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Konnek



What do a Golf Limited, a Porsche 914/6 and a Mk3 delivery van have in common? Well, they were all built or engineered by Volkswagen, and the ones you see here are all owned by one man: Paul Smith, boss of H2O Konnection. DAVID CORFIELD pops in to collect the keys...

Photographs: David Corfield

"BE CAREFUL WHEN you reverse..."

The door slams shut and I sink into a world of leather. Hmmm, nice place this. Not too scary. Don't know what all the fuss was about. OK, so it's left hand drive and has 225bhp hovering somewhere under my size tens, but it's nothing a careful right foot and a tight grip on the leather-clad steering wheel couldn't take care of.

How wrong I was.

This Golf Limited has a clutch bite nastier than a rabid Doberman. Having gingerly selected reverse, I kangaroo out onto the street and narrowly miss an articulated truck. Bugger. With beads of sweat forming on my brow, I try again. Same result, only this time a milk float glides past, gallons of semi-skimmed inches from this most polished of bonnets.

Surely Golfs were never always like this. Were they?

The door opens. "This ain't no ordinary Golf, mate. It's a Limited."

Paul Smith knows his stuff, and he knows a good car when he sees one. To say this VW is rare is to understate the obvious. The Golf Limiteds were practically hand-built by Volkswagen Motorsport in Germany in 1991 and beneath that innocent 5-door GL body lurks a 16-valve engine linked to a four-wheel drive syncro system, with a supercharger bolted on for good measure.

Original power output was 210bhp but this car has been mildly breathed on to produce a nerve-jangling 225. It was Volkswagen's last-ditch attempt to retain the hot-hatch crown and I'm driving car number 63. Of only 70 ever made. Blimey.

Smith's a lucky man. His passion is his business. A life spent working with cars, in particular VWs, has enabled him to set up a business which, in these economically challenged times, appears to be booming.

H2O Konnection is the front for an operation which caters for watercooled VWs of any type, but anything out-of-the-ordinary is welcomed. The nitrous-oxide Mk3 Golf delivery van is proof of that. As is the Porsche 914/6 beside it. All three cars are special.

"The delivery van is my current favourite," remarks Smith. It will beat a Cossie off the lights with the nitrous switched on. You'd never guess it was a diesel."

A what? "Yep, it's an oil-burner but don't let that put you off. In actual fact, it has a ported & polished head, along with a TDI intercooler and a Jetex exhaust." He pops the bonnet. Good grief.

"VR6 interior, 1996 Caddy clocks, 1997 Polo steering wheel, H2O aluminium gearknob, chrome door handles, aluminium wing mirror adjusters, VR6 suspension lowered by 40mm, drilled front discs, fast road pads, new rear brakes, a Neuspeed front upper strut brace, Hella twin headlight conversion, Bonrath front grill & grill lip spoiler, VR6 front spoiler, chrome wheel arches..."

"Stop, stop, stop!" Smith's mental checklist of mods is making me dizzy. The car is anything but standard, and that's just the way he likes it.

It's actually going to be sold to a friend of the family," he tells me, "and he's going to put glass into the side panels to make it into a proper car." Why, I don't know. The van shell suits this car a treat. You'd certainly get your pizzas delivered in double-quick time. And even if you didn't see it

coming you'd most certainly hear it thanks to the monster sound system inside.

"I've got a Kenwood stealth head unit connected to a Kenwood 4x100 amp bridged for 20ff 300watt subs. With Kenwood 6x9in speakers in the rear and Kenwood 6in in the front doors the panels vibrate like crazy when I've got Prodigy booming out. Allow me to demonstrate. Care for some 'Smack My Bitch Up?'" Er, quite.

We turn to the Porsche, resplendent in its original silver paint. Smith's eyes glaze over. It's clear he loves this car.

"It's a 914/6 made in 1971. It's been imported from the United States and has been fully restored. There were only 3500 ever built and the reason it's so special is that it's powered by a two-litre 911T engine running

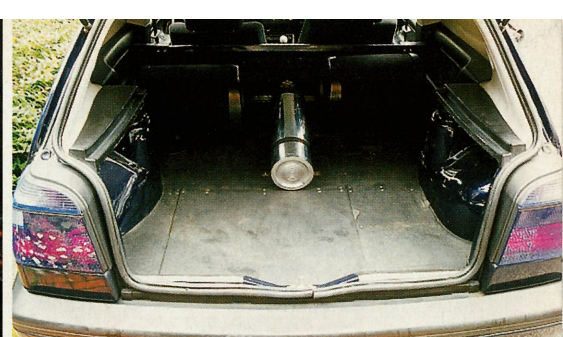
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Tech spec

Volkswagen Golf Limited

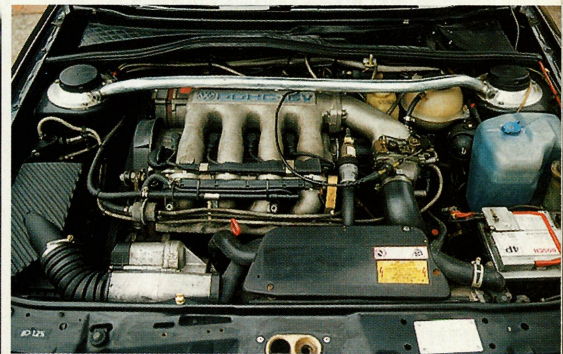
Engine:	1781cc 16V with G60 supercharger
Power:	210bhp (DIN) at 6,500rpm
Torque:	186lb/ft at 5,000rpm
Transmission:	Syncro viscous-coupled four-wheel drive
Wheels/tyres:	6.5Jx15in BBS alloys with 195/50VR15 tyres
Weight:	2,805lb
Performance:	0-60mph in 7.2 secs.
Top speed:	142mph



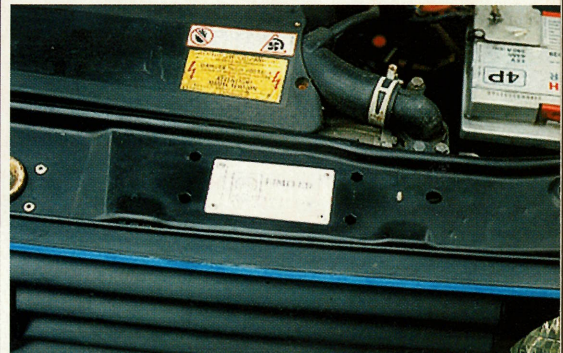
That poor nitrous bottle looks awfully lonely in there. Anyone fancy doing a spot of shopping?



For once chrome wheelarches actually look quite good. They match the rather expensive paint job...



The business end of Smith's Golf Limited. The 16V lump may look stock, but the performance isn't!



A pop-riveted badge on the slam panel reveals this car's rarity. Out of 70 built, four are in the UK.



Golf Limited sits lower on the ground than a standard Mk2 16V. Looks mean. Looks very mean...

STRICTLY LIMITED

on treble 40 Webers. It's a 6 cylinder car (which is why it's called 914/6) and was popular in the States for it's cruising capability."

The car was a joint exercise by VW and Porsche, who set up a joint-stock company based in Ludwigsburg to produce it. Two versions were made: a four-cylinder Volkswagen engine (originally 1.6 litres, but later 1.7, 1.8 and 2.0 litres with fuel-injection), or a 2 litre 6 cylinder Porsche engine.

"Around 125,000 cars were made in five years but they never really took off over here," Smith recalls. "Over sixty per cent of them were exported to the States (half of which were to California alone). But I'm lucky to have this one. Very lucky."

I'M BACK IN the Golf Limited. It takes some getting used to. After a ten mile drive the gearbox has warmed up and the gear changing is slicker. The odd crunch as second engages is more down to my incompetence than the car's indifference.

Designed as the ultimate wolf in sheep's clothing, the Limited was the brainchild of VW Motorsport boss Klaus-Peter Rosorius. "The idea was to have a nice, elegant-looking production Golf without external modifications but lots of fascination under the bonnet," he told the UK press on the car's debut in 1991.

Under the bonnet is where the real fun begins. With the drivetrain taken from the rather more overstated Rallye (including, I might add, it's complete front end) the Limited has larger inner arches to accommodate the tyres without scuffing the suspension. It also has a larger capacity radiator plus a new gearbox. But that's all under the skin. Outside, visually, there's very little to distinguish the Limited from a GL. Nothing, in fact, apart from some desirable 15 in BBS split-rim alloys and rather fetching metallic anthracite paintwork with blue grille surround (instead of the usual red). Oh, and a subtle Motorsport badge on the grille. But that's yer lot.

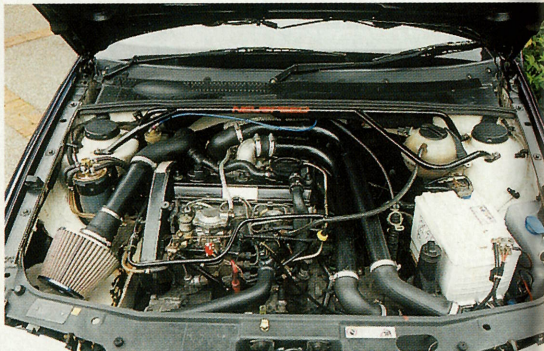
Small badge, big performer, one mighty scared journalist. Fun though. Oh yes. My trip round the Safeway carpark that evening was most entertaining...



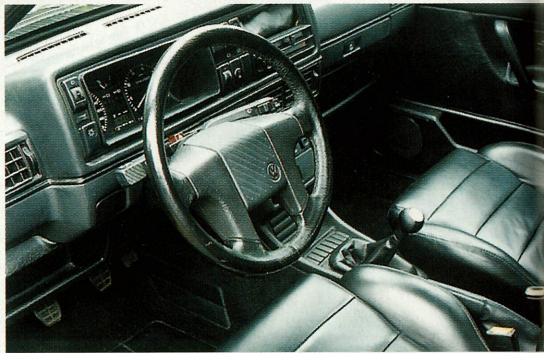
Neat registration number leaves you in no doubt where this car gets its mods from...



Limited car, and a limited supply of these 15in BBS split rims. About as hard to find as the car, we hear.



Meanwhile, back in diesel land... Holy smoke! Just look at that nitrous wiring! And that intercooler!



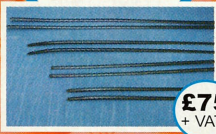
Golf Limited interior is a leather clad delight. Tom Jones would be pleased. Mind you, so would we...



Even the Limited's small bumpers aren't flash. No sign of any red stripes or GTI badges anywhere.

H²O KONNECTION

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Original black thin mouldings for Mk1 Golf GTI, sold separately or in sets of 8 including larger lower sill trims



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40mm drop, 20% uprate. Unbelievable handling improvement for Mk1 & Mk2's



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