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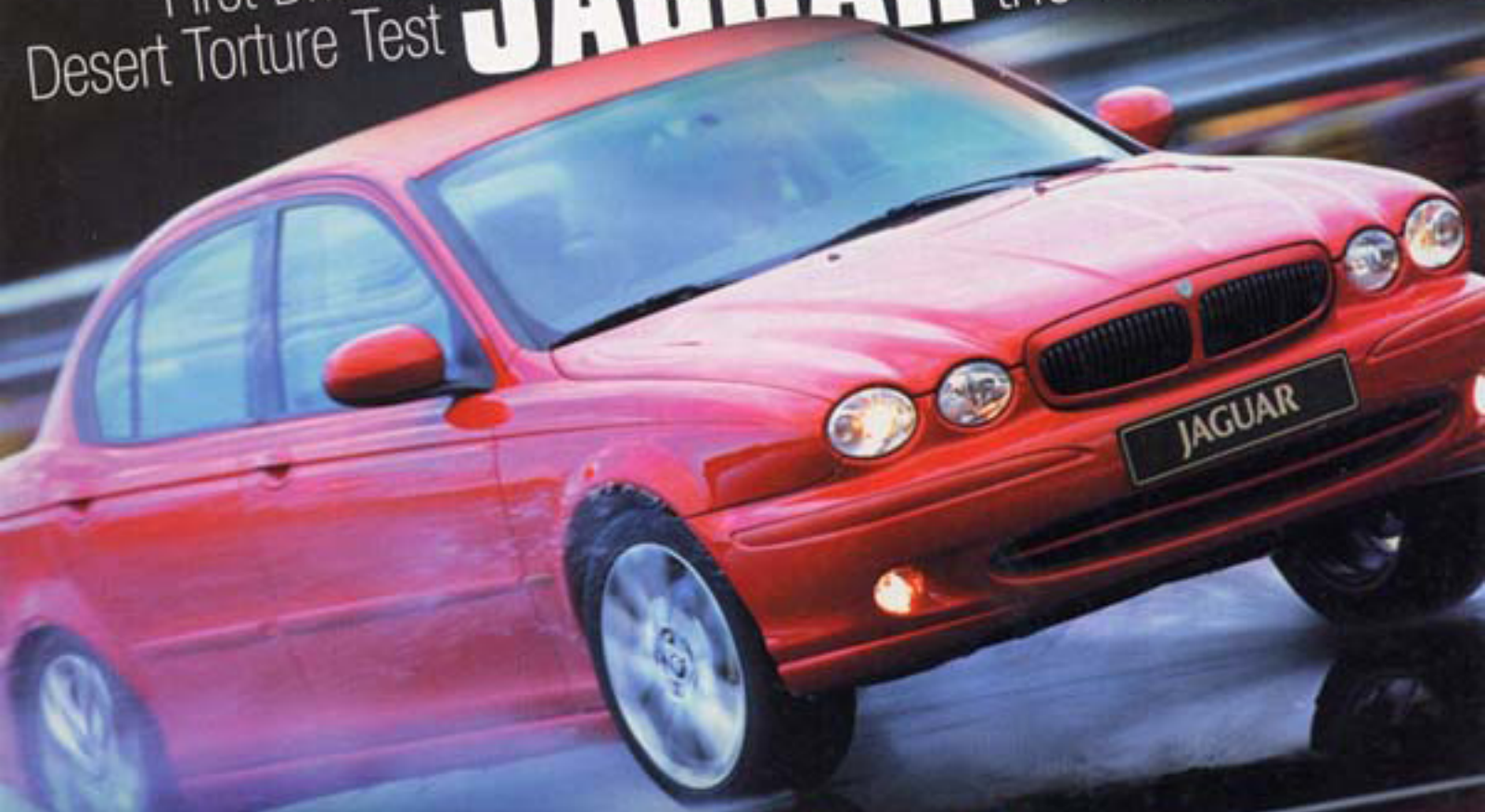
# MOTOR TREND

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# 0-60 in 4.2 seconds— and it's a BEETLE

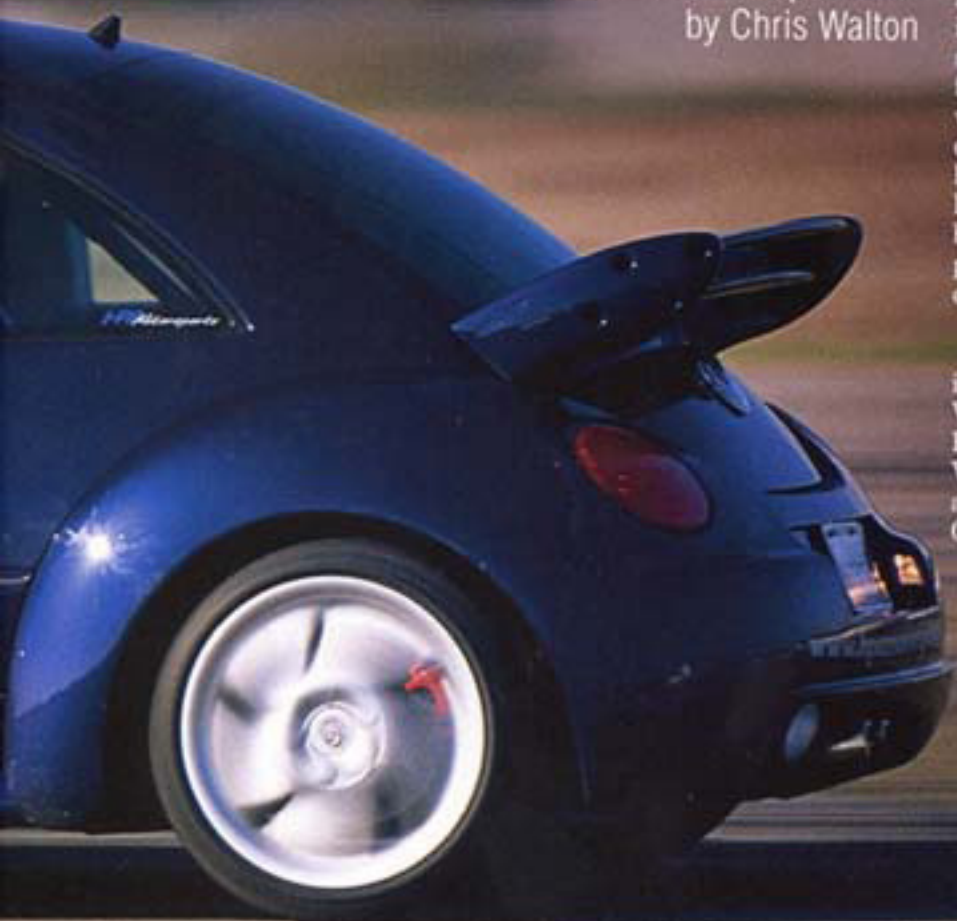
Making speed in HPA  
Motorsports' GT6  
Twin-Turbo 500-hp Beetle  
by Chris Walton

One drive in this definition-defying New Beetle, and you'll be ruined for life. Everything you once considered really quick—Corvette, 911 Carrera, M5/Z3, or XKR—will be handily out-run by an HPA Motorsports GT6 Beetle. Go ahead and laugh. The only exotica out there that can touch it are a 911 Turbo, Viper, or a Ferrari 360 Modena.

You think we're kidding? Do 500 hp and all-wheel drive change your mind? How about a mere \$65,000 pricetag? Interested yet? It's also serviceable at any VW dealership and warranted by its Canadian builder, HPA Motorsports of Langley, British Columbia, for a year on parts and six months on workmanship. HPA's never had to oblige a customer yet, and you know how the buyer of this type of car is likely to drive it. More amazingly, it's built from all factory VW/Audi OE parts—just put together in a different configuration.

"No way!" Yes—way.

In fact, so many VW/Audi parts are interchangeable among variants of VW's "A-platform" that, according to HPA, an all-wheel-drive twin-turbo V-6 conversion can be performed on any current-model Beetle, Jetta, Golf/GTI, or Audi TT. Doesn't that





# speed racers

send your mind reeling? The Beetle requires the most work, because its engine bay is the smallest, and the floorpan needs to be swapped out to accommodate the driveshaft and rearend.

Sadly, you can't get a Beetle with a (VW 4-Motion or Audi quattro) Haldex all-wheel-drive system from VW. The solution is found in its platformmate, the Audi TT quattro. According to HPA's thoroughly hospitable president, Marcel Horn, the operation sounds far more invasive than it really is. Total time to make the floorpan transplant, including adding in the all-wheel-drive pieces, is about 80 hours. And in case you suspect a TT driveline can't handle 500 horses, HPA has confirmed Audi AG's testing of it up to 800 hp without failure. Yes, it's that hardy, and the 34 brutal acceleration launches we made in this Beetle (in one morning!) made us believers.

Again, you can't get a Beetle with a V-6—yet. It takes HPA an additional 16 hours to install a 2.8L V-6 engine in a Beetle (either a Euro-spec 204-hp/24-valver as this car has or U.S.-spec 174-hp/12-valve VR6) and two KKK turbos good for an additional 304 hp, bringing the total to an amazing 508 hp. Of course, those giant wheels (Porsche Turbo 993-spec) can't possibly fit under the stock Beetle's fenders, so HPA installed a subtle Dietrich Wide Body Cup Kit, as seen on Beetle Cup racers. The other major body mod is a Kersher carbon-fiber wing.

Rounding out this tester are KW adjustable coil-over Competition suspension upgrades front and rear, proprietary HPA/HGP reprogrammed Bosch Motronic ECU with port fuel injection, VW Motorsport/Sachs race clutch, HPA/HGP 3-in.-diameter T-304 stainless-steel exhaust, a paint job, matching rollbar, and a gauge package. The best part is the use of so much factory stuff that already bolts together, speaks the same electro-mechanical language, and looks right—because it is right.

If you can dream it up, HPA can build it, and depending on which vehicle you begin with (a Beetle has neither a VR6 nor AWD; a GTI has a VR6 motor, but not AWD; a TT already has AWD, but can accept a V-6, etc.), mods can range from a simple \$9800 VR6 engine install to the \$50-55K full-tilt twin-turbo AWD V-6 terror you see here. This Beetle GT6 actually belongs to a generous and trusting HPA customer and carries an estimated out-the-door grand-total price of \$65,000, including the donor Beetle.

Can you imagine a Beetle that's nearly fast as a 911 Turbo—for half the

cost? If we owned a car like this GT6 Beetle, it'd be hunting season all year long.

At the track, a tentative 3500-rpm launch produced a bit too much initial bog out of the hole and "slow" 0-60-mph runs in the mid 5-sec range. Horn instructed us to be much more aggressive: Rev it up and dump the clutch. We settled on a throttle-blipping technique (rather than a constant rpm) from 5000 to 5500 rpm to get the turbos really spooling up, followed by a seriously violent clutch release. Suddenly, it was a completely different car that felt like it could do a wheelie. Everything hooked up and VeeDub's blunt nose rose up 3 in. and stayed there the entire way down the quarter mile. Our best 0-60 run of 4.25 sec is the quickest we've seen this year, with a less impressive quarter mile of 12.99 sec at 102.41 mph.

We suspect the GT6 is even quicker and could probably achieve a 4.0 and 12.55/109, respectively, had it been filled with either the Canadian 94-octane gasoline it was raised on or been driven for a day to let the computer recalibrate for the oxygenated 92 we're forced to use here in California. Due to the fuel, the ECU was doing its job and insisting on an ever-lower rev-limiter before each gear-change: First to second was fine at 6400 rpm, but the 2-3 shift had to be made at 6000, 3-4 at 5500, and so on. Horn was pleased the car was "protecting itself" by pulling the timing down to prevent detonation, and at the same time disappointed, as we both knew it was even faster.

The GT6's handling is as stunning as its acceleration, executing a 65-plus-mph wiggle between the slalom cones. Built-in understeer is easily overcome with a generous application of throttle. The AWD vector correction takes place so effortlessly you feel like rally champ Walter Rohrl. And you'd better be holding on tight as HPA's Porsche Turbo disc-brake conversion halts the Beetle in a throw-out-the-anchor 115 ft from 60 mph.

The incongruity of the HPA GT6 Beetle is something we'll never get used to, nor tire of. We appreciate its ultimate sleeper quality, and if it were a member of the *MT* fleet (and we wish it were) we'd make it even more inconspicuous. It's already quiet and quick, but not quite invisible. We'd peel off the stickers and the wing (sorry, HPA) and hunt down some unsuspecting exotic-driving millionaire. Then we'd pass him as if he were a chained-up dog and let him read our rear license-plate frame that says something like: "You've just been beat by a Beetle—have a nice day." And isn't that what a sleeper is all about?



**Ultimate sleeper:  
508 hp, stock looks,  
blinding acceleration.**





#### POWERTRAIN/CHASSIS

Drivetrain layout	Front engine, AWD	
Engine type	Twin-turbo 15° V-6, cast-iron blk/alum hds	
Valve gear	DOHC, 4 valves/cyl	
Bore/stroke, in/mm	3.19x3.56/81.0x90.3	
Displacement, ci/cc	170.4/2727	
Compression ratio	7.0:1	
Horsepower @ rpm	508 @ 5600	
Torque @ rpm	556 @ 3400	
Redline, rpm	7200	
Transmission	6-speed manual	
Axle/Final drive ratio	3.32:1/3.02:1	
Suspension, f/r	MacPherson struts, coil springs, anti-roll bar/multilink, coil springs, anti-roll bar	
Brakes, f/r	13.0-in vented disc/11.8-in vented disc, ABS	
Wheels, f/r	18x8.5/18x10.0, hollow, cast alum	
Tires, f/r	225/40ZR18/255/35ZR18 Bridgestone Potenza S-02	



#### TEST DATA

Acceleration, sec	Stock	HPA
	1.8T	GT6
0-30 mph	2.4	1.26
0-40 mph	3.8	2.30
0-50 mph	5.8	3.21
0-60 mph	7.6	4.25
0-70 mph	10.2	5.97
0-80 mph	13.0	7.49
0-90 mph	—	9.73
1/4 mile, sec/mph	15.9/88.4	12.99/102.41
0-100-0 mph, sec	—	17.31
Braking, 60-0 mph, ft	123	115
600-ft slalom, mph	64.1	65.2

#### PRICE

Base price	\$16,450
Price as tested	\$65,000

*The twin-turbo 2.8L V-6 powerplant is a tight fit in the Beetle's engine compartment. The only real hints to this car's true capabilities are the widened fenders necessary to accommodate the huge 255/35ZR18 Bridgestone tires and the Kersher carbon-fiber wing out back.*

