



ABD

'S

1.8T

& 24v VR6

ink: Philip Royle

pics: Wesley Allison & Philip Royle

Battle It Out

On

The Road

duo



Which is better:
the 1.8T or VR6 GTI?

Not an easy question to answer, is it?

In fact, this question has been tossed around and beaten to death for so long that it's beginning to look like an abused crack whore—but despite people's persistence in pondering the riddle, it remains definitively unanswered. With the help of ABD Racing, we decided to answer it for you. >>

Under extreme driving, the 337 felt so much lighter than the portly VR6 that in the race up the mountain, the 1.8T was everyone's pick.

GTI

Once the rain started to fall, the limitations of a high-boost car became apparent. Even rolling in Third, the boost in the 1.8T was enough to break the tires loose and push the car off its line.



Under the hood of the 1.8T is not a K04 upgrade. Rather, various affordable bolt-on pieces and a 75-shot of NX nitrous make the four-cylinder pound out 262 horses to the wheels.

The 24v VR6 motor wears less aftermarket goodies as fewer products are available. The nearly 210-wheel-horsepower pull on the dyno proved the mods worked, though.

Actually, you have ABD Racing to thank for this idea. A year ago, ABD co-owners Dave Anderson and Jason Reich had a brainstorm. They knew the GTI 337s with the 180hp 1.8Ts and the 24v VR6 GTIs were being released, and since both cars housed the silky new six-speed manual, both would be on a fairly even playing field if they were to battle. As soon as it was possible, ABD Racing took delivery of both cars and began to build them.

ABD's tuned GTIs are, for all intents and purposes, the same car. Both hatchbacks house MOMO seats, ABD aluminum rollcages

with rear aluminum paneling, Perfect Image Creations aluminum dash kits, and ABD's aluminum pedal kits; both wear the same Rieger body kits, 19-inch OZ Superleggera wheels, Pirelli P-Zero Asimmetrico 225mm tires, and RPI/Wilwood 11.3-inch front brake kits. The two cars even sport the same wheel spacers and Eibach coilovers.

The difference, however, comes with the engine tuning. The 1.8T was the hands-down favorite for tuning potential, as there are a ton of available products for the motor. ABD's goal, however, was not only to find out which powerplant is more tuner friendly, but

to tune both cars in a realistic fashion that anyone could duplicate without taking out a loan—at the same time, though, ABD wanted mad power. With the addition of a ton of ABD Racing parts, including the company's Quickflow intake, a cleverly designed front mount intercooler, and most notably a Split Second boost controller cranked to a maximum boost of just under 20 psi, the little four-cylinder screams. When ABD bolted on the Supersprint race exhaust, added the lightened flywheel, and doused the motor with a 75-shot of Nitrous Express' go-fast juice, the 337 proved its potency at R&D

The interiors of the two cars are nearly identical. The 1.8T, however, uses an ABD boost gauge mounting bracket to replace the driver-side vent with an Auto Meter gauge.





From the exterior, the only thing that distinguishes the 1.8T from the VR6 is the FMIC on the four-cylinder.

Dyno with a 271.0-wheel-horsepower dyno pull. What was even more brain shattering was the flat torque curve peaking at 309.6 lb-ft. That's K04 power at a fraction of the cost. Take away the bottle, and the 1.8T put down 181.1 horses to the wheels—still very impressive.

As expected, the VR6 couldn't match the wheel horsepower of the 1.8T—but that may have to do with the fact that there are far fewer easy bolt-ons available for the 24v. With an ABD Racing intake system, Supersprint exhaust, and a 50-shot of nitrous via a Nitrous Express wet injection kit, the 24v powered down a 225.0-horse run, with the torque measuring in at 245.8 lb-ft. It became obvious on the dyno which car had the advantage when ABD used the Nitrous Express N-TerCooler to freeze the front mount intercooler on the 1.8T, and the car's power dramatically climbed.

In the trunk of the cars are complete aluminum floors with recessed mounts for the fullsize Nitrous Express bottles.

Even if ABD had wired the VR6 with a 75-shot of nitrous, the six-cylinder would have come in at least 21 horses to the wheels shy of the 1.8T's output.

A trip through 60 miles of canyon roads

Where the 337 retained its factory golf ball shift knob, ABD replaced the VR6 unit with a MOMO Sphere unit.

For easy access, the Split Second boost controller is mounted in the ashtray just in front of the shifter.

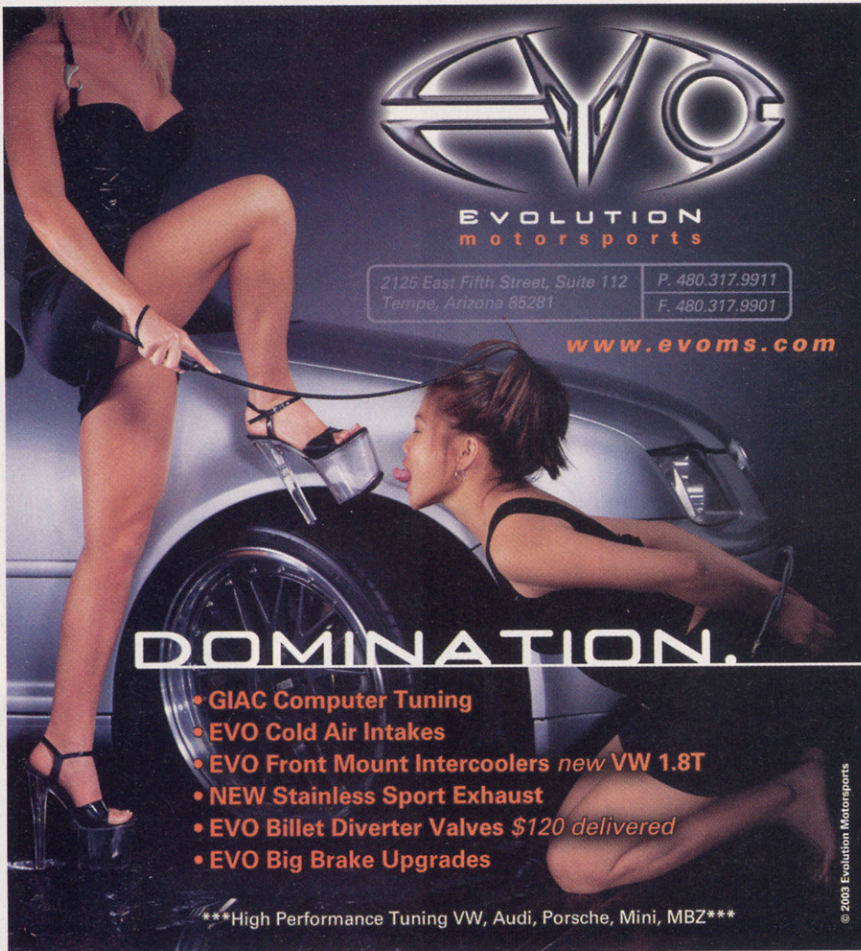


told the rest of the story. As we headed into the forest just north of Los Angeles, rain started to fall, and the 1.8T began to experience traction problems. When the rain was coming down hard, even Third gear became tricky once the boost kicked in at 3,500 rpm. If you weren't careful, it was all too easy to hit boost in the middle of a turn and experience quite nerve-wracking power understeer. While the front tires of the 1.8T were struggling, the VR6, on the other hand, was gripping in every gear without a care in the world.

Once the rain cleared up, however, the tables turned. With the ability to safely lay into the canyon's switchbacks, it became painfully obvious that the VR6 GTI's extra 100-pound curb weight (when compared to the 1.8T's) resides entirely over the front wheels. Every turn that was a delight in the 1.8T and could be taken with a flick of the steering wheel

Underneath the OZ Superleggera 19-inch wheels are 11.3-inch RPI/Wilwood big brakes and ABD braided brake lines.





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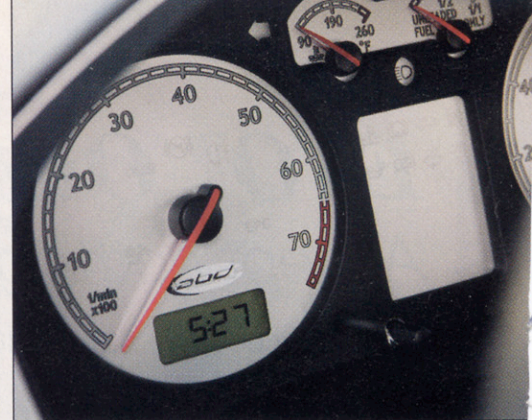
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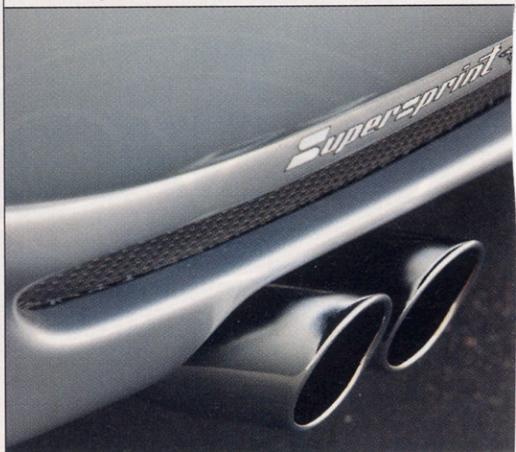
ABD replaced the gauges faces with its own silver gauges. The new gauges use the factory LEDs to illuminate the face so nighttime readability isn't compromised as it is with some other gauges.

was a slight battle in the porkier VR6. You never really appreciate how light the 1.8T is and how much more agile the GTI is with that motor under the hood until you get to drive the same stretches of road back to back in nearly identically prepared cars.

That's not to say the VR6 is a bad choice. Under inclement weather, the VR6 was easier to drive, as the lack of a harsh boost curve meant no unexpected power would have its way with you. The VR6 also proved its superiority during a slow climb up one hill in Fifth gear, where the 1.8T had to sit in Third or else it couldn't muster the power to justify its own existence. The VR6 also sounds meaner. Actually, the pissed-off grumble of the VR6 under full throttle was music to the ears on canyon roads, but it did become a little nauseating during the freeway drive to the mountains.

Which car is the better of the two? Without a doubt, the 1.8T is the better tuner car. It has more products available, and even if you have less than \$1,500 to throw at the motor, you can still get the power-to-weight ratio close to 10:1. The VR6, on the other hand, is a dream around town. You never have to think about what gear you're in, and even if you grab the wrong gear, you're still going to pull away from nearly any other car that comes against you. Unfortunately, if you want to hit the heavenly 10:1 power-to-weight ratio, expect to drop two to three times what you would with the 1.8T. Money talks, and so do dyno results, so our pick is the four-banger. 

Both the 1.8T and VR6 wear Supersprint after-cat exhaust systems.



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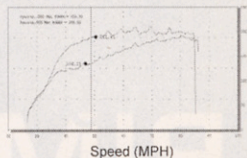
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Connected to the ABD Racing intercooler is a Nitrous Express Halo sprayer that freezes the FMIC to lower the temperature of the intake charge.

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2003

VW
GTI 337

ABDRACING // RIVERSIDE, CA

TECH SPECS

ENGINE:

1.8T I-4, Split Second boost controller, ABD Racing four-bar fuel pressure regulator, 45mm turbo inlet pipe, lower intercooler pipe, front mount intercooler, silicone intake tube, LAN pipe cold air intake with Quickflow filter and summer extension, lightened fly-wheel, six-speed clutch upgrade, and aluminum strut cap covers, Turbo XS billet bypass valve and wastegate controller, Nitrous Express N-TerCooler Halo sprayer, single-nozzle 75hp wet injection kit, and billet bottle mounts, Techtonics Tuning 2½-inch down pipe and high-flow cat, Supersprint 2½-inch race exhaust system with DTM tips

TRANSMISSION:

Six-speed manual

SUSPENSION:

Eibach Pro Kit coilovers, ABD Racing 25mm front and 28mm rear lightweight sway bars, urethane sway bar bushings, and upper stress bar

WHEELS & TIRES:

OZ Superleggera 19x8 wheels, Pirelli P-Zero Asimmetrico 225/35-19 tires, Eibach 10mm front and 40mm rear wheel spacers

BRAKES:

RPI/Wilwood 11.3-inch Race front brakes, EBC brake pads, ABD Racing stainless steel braided brake lines, cross-drilled rear rotors, and red brake caliper paint

BODYWORK/LIGHTING:

Rieger RX body kit and hood blend, ABD Racing billet shorty antenna and ABD badge, Hella smoked taillights, Kamei headlight eyebrows

INTERIOR:

MOMO Street Racer seats and mounting brackets, Schroth three-point racing harnesses with shoulder pads, Perfect Image Creations aluminum dash kit, ABD Racing floor mats, aluminum pedal set, aluminum foot rest, billet door pins, silver gauge face kit, gauge relocation kit, polished aluminum rollcage, and polished aluminum paneling with recessed nitrous tank, Auto Meter Silver Series boost gauge

MOBILTRONICS:

Factory sound system



2003

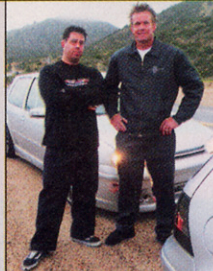
VW
GTI VR6

ABDRACING // RIVERSIDE, CA

TECH SPECS

ENGINE:

2.8L 24v VR6, ABD Racing 24v Quickflow intake system, Big Bore intake, and aluminum strut cap covers, Supersprint 2½-inch race exhaust system with DTM tips, Nitrous Express single-nozzle 50hp wet injection kit



TRANSMISSION:

Six-speed manual

SUSPENSION:

Eibach Pro Kit coilovers, ABD Racing 25mm front and 28mm rear lightweight sway bars, urethane sway bar bushings, and upper stress bar

WHEELS & TIRES:

OZ Superleggera 19x8 wheels, Pirelli P-Zero Asimmetrico 225/35-19 tires, Eibach 10mm front and 40mm rear wheel spacers

BRAKES:

RPI/Wilwood 11.3-inch Race front brakes, EBC brake pads, ABD Racing stainless steel braided brake lines, cross-drilled rear rotors, and red brake caliper paint

BODYWORK/LIGHTING:

Rieger RX body kit, hood blend, and hatch spoiler, ABD Racing short black antenna and ABD badge, Hella smoked taillights, Kamei headlight eyebrows

INTERIOR:

MOMO Street Racer seats, mounting brackets, Sphere aluminum shift knob, and Elegance black shift boot, Schroth three-point racing harnesses with shoulder pads, Perfect Image Creations aluminum dash kit, ABD Racing floor mats, aluminum pedal set, aluminum foot rest, billet door pins, silver gauge face kit, polished aluminum rollcage, and polished aluminum paneling with recessed nitrous tank, VW R32 steering wheel

MOBILTRONICS:

Factory sound system

PROPS/SHOUT-OUTS/MAD LOVE:

Everyone who chipped in to make this two-car project come together in one year, and the crew at ABD Racing for putting in those long hours