear bumper." Neil Birkitt, Editor, VW Driver Magazine

- A practical, simple and stylish solution to cover unsightly scuffed and scratched bumper tops
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RBP606



RBP556

Part No:	Model
RBP229	BEETLE 2 ▬ 2.2003>8. 2005 (NOT CONVERTIBLE)
RBP263	BEETLE 2 ▬ 9. 2005>9.2011 (NOT CONVERTIBLE)
RBP219	CRAFTER (BLACK ONLY)
RBP318	EOS 2 ▬ 5.2006>12.2010
RBP514	EOS 2 ▬ 1.2011>
RBP230	FOX 3 ▬ 6.2005>
RBP233	GOLF MK IV 3/5 ▬ 9.1997>8.2003
RBP222	GOLF MK V 3/5 ▬ 9.2003>9.2008
RBP223	GOLF MK V VARIANT/ESTATE/COMBI 6.2007>5.2009
RBP224	GOLF PLUS MK V 1.2005>2.2009
RBP317	GOLF MK VI 3/5 ▬ 10.2008>10.2012
RBP444	GOLF MK VI PLUS 3.2009>1.2012
RBP443	GOLF MK VI VARIANT/COMBI/ESTATE 6.2009>5.2013
RBP588	GOLF MK VII 3/5 ▬ 11.2012>
RBP617	GOLF MK VII VARIANT/COMBI/ESTATE 6.2013>
RBP545	GOLF CABRIOLET 2 ▬ 6.2011>
RBP231	JETTA 4 ▬ 9.2005>12.2010
RBP522	JETTA 4 ▬ (European Model) 1.2011>
RBP594	JETTA 4 ▬ (USA/Canada Model) 1.2011>
RBP391	PASSAT 4 ▬ 2000>2.2005
RBP225	PASSAT 4 ▬ 3.2005>9.2010

Part No:	Model
RBP494	PASSAT 4 ▬ 10.2010>
RBP340	PASSAT VARIANT/ESTATE/COMBI B5 98>9.2005
RBP226	PASSAT VARIANT/ESTATE/COMBI 10.2005>10.2010
RBP495	PASSAT VARIANT/ESTATE/COMBI 11.2010> (NOT ALLTRACK)
RBP606	PASSAT VARIANT/ESTATE/ ALLTRACK 4X4 10.2010>
RBP488	PASSAT CC 4 ▬ 5.2008>1.2012
RBP710	CC 4 ▬ 2.2012>
RBP227	POLO MK IV 3/5 ▬ 2003>5.2009
RBP357	POLO MK V 3/5 ▬ 6.2009>5.2014
RBP496	SCIROCCO 3 ▬ 8.2008>
RBP232	SHARAN 3.2000>8.2010
RBP487	SHARAN 9.2010>
RBP234	T4
RBP736	T5 CARAVELLE/MULTIVAN 6.2012> (Painted Bumpers) NEW RIBBED DESIGN
RBP737	T5 CARAVELLE/MULTIVAN 6.2012> (Black Bumpers) NEW RIBBED DESIGN
RBP445	TIGUAN 4X4 11.2007>
RBP228	TOURAN 3.2003>7.2010
RBP486	TOURAN 8.2010>
RBP395	TOUAREG 4X4 >3.2010
RBP556	UP 3/5 ▬ 11.2011>


RBP736



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SE 5-door 1.2 TSI 90 PS 5-speed manual	£14,360
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GOLF 7

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PROPOSED COACH TOUR OF GERMAN VW FACTORIES IN 2015



Further details are now available regarding our 2015 Tour to Germany, from June 20 to June 26. Travelling by luxury coach, the tour will occupy seven days (six nights) staying at 3- or 4-star hotels and will include six evening meals, six breakfasts and four mid-day lunches.

The following itinerary has now been established and we would love you to join us.

Saturday June 20: Depart at 5.30 from Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire, where there is some parking, with pick-ups (by prior arrangement) along the M40 - M25 - M20 en-route to Dover, 11.00 am crossing to Calais and on to Eschweiler near Aachen for dinner and overnight stay.

Sunday June 21: Early breakfast, depart to spend some time at the vintage VW gathering at Bad Camberg, then continue to hotel at Bad Hersfeld for evening meal and overnight stay.

Monday June 22: North to the VW plant in Braunschweig, for lunch and a tour of the plant where they make tools, suspension, steering and brakes. Short journey to a hotel in Braunschweig for evening meal and overnight stay.

Tuesday June 23: After breakfast, short journey to Wolfsburg, to visit Autostadt and the original VW Museum. Also the chance to try the E-Golf or Touareg on the handling course, at a small additional cost. Lunch in one of Autostadt's restaurants. Dinner at Alter Wolf restaurant, opposite Wolfsburg Castle then back to Braunschweig for overnight stay.

Wednesday June 24: Back to Wolfsburg for a tour of the plant (Golf and Touran production), visiting parts that the general public do not get to see. After lunch we head west to Hannover to visit the new department which refurbishes Type 2s. From there, a short drive to our hotel in Hannover for evening meal and overnight stay.

Thursday June 25: After breakfast, we head west to the European home of Vredestein Tyres in Holland, for light lunch prior to touring the plant. After the tour, we continue to Nijmegen for evening meal and overnight stay.

Friday June 26: After breakfast, commence journey home, via Calais, dropping off travellers at the points where they were picked up.

Itinerary is subject to changes outside of our control. Please note that the tour involves a significant amount of walking.

The cost is £895 per person for a single room, and £795 per person sharing a twin room. Deposit £250 per person, fully refundable if we have to cancel due to insufficient numbers. Balance required by April 30, 2015.

We'll be delighted to hear from any readers who might be interested in joining us. Please e-mail us at: *mail@autometrix.co.uk* or call 01525 750 500 during office hours.

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'The 7R's predecessors give some indication of how it might fare going into the future, after time has taken its toll on value...'

PETER CARRICK

On the market

WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE ABOUT THE GOLF 7R? Unless you're a fan of its breadvan-styled 'competitor', the BMW 135iM, that is! There's been a lot of internet chat generated by the latest Golf 'R', and it has its critics as well as its fans, as you would expect. In terms of style and dynamic presence, though, it's a highly attractive package and, as this special Golf R issue of *Volkswagen Driver* proves, this new super-performance hatch is attracting a great deal of interest.

The combination of amazing performance and roadholding, together with the practicality of a well-respected family holdall, is winning many fans, and the '7R' is starting to become a more familiar sight on our roads. A good test of the showroom-appeal of any model is the time it takes for a punter to get his or her hands on one. Waiting lists are the subject of much discussion on enthusiast forums, and it's anyone's guess just exactly how long you'd have to wait to take delivery of a shiny new 7R if you placed an order right now.

Estimates vary between 14-18 weeks, and this state of affairs is having a healthy influence on nearly-new values, with retailers asking just shy of list retail for 2014 models with demo-type mileage readings. The entire 2015 allocation of 500 units for the USA was sold out in less than 11 hours, when it went on public sale, so it's not just causing a stir in Europe, either...

In the UK, there are some cracking lease deals available, which has undoubtedly stoked the fires of demand for the hottest Golf. Some companies are offering a two-year 8,000-mile-per-year deal, requiring a £2,000 advance payment, followed by 23 very reasonable monthly chunks of £185, all plus VAT. In normal circumstances, 50% of this VAT can be reclaimed through a company purchase, if the business is registered for VAT.

As a longer-term prospect, the 7R's predecessors give some indication of how it might fare going into the future, after time has taken its toll on value. The 'R'-line Golfs have now been around since 2002 and, although the concept has changed significantly from the original narrow-angle V6-powered R32, the thinking behind it has not. Creating a niche for an exclusive high-performance Golf variant, above the level of the Golf GTI, has been extremely successful, especially with limited production numbers. This perceived exclusivity has also kept demand for used examples high.

Looking at the previous '6R' version, this remains very sought-after on the used market, with lower-mileage examples in particular selling quickly. 2010 models are still making £21,000, with 40-50,000 miles on them. Surprisingly, there are very few bargains around, even amongst the more leggy stuff, with 100,000-plus milers still being touted around the £17,000 mark. Clearly, the lack of a V6 powerplant in this, the first of the four-pot R-line models, has not been an issue for buyers.

Shift back a couple of years to the Mk 5 R32. Despite the fact that this isn't exactly the most sought-after of the R-line Golfs, it still has that fantastic-sounding VR narrow-angle six-cylinder motor and permanent four-wheel drive. Demand is steady and there are generally several low-mileage 2009 examples on offer for £15,000, at any one time. You'd still be hard pushed to find one of the earliest 2005-reg cars for much under £10,000, with a respectable mileage reading. Typical asking prices are £14,990 for an '09 5-door, 33,000 miles in metallic blue, £11,750 for a 2008 5-door in black, with 39,000 miles recorded, and £9750 for an '06 3-door in Silver that's covered 64,000. Not bad for a car that's approaching 10 years old – still worth almost half of what it cost new!

But if we go back to the original R32 from the Mk 4 generation, we find the single biggest reason that may make the latest 7R a good longer-term investment – if it's possible to use that word on a constantly-depreciating asset! The original R32 has completely side-stepped the value-shedding that has now turned lesser Mk 4 Golfs into bargain-basement material. It will form a baseline for all other 'R' series Golf models, and it resolutely refuses to drop below current price levels, which have remained fairly constant for the last two or three years.

My plan to pick one up when they fell to two or three grand backfired many years ago! Now, low-mileage R32s are on the up. I recently saw one with an asking price of £10,495, which I thought was optimistic, even for a 46,000-mile 3-door in Silver. But it sold. Another, this time a black 5-door with 25,000 miles, is on sale at the time of writing for £10,950. There are, of course, still some on offer for half of that figure, but then they've usually done more than twice the mileage! Like a black 3-door showing 108,000 for £5,700.

In between, there are reasonable numbers still on sale at more affordable prices, but some of them are Cat C or D insurance rebuilds, like a 77,000-mile 3-door for £4,995. Maybe it would be better to find a bit more cash and buy a three-owner 77,000-mile black 3-door for £6500 ono, even though it needed two new tyres and a bit of paint on the tailgate.

Inevitably, there are those that have been got hold of by the modders, with varying degrees of taste and success. Thankfully, few of the later models have fallen victim to this, but a significant number of Mk 4 R32s have been de-badged, re-grilled, lowered, de-catted, chipped and worse. No matter how much enthusiasts love their own cars when they've received such treatment, inevitably it renders them much less attractive as the years go by, and customising fads pass. Look at the way original Mk 1 Golf GTIs and small-bumper Mk 2 GTIs are suddenly shooting up in value – because there are so few left – and you'll see how low-mileage and largely factory-standard Golf Rs will continue to hold their value in years to come...





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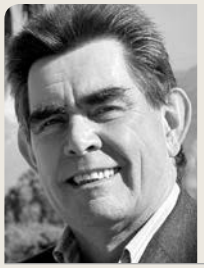
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'The new Superb is the cleverest Skoda ever... it's simply superb!'

ROBERT COULDWELL

Sister marques



FEW PEOPLE realise that Škoda is one of the longest-established vehicle manufacturers in the world. The Czech factory in Mladá Boleslav began production of bicycles in 1895, followed shortly afterwards with motor-cycles and cars. It is this proud tradition which is in the mind of Škoda employees, not the years behind the iron curtain.

After the first negotiations with the Volkswagen Group in 1990, it took Škoda another 12 years to produce a car of a size similar to Skodas from the company's heyday in the 1930s. It was called 'Superb' after the luxury saloon built between 1934 and 1949, a car with a range of engines including a 4.0-litre V8 and, almost unheard of then, four-wheel drive.

Since the 2001 launch, an impressive 700,000 have been produced over two generations, with as many as 9,000 a year sold in Britain. These numbers are far greater than envisaged when the car was launched as a doctored Volkswagen Passat to appeal to Eastern European heads-of-state and government officials.

Amazingly, the new Superb is built on the Volkswagen MQB architecture shared by every-thing from Golf and Leon to TT and Passat.

Based on the design language of the 'Škoda VisionC' show car, the new Superb is so elegant that it could easily have an Audi badge. The razor-sharp tornado line along the car's side, narrow pillars, precision-cut window outlines and gently sloping roofline give the vehicle a coupé-style look echoing the Audi A7.

Gone is the top-heavy, or what a Skoda engineer called 'stretched' look of the first two generations of Superb and, incredibly, the new car has even more room inside thanks to an 80 mm increase in wheelbase. Front overhang is also reduced by 61 mm.

The completely redesigned interior has an emphasis on horizontal lines, giving the interior a more generous feel. Surely, the designers must have been glancing across to Audi when creating such sharp, precise workmanship and the use of high-quality materials results in a premium appearance.

The front seat occupants enjoy more headroom and 39 mm more elbow room. With 157 mm legroom, the rear space is limousine-like, about twice as much as in the nearest competitor. Best-in-class headroom measures 980 mm and rear elbow room has increased by 69 mm. The 625-litre boot capacity is 30 litres more than the current Superb and considerably bigger than an A8 or even the highly commodious Passat.

The new Superb is the brand's first model to offer Driving Mode Select including Dynamic Chassis Control. There are new air-conditioning systems, optionally three-zone. Heated seats, washer jets and wireless heated windscreen are available for the colder months. There are automatic windscreen wipers and switching between daytime running lights and dipped beam as required.

Few cars apart from Rolls-Royce have one on-board umbrella and the new Superb now has two, one hidden in each front door. The dual-opening tailgate has gone, which in some ways is a shame but it could have been killed by the Audi A5 and A7 Sportbacks, as they are premium cars with hatchbacks. The new, electric tailgate can be complemented with an optional Audi-style virtual pedal, where the customer can open the boot by waving a foot under the rear bumper. The new Superb comes with the latest generation of automatic parking as well as a rear-view camera for the first time. An electronic parking brake is standard.

The Škoda Superb can be connected to a smartphone for the first time and selected apps can be operated from the infotainment system's screen. SmartLink includes MirrorLink, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. The SmartGate interface, developed by Škoda, allows certain vehicle data to be accessed and on the user's smartphone apps. The new Škoda Media Command app and the Wi-Fi hotspot integrated into the Columbus system allows the infotainment system to be controlled remotely from the rear seats for the first time. The Canton Sound System with 12 speakers and 610W output turn the new Škoda Superb into a concert hall on wheels.

The new Superb is the cleverest Škoda ever, with 23 new 'Simply Clever' solutions including mechanically retractable towbar, tablet holder in the rear, tablet storage compartment in the front centre armrest, a USB port and 230V socket in the rear, cup-holders that allow single-handed opening for 0.5-litre bottles and all doors will each hold a 1.5-litre bottle. There is high-visibility vest storage in all four doors. The rear seats can be folded forward using levers in the boot.

The new Superb's new engines are up to 30 per cent more efficient, the star being the GreenLine with a claimed 76.4 mpg and 95 g/m CO_2 emissions, thanks to weight reductions of as much as 75 kg and better aerodynamics. The combination of up to 20 per cent more power, reduced air resistance and a reduction in weight should also result in much improved driving dynamics.

There will be a choice of five TSI petrol and three TDI common-rail diesels, all EU6, with stop/start and brake energy recovery. The petrol engines have a power output of between 125 PS and 280 PS and the diesels range from 120 PS to 190 PS. Except for the entry-level petrol version, all engines are available with the latest DSG transmission, while four engines are available with all-wheel drive based on the Haldex 5 coupling. It's simply superb!

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'The Touareg was designed to have the on-road capability of a BMW X5, and the off-road ability of a Range Rover...'

PAUL HARRIS

Last word

I RECENTLY SPENT some time behind the wheel of the current Touareg, a car which I always enjoy driving. This one was powered, like so many these days, by the 3.0-litre V6 TDI engine, a unit which was originally developed by Audi. Initially having a displacement of 2.5-litres, this engine has been refined over the years to such an extent that it has become widely used by both Audi and Volkswagen.

When I went to the original launch of the Touareg in 2002, this was not the case and all the attention was focussed on the 5.0-litre V10 engine, which was also being used to power the Phaeton. This was a wonderful unit, with pump injectors for each cylinder, and developing a very high level of torque, some 750 Nm! I recall that, after the original launch, I went to Spain to try the Touareg out on an off-road course and, when this was over, I drove a V10 back to Barcelona. On the outskirts of the city, on a road with multiple lanes, I sat at traffic lights, with fast cars on either side of me, their driver clearly eager to get away first. When the lights went green, I floored the accelerator and, when I looked in the mirror, every other car was way behind.

I can remember the Volkswagen engineers saying that the Touareg was designed to have the on-road capability of a BMW X5, and the off-road ability of a Range Rover. There has always been some debate about whether they achieved these goals, but I certainly enjoyed driving the Touareg on an off-road course which had been designed to test the SEAT rally cars.

However much effort Volkswagen put into demonstrating the off-road abilities of the Touareg, I am afraid that Land Rover always came out on top. This isn't necessarily due to the vehicles; Land Rover has a long tradition of training drivers how to manage off-road driving, and its various teams have an enormous amount of experience. Throughout the year, there are training courses all over the country and abroad, but Volkswagen has never put the same amount of effort into teaching customers how to get the best from the Touareg, or the Tiguan.

This is because, in reality, hardly anyone ever drives a Touareg or a Tiguan off-road, whereas Land Rovers, in one form or another, carry out this sort of activity all the time, and across the whole world. I have enjoyed several days of Land Rover training in this country and also a couple of days on a vast estate in Spain which offered all sorts of challenges, many of which seemed to be beyond the abilities of any wheeled vehicle. The Range Rovers, Freelanders and Land Rovers showed that it could be done and, at the time, I wished we could have had a few Touaregs there to see how they would compare.

The estate was owned by a rich Spaniard who competed regularly in the Paris-Dakar rally, using a hugely modified Mercedes truck. Sitting on massive wheels and tyres and with rows of shock absorbers, you had to climb a ladder to get into the cab. I was lucky enough to be driven around the training course by the owner – a fantastic experience, with the truck seeming to spend most of its time airborne!

In those early days of the Touareg, much was made of the adaptive air suspension which allowed the ride height to be altered, as well as the firmness of the dampers. It is an expensive set-up, though, and few Touaregs seem to have it fitted these days.

It is a shame that production of the V10 diesel engine came to an end. A special version was used to power the Touareg R50 in 2007, with a power output of 350 PS and maximum torque of 850 Nm. I know that there is still a demand for Touaregs and Phaetons powered by this engine but, by now, virtually all of them will have clocked up high mileages and, with one pump injector for each of the 10 cylinders, servicing costs might be substantial.

The Touareg is built in Volkswagen's plant in Bratislava, Slovakia, a factory which was originally set up, in 1971, to build Skodas, all the parts being supplied from the Czech Republic. Volkswagen took over the plant in the early '90s and, as well as building the Touareg, this is where the Porsche Cayenne and the Audi Q7 are assembled, all three vehicles using more or less the same platform. Part of the way through construction, the Porsche Cayennes are separated off and transported to Leipzig, where final assembly takes place.

Quite a lot of transportation occurs between the various Volkswagen Group factories. The bodies for the Phaeton, for example, are constructed at the Mosel plant and then shipped to the 'glass manufactury' in Dresden where assembly takes place. The assembly plant in Dresden is magnificent, but it doesn't have press facilities.

The Mosel plant is at Zwickau, which was once the centre of car building in Germany. Both Horch and Audi had factories here in the '30s and, when these two brands were absorbed into Auto Union, along with Wanderer and DKW, it became the home of Auto Union and the place where the Grand Prix cars, which competed so fiercely with Mercedes-Benz, were developed.

When the Second World War came to an end, Zwickau was in the Eastern zone and a great deal of heritage and experience was lost, although many of the engineers fled to the West to work for the reborn Auto Union, before the wall went up. The plants at Zwickau were then used to build Trabants.

A few days after the wall came down, I went into what had been East Germany and stopped at a small village. The local nurse had just pulled up in her Trabant and my colleague asked her if we could look at the engine. 'No, it is not permitted,' she said, clearly thinking that all foreigners were spies trying to steal the secrets of East German engineering!



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BORA 1.8T SPORT 150 PS 1.8 turbo 20-valve petrol engine. Dec 2003 (53-plate) 108,000 miles. Full service history. Owned by same family since new. MoT to end of December 2015. Very good condition. £2,695.00. Tel: 01392 467 144 (Exeter)



PASSAT CL 1800 1989 (G-reg) Finished in Gold metallic with unmarked beige interior. Only 117,000 miles, loads of history with receipts. Outstanding condition throughout, with only one previous owner. Sachs suspension fitted, ATS Cups with 195/40-15 tyres. £950. Contact John Tel: 07947 874 793



2003 MK 4 GOLF TDI SE 5-door in Silver. 100 bhp 1.9 TDI. MoT until August 2015. 93,000 miles with full service history including new cambelt and water pump at 73,000, two recent front tyres. Very clean car inside and out, along with being economical to run. Factory extras include climate control, CD player, cruise control, front and rear electric windows, velour interior. Car is in Swansea South Wales. £2,250 ono. Contact 07789 868 971.



JUNE 2012 GOLF GTI 2.0 TFSI DSG 3-door Candy white, 40,000 miles. Still under manufacturer's warranty, lady owner. Highly specified: Black heated leather, sunroof, satnav with Bluetooth, unmarked 18-inch Monzas. Full VW history. Last serviced 4/12/14 including DSG oil change. Just had 2 new Conti CS5s fitted, all matching. Fantastic, unmarked, unmolested condition. New car forces sale. £17,500 ono. Tel: 07872 544 729



CORRADO with ABF 2.0 16V engine on Digifant 3 EFI. Owned since 2009, ABF engine fitted last year. SEAT high-flow cat, stainless steel exhaust system, 280 mm front brakes. 10,000 since new gas dampers. Sunroof, windows and spoiler all work correctly. Never been welded. Large history file included. Recently fitted radiator, rear brake hoses, beam bushes, handbrake cables, crank sensor, front bushes, stitch-welded control arms. MoT Jan 2016. Cambelt just replaced and full service completed and Mk 4 Golf gearshift mechanism installed. £1,750 ono. Located Yarmouth, Isle of Wight. Call Thomas on 0777 585 4268 or e-mail: diamondhell@gmail.com



MK 4 GOLF GTI 1.8T I have owned this car since Sept 2012 but reluctantly selling as need something bigger. 105,000 on the clock but will go up slightly as it is in daily use. MoT March 2015. Electric windows, electric door mirrors (nearside glass is cracked), fob alarm and central locking, onboard computer, electric sunroof. Recaro seats (slight wear on drivers side bolster), power steering, climate control (needs re-gassing) Some service history, stamped up to 2006 at 50,000 miles. Water pump and cambelt replaced November 2012 with genuine VW parts. Various MoTs - 2003, then 06-07, 07-08, 10-11, 11-12, 13-14, 14-15. Various receipts and paperwork. Aftermarket re-circulation dump valve, aftermarket cone filter. In good condition for age, but it is 14 years old and has a few scratches and marks round the car and the bumpers. All 4 alloys are scuffed. Drives like a dream, no knocks or rattles from the engine and it pulls away very quickly when needed. This car is a clean car but by no means mint and has the common starter motor squeal on ignition. Also passenger's, driver's and nearside rear window won't open – haven't got time to repair them myself. I have a towbar which came with the car but I took it off. This will come with the vehicle. I have also changed the stereo to a Bluetooth mobile hands-free car kit, one with CD and USB, Aux-in and Bluetooth connectivity. Will leave this in if I get the right price, if not will change back to the standard one. £800 ono. Contact me by e-mail: mrsidney833@msn.com or call 07974 974 271 (leave message if no answer and I will get straight back to you) Car is in Romford, Essex.



B5.5 PASSAT ESTATE SE TDI 130 PD 2001 Dark metallic green. Fully VW stamped service history with VW Ridgeway and Raynor Diesel Services of Newbury + independent specialist and oil changes by myself. Two cambelt changes, the last 35,000 ago. Current mileage: 162,569 – nothing for a well-looked-after PD engine! Cruise control (factory-fitted), electric windows, remote central-locking, ABS, traction control. Climate control air-con works fine, also with cooled glovebox, height-adjustable seat with lumbar support, front and rear armrests. Recent new CTS with 50/50 top-up as changed coolant whilst doing CTS, new high-powered battery, inlet manifold fully cleaned like new inside, turbo cleaned. 2 keys, 4 previous owners, 7 months MoT. Full Powerflow stainless exhaust with lifetime guarantee, Powerflow s/s de-cat, EGR blank pipe with uprated silicone hose, silicone boost hoses, re-mapped to 180 bhp but still does 47 mpg around town and 55+ on a run. Lowered 50 mm on adjustable Spax coilovers, Audi 16" A4 alloys with good tyres and tread (5.5 mm on all) LED sidelights with Osram Nightbreaker Extreme bulbs, full LED interior lights. Only run on Shell V-Power diesel. Pioneer Blutooth HU with USB/Aux and microphone housed beneath centre vents, running a Phoenix Gold QX.100 amp driving the front door speakers at 2 ohms being JBL 6.5's and tweets. The mid/bass will drop as low as 76 Hz on these. In the boot is a QX800 amp powering a 12" Pioneer sub in a box tuned to 39Hz! Speakers are all running off 10g OF cable and power/earth are 8g PG. Door skins lined with 10 mm of silent coat. Custom pods with 6 mm of Silent Coat. Not one speaker can be seen, all in original holes but custom pods to add a bit of depth for the speakers yet still fit nice and snug behind the door cards. The sound is amazing, crystal-clear clarity yet ridiculously low sub bass. Interior is in excellent condition with everything working as it should. Exterior in good condition, was mopped using G3 in August so still comes up well when washed, although light scuff on passenger side wing has been touched up and looks OK. Airbag light is on due to me having an aftermarket steering wheel fitted without an airbag so need to clear this fault. Overall, in excellent condition but please remember she is a 14-year-old car, so not like brand-new! Price £1,500. Reason for sale – I have my beady eyes on another VW! Tel: 07479 780 813 (Winslow, 5 miles from Milton Keynes / 5 miles from Buckingham / 7 miles from Aylesbury)

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MK 7 GOLF R 2.0 TSI 3-door manual 2014 model-year Mk 7 Golf R with 300 PS 4-cylinder 2.0 TSI turbocharged engine, 6-speed manual gearbox and Haldex 4Motion all-wheel drive. Lapiz blue pearl effect paintwork and black Vienna leather upholstery with front seat heating. Ordered in mid-Nov 2013, built week 5 of 2014, delivered to the UK via Sheerness on 14/2/14 and handed over by supplying dealership Windrush of Maidenhead on 1/3/14 to the one and only owner. 7,250 miles and not due a service yet. However, I have personally performed oil and filter changes at 1000 and 5000 miles using VW oil filter and VW's Quantum Longlife III 5w/30 oil. No mechanical issues experienced, in fact it has never missed a beat. VW warranty to 1/3/17. Complete owner's manual wallet, 2 remote keys, genuine VW flexible load liner, unused cloth floor mats, VW rubber front floor mats, Volkswizard number plates (with GB logo), original Windrush plates also supplied, Windrush VW tax disc holder and VW tax disc holder and rear window sticker. £3265 worth of factory-fitted options: DCC dynamic chassis control adaptive suspension, 19-inch Pretoria lightweight alloy wheels, special paintwork (Lapiz blue), Vienna leather, Discover Navigation, rear-view camera. Manual gearbox is increasingly unfashionable especially on forums but strangely enough the preferred choice of people who review cars for a living (*Autocar* recently put the R as number of 1 of the 50 best cars and specifically said a 3-door with a manual gearbox was the best combination) – if I planned to use the car daily and get stuck in traffic then I'd order a DSG but then I wouldn't buy a Golf R for that kind of driving. To minimise stone chips and other damage, the leading edge of the bonnet and the wings, the front bumper, mirror casings, sill steps and rear bumper load lip were covered in 3M Ventureshield protective film by Tony James Designs of Solihull. Paintwork has been detailed using 3M's yellow and blue (anti-hologram) compounds, a coat of Autoglym HD wax and finished off with a paint sealer recommended by Tony James Designs and it beads beautifully. Condition is still pretty much as new, tyres have approx 5-6 mm of tread remaining as most miles have been accumulated at motorways speeds, approx 6000 miles were covered on three European road trips. Subject of several major features, including front cover, in *Volkswagen Driver* magazine. As with any used car since 1/10/14 no road tax included. Road tax rate of £180 12 months, £99 6 months. £29,999 (VAT qualifying for business owners) good px welcome. Contact Andrew Chapple, Tel: 01564 330 495 or e-mail: andrew@volkswizard.co.uk (Birmingham)



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GOLF GTI 25th ANNIVERSARY Silver, 83,000 miles with full service history, one previous owner. Excellent example of this limited edition 180 bhp 25th Anniversary edition. No. 201 of 1500. No accidents, all bodywork is original, never been painted. 11 stamps with FSH. Serviced on 17/7/03 at 9,320miles, 30/7/04 at 18,211 miles, 5/9/05 at 29,963 miles, 2/3/07 at 42,822 miles, 4/9/08 at 49,173 miles, 11/2/09 at 57,305 miles, 24/3/10 at 65,102 miles, 21/4/11 at 70150 miles, 23/5/12 at 75,529 miles, 29/1/14 at 80,384 miles, 29/01/15 at 83,745 miles. Last serviced and MoT on Jan 29, with just one advisory which was a tyre, so has a full year's MoT. Alpine CDA-9883R head unit with uprated speakers, amp and sub. All discretely fitted, so the interior looks original. Two dinks on bodywork. On occasion the speedo will drop. VGC for year. It is now sat on my driveway after a £400 service. I've just bought an S3, so it has got to go - someone is going to get a bargain at £3,400. Contact 07833 250 601 (Surrey J9 M25)



A6 XXX Registration for sale at £15,000. One owner for 24 years. e-mail: tangolima43@talktalk.net (Basingstoke)



UNIQUE GOLF GTI EDITION 35 DSG 5-door This car is a dry climate import which has a 'rest of the world spec Edition 35 interior'. Whereas UK Edition 35 have full leather, this car has leather and Alcantara with a prominent "35" stitched into the seat back. You won't see another in the UK or Europe I promise and it is as it left the factory. I have known the car since new as it was owned by a family member and can honestly say you will be hard-pushed to find a better example, it truly has been pampered and loved from day one. It has never been driven in the rain and has done its sea journey from Australia in an enclosed container, it is immaculate in every way. Available to view now, please contact me to arrange an appointment to do so. Spec wise it has the following: Sunroof, satellite navigation, adaptive Bi-Xenon LED headlamps, LED rear Lights, 18" Watkins Glen wheels in grey, half leather and Alcantara interior (unique to the Edition 35), DSG (paddle shift) Bluetooth, Bluetooth streaming, auto headlights, auto wipers, digital climate control, brand-new Continental front tyres just fitted. 28,236 miles on the clock on Dec 31, 2014. Will be serviced and health-checked at my local VW dealer before the new buyer collects at buy it now price (has had 2 services abroad but they didn't stamp the book and won't send me the invoice as the car wasn't in my name when it was done!) The Golf will be available to view either in Cumbria or West Sussex by appointment. Please call for more info on 07810 825 185. I am a VW enthusiast and I believe you will be hard-pushed to find a better example. Inspections are welcomed on this one. £21,995. I will px for another VAG car.



MK 5 GOLF 1.6 FSI SE 2004 106,000 miles. 6-speed manual. Blue, colour-coded exterior, air-con, cruise control, genuine 18-inch R32 alloy wheels with anti-theft wheel bolts, Falken ZE-914 tyres all round, Eibach Pro Kit suspension. Electric front windows, radio/CD player + 8 speakers, Parrot Bluetooth phone kit, automatic headlights, automatic wipers, LED interior lights, LED LP lights, protective boot liner, new car mats back and front, speed-related power steering, height/reach adjustable steering wheel, ESP (Electronic Stability Programme) ASR (anti-slip regulation) and EDL (electronic differential lock), alarm with interior protection, electric heated + adjustable door mirrors, electronic engine immobiliser. Front height/lumbar adjustable comfort seats, Convenience pack. Non-smoker, three owners, 2 keys. HPI clear. £3,300 ovno. Tel: 07599 748 607.

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SET OF FOUR VW Sebring Golf Rallye / Corrado alloy wheels with Toyo R888 tyres. Superb condition, no kerbing, summer use only. I have previously had them professionally refurbished and they come complete with genuine VW centre caps and Toyo R888 195/50-15 tyres. A little bit of VW history to them, as I was told they were originally from one of the very first VW demo Corrados in the UK! 4 x 100 mm PCD, 6Jx 15, so will fit a number of VW Group models including Mk 1 / 2 Golf, 4-stud Polo etc. Looking for £425 ono. Tel: 07881 832 825 (Located near York).

classified@autometrix.co.uk



MK 2 GTI 16V RE 2000 Race/trackday car. Reluctant sale of Advantage Motorsport Mk 2 Golf GTI 2.0 16V. As well as a great trackday tool, it has recently run in CSCC Future Classics, also eligible for VAG Trophy, CTCRC pre '92 as well as various BRSCC and other series. Looked after by QR Sport in Tattenhall near Chester, alongside my Production GTI Golfs. Top spec and although only done a couple of races in it we achieved 1:24 at Donington and 2:03 at Oulton on knackered Dunlops. With decent tyres I am sure the car is capable of 2:00 at Oulton and 1:22 at Donny, which should frighten much more expensive machinery. Engine is a GTI Engineering RE2000 16V (200 bhp @ 6940 rpm in top and 161 Nm of Torque @ 6360 rpm on Stealth rolling-road dyno). Balanced with all data re piston / conrod weights etc. Schrick 276 cams, TSR 4-branch mated to Milltek Sport stainless exhaust, Schrick baffled sump, 2013 Mocal oil cooler, Kenlowe electric fan, TDI radiator. Gearbox rebuilt 2014 (standard ratios), new clutch 2013, Quaife LSD. KW coilover suspension with spring rates from my 2012 championship-winning Golf, poly-bushed, Eibach anti-roll bars. Brakes: 2013 New G60 callipers on 280 mm cross-drilled vented discs and new bearings on front, new standard 16V discs and callipers / bearings on rear. New master cylinder and all stainless flexible hoses, OBP brake balance valve. 2013 Lifeline Zero 200 plumbed-in extinguisher, Sabelt Hans belts to 2018, OMP Race seat, bolt-in 6-point cage with door bars. This is a very sound 1990 Mk 2 big-bumper 16V GTI shell with lightened steel bonnet, hatch and doors, which still retains its working slide and tilt sunroof. Four 7 x 15 Team Dynamics wheels shod with very used Dunlops. Varley Red Top battery and mounting. Poly windows and laminated front screen. The bad bits: NSR quarter panel and door suffered some damage which needs attention from a panel beater, also cracked screen – you could run it without any repair, it just looks a bit tatty. I will accept £6,500. Contact John Mawdsley, Tel: 07768 958 116.



FOR SALE: Registration plate [M17 BUG] Offers above £1525 to reg@brianbeales.co.uk

FOR SALE: Private plate [5391 VW] Open to sensible offers. Tel: 07812 948 858

MK 6 GOLF GTI 2010 (02/12/09) 5-door, 6-speed manual, FVWSH (new engine under warranty in September '13 at 34,443 mile), 12 months MoT. Metallic Carbon Steel grey, 2 previous owners, 49,700 miles, Grey Vienna leather trim, 18-inch Monza Shadow alloys with Yokohama Advan tyres, Rear privacy glass, Xenons, rear parking sensors, Winter pack, Storage pack, Dynaudio speakers, RNS 510 head unit with satellite navigation, Multifunction steering wheel, Highline computer, VW Bluetooth, Daytime running lights. £13,500. Contact Simon Burt, Tel: 07442 501 595 E: simonburt@hotmail.com (Solihull, West Midlands)



MK 2 GOLF GTI 8V 5-door. White. Digifant engine has had new head gasket in the last 6 months along with cambelt and water pump a couple of months earlier. The original Mexican head was corroded around the water ports and was replaced with a good recon German head with new valve stem seals. Oil and coolant flushed and replaced when head gasket done. Also replaced this year: Blue temp sensor, both oil pressure sensors, plugs, leads, dizzy cap and rotor arm. The Hall sender went in the original dizzy a couple of months ago so I obtained a dizzy that had never been fitted to a car and fitted that. Scorpion 3-piece stainless exhaust fitted. Some welding this year so the car is super solid now! Odd rust spots on lower doors and tailgate, but overall in good condition. Crack in windscreen near where tax disc used to be (replacement screen £60 on insurance or less DIY!) CV clicks on full lock only (no noise when driving) but I have a good long driveshaft with CVs and also a not so good short shaft with CVs (pretty sure it's the long shaft CV that's clicking as it's driver's side) These can go with the car. Upright bolster on the driver's side has just gone through the fabric (was perfect until about a month ago when this happened!) Rear discs/pads will need doing, as discs are pitted and inner pad on passenger side is almost down to metal. Recently it has spluttered a bit but clears after a little while, I put this down to either fuel filter needs replacing or injectors need cleaning but I haven't had time to do this. There are no leaks in this car and the engine pulls really well (apart from the above). Can be a bit jerky at a crawl when coming on/off throttle (linked to the above) but fine when driving. Genuine reason for sale is that it's just wasted on my commute. I've just bought myself a B5.5 Passat TDI as that gives 35 mpg+ sat in traffic compared with the Golf's low 20s – although on a run the Golf gets high 30s! Mileage is 173,000 and MoT is up to April 1, 2015. New tax rules will apply. £1500 ono. Tel: 07786 452 090 (Car is located in Ilkeston, Derbyshire about 10 mins from J26 M1).

WANTED

WANTED: PASSAT B3 (1992-95) PARTS: Body kit + wheelarch trims (VR6?) Door hinge repair kit or secondhand doors, central-locking vacuum unit (in boot) tailgate struts, triangular black internal trim (4x5 cm), aftermarket springs / wheels. Continental 185/55 x 15 or 205/50 x 15 tyres – new or excellent condition. OE stainless exhaust parts (2.0 AGG engine) OSR window motor. What have you got? Contact Steve on 07955 553 684 (text or phone) (Wolverhampton)

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MAY ISSUE ON SALE WED APRIL 15















Full road tests of the new Passat GT 2.0 TDI (190 PS) DSG and Touareg SE 3.0 V6 TDI (204 PS) plus a running report on the Mk 7 Golf SE TDI 150.

We'll also be featuring a full report on another high-flying VW success at Rally Mexico and more about the VW CCs in the forthcoming BTCC series.

Also, a full feature and first-hand test of the new Michelin CrossClimate tyre; we get re-acquainted with the ABT supercharged Mk 4 Golf V6 4Motion that we drove back from Germany when it was brand-new in 2001, and we meet the owner of a concours quality Jetta GT...Plus all the usual news and views on the modern Volkswagen scene. **DON"T MISS IT!!!**

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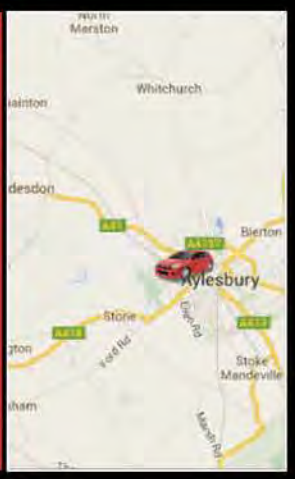
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