

SUPERCHARGED GOLF VR6

**"A SUPERCHARGER PROVEN IN POWERBOAT"**

It's a Golf, mate, but not as we know it...

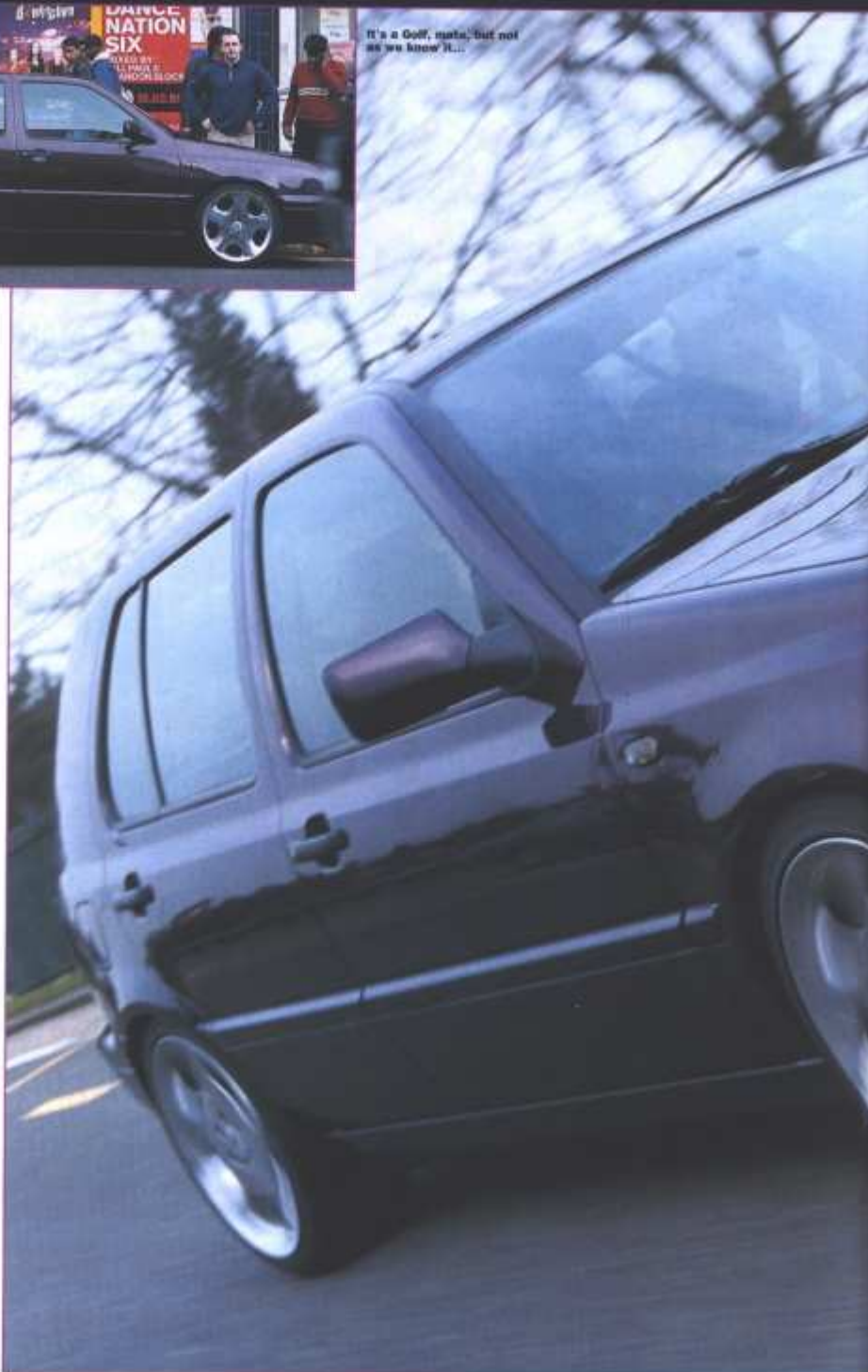
Words: Richard Munn, Eric, James Hall

**W**hen you're tooling around the leafier, high-rent corners of North London in a nice modded car, you expect to get a few looks. Preferably admiring glances from attractive blonde women in short skirts.

But, generally speaking, you don't expect the attention to come from a female ambulance driver bombing past with blue lights blazing. So we were suitably impressed when the twenty-something blonde who wouldn't have looked out of place in an episode of *Holby City* gave us a cheeky wink as she gave our tweaked Golf VR6 a fleeting once-over on route to some life-or-death medical emergency or other.


We were flattered, too. Anyone would be. But shouldn't she have been concentrating on the road, not checking out our alloys? I don't know, what's the NHS coming to these days?

The incident was all the more surprising because, on the outside, Nik Saran's car is pretty standard, aside from a set of polished alloy wheels, each the size of the Jodrell Bank radio telescope. A Golf Highline with: **>>**



RACING AND OUT ON THE DRAG STRIP

SUPERCHARGED GOLF VR6



After the turbo frenzy of the Eighties, superchargers are coming back into fashion – and Nik Saran Racing makes the most of 'em...

# 305BHP GOLF

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## SUPERCHARGED GOLF VR6

"YOU DON'T GET ANY LAG, YOU JUST



**WAGON WHEELS** Nik's fitted some of the most ridiculously huge alloys we've ever seen. Smart

Blackberry pearl effect paint, it's a rather aesthetically pleasing motor and no mistake. But what makes this demo car, built by London VW engine wizard Nik Saran Racing, really special is tucked away under the bonnet – a supercharger proven in powerboat racing and out on the drag strip.

Superchargers, which use energy from the engine's belt system to boost airflow into the cylinders, have always been big in America, where every self-respecting muscle car has one whirring away under the hood. But they fell out of fashion in

Europe when turbos (which use exhaust gases to achieve the same end) became popular in the Eighties.

Recently, though, manufacturers such as Jaguar and Mercedes are again embracing the long-overlooked benefits of supercharging, and Marcos, creator of outrageous Brit muscle cars, also uses the same US-made Vortech superchargers as Nik.

NS Racing's charger kit takes a day and a half to fit, and cranks power up from the bog-standard VR6's healthy 174 bhp to an extremely useful 250bhp. The brakes don't need

uprating and the standard VR6 clutch is up to the job, too. Nik reckons his demo car will make 305bhp once he's ditched the performance-strangling factory exhaust and replaced it with a custom system he's ordered at a cost of £900. With that much power on tap, he'll probably replace the anchors with more powerful four-pot items. Very wise.

"The supercharger is basically a bolt-on item," explains Nik. "No cylinder head work is needed, and you don't have to mess around with the compression ratios or anything."

It took just six weeks to transform the '97 Golf Synchro into NS Racing's latest demonstrator. Not available in the UK, this Golf comes fully loaded with goodies such as four-wheel drive and ABS as standard. Nik had this left-hander shipped in from Germany.

"I've always wanted to start with a crisp car and do everything at once, rather than bit by bit," says Nik. He's spent about £6,000 on this car's engine mods – including carbon fibre and polished ducting, an intercooler and dump valve – but his company fits the basic VR6 charger kit for £3,300.

But why bother with a supercharger at all, when there's so much else you can do to make your car go faster, like boring out your cylinders, chipping, or simply sticking some stripes down the side? And why not go for a turbo, instead?

For starters, superchargers deliver a more civilised spread of power. They feed in the extra horses in a smooth, controlled way, without the sudden, hairtrigger on/off surges of power, crazed fits of wheelspin and dubious wet weather manners associated with turbos.

"You don't get any lag," says Nik, >>>



**WAGON WHEELS** (Left) Some people just don't appreciate a cool motor, even when it's about to run 'em over...



**WAGON WHEELS** (Right) A subtle twin-headlamp conversion is one of the only exterior changes Nik has made



**POT YOUR FOOT DOWN AND GO** **SUPERCHARGED GOLF VR6**



**ANERA**

**PLAZA SUPERCHARGING**  
The Anera Inga isn't new, and you might even have come across Nik Saran Racing, but you won't have seen many Syncro Golfs - this 4x4 model's never been released in the UK.



**GOLF VR6**



**NIK SARAN RACING**

**TECH SPEC** **SUPERCHARGED GOLF VR6**

PRICE	around £30,000 (includes cost of car)
ENGINE	2.9 litre VW VR6 with Vortech supercharger, dump valve, seventh injector, special ECU and intercooler
TRANSMISSION	Standard
POWER	305bhp (with custom exhaust)
TORQUE	233lbs/ft
POWER TO WEIGHT	245bhp/ton
0-60MPH	5.9secs
TOP SPEED	157mph (limited by gearbox)
MPG (AVERAGE)	25mpg
STANDARD FEATURES	ABS, climate control, traction control, four-wheel drive, twin airbags

**WE MADE IT...** **NIK SARAN RACING**



**VW GOLF SUPERCHARGED VR6**  
Nik Saran Racing has specialised in VR6 engine transplants since the firm was set up three years ago. Nik's been supercharging VR6 engines for 12 months now, and has sole rights to carry out this particular conversion in the UK.

"Turbos are quite complicated bits of kit, but a supercharger is much simpler and more easily maintainable. The supercharger in our Golf demo car would last longer than the engine," says the 26-year-old computer sciences graduate.

"We can supercharge any VR6 - Coronados, Ventos, Passats, Audi A4s, A6s and A8s," he adds. "The VR6 also comes in the Mercedes MPV, the Galaxy and Sharan, so we can supercharge them as well. The VR6 is bulletproof, really. There's not much that can go wrong with it as long as it's well maintained."

He doesn't just work on German metal, though. Other recent projects have included a supercharged Lotus ("Thunderous," he says) and a Vauxhall Vectra V6. Nik, who lives near St Albans, also owns a mint 1990 Porsche 964 convertible.

Lucky bastard.



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## SUPERCHARGED GOLF VR6

## "THE TURBINE-SMOOTH SUPERCHARGED

## SHOPPING LIST HOW MUCH?!

NS Racing Vortech supercharger kit	£3,300 (inc VAT)
Eibach strut brace	£120
NS Racing intercooler kit	£1,400 (inc VAT)
Jamex bonnet lifters	£50 pair
Polished alloy Antera 123 7.5x17 wheels	£340 each
Continental C291 205 40/17 VR tyres	£160 each
Kamel grille	£225
H&R height adjustable suspension	£800
Heated leather Recaro interior	£1,000

**TOTAL** **£8,895**



**WHISPER QUIET...** with a boosting 173bhp/ft from the standard VR6, you would've thought they'd be happy...



"You just put your foot down and go. And the four-wheel drive on this car means you can thrash the nuts off it in the rain. When you take a supercharger off a VR6, the car feels like crap, it really does."

I bet it does, too. You might think the VR6 is a lairy enough motor as it is, but the turbine-smooth supercharged version is a massive improvement, producing a great slab of useable power. Engines that pull like this usually have eight carriages, a buffet car and a guards van hooked up behind them... plus they always arrive late and you have to stand knee deep in discarded takeaway cartons and polystyrene cups for hours, but that's neither here nor there...

Because they run at lower temperatures, lower pressure and don't spin so damn fast, superchargers are also very reliable. Unlike turbos, which tend to require a touch more care to keep them happy.

But best of all is the way they sound. Nik

talked me through the mechanical symphony resonating from under the Golf's bonnet.

"The hum is the air filter, the whistle is the supercharger, the whoosh is from the dump valve and that winding noise is the VR6 itself," he explains. "Now all we need is a nice exhaust to finish it off!"

Because no cylinder head mods are necessary, taking the supercharger off again (when you sell the car, for instance) is a painless, straightforward operation. If you are prepared to modify the head gasket though, Nik reckons you could get 350 bhp from the Golf VR6, effectively doubling the standard car's power. Now that would be quite a car. With an engine like that, you'd soon get used to attention from vehicles with flashing blue lights on top...

## USEFUL NUMBERS

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