



# STAR ROAD TEST

## VOLKSWAGEN GOLF GTI

'Homologation special' remarkable for quietness and refinement as well as high performance and excellent handling and roadholding. Very good economy, so exceptional value for money. Only available in LHD form

VOLKSWAGEN HAVE made no secret of their intention to take part in various forms of motor sport, nor have they tried to conceal the fact that the Golf GTI, the subject of this test, is one instrument of that intention. The Golf GTI is being sold to the public at least partly to conform with Group I homologation regulations which require that a minimum of 5000 examples should be built.

VW are by no means the first manufacturer to do this, of course. Other companies have followed the same path for the same reasons, introducing such cars as the Ford RS2000 in consequence. The general idea is to achieve a major improvement in the performance

and roadholding of a family saloon which is inherently light, lively and nimble. If done well — and the GTI has been done very well indeed — the result is not only suitable for competition, but also a taut high-performance car entirely acceptable to the ordinary driver with sporting tastes.

The GTI is based on the standard Golf 1600, retaining the same all-independent suspension — by MacPherson struts at the front and trailing arms at the rear. But with bowl-in-piston combustion chambers, an increased compression ratio, Bosch K-Jetronic fuel injection and other modifications the output of the transversely mounted 1588 cc engine has been raised to 110 bhp. To cope with

the extra performance, ventilated disc front brakes are fitted, while to obtain the required improvement in roadholding, the ride height has been reduced, an anti-roll bar has been added at each end of the car and fatter wheels and tyres are fitted. Externally the car is distinguishable by its extended wheelarches, front spoiler and rear wiper. Inside, rally-type front seats, a rev-counter and an oil temperature gauge are also among the standard fittings.

The car created by all these modifications does well in most of the areas important to a "homologation special" but achieves much more besides: its standard of refinement is remarkable for any small production saloon, still more so for one which is highly tuned. And at £3372 it is competitively priced in its own sector of the market, unlike most German cars which are heavily penalised by the low value of the £. If Volkswagen are as successful in competition as they have been in developing this car they will prove formidable opponents.

### PERFORMANCE

★★★ Volkswagen's basic 1588 cc engine has been extensively modified to produce the power output required. Structurally the biggest change has been the adoption of bowl-in-piston combustion chambers in place of the conventional kind, but bigger inlet valves are

also fitted and the compression ratio has been raised from 8.2:1 to 9.5:1. An oil cooler is fitted to keep down the engine temperature.

The fuel is not metered by a carburettor but by a Bosch K-Jetronic continuous-flow injection system which has shown itself capable of giving outstanding results in other cars. Its most important feature is its use, in place of pressure and temperature sensors, of a direct air flow measuring device involving a floating plate which varies its position with the rate at which air is drawn into the engine and allows the fuel to be apportioned accordingly.

The net result of all these changes is to raise the power output to a claimed 110 (DIN) bhp at 6100 rpm — way above the 85 bhp of the Scirocco/Passat GLS versions of the engine, let alone the 75 bhp of an ordinary Golf 1600. Maximum torque is a healthy 101 lb ft, though developed at a very high engine speed—5000 rpm.

As might be expected, this makes the GTI a pretty brisk car, but what impressed us far more was its combination of high performance with a level of smoothness, quietness and refinement which is quite exceptional for a mass-produced 1½ litre saloon, let alone a highly tuned one. Even at its 6900 rpm limit, the engine sounds completely unfussed and its noise level remains remarkably low. Other manufacturers please copy.

Almost equally impressive was

the low-speed torque available as demonstrated by the way in which the engine would pull without hesitation from below 20 mph in top — equivalent to just over 1000 rpm. It is confirmed by the good acceleration times in top gear for each 20 mph increase in speed — 9.8s for both the 30-50 mph and the 40-60 mph increments, for example. We suspect this virtue, along with the complete lack of any flat spots or hesitations, to be due to clever manifold design combined with the excellence of the K-Jetronic fuel injection system.

Although our test car was certainly fast for a 1600, its speed and acceleration did not match Volkswagen's claims. The maxi-

mum speed, for example, was 108 mph as against a claimed 113 mph, and the 0-60 mph acceleration time was 9.6s compared with an expected time of less than 9s. VW's claims in the past have been honest and realistic, so perhaps our test car was below par.

## ECONOMY

★★ Unfortunately we were unable to attach our fuel flowmeter to the complex K-Jetronic injection system, but VW's claims of 50.4 mpg at a constant 50 mph and 38.2 mpg at a constant 70 mph seems entirely realistic, as do their other figures which would lead to a touring

consumption of 36.7 mpg. This, incidentally, would give a range of around 360 miles from the 9.9-gallon tank.

All this fits in well with the consumption values of well over 30 mpg which we obtained when driving the car gently, and with our 28.5 mpg overall figure, which is outstandingly good in view of the performance — and another of the car's important virtues.

## TRANSMISSION

★★ Operated by a floor-mounted lever topped with a knob shaped like a large golf ball — but coloured black — the GTI's gearchange is a delight to use. Its light, precise action

fully complements the smooth and responsive character of the engine.

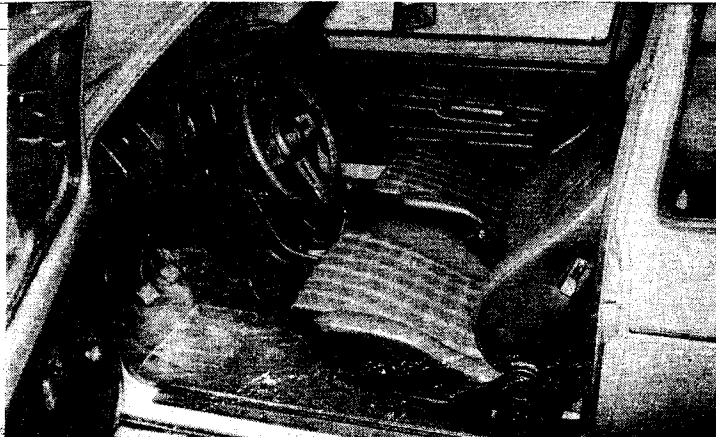
The gearbox ratios are the same as the standard 1600's, but the final drive gearing has been raised — from 3.90 : 1 to 3.70 : 1 — giving 18.4 mph/1000 rpm in top. The engine pulls so well at low speeds, though, that this fairly high gearing is no disadvantage, and the car was easily able to accomplish a restart on the 1-in-3 slope. But because 90 mph can be attained in third, and because the engine is very quiet even at high rpm, it is easy to forget to change up when travelling at moderate speeds.

## HANDLING

★★ The GTI retains the Golf's basic suspension system — MacPherson struts at the front and trailing arms at the back — but in an extensively modified form. The torsion bar which links those rear trailing arms, for example, is augmented by an additional anti-roll bar and another anti-roll bar is fitted at the front. The spring and damper rates have been changed, the car has been lowered by nearly 1 in and it runs on 175/70 tyres fitted to 5½ in rims in place of the usual 155 tyres and 5 in rims. According to the VW engineers, the result is to cut the maximum roll angle from about 6½ deg to less than 4½ deg and to raise the maximum sustainable cornering force at a steady speed from around 0.73 g to about 0.81 g.

In our view the result is a car which corners very well indeed but does not possess the almost extraordinary precision of hand-





Left: thanks to clever packaging there is more than ample space in both the front and the rear (right) of the GTI, while the firm but very comfortable rally-type front seats are attractively upholstered in a tartan cloth.



Below: the padded sides to the well contoured front seats do mean that entry to the rear is a little restricted



ling and reserves of adhesion provided by the Alfasud. But the Golf is nevertheless very nimble and responsive with mild initial understeer which means that it can be driven fast along a twisty road without much effort. At higher cornering forces, though, it begins to understeer strongly, especially on tight bends in the wet. It is also a little inconsistent at times: a bump in the road surface or a high initial rate of turn can reduce the basic understeer considerably.

The steering is low geared, but light and precise with enough feel to give some warning of impending front-end breakaway in the wet. Strangely, though, it becomes rather dead at the higher cornering speeds possible in the dry, and under hard acceleration from rest there is occasionally a trace of the added frictional stiffness combined with tuggings at the driver's hands from which the first VWs with negative offset steering originally suffered. Despite the front spoiler, too, the car is just a little unstable in a straight line at high speeds.

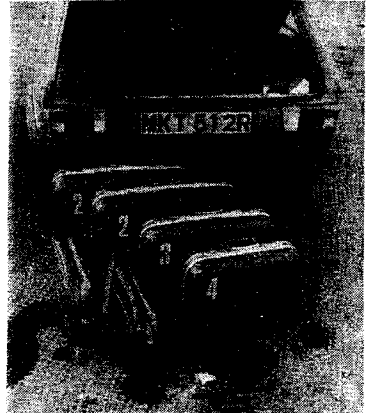
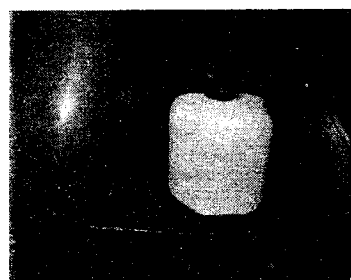
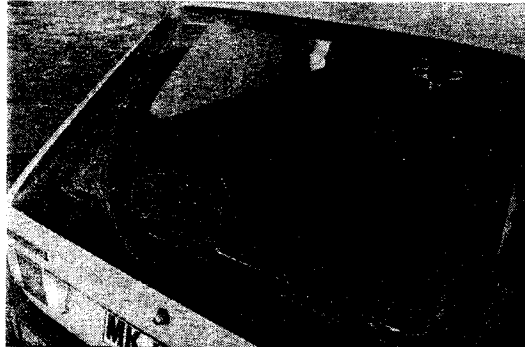
**BRAKES**

★★ To cope with the extra performance, the Golf's braking system has been upgraded for the GTI: ventilated rather than solid discs are fitted at the front and a larger servo is provided as is a pressure relief valve for the rear circuit. As for the standard 1600 model the rear brakes are of the drum type.

This system is admirably progressive in action and also very light: a pedal force of 70 lb was enough to send the dial of our Tapley off the end of its scale, indicating a deceleration of more than 1 g. No fade was experienced during fast driving on the road, but the pedal force required rose

Above: wider, flared wheel arches, side stripes, a front spoiler, alloy wheels and wide tyres—all the accoutrements of a sporty car, but discreetly applied

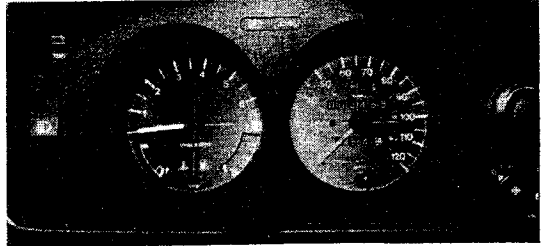
Right: the very useful rear window wash/wipe system is supplied by a plastic water bottle in the rear quarter recess, below



Above: with the rear seat in use the boot only takes 6.6 cu ft of test suitcases but the luggage area can be considerably enlarged when it is folded as below



Right: apart from these instruments, which include a tachometer in the top half of the left-hand dial, there is a clock and an oil temperature gauge on the central console



by 15 lb halfway through our 20-stop test. Several stops were needed before the brakes recovered from a soaking in the watersplash. The handbrake held the car securely on the 1-in-3 slope, even when the car faced downwards, but could only manage a 0.3 g retardation on the flat.

**ACCOMMODATION**

★★ Though the Golf is little more than 12 ft long and only weighs just over 16 cwt, there's more room inside it—thanks to its front-wheel-drive and transverse engine—than in many a rear-wheel-drive car 2 ft longer and 4 cwt heavier. Thus the driver's seat has a range of adjustment which provides ample legroom for the tall, and even

when it is in its rearmost position there is enough space behind it for a person of average size—though some sharing of the available space will be called for if both driver and passenger are tall. The nearly horizontal line of the roof means that there is also good headroom in the rear seat.

The luggage space is not quite so generous, the boot taking 6.6 cu ft of our suitcases though, of course, it can be increased in size very considerably by folding the rear seat forwards. There are plenty of places to stow oddments, though. Apart from the hinged boot cover which lifts up with the tailgate but can be used as a parcel shelf, there are two small but useful cubbies in the central console, a parcel shelf under the fascia on the passenger's side and an open glovebox above it.

**RIDE COMFORT**

★★ With anti-roll bars at front and rear, different spring and damper rates and a ride height reduced by nearly 1 in, the GTI's suspension has been tuned for handling rather than comfort, yet the ride is little different from that of a standard Golf 1600. Firm at all times, it is certainly a little restless and jiggly at low speeds and over small irregularities of cobblestone size. But it smoothes out at higher speeds and is well controlled on undulations, giving an entirely acceptable standard of comfort for a small saloon. There is some crash-through however, on man-hole covers and the like, while cat's eyes create a lot of bump-thump.

## AT THE WHEEL



Perhaps the two best features of the GTI's interior are its firmly padded yet very comfortable rally-type front seats which are attractively upholstered in a tartan cloth. Their reclining backrests incorporate head restraints and provide good lumbar and lateral support, while the range of fore-and-aft adjustment is ample for tall drivers.

The major controls, such as the gearlever, handbrake and pedals are mostly well laid out, save in one respect important to a car of so sporting a character: the proximity of the central console — totally unnecessary in a front-wheel-drive vehicle with a transverse engine — to the accelerator makes it difficult to heel-and-toe.

A pair of stalks place the majority of the minor facilities under fingertip control, but the rear wash/wipe switch is tucked rather inaccessibly under the fascia. This is arranged so that it is difficult to operate the wipers without a preliminary squirt of the washer — which we would prefer to control independently.

## VISIBILITY



With slim, well located pillars, plenty of glass and a body with flat sides, forward visibility is good and the Golf is easily aimed through small gaps. It is also easy to judge the position of the stubby tail, but the area swept by the rear wiper (an absolutely essential item of equipment, as the tailgate window gets very dirty in wet weather) is not well placed for a left-hand-drive car used on left-hand rule roads. Similarly the mirror, with its field of view necessarily angled to the nearside, does not give the best rearward visibility and the back pillars create some obstruction at angled junctions. The light output and beam pattern of the headlamps is only fair, and the car lacks the headlamp washers we would expect to see on a high-performance sporting car of this price.

## INSTRUMENTS



In front of the driver are two well-located circular dials of reasonable size: a speedometer incorporating total and trip mileometers and a matching rev-counter incorporating fuel and water temperature gauges. These instruments are easy to read and attractively styled but calibrated in large steps. We don't like the conical glasses which cover them, but they do minimise unwanted reflections with tolerable efficiency at the expense of a little distortion.

In the central console are two additional and smaller instruments: a clock and an oil temperature gauge — an oil pressure gauge would be more useful in our opinion.

## HEATING



A long-travel lever moving in a horizontal arc controls the heater temperature, while two levers above it

# MOTOR ROAD TEST No 55/76 • VOLKSWAGEN GOLF GTI

## PERFORMANCE

### CONDITIONS

Weather	Cool and damp; wind 10-20 mph
Temperature	43°F
Barometer	30.0 in Hg
Surface	Dry tarmac/adam

### MAXIMUM SPEEDS

	mph	kph
Banked circuit	108.0	173.8
Best 1/4 mile	112.5	181.0
Terminal speeds:		
at 1/4 mile	82	132
at kilometer	98	158
at mile	106	171
Speed in gears (at 6900 rpm):		
1st	36	58
2nd	64	103
3rd	90	145

### ACCELERATION FROM REST

mph	sec	kph	sec
0-30	3.3	0-40	2.4
0-40	4.9	0-60	4.4
0-50	7.0	0-80	7.0
0-60	9.6	0-100	10.3
0-70	13.0	0-120	14.5
0-80	17.0	0-140	21.0
0-90	22.7	0-160	33.6
0-100	35.3		
Stand'g 1/4	17.2	Stand'g km	32.0

### ACCELERATION IN TOP

mph	sec	kph	sec
20-40	10.5	40-60	6.8
30-50	9.8	60-80	5.8
40-60	9.8	80-100	6.4
50-70	10.5	100-120	7.3
60-80	12.1	120-140	9.0
70-90	14.6		

## GENERAL SPECIFICATION

### ENGINE

Cylinders	4 in line
Capacity	1588 cc (96.9 cu in)
Bore/stroke	79.5/80.0 mm (3.13/3.15 in)
Cooling	Water
Block	Cast iron
Head	Alloy
Valves	Ohc
Valve timing	
inlet opens	9° btdc
inlet closes	41° abdc
ex opens	49° btdc
ex closes	1° atdc
Compression	9.5:1
Fuel metering	Bosch K-Jetronic fuel injection
Bearings	5 main
Fuel pump	Electrical
Max power	110 bhp (DIN) at 6100 rpm
Max torque	101 lb ft (DIN) at 5000 rpm

### TRANSMISSION

Type	4-speed manual
Clutch	Sdp
Internal ratios	and mph/1000 rpm:
Top	0.97:1/18.4
3rd	1.37:1/13.0
2nd	1.94:1/9.2
1st	3.45:1/5.2
Rev	3.17:1
Final drive	3.70:1

### FUEL CONSUMPTION

Overall	28.5 mpg 9.9 litres/100 km
Fuel grade	100 octane
Tank capacity	5 star rating 9.9 gallons 45 litres
Max range	See text
Test distance	1264 miles 2034 km

### BRAKES

Pedal pressure	deceleration and stopping distance from 30 mph (48 kph)	lb	kg	g	ft	m
25		11	0.55	55	17	
50		23	0.97	31	10	
70		32	1.00+	30	9	
Handbrake			0.31	97	30	

### BODY/CHASSIS

Construction	Unitary
Protection	Phosphating, electro- phoretic dip, zinc powder paint, PVC undersealant

### SUSPENSION

Front	Independent by Mac- Pherson struts with coil springs and anti- roll bar
Rear	Independent by trail- ing arms with coil springs, intercon- necting torsion bar and added anti-roll bar

### STEERING

Type	Rack and pinion
Assistance	No
Toe in	—
Camber	+30' ± 30'
Castor	+20' ± 30'
Rear toe in	0° ± 15'

### BRAKES

Type	Ventilated discs/drums
Servo	Yes
Circuit	Two—diagonally split
Rear valve	Yes
Adjustment	Manual

### FADE

20 lb stops at 1 min intervals from speed midway between 40 mph (64 kph) and maximum (74 mph, 119 kph)

Pedal force at start	lb	kg
Pedal force at 10th stop	25	11
Pedal force at 20th stop	40	18
	35	16

### STEERING

Turning circle between kerbs	ft	m
left	31	9.5
right	30	9.1
Lock to lock	3.8 turns	
50ft diam circle	1.2 turns	

### CLUTCH

Free pedal movement	in	cm
Additional to disengage	1	2.5
Maximum pedal load	23 lb	7.0 kg
	25 lb	11 kg

### SPEEDOMETER (mph)

Speedo	30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
True mph	28 37 48 58 67 79 90 100
Distance recorder	3.5 per cent fast

### WEIGHT

Unladen weight*	cwt	kg
Weight as tested	16.2	823.0
*with fuel for approx 50 miles	19.9	1011.0

Performance tests carried out by Motor's staff at the Motor Industry Research Association proving ground, Lindley.

Test data: World Copyright reserved; no unauthorised reproduction in whole or part.

### WHEELS

Type	5 1/2 J steel
Tyres	175/70 HR 13
Pressures	24 psi F; 24 psi R

### ELECTRICAL

Battery	12V 36 Ah
Polarity	Negative earth
Generator	35A alternator
Fuses	15
Headlights	Two halogen circular

## IN SERVICE

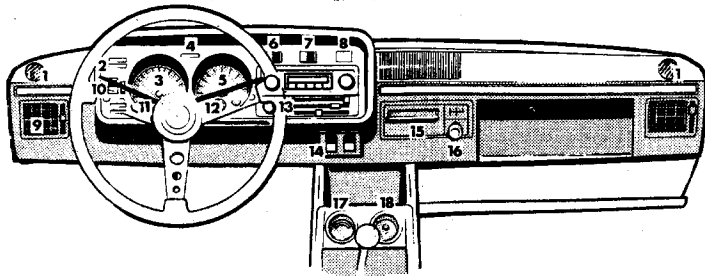
### GUARANTEE

Duration	12 months, unlimited mileage
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### MAINTENANCE

Schedule	Every 10,000 miles
Free service	at 600 miles
Labour for year	1h 20m
DO-IT-YOURSELF	
Sump	6 pints, SAE 20W/50
Gearbox and final drive	2.2 pints, SAE 80
Steering gear	Sealed
Coolant	11.4 pints
Chassis lubrication	None
Contact breaker gap	Approx 0.4mm
Spark plug type	Bosch W225 T30
Spark plug gap	0.6-0.7mm
Tappets (hot)	
inlet	0.2mm ± 0.05mm
exhaust	0.4mm ± 0.05mm

1 side-window demister	10 lights switch
2 charge and oil pressure warning lights	11 indicator/horn stalk
3 rev-counter	12 wash/wipe stalk
4 indicator tell-tale/main beam warning	13 heater controls
5 speedometer	14 rear wash/wipe switch
6 backlight heater switch	15 ashtray
7 hazard flasher switch	16 cigar lighter
8 blank	17 oil temperature gauge
9 fresh air vent	18 clock



Make: Volkswagen Model: Golf GTI  
Makers: Volkswagenwerk AG, 3180 Wolfsburg,  
W. Germany

Concessionaires: Volkswagen (GB) Ltd,  
Volkswagen House, Brighton Road, Purley, Surrey  
Price: £2882.05 plus £240.17 car tax plus £249.78 VAT equals £3372.00



excellent



good



average



poor



bad

with shorter movements regulate the volumes of heated air directed to the footwell and windscreen. Symbols by this last lever rather confusingly imply that movement of it to a certain spot will bring in the booster fan, whereas this is separately controlled by a knob.

Without this booster fan the throughput of heated air is meagre, even at speed. It becomes adequate when the fan is set to its first speed, ample on the second or third, but both these are noisy. It is not easy to control the temperature finely, so the interior of the car can become stuffy when just a little heat is needed.

## VENTILATION

★ Like all other versions of the Golf we have tested the GTI has poor ventilation. Small cheese-cutter type vents at the ends of the fascia admit fresh air, but the flow is meagre under ram pressure alone and not very strong even when fan boosted. It is insufficient to prevent the car from becoming stuffy when the heater is in use.

## NOISE

★★★ Although we expect reasonable quietness of any road car sold to the public for a substantial sum of money, we would hardly be surprised to find refinement among the less striking virtues of a car introduced largely to conform with Group 1 racing homologation requirements. But we were surprised by the Golf GTI: it's not merely quiet by the standards of direct competitors like the Escort RS2000; it's quiet by the standards of any 1½-litre car. In particular, the very smooth and unfussed engine isn't obtrusive even at its 6900 rpm limit. It does take on a rather insistent drone at above 90 mph in top, but at any

lower speed the car cruises in a relaxed way as there is little wind noise. There isn't much transmission noise, either, and the road noise is moderate.

## EQUIPMENT

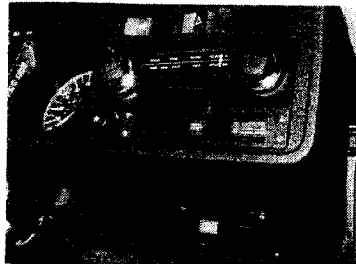
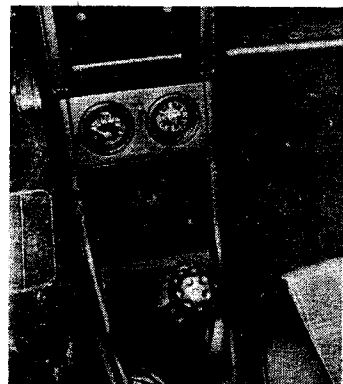
★★★ The GTI's mechanical modifications are complemented by an extensive list of additional fittings. The two rally-type front seats are the main feature of the fully carpeted interior, and the tartan cloth with which they are covered is also used for the bench seat at the rear. A rev-counter, two-speed wipers with delay, and a heater, washer and wiper for the rear window are all standard fittings, as is an additional central console incorporating two cubbies, a clock and an oil temperature gauge. Alloy wheels and tinted glass are available as extras.

## FINISH

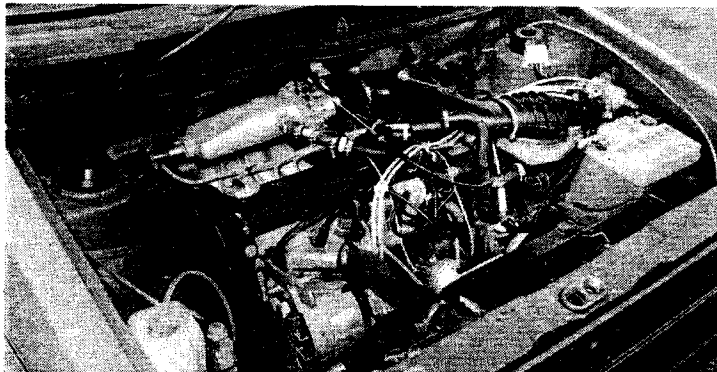
★★ In the past we have had cause to criticise the Golf's finish, but the GTI seemed better put together than the models previously tested. There were fewer creaks and rattles from the tailgate, and apart from a vibration in the fascia audible when the engine idled, there was little to complain of.

## IN SERVICE

The GTI carries the same warranty as an ordinary Golf and requires servicing at the same intervals: 10,000 miles with an oil change recommended at 5000 miles. Nor does the engine's high state of tune create any clutter under the bonnet. The oil cooler fits neatly beside the radiator and the K-Jetronic injection system does not interfere with the accessibility of other components such as the brake reservoir and distributor.



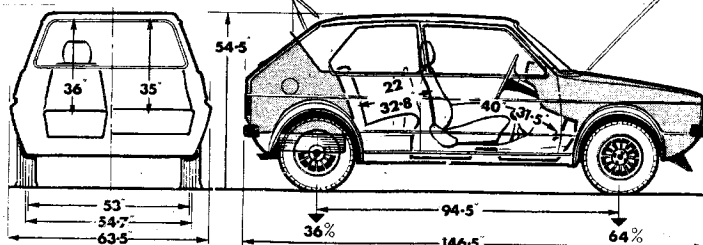
Left: a nice touch—the golf ball gearlever knob. Above: neat, simple heater controls below the radio. Below: the K-Jetronic fuel injection system dominates the under-bonnet view—the metering unit is on the right



# THE RIVALS

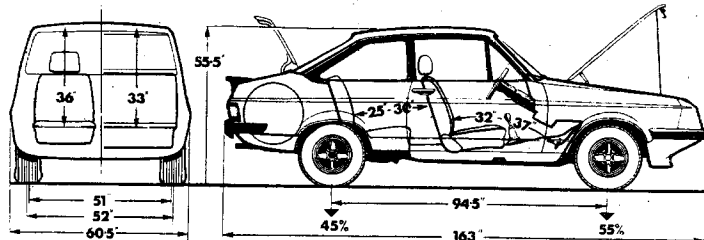
## VW GOLF GTI

£3372



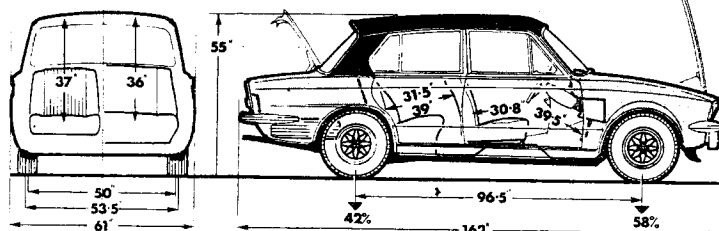
## FORD ESCORT RS2000

£3279



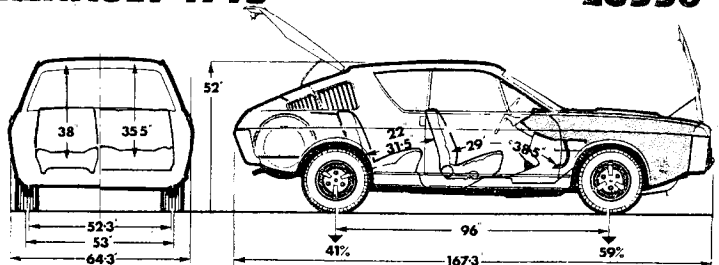
## TRIUMPH DOLOMITE SPRINT

£3833



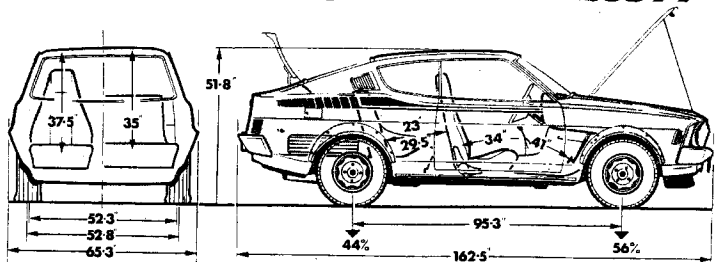
## RENAULT 17TS

£3556



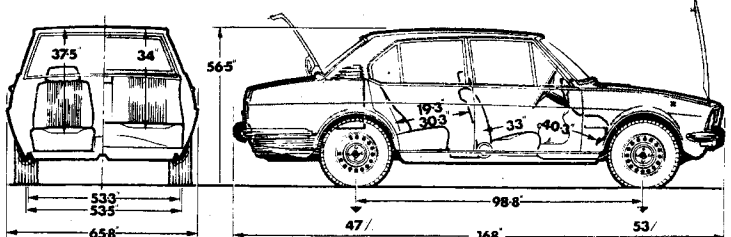
## COLT GALANT GTO

£3599

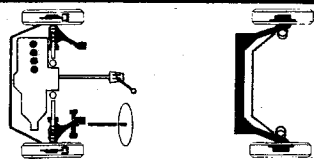


## ALFETTA 1.8

£3799

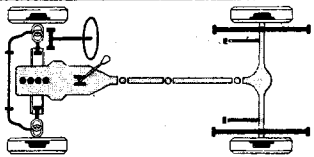


Another possible competitor is the Toyota Celica Liftback GT at £3805. The GTi is unusually cheap for a German car. Report on Renault 17TS following shortly



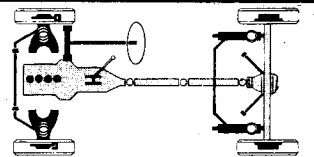
Capacity	1588
Power, bhp/rpm	110/6100
Torque, lb ft/rpm	101/5000
Valves	Sohc
Tyres	175/70 HR 13
Mph/1000	18.4
Test date	Dec 18, 1976

High performance version of Golf 1600 introduced partly to comply with Group 1 racing requirements. Bowl-in-piston combustion chambers and fuel injection help to raise output to 110 bhp; wider tyres and suspension modifications improve roadholding. Fast and very economical, but almost more remarkable for outstanding quietness and refinement. Excellent gearbox, good handling and roadholding; has many extras.



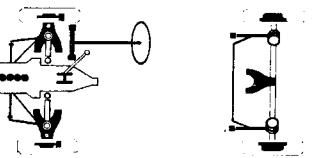
Capacity	1993
Power, bhp/rpm	110/5500
Torque, lb ft/rpm	118.5/4000
Valves	Sohc
Tyres	175/70 HR 13
Mph/1000	18.9
Test date	Sep 11, 1976

Astonishingly good value for money. This big-engined version of Ford's best-selling family saloon is an excellent example of the sporting model. Good performance and an excellent gearbox plus fun handling make it a driver's car. Economy only fair. Well finished with very comfortable front seats and excellent instrumentation. Poor rear legroom, firm almost harsh ride and a lack of refinement.



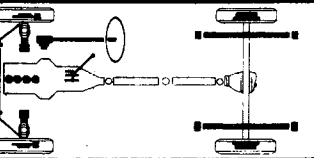
Capacity	1998
Power, bhp/rpm	127/5700
Torque, lb ft/rpm	122/4500
Valves	Sohc
Tyres	175/70 x 13
Mph/1000	23.7
Test date	July 14, 1973

One of Leyland's best cars. Conventional chassis with live axle — albeit well located — at the rear, but sophisticated 16-valve engine. One of the quickest of our selection. Responsive handling on smooth surfaces but doesn't like bumps. Well finished inside and out, versatile driving position and relaxed at speed. A prestige car, attractively priced.



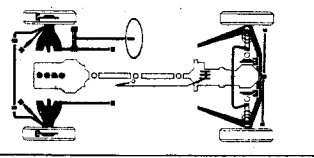
Capacity	1647
Power, bhp/rpm	98/5750
Torque, lb ft/rpm	97.6/3500
Valves	Pushrod Ohv
Tyres	155 SR 13
Mph/1000	20.2
Test date	Jan 1, 1977

Facelifted version of Renault's stylish fastback coupe with restyled interior and much improved instruments. Performance a little below average for the class but fuel consumption quite good; five-speed gearbox slightly notchy. Ride good, handling safe but un-sporting. Big enough to take four adults. Unusual front seats with adjustable lateral support not particularly comfortable. Not very quiet at speed.



Capacity	1995
Power, bhp/rpm	125/6200
Torque, lb ft/rpm	126/4000
Valves	Sohc with rockers
Tyres	185/70 HR 13
Mph/1000	20.1
Test date	Nov 1, 1975

Sporty version of Mitsubishi's Galant, though only the platform chassis is shared. More powerful engine, stiffened suspension, wider wheels and tyres as well as bolt-on wheelarch extensions. Brisk, but not outstandingly so. Lusty low-speed torque. Superb gearchange, comfortable driving position, good heating and ventilation, and clear instrumentation. Limited accommodation and stiff ride.



Capacity	1779
Power, bhp/rpm	122/5500
Torque, lb ft/rpm	123.3/4400
Valves	Dohc
Tyres	185/70 HR 14
Mph/1000	20.7
Test date	April 20, 1974

Technically interesting sporting Italian saloon with twin ohc engine. Has de Dion suspension and a five-speed gearbox at the rear. Apart from typical Italian driving position (pedals too close to steering wheel) a very nice car indeed, with plenty of performance allied to very good fuel consumption. Other features are very good noise suppression and outstanding roadholding and handling on all surfaces.

## PERFORMANCE

	Golf GTI	Escort RS 2000	Dolomite Sprint	Renault 17TS	Galant GTO	Alfetta 1.8
Max speed, mph	108.0	108.2	112.7	103.6	107.4	111.4
Max in 4th	—	—	—	100	103	93
3rd	90	88	89	70	76	71
2nd	64	61	58	47	51	49
1st	36	33	41	27	31	21
0-60 mph, secs	9.6	8.5	8.4	11.9	11.7	9.5
30-50 mph in 4th, secs	9.8	8.4	8.0	10.0	9.8	7.2
50-70 mph in top, secs	10.5	8.0	8.7	14.3	11.2	10.8
Weight, cwt	16.2	18.1	19.8	19.3	19.8	21.2
Turning circle, ft*	30.5	29.0	29.0	31.6	31.3	32.6
50ft circle, turns	1.2	0.8	1.1	1.2	0.85	1.25
Boot capacity, cu ft	6.6	6.9	9.4	8.0	7.5	12.4

\*mean of left and right

## COSTS

	Golf GTI	Escort RS 2000	Dolomite Sprint	Renault 17TS	Galant GTO	Alfetta 1.8
Price, inc VAT & tax, £	3372	3279	3833	3556	3599	3799
Insurance group	—	6	6	—	—	7
Overall mpg	28.5	23.5	26.7	27.8	23.2	26.2
Touring mpg	—	27.6	33.1	33.6	31.7	29.2
Fuel grade (stars)	5	4	4	4	4	4
Tank capacity, gals	9.9	9.0	12.5	12.0	11.4	10.7
Service interval, miles	10,000	6000	6000	3000	3000	6000
Set brake pads (front) £*	14.26	9.69	4.77	12.36	6.50	6.75
Oil filter, £*	2.62	2.66	1.00	2.16	2.66	3.23
Starter motor, £*	—	47.56†	41.52	29.16†	25.00†	32.72
Windscreen, £*	31.27	26.05**	24.50**	53.35**	34.00	73.91

\*inc VAT \*\*Laminated †Exchange

## EQUIPMENT

	Golf GTI	Escort RS 2000	Dolomite Sprint	Renault 17TS	Galant GTO	Alfetta 1.8
Adjustable steering			●		●	●
Carpets	●	●		●	●	●
Central locking						●
Cigar lighter	●	●	●		●	●
Clock	●	●		●	●	●
Cloth trim	●	●	●		●	●
Dipping mirror	●	●	●	●	●	●
Dual circuit brakes	●	●		●	●	●
Electric windows				●	●	●
Fresh air vents	●	●	●	●	●	●
Hazard flashers	●	●	●	●	●	●
Head restraints	●	●		●	●	●
Heated rear window	●	●	●	●	●	●
Laminated screen	●	●	●	●	●	●
Locker		●	●	●	●	●
Outside mirror	●	●	●	●	●	●
Petrol filler lock				●	●	●
Radio				●	●	●
Rear central armrest			●			
Rear wash/wipe	●					
Rev counter	●	●	●	●	●	●
Seat belts (front)		●	●		●	●
Seat recline	●	●	●	●	●	●
Sliding roof						●
Tinted glass					●	●
Windscreen wash/wipe	●	●	●	●	●	●
Wiper delay	●	●		●	●	

## CONCLUSION

When a manufacturer develops a car with competition specifically in mind, we expect the result to have taut, precise handling, unusually high cornering powers and exceptional performance for its engine size. In all these respects the Golf GTI, introduced partly to conform with Group 1 racing requirements, largely met our expectations. With a maximum speed of 108 mph, for instance, it was certainly fast, even though we have good reason to believe the

engine of our test car to be below par. The GTI's gearchange is very good, too, and both its handling and roadholding are excellent, while not quite matching the very high standards set by the Alfesud.

The big surprise, though, lies in the GTI's unexpected and quite remarkable quietness and refinement. A certain amount of road noise is transmitted, it is true, to the interior, but there is very little wind noise and the level of engine noise — even at high rpm — is extremely low. Add to this a competitive price which includes many useful extras and the result in our opinion is a very fine car.