

Superchips has discovered hidden reserves of power in the GTI Edition 30



Unlimited Edition!

THERE WERE mixed feelings when Volkswagen first released the GTI Edition 30, to celebrate thirty years of the GTI. While it was welcomed as something even more exciting than the norm, there was also just a little disappointment that more hadn't been made of this limited edition special...

It was nice enough, but the special trim and wheels and tyres weren't perhaps quite as special as they might have been, and some were disappointed that the Edition 30 wasn't individually numbered, like the previous 25th anniversary Mk 4 model had been. But most of all, the power increase, an extra 30 PS (chosen to correlate with the anniversary) was considered fairly modest compared with the 50-60 PS which could be readily added by the aftermarket tuning companies, using a simple ECU re-map and free-flow exhaust system.

Although virtually the whole of the 1,500 allocation has now been sold, we know of

quite a few which have already had the dull and dreary Pescara alloys swapped, either for some rather more attractive aftermarket BBS-type alloys, or the Monza-style wheels refinished in satin black. This latter option was, you may recall, the original fitment on the Edition 30 design study first shown at the Golf Record Day in Germany last May.

There were also some new owners who suspected that an aftermarket re-map could liberate much more than the standard 230 PS, undoubtedly inspired by the fact that the 2.0 T-FSI engine in the new SEAT Leon Cupra was rated at 240 PS. It was already known that the powerplant used for the Leon Cupra was not exactly the same 2.0 T-FSI engine as the GTI, tweaked up, but a de-tuned version of the 265 PS unit used in the new Audi S3. Could the same be true of the 230 PS unit in the GTI Edition 30...?

Indeed it was, and one of the first aftermarket tuners in the UK to get their hands on the GTI Edition 30 was Superchips, based in Buckingham. The official tuning partner to Volkswagen Racing, Superchips has a long pedigree in electronic engine tuning, with more than 500,000 cars of all makes successfully modified over the last 27 years.

As soon as the Superchips engineers examined the maps in the Edition 30's ECU in detail, they realised that they weren't looking at a standard 2.0 T-FSI unit which had been simply tweaked. The ignition timing, boost level, injector timing and other parameters were much more akin to the basic settings used for the new S3. With its stronger engine block, upgraded bearings, stronger conrods and a different alloy for the cylinder head, as well as a bigger intercooler, different valve timing and bigger



'WHAT WOULD IT BE LIKE WITH OVER 300 PS TO TRANSMIT THROUGH THE FRONT WHEELS? WE WERE ABOUT TO FIND OUT...'



injectors, plus a revised turbo giving greater boost, Superchips had already re-mapped the S3 unit up to over 300 bhp, and there was no reason why they couldn't do much the same to the Edition 30 GTI.

The only problem, of course, is that while the S3 has the Haldex-controlled four-wheel drive system, the Golf GTI has to manage with front-wheel drive only. We'd found our hands full when driving the standard Edition 30 during our road test back in the March issue. While much more responsive and exciting once on the move, it had been a real challenge to put the extra power down cleanly on wet and slippery roads. What would it be like with over 300 PS to transmit through the front wheels? We were about to find out...

The latest tuning technology offered by Superchips makes use of the Bluefin concept which we've previously reported on, in the February issue of *Volkswagen Driver*. Rather than have to remove the ECU for



expert interrogation in the workshop, a hand-held unit is used by the owner to DIY-download the high-performance program through the diagnostic (OBD) port.

So when Superchips let us loose with its Edition 30, our first task was to accustom ourselves to it in standard form. This time, driving on bone-dry roads on a sunny day in late April, it was much more manageable and its keen mid-range response was matched only by our eagerness to switch

to the high-performance program. After completing the photoshoot, while the car was still clean, we recorded a cross-section of in-gear times, for later comparison, before heading for the nearest layby to download the new software. It's a straightforward procedure, taking about 20 minutes, plugging in the Bluefin module and following a simple sequence of instructions on the digital display.

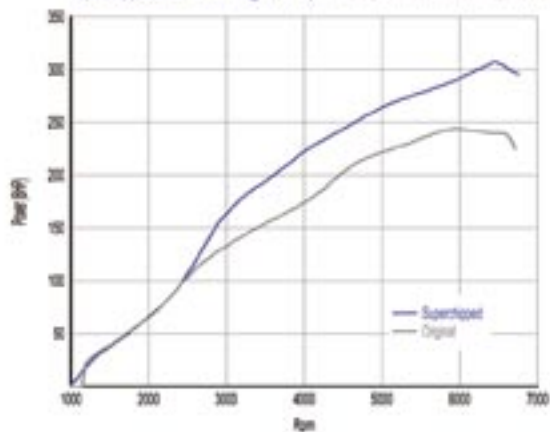
Surprisingly, the extra power wasn't instantly obvious. Up to about 2500 rpm, there's not a lot of difference, the engine just as smooth and manageable as standard, although response to the throttle pedal is slightly sharper. Accelerate more firmly, though, and all hell breaks loose – attempt a standing start by dropping the clutch at anything above 2000 rpm and you can forget about forward motion. Even on sticky track-day tyres, the 225/35 ZR19 Hankook Ventus Evos on 8x19-inch rims borrowed from Volkswagen Racing, the



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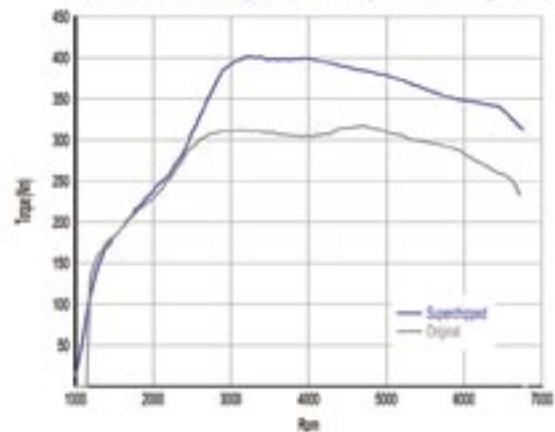
Power 64 BHP Increase @ 6329 Rpm

Supercharged Max 307 BHP @ 6426 Rpm Original Max 244 BHP @ 6288 Rpm



Torque 94 Nm Increase @ 3865 Rpm

Supercharged Max 401 Nm @ 3140 Rpm Original Max 317 Nm @ 4752 Rpm





'...THAT'S THE KIND OF PERFORMANCE YOU'D EXPECT FROM A FERRARI OR LAMBORGHINI...'



Superchips GTI would simply wheelspin and tramp furiously through the transmission.

Ease it away sensibly, though, getting it rolling before accelerating progressively, and the Superchips GTI scorches away with a smooth surge of extra power. By 3000 rpm, the torque has increased hugely, from the standard 310 Nm to almost 400, the torque curve remaining at around 400 Nm all the way to 4000 rpm and then only gradually tailing off, while the power curve continues to climb steeply, peaking at 307 bhp at 6425 rpm.

Without the facilities of a drag strip for the day, there was no way to record any meaningful 0-60 times, but in-gear acceleration tests showed a consistent improvement in each and every case, with 50-70 in fifth over a second quicker and 70 - 90 almost 2 seconds faster. It might not sound like a lot, but bear in mind that the Edition 30 is already quite a quick car. The increased response is almost as if a lower gear was selected on each occasion.

There's just no way to explore the upper reaches of its performance on public roads, because above 4000 rpm in top gear you're

already heading deep into licence-losing territory with every sign of the acceleration actually increasing. Suffice it to say that even in sixth gear it accelerates from 80 to 100 mph in 4.3 seconds; that's the kind of performance you'd expect from a Ferrari or Lamborghini rather than a four-door hatchback.

The beauty of it is that, with the Superchips Bluefin module, you can have two GTI Edition 30s; enable the high-performance program, for a fast cross-country run on a dry summer day, and you've got a relatively modest-looking Golf which can outrun most supercars, but wake up to a wet and windy morning and you can leave it as standard and make do with the standard 230 PS. Indeed, if you find the full power of the Superchips conversion too much to handle, the engineers can always re-map it to a more modest level.

With the discovery of such huge reserves of power lurking beneath the surface, we've developed a new respect for the GTI Edition 30 and those 1500 examples are likely to become even more sought after. While the chassis and suspension are quite

competent even in standard form, there is always scope for improvement and a 300 bhp GTI with a big-brake and suspension kit could prove a match for most other high-performance machinery out on the road. That £1,700 premium for the limited edition GTI must now be considered the bargain of the century! 🇩🇪

For further information on Superchips bluefin, telephone 01280 816 781 or log on at: www.mybluefin.co.uk

'THAT £1,700 PREMIUM FOR THE LIMITED EDITION GTI MUST NOW BE CONSIDERED THE BARGAIN OF THE CENTURY!'