



KWAAAI CABBIIES

CHARL NORMAN KEEPS US UP TO SPEED ON THE LATEST IN MOTORING

GOTTA BE QUICK: VW is only making a limited number of their Golf R32s



It's all muscle

VOLKSWAGEN has announced the return of its racy and inspired Golf R32.

First introduced in 2004, the all-wheel-drive hot hatch is the fastest car ever to emerge from the German manufacturer.

More than the menacing looks, dark cabin and R-branded decor, it is the first flick of the wrist which tells the driver there is something exciting to delve into here.

The dual exhaust's note is sinister and, while the race-car crackle delivered at higher revs is exhilarating, it is the moment of ignition that is the most memorable.

The star of the show is the car's throaty 3.2 litre, naturally aspirated V6 engine, from which the R32 derives its name.

And with 250 horsepower and tons of torque, it's all muscle.

The 3189cc, 24-valve narrow-angle V6 features wonderful smoothness, a barrel-chested mid-range, lots of run near the red line and a decent amount of muscle at low revs.

Short gearing assists the cause. At 100km/h in sixth gear, it ticks over at 2 500rpm.

Responsive

But such is the engine's responsiveness through the accelerator that the driver never feels the need to labour with the gearbox.

Sitting 20mm lower than a standard Golf and resting on



A RUNNER: Simply exhilarating

RETURN OF VW'S MOST POTENT HOT HATCH EVER

stiffer suspension, the 1 477kg R32 darts athletically through turns and sits flat in a corner, showing tremendous grip.

Twin chrome exhausts, 18-inch alloy wheels, bi-xenon headlights, a uniquely-shaped front grille and R32 badging distinguish this car from anything else on the road.

A rear roof spoiler and deep front spoiler, coupled with body-coloured bumpers, side bump strips, door handles and door mirrors, add to the streamlined, sporty look.

The car is surprisingly roomy. It fits four six-foot adults comfortably and, if you want the R32 as a practical car, you can option it with five doors for only a little more.

Luggage space is pretty good. And with the split-folding seats down, the R32 could be the world's fastest courier van.



RACY: The interior is tarted up Golf but it's still a nice place to be

The R32 boasts a long list of safety features, including an electronic stabilisation programme that reacts to critical driving situations in milliseconds by controlling the speed of individual wheels.

And a confidence-inspiring anti-lock braking system helps prevent the wheels from locking under heavy braking.

Racing

Inside, the R32 takes its cues from racing with its aluminum-look foot pedals and deep front sports seats.

All the bells and whistles come standard, including a premium CD stereo system, rain-sensing wipers and heatable front seats, no less.

As you'd expect, the interior is tarted up Golf but it's still a nice place to be.

On the whole, it's a very sporty, sleek and safe car.



SNAZZY: Golf's rad branding

Will you modify it? Well, there's only one way to find out: you can only pre-order the car at www.5000r32.com. Only a limited number will be manufactured so you'd better hurry.

The standard Golf remains, in essence, an econo-box for travelling from A to B and not a whole lot more. But the R32 is a totally different beast: the result of all the pent-up passion of VW's engineers.

Finally, here's a car which shows what they can do when they're allowed to have fun.



HOT: Mini Cooper D is the first diesel version

Dynamite comes in small packages

SOME time back I reported about the diesel Mini concept. Well, BMW will be showing the Mini Cooper D, as well as the new Mini One in Geneva soon.

Capable

The Mini Cooper D is the first diesel version with the Cooper logo.

The car will be equipped with a 1.6 litre Peugeot-sourced turbo-diesel engine.

With a top speed of 195 km/h, it'll do 0 to



A FIRST: The new logo 100 km/h in 9.9 seconds and will have an average fuel consumption of 4.4 litres/100 km.

That's lekker power and good fuel economy. The Mini One has a 1.4 litre petrol engine capable of pushing it up to 185 km/h and 0 to 100 km/h in 10.9 seconds.

No word yet about when the cars will reach our shores.

MERC UPDATE



SLICK: The new SL

MERCEDES is looking to strengthen its already strong line-up with an update of the SL for 2009.

It seems the vehicle will take cues from the CL and will benefit from changes to the headlights, grille, and air intakes.

According to a photographer who sneaked pix of the car, this well-disguised vehicle may

be the AMG version of the SL.

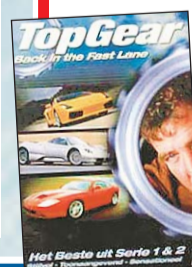
The photos were taken during cold-weather testing near the Arctic Circle.

We don't know of too many people that drive rear-wheel-drive uber-coups at -20 degrees but if you take out the SL it should be ready.

Hats off to the snapper who braved sub-zero temperatures.

Must-have DVDs

IT'S not fair that free-TV viewers miss out on BBC Prime's *TopGear*.



But at least you can get to see highlights from past episodes, as well as individual shows, of what is probably the world's most entertaining and informative TV motoring show on DVD.

By logging on to autostyle.co.za, you can buy classic *TopGear* DVDs for R90 a pop. A must for all motoring fans.