

2005 SPORT/UTILITY OF THE YEAR: THE FUTURE OF 4WD

MOTOR TREND

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+ PLUS

THE GREAT AMERICAN SEDAN SHOOTOUT

- > Buick LaCrosse
- > Chrysler 300 Touring
- > Ford Five Hundred
- > Toyota Avalon

ON THE ROAD IN

- > Sizzling new Golf GTI
- > Porsche's hot Boxster
- > Facelifted Audi A4

THE 1000-HP CLASH

BMW'S MONSTER V-10 M5 MEETS AMG'S E55 BENZ

DECEMBER 2004
USA \$3.99 CANADA \$4.99



WE DRIVE
Ferrari's fabulous
F1-inspired F430



Some Assem

We build it, you buy it



The Plan

The idea seemed simple enough. Give 10 Primedia magazine teams \$25,000 each to build the best tuner vehicle they could dream up, with the vehicle and nearly all the parts purchased from ebaymotors.com. Establish a time limit for project completion. Then each team shows up at a test track with its finished product to duke it out. Afterward, sell the projects and donate the proceeds to a worthy charity. That was the plan. Now, here's our story.

The Car

What to buy, what to build? Perplexing questions, indeed. Start with a cheap car, leaving lots of money for upgrades? Or buy a high-performance car and unlock its hidden potential with

the last remaining bucks? Muscled sports car, pocket-rock-et? After careful consideration, one of several Volkswagen models appeared to offer the right mix of luxury, performance, style, and premium nameplate—yet remain affordable. We searched eBay Motors for clean yet inexpensive Golfs, GTIs, and Passats. Midway into the search, we flashed back to a recent *Motor Trend* story ("Tuners," January 2004) in which we tested a positively wicked VW R32 build-up by HPA Motorsports. The R32's 3.2-liter V-6 had been treated to a twin-turbocharged

upgrade that raised output to 550 horsepower, netting 11.5-second quarter-mile runs. The HPA R32 also was equipped with KW coil-over suspension, grippy 18-inch wheels/tires, and other tweaks, resulting in an impressive 70.9-mph average speed through the 600-foot slalom. (For comparison, a Ferrari Modena runs the cones at 69.0 mph.)

The goal this time was to build a knockoff of HPA's radical \$70K R32 monster. But we needed to do it on the cheap, so scouting, for and buying the right parts via eBay would be crucial.

We found a 2000 GTI retrofitted with Audi's 4Motion AWD—but it

was missing the engine and interior. It ran us \$10,000. Then we scored a modified VR6 engine with a Quaife six-speed gearbox. Later came the purchase of a used HPA single-turbo system with twin intercoolers. Next up was a used KW INOX coil-over suspension, RH 18-inch wheels wrapped in Kumho Ecsta V700 tires, and nearly new R32 disc brakes. A Euro-spec R32 body kit dressed up the outside, while a custom-stitched Alcantara suede interior spiced up the cabin.

As with a plastic model kit, the parts needed assembling into a functioning finished product. Being that the R28 project came without instructions, HPA (hparamotorsports.com) helped with the assembly. After creative spending and many long nights of wrenching, what were the results? Nothing short of stunning.

Assembly Required

What'll She Do?

After leaving HPA headquarters in Canada and clearing customs at nine in the evening, we made a shakedown run of over 1300 miles to Los Angeles. We encountered many challengers (they all lost) and verified that the 425-horse R28 effortlessly eclipsed its 160-mph speedo markings and still knocked back a cool 25 mpg in the process.

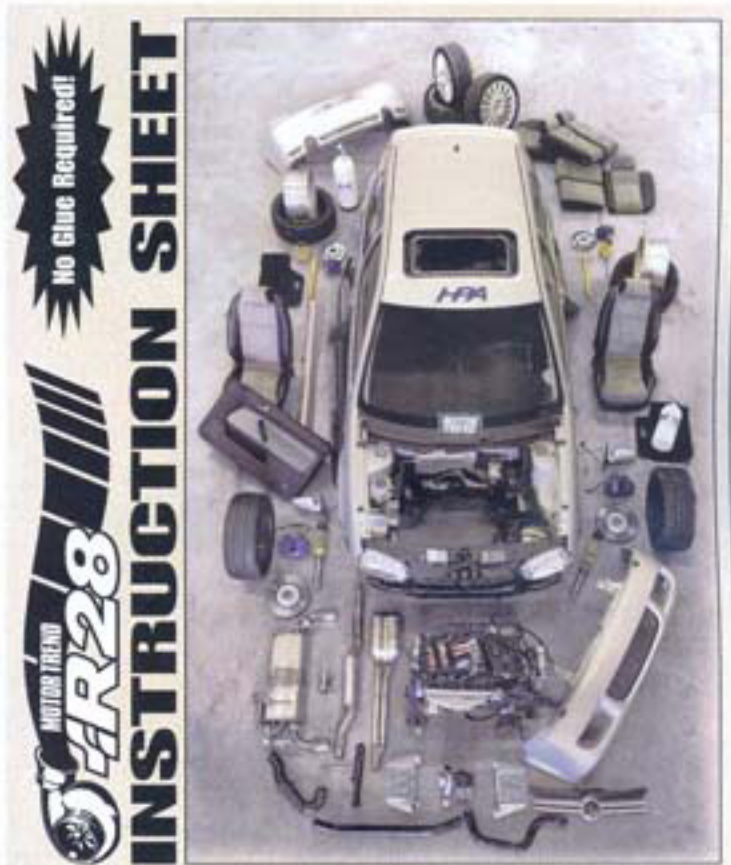
At the test track (with a full tank of 91 octane), the R28 blasted out 12.1-second quarter-mile runs with conservative shifts. In braking, the car delivered stellar 100-foot stops from 60 mph and 292-foot

stops from 100. In the 600-foot slalom, the R28 hustled to an Evo-like 71.5-mph average speed. Test-driver Chris Walton noted, "Not many cars can do this, especially with this amount of precision and predictability." The slalom runs were backed up with 0.91g lateral-acceleration figures. The HPA R28 doesn't get hot, doesn't buck or snort, and idles like a stocker. In short, it delivers red-carpet performance at a shag-carpet price. And, if the weather goes sour, the R28's AWD system will deliver nearly identical performance.

>> WHOSE BUTT CAN YOU KICK?

* Boldface indicates best performance

	0-60 mph	1/4 mile	60-0 mph	100-0 mph	Slalom
HPA R28 Golf	3.8	12.1	100	290	71.5
BMW M3 SMG	5.0	13.3	113	338	66.6
Corvette Z06	4.3	12.4	107	304	70.2
Ferrari 360 Modena	4.0	12.4	117	315	69.0
Lamborghini Gallardo	4.3	12.5	115	324	67.1
Mercedes-Benz E55	4.2	12.4	118	309	66.5
Porsche GT2	3.8	12.1	107	309	68.3
Subaru STI	4.7	13.2	113	317	69.1



No Glue Required!
INSTRUCTION SHEET



1.

1. The R28 started life as a stripped shell, but included \$14K worth of Audi AWD retrofit by the previous owner. 2. \$1200 worth of PayPal bucks bought a custom-stitched suede interior. 3. Adjustable KW Suspension coil-over shocks improved handling and allowed for custom ride-height settings. 4. A set of R32 brakes, including slotted rotors and performance pads, cost \$1200. 5. A used HPA single-turbo system with twin intercoolers set us back \$3K, but delivered a stellar 20 psi of boost. 6. After a late-night flog, the VR6 engine went in.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.

The Twist

One lucky *Motor Trend* reader will have the opportunity to buy this R28 bruiser at eBay Motors. The deal includes hanging with *Motor Trend's* test crew for a day in Los Angeles, where he'll learn the ropes of track testing, have the opportunity to track test his new R28, and get a nifty *Motor Trend* shirt and jacket. He'll also participate in a private day of instruction alongside *Motor Trend* staffers as they further hone their vehicle-control skills at the new Bondurant Drifting School.

Conclusion

Some fancy buying on eBay, lots of late nights at HPA, and horse-trading of parts let us build the R28 within our \$25K budget. However, if you tried to build the same car using new parts and paid for labor, it would set you back over \$60K. Save yourself the extra cost by bidding for the car on eBay and support a good cause in the process.

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An expanded version of the buildup, track and dyno testing, videos, and team info can be found at motortrend.com. The Web site also covers the other teams' vehicle buildups along with the overall results of the 10-team shootout. Log on and vote for your favorite.

