

SHOCKING CAR!



This Polo Genesis has undergone a radical transformation in the hands of owner Steve Morris. Peter Rosenthal finds out what makes this coupé really howl...

You're probably thinking 'what a lovely looking Polo. Nice alloys. Sharp paintwork'. What you can't see, though, is the G40 engine that has been shoehorned under the bonnet and which has transformed this humble hatch into a real GTI-beater. Not so much 'shopping car' as supercar!

The man responsible for the tasteful mods to this Polo Genesis is Steve

Morris, a VW enthusiast from Ruddington in Nottingham.

A paint sprayer by trade, Steve's passion for all things VW started many years ago when his dad purchased a '61 1200 DeLuxe Beetle. This was ultimately superseded by a 1970 1302S which was sold, much to the young Steve's disappointment, in 1984. However, a neighbour softened the blow for him by offering to sell the 14-year-old a

1964 Beetle for spares or repairs. The princely sum of £35 soon changed hands...

Four years on, after much tinkering with a great many other VWs, Steve obtained his provisional licence and needed an MoT'd car to learn to drive in. Fortunately, a garage close to where he worked had a 1981 Polo N up for sale, and, after a brief test drive, Steve bought it and ever since then has been well

and truly smitten with the Polo bug.

A succession of Polos and Derbys followed, with the odd Scirocco GTI thrown in for good measure. By early 1997 Steve owned a show-standard MK 1 Polo but was hankering after something different. A trip to watch the motor racing at Mallory Park was to change all that...

At this particular race meeting, Steve, who by now was well known in the

● The low-mileage ex-Polo Cup G40 engine was fully cleaned and painted before being slotted into place. The actual installation is so neat it could almost have been done at the factory!



Polo scene, was approached by a man who had the ex-David Finlay Polo G40 Cup race car for sale. Although it had heavy rear damage, the running gear could be saved. The chance to buy such a vehicle doesn't happen every day and it wasn't long before money swapped hands and Steve found himself the proud owner of a somewhat crumpled supercharged Polo race car.

The Polo G40 Cup race series ran from early 1992, initially being supported

by VW and Shell, with the cars using sealed 113 bhp engines, gearboxes and superchargers to ensure a level playing field.

Competition springs, dampers, suspension bushes, brake pads, oil cooler, sump baffle and exhaust were all supplied as part of an official race kit with the cars. Each had to use 'control' Dunlop racing tyres and the stock G40-spec 5.5 x 13-inch BBS rims.

The race series was designed to boost the public image of the Polo G40 (as

did the Vento Challenge for the booted Golf...) and there's no denying that the hot hatches were extremely quick. The racing Polos, which tipped the scales at 730 kg, some 100 kg lighter than their road-going counterparts, would lap Brands Hatch in around 55 secs at 78 mph and, at the time, they were the fastest of all the one-make racing series!

Knowing that he had an extremely potent powerplant on his hands and not wanting to stick it in his concours Polo N, the search was on for a suitable recipient vehicle. After two months of 'looking

at overpriced, townbound, battered and seemingly always white' Polo Mk 3s Steve began to get slightly dispirited.

However, at the 1997 GTI Festival at the NAS near Peterborough, Steve got chatting to a fellow G40 owner who had a high-mileage Genesis up for sale at a reasonable price. And, best of all, it wasn't white!

A trip to Watford later that day revealed just the car Steve had been looking for and he soon became the owner of K232 ARP: a 1993 Indian Red Polo Genesis coupe with 106,000 miles on the clock.

The Genesis was a special model brought out near the end of the Mk 3 Polo model lifespan and it's

based on a Fox, with loads of extras fitted. These include a sliding steel sunroof, height adjustable driver's seat, a rev-counter, a split-folding rear seat, tinted glass and a sports steering wheel (the same style as the G40's but sans leather). Two engine versions were offered; a 1050 cc and a 1272 cc 5-speed model, as is the case here. Once Steve had got the Genesis back to Nottingham then the creation began...

He started by dumping the wheels (someone had fitted some ghastly three-spoke alloys, he tells us!) and then ripping out the original 55-bhp engine and gearbox. The next parts to be ditched were the original suspension struts - a wise move given the substantial hike in power that the Polo was about to receive!

The actual G40 Cup engine appeared to be in

good order, and although the speedo of the race car indicated 11,000 miles, only 2,000 of these are reputed to have been track miles. After a thorough clean and a repaint with Sperex heat-resistant paint, the engine was slotted in place in the Genesis, together with the G40 wiring loom.

The race car also donated its gearbox, suspension and parts of its exhaust, although a straight-through middle pipe and a Remus back box have now superseded the latter. Being a K-reg vehicle, the catalytic converter has had to remain in place.

With the running gear sorted, Steve then treated the bodywork to a spruce-up, repainting the stone-chipped bonnet and colour-coding the bumpers (a surprisingly effective mod). Unlike G40 Polos, the Genesis doesn't come fitted with plastic wheelarch trims or sill mouldings, which enabled Steve to get the car looking really smooth and 'Euro'...

Action photo:
John Clewer

Clear front indicators have been fitted up front, with smoked side repeaters and rear lenses finishing off the exterior look. To keep it looking like a proper 'Q' car, and to annoy the local GTi boys, the car's original 'Genesis' badging remains...

Before it hit the streets, Steve took the precaution of getting it equipped with a full Scorpion Thatcham Cat 1 alarm (fitted by Paul Tomlinson at Dockholme Garage) and a set of armoured door plates from C&R Enterprises. 'After all this work the last thing I wanted was for it to go missing!'

He wasn't yet satisfied with the look of the car, though, and decided that a new set of alloys would have to be sourced. He settled on a set of tasteful five-spoke Azev A rims and although these are only 14-inch in diameter (you'd swear they were 15s!) they fill the arches to perfection. They're wrapped in Yokohama A520 rubber in size 185/50-14.

The brakes were next on Steve's hit list and he

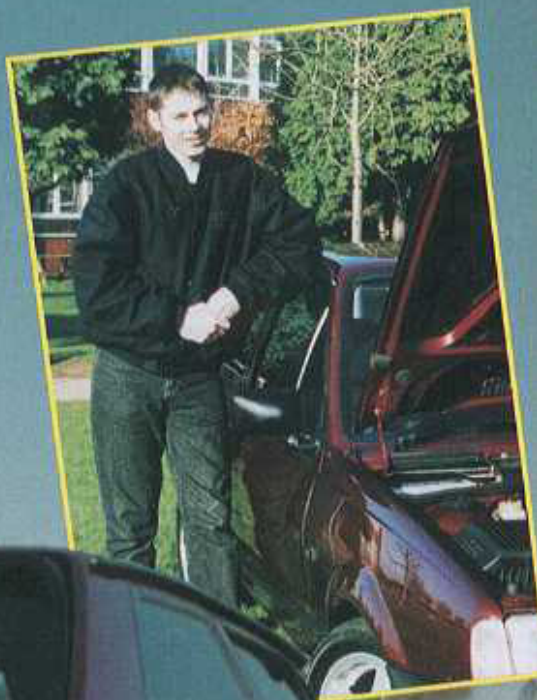


● Custom dials and jazzy blue centre panels of the G40 trim add a touch of colour to the interior. And just look at the size of those door speakers!





● Subtle colour-coding of bumpers and stylish 14-inch AZEV alloys add a menacing look to Steve's Polo.



opted to upgrade to Black Diamond 239 mm discs up front, squeezed by a set of Ferodo DS2000 pads. He reckons that this set-up has enhanced the brakes, but that further improvements can be achieved by fitting a Golf 16V master cylinder and a set of braided hoses.

Having sorted out the 'go' and the 'stop', Steve thought it was about time to see how much the handling could be improved and, taking the advice of Steve Cresswell (the 'C' in C&R Enterprises), a Weitec GT suspension kit was purchased. This was supposed to lower the car by 60 mm all around, but upon fitting, it was discovered that although the ride height at the rear was fine, the front units

had dropped the car by a massive 85 mm, causing clearance problems. Also, the front dampers didn't appear to be firm enough for the additional weight of the G40 drivetrain. To sort out these teething problems, a set of 40 mm Weitec springs and a set of stiffer 'SR'-rated dampers were fitted, a set-up which Steve says has now sorted out the handling, 'it's much, much better now!'

With all these mods carried out you could forgive Steve for having a bit of a rest and keeping the interior stock. But, of course, he hasn't and it now benefits from G40 seats (complete with jazzy blue patterned centre trims), door cards and clocks. The instruments have been

equipped with cool white Invert Design dial faces (with the speedo numerals going up to 160 mph!) and, as if that wasn't enough, he's even changed the illumination colour from green to red - 'It's not that difficult if you're patient...'

He's also equipped it with electric windows - an option which even G40 models didn't have - using bits of Polo, Passat and Golf winder mechanisms, together with a Spal factory-look switch kit.

Needless to say, the Polo has been kitted out with an upgraded audio system, with an Alpine CDA7832R CD-tuner providing the source. Home-made door pods house enormous 7 x 10-inch Kenwood 200 Watt speakers, fed by a

Kenwood PS100 amp, with sub bass being handled via a second Kenwood amp, a mono KAC 715, driving a 10-inch Kenwood sub mounted in its own enclosure. Quiet it ain't!

By far the best sound, though, doesn't come from the stereo at all - it's the deep howl that the G-lader supercharger emits when it's being spun in anger. What's more, as Steve has recently kitted the Genesis out with a motorsport pulley and an ECU re-chip, you can bet that this beauty now wails loud enough to wake the dead!

Those VW enthusiasts who sneer at the Polo and don't rate it as a hot-hatch obviously haven't checked out this one. Shopping car? More like *shocking car!* ■