

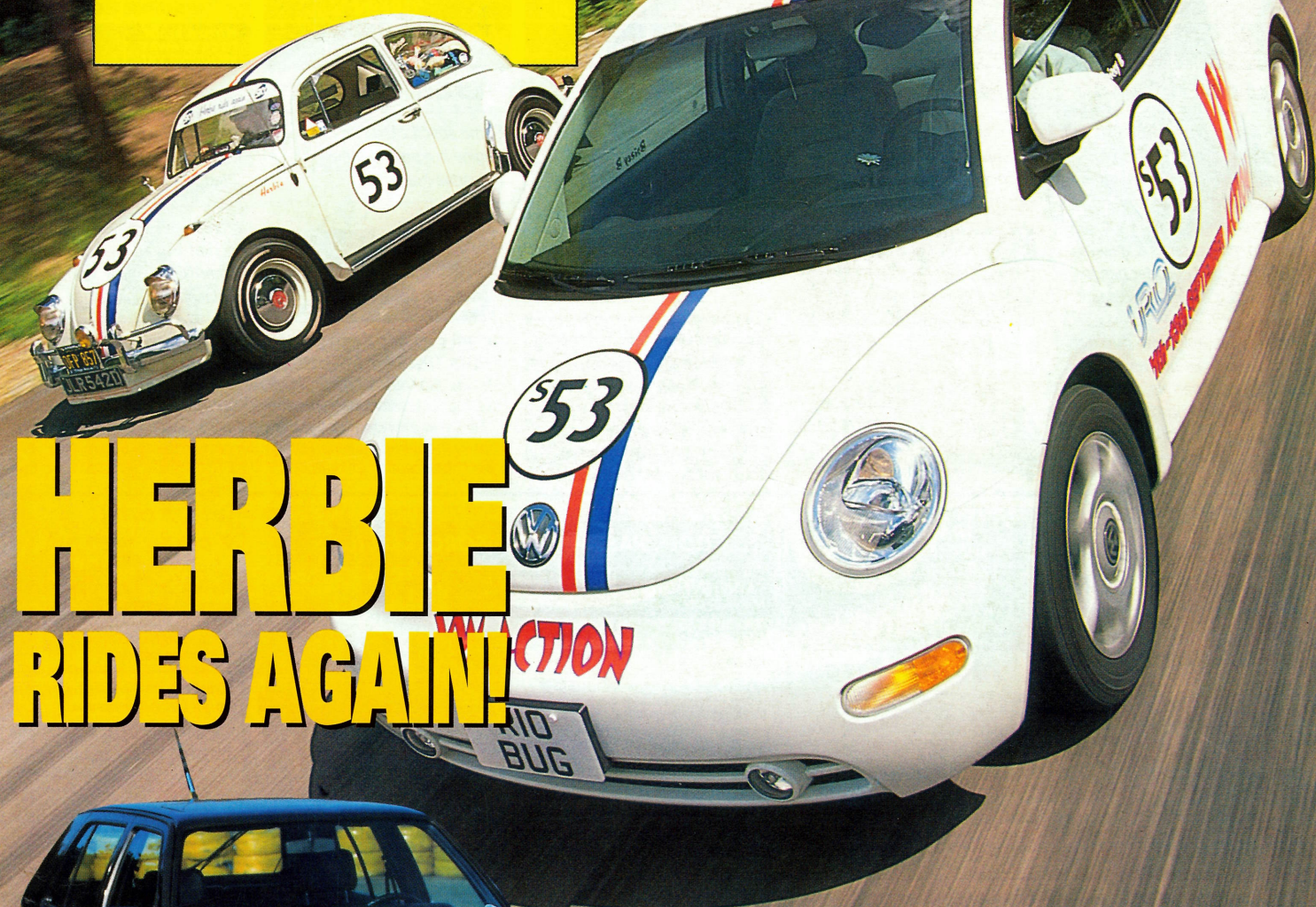
VW

motoring

August 1998

- 300,000-mile Passat
- T25 Transporter resto
- Sport quattro lookalike
- Classic/Custom '69 Bug
- Golf GTi brake upgrades
- 165 bhp 2.0 litre Mk 1 GTi
- Viking Spacemaker Camper

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FRONT COVER:

Herbie Rides Again! by Michael Baillie

LIMITED APPEAL!

At this year's GTI International event many visitors walked straight past this innocuous-looking black 5-door Golf, without giving it a second glance. Which is a pity, because it's a G60 Limited Edition – the rarest and fastest Golf ever made! *Peter Rosenthal reports*



Every now and then at one of the VW events you stumble across a real 'find'. Perhaps it's an unusual part you've been looking for, or a particularly rare model of VW or Audi. The first reaction you'll probably experience is disbelief - 'it can't be one of those?'. If it actually is that elusive part / rare car, the next reaction will probably involve a large grin!

Which is how I came to find myself grinning from ear-to-ear at this year's GTI International show while talking to Ron Kasner, a cheerful Scot who just happens to own this G60

Limited Edition, the rarest of all models of Golf.

The G60 Limited Edition was the brainchild of the head of VW Motorsport, Klaus-Peter Rosorius, who was keen to build 'a nice elegant-looking Golf without any exterior alterations, but which incorporated a number of interesting underbonnet changes.'

This has to be one of the most understated quotes ever – not only does the Limited have a 210 bhp supercharged 16V engine, but it's also equipped with Syncro four-wheel drive, ABS brakes and even has a

full leather interior!

Only 70 examples were ever built and each one took a week to be assembled by hand at VW Motorsport's base in Hanover: it's uneconomic to build such small productions runs at the main Wolfsburg plant.

Although the exterior bodywork of the Limited appears similar to that of a standard Golf, there are a number of subtle, yet significant, differences. For starters, it was only available with a five-door bodyshell painted in metallic black, and the blue-rimmed 'single lamp' grille is unique to the model

(as is the blue-on-black 'VW Motorsport' badging). Also unique are the bumpers and front indicator units: these are slightly deeper than those fitted to pre-'90 'small bumper' Golfs. A 16V spoiler, with built-in brake cooling ducts, finishes off the look of the front.

Tinted windows were standard on the Limited, with the windscreen differing from 'normal' Golfs in that it was bonded in place, rather than being rubber-mounted.

Under the skin, the G60 Limited shares many parts with the Golf Rallye, including the complete front end, which is

● VW Motorsport worked their magic on the supercharged 16V engine so that it could produce 210 bhp with reliability.

● All genuine G60 Limiteds sport this engraved plaque on the front panel of the engine bay.



● This car was probably the only one at GTI International that left the factory wearing the VW Motorsport badge...

● G60 Limiteds have 'all the toys' as standard. Blue numerals on the speedo are 'mph' markings on the original metric item.



used beneath standard 'non-flared' Golf wings (with 'GTi'-style wheelarch trims being used at each corner). As Rallyes have greater inner wheelarch clearance, the Limited's 6.5 x 15-inch BBS 'RM' split-rim alloys (using 195/50-15 tyres) could be accommodated with ease.

Using the Rallye front end also enables the Limited to use an enlarged-capacity radiator – which helps keep engine temperatures down – as well as a full-width Rallye intercooler (which helps keep the power output up!).

As you would expect from a VW Motorsport engineering-led

project, the powerplant itself is particularly special. The starting point was the 16V Golf GTi engine, which displaces 1781cc and, in standard form, produces around 139 bhp. VW Motorsport then added a 'fettled' G60 supercharger, running at 23psi of boost (1.56 Bar), having dropped the compression ratio from 10:1 to 8.8:1 (this is to reduce the stress on the engine and is essential for most methods of forced induction).

However, it's worth pointing out that the normal 8-valve G60 engine has a compression ratio of 8.0:1.

This combination results in monstrous amounts of power

and torque being on tap, with a maximum of 210 bhp at 6,500 rpm, and 186 lbf ft of torque being available at 5,000 rpm (51bf ft more than a 2.9-litre Corrado VR6!). This level of grunt is more than sufficient to propel the G60 Limited firmly into supercar territory.

Considering that it's based around an engine capacity of just 1.8-litres, the performance is nothing short of sensational. Even the manufacturer's ultra-conservative figures reckoned that it could hit 62 mph from rest in just 7.4 secs, and then power its way on to a top speed of 142 mph. Not bad for a 'plain Jane' five-door Golf!

It's worth pointing out that this is a very 'green' engine, too, with the far-sighted engineers at VW Motorsport designing it to run on super unleaded fuel from the outset. They even equipped it with a pair of three-way catalytic convertors (not that common in 1990) to comply with the stringent U.S. emissions legislation! Tweaked Digifant electronic fuel injection further helps reduce emissions, while an anti-knock sensor prevents engine damage should the owner inadvertently use fuel of a lower quality.

To handle all that additional power and torque, the original

16V gearbox was ditched in favour of the much stronger cable-operated '02A' gearbox found in the Rallye. The power is distributed to the wheels via a special VW Motorsport clutch and the Syncro drivetrain.

However, although the emphasis is undoubtedly on high performance, the G60 Limited is certainly no stripped-out racer and came with a very generous level of equipment as standard.

This included full black leather trim (even on the door cards), electrically-heated front seats, central locking, power-steering, electric windows and mirrors, a sunroof, an electric

headlight-levelling control and ABS braking.

The brakes themselves are dinner-plate sized 280mm diameter vented discs up front, with 239mm disc brakes being employed at the rear.

Oh, and for those ICE enthusiasts amongst you (who've hopefully bought this issue for the free car-audio supplement!), the standard-fit radio-cassette was a Gamma unit complete with RDS and autoreverse!

All 70 of the left-hand drive G60 Limited Editions were eagerly snapped up, before they were even built, for around £24,000 each. This may not

sound a great deal of money in modern terms, but bear in mind that eight years ago a brand-new 16V GTi only cost about £12,000! This makes the Limited easily the most expensive Golf ever officially produced by VW.

All genuine Limited Edition models have a numbered engraved 'VW Motorsport' plaque under the bonnet, with Ron's car being number 49.

He actually came across this Limited in Germany, in September 1997, following an exhaustive search.

This particular example was the second car of a wealthy businessman who only used it for the Winter season, where

the sure-footed Syncro drivetrain really came into its own.

As a result of this, the car had very little mileage on it (even now it only has a little over 87,000 km on the clock – about 54,000 miles) and it came complete with a full service history. Usefully, it had also

been fitted with new discs and pads all round and a brand-new VW Motorsport G60 supercharger had recently been installed – making for one less thing to worry about!

Ron eagerly snapped the Limited up – for an undisclosed sum – and then set off on the long journey back to Scotland.

However, the trip home didn't go completely to plan as the rear differential broke on the way – causing more than a little grief in the process.

Fortunately this was replaced with a good secondhand unit from a Rallye – reputed to have done less than 10,000 km – so it wasn't a complete disaster.

Once back 'north of the border', Ron set about carrying out a few minor bits of tidying to the car, such as having the bottom of the doors repainted (thanks to



Stuart Moncrief on 01333 351613).

Ron tells us that the car is 'great fun to drive, with superb handling, even in the wet'. Most road test reports of the time claimed that the Limited was a bit of a brute in performance terms and certainly Ron's comments would appear to tally with that.

'Keep the revs above 4,000 rpm and the torque and acceleration makes for an incredible experience. Especially in second, third and fourth!'

He does, however, point out that although the special VW Motorsport clutch is lovely and smooth, the same can't be said for the cable-change gearbox, which is a bit on the notchy side.

His future plans for the car include the removal of the cat,

which should liberate a few extra ponies (he's hoping for an extra 15-20 bhp) and will also allow leaded fuel to be used – well, for a couple of years, at least!

The only 'trouble' that Ron finds with the G60 Limited is its very rarity. Given that, to the best of our knowledge, this is one of only three such examples in the UK, you can appreciate his point. This isn't the sort of car you can just park anywhere, and nor could it be replaced in the event of an accident. Plus, it's far too precious a vehicle to be driven hard – not that Ron would want to abuse it in that way.

However, the key question – for all us enthusiasts, at least – is would he ever sell it? 'Ah, well I don't know. Maybe I could be tempted if someone offered me a highly-modded Mk 4 Golf 1.8T in Jazz Blue with Recaros...' ■

● **A happy man: well, wouldn't you be if you owned one of the rarest Golfs in the country?**



● **Gorgeous 6.5 x 15-inch BBS 'RM' alloys were originally shod with Pirelli rubber, but now use Fulda Carat Assuros.**