

# MASS DUBATE

**Dom – D-Tech**

I hate diesel! And you can quote me on that! Nothing compares to a well sorted petrol engine. Yes, we've had PD130s in that have kept up with R32s, but it's a totally different experience; all gear changes and peaky torque curves. If you're after a fast road car, then a mapped diesel is perfect, at motorway speeds having loads of torque makes all the difference but of course, if you want a track car then petrol is the way to go. Petrols are just much quicker all round. Saying that, we've been getting more and more diesel work recently. A lot of the local lads round here who used to own Audi RS4s and the like are chopping them in for the Audi 2.7 TDIs and mapping them up. They still shift but get decent fuel economy with it, I guess at the moment that is what's important, plus they're much easier to get on lease.

**Steve Cresswell – C&R Enterprises**

I would not have a PD engined car if you paid me. I don't call them 'Pathetic Diesels' for nothing! From my experience, the PD engines, especially the 150bhp variants, are incredibly problematic. I've seen countless catastrophic failures of PD150s over the years; the head gaskets are prone to leaking, which in turn irreparably damages the injectors, forcing a major strip down. And when you're talking £450 per injector and £1000 for a head from VW, not forgetting labour costs, it's certainly not a cheap repair. In fact, I've known people to simply write the car off rather than fix it. That's not to say petrol engines are faultless, however. I love the 1.8T and as long as you live by the mantra 'spool then cool' and maintain it correctly, it's generally a very reliable unit. But please, don't get me started on Long Life servicing schedules, they're a joke! With technology like lean burn and direct injection improving at the rate that it is, I can see economic petrels overtaking diesels in the future so much that diesel's trump card, high mpg figures, will be negated. The simplicity, driveability and the noise of petrol power wins every time.

**JP – JNL Racing**

It comes down to what an individual wants from their car. For the road, torque is more important. Horsepower only really comes into play at high speeds of 150mph+ when you're battling wind resistance. For out and out power, petrol is king. But Audi's success at Le Mans has proved that torque and fuel consumption win races. In a petrol car, fuel economy is dependent on driving style and engine capacity. Diesel engines are like petrol engines in reverse, and tuning them is a different game altogether. Chip tuning is so easy, people are keeping things simple with remaps rather than going all-out with head work and cams. People need to get their heads around the idea of compound charging, the multiplication factor. Old-skool tractor pullers in the US used to run compound charging systems, one turbo feeding the other, 8bar of boost and loads of fuel to make over 2600bhp. It's this that we need to see more of. People need to get away from 'pub talk' bragging about horsepower figures at motorway speeds and for general bantering, torque is king.

Once only found in taxis and tractors, these days diesels are at the front of the pack on both the road and the track. But are they better than petrol engines? Really?

**Kevin MacDougal – US Mk2 Addict**

This is an easy question for me to entertain with my current stable of Mk2s. Unfortunately I'm quite biased, as I'm the cheapest person I know. I drive my TDI swapped Mk2 daily, and at better than 50mpg, why not? But wait, it doesn't stop there. Did I mention it also runs on old vegetable oil which is readily obtained for free? Yeah, you read that correctly – 50+mpg for free, daily. So now I'm throwing a new contender into this debate. For the last few years I have been all about diesel cars. Our whole household is currently running diesel/grease daily. As well as my dad, cousin and my big truck for towing cars. I guess the point of all this is I'm siding with the diesel folks in this argument strictly based on economics. Don't get me wrong, I love my fleet of VR6 powered Mk2s and I would probably pay \$10 a gallon to hear the sound of exhaust note a few times a week. But my everyday and long trip pocketbook loves the smell of diesel fuel in the morning.

**Simon Cooper – Central VW Audi**

I prefer diesel, simple as that. Although, strangely, I actually run a tuned petrol car as my daily; an Edition One with a 1.8-litre Crossflow lump with a turbo from a Mitsubishi Evo. The problem with diesels is that there just isn't that much available out there. There is nobody offering different valve setups or cams like there is available for petrels. Once you've changed the turbo, manifold, injectors and intercooler and sorted the software out to suit, there's not a lot else you can do. I'm currently working on my latest project, a Mk2 Golf with the 2.0-litre 16v TDI from a Mk5 in it. It's already got a bigger turbo and I've fabricated a tubular manifold to suit and it should be putting down some serious numbers when it's done. It's got all the makings of something pretty lively if my old Mk2 TDIs are anything to go by!

**David Bywater – Haslemere Tuning**

Diesel engines have come along massively in the last decade, first with the VP44 pump and then common rail injection systems. No longer is diesel the domain of buses, taxis and lorries, SEAT has been using tuned diesel engines to great effect on the track. Second in the manufacturers' championship in the BTCC and currently leading the WTCC; you still think diesels are slow? Virtually all modern diesel engines come with a turbo and intercooler as standard, all you need to do is to convince the turbo to work harder and you can see an improvement. Perhaps everyone concentrates on bhp figures because that's what people understand; they can imagine what 200 horses might

actually look like. But which makes you most tough – being able to hit a nail into a block of oak with a hammer (bhp), or being able to press it in with your thumb (torque)? Wouldn't it be great not to have the turbo lag with a diesel engine? Well, there are more standard diesels on the market that can do that, too. They have dual chargers; a small one to spool up quickly, with a larger one for big top-end power. Try driving one – you could easily forget it's a diesel.

**NEXT TIME...**

Drag Strip vs Circuit