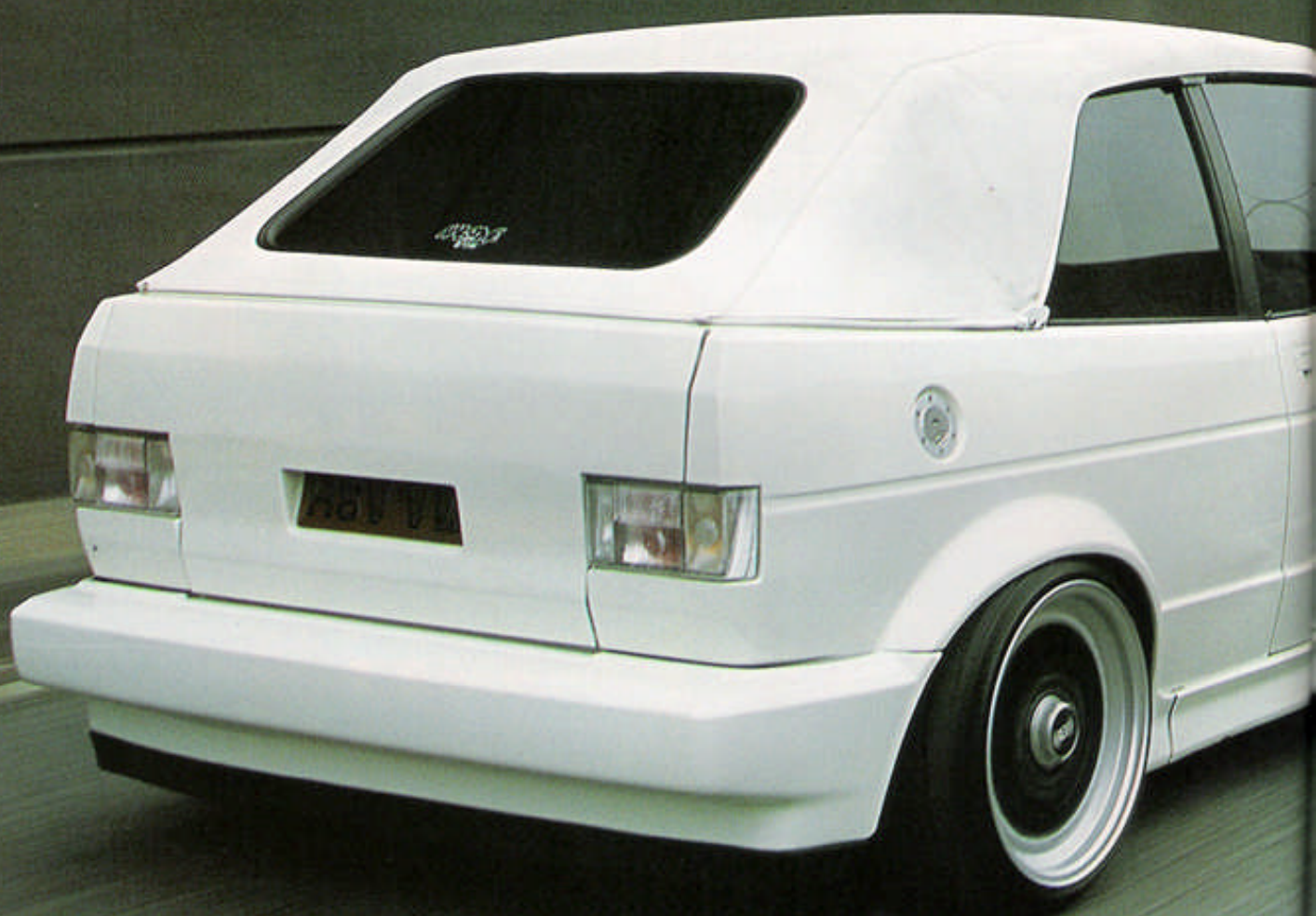


Brilliant White

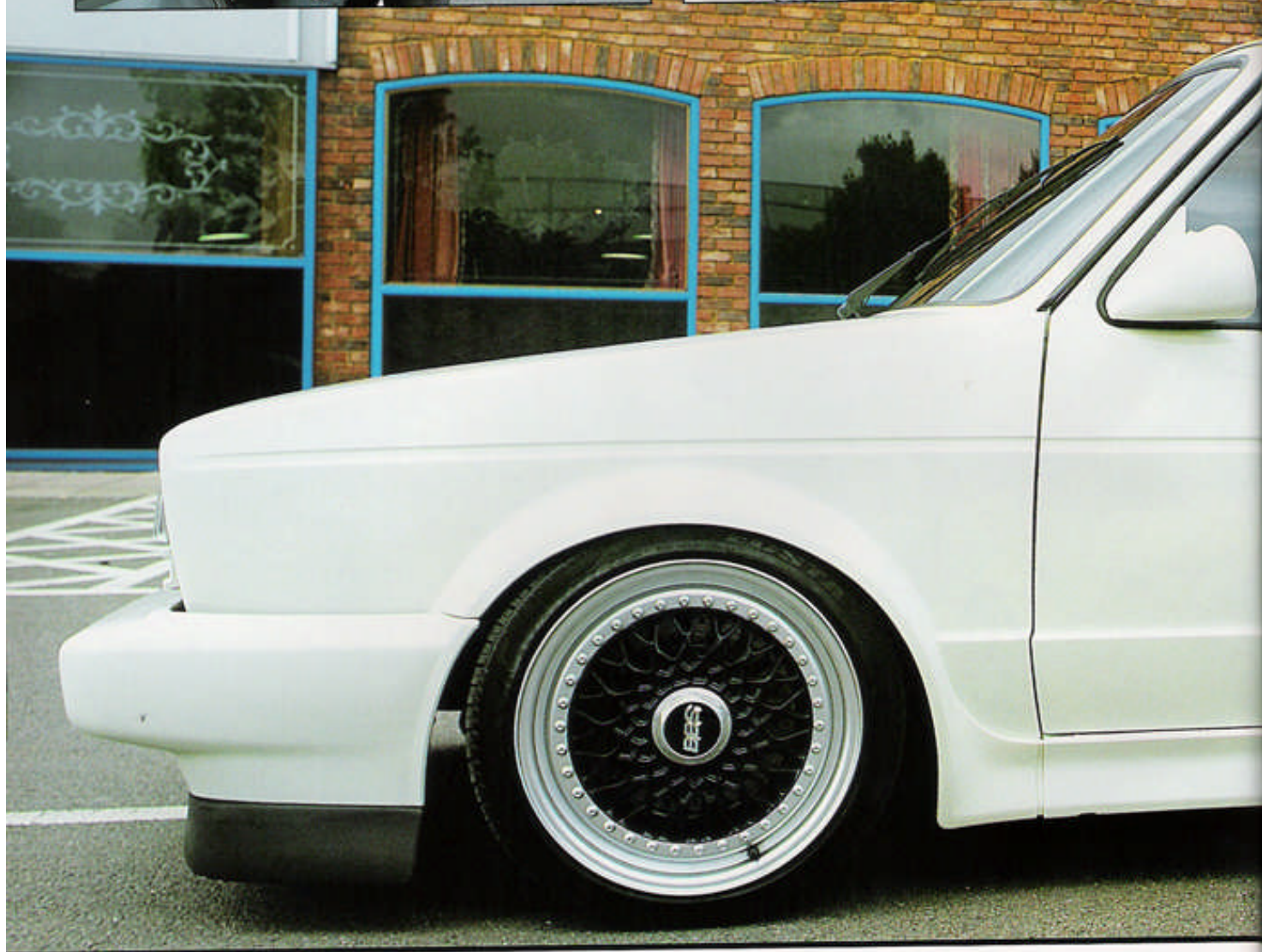
Pure 'n' simple is the theme for this brilliant white Mk1 convertible, and it's successfully brought it kicking and screaming into the Noughties.

Words: Joe Clifford Photos: Gary Hawkins





Mk1 GOLF CONVERTIBLE



White Mk1 convertibles – they're a bit Eighties, aren't they? Well, banish those visions of cruising down Chelsea High Road with the hood down and Spandau Ballet on the stereo, because we're making a return visit on Kalpesh Patel's bodyshop-

fresh Golf. He's brought the rag-top kicking and screaming into the Noughties.

Kalpesh's late model Mk1 was featured back in *PW* 1/02. At the time it was a prime example of bad-boy styling and low rider stance. But looking back, Kalpesh realised the parts he'd added looked exactly that, like add-ons. He wanted to simplify

and modernise the '91 Golf's appearance, and the end result is a car which we feel brings a number of important innovations to the VW scene.

One look at the Dub Details panel will show you just how complicated simplicity can be. Tony Payne's bodyshop in Iver, near Heathrow, should be given most of the praise for the Golf's

transformation. It was booked in early 2002 with the aim of having all bodywork complete for debut at GTI International. But (isn't there always a 'but?') after removing the wings, Tony discovered the chassis was still twisted after a major shunt earlier on in its life. This called for a complete front end rebuild before the more interesting



modifications could begin.

So let's make a start on these, shall we? Rallye front ends on Mk1s aren't particularly successful when fitted as a direct replacement. The gently tapered headlights next to the more vertical wings form ugly gaps which can only be deleted by extending the wings' leading edges. To make this fabrication

more difficult for Tony it also had to flow smoothly into the bad-boy bonnet. A little extreme for our tastes, the bad-boy extension is nevertheless well executed, being double-skinned and blended seamlessly into the original metal. Further frontal simplification can be seen further up the bonnet, where the vents and washer jets have been removed.

Likewise, the scuttle panel has also been smoothed over as the single wiper conversion only requires one hole.

Because the Golf is roughly 100mm lower on its FK coilovers and even average-height people tower over it, it can be easy to overlook the hard graft carried out on the front bumper. Where are the indicators, the number

plate, the air vents? Gone; well, almost. The indicators have been relocated to the inner lamps of the headlights, while the number plate is generally kept on the dashboard (not sure on the legalities of that). As for the lower vents, seeing as plenty of air gets to the radiator through the main grille, there's little point in having them there. Tony was

Mk1 GOLF CONVERTIBLE

concerned for the bumper's rigidity as many of the uprights had to be removed but these fears were unfounded. Bringing the front within a gnat's whisker of the road is a Mk3 VR6 chin spoiler.

Moving to the side elevation, the front wings have had their side repeaters and aerial hole filled. The rubbing strips have been removed from inside the horizontal swage line, though the indent remains to visually lengthen the car. Aftermarket Porsche-style handles used to be in place on the doors, and these have been swapped for flush-fitting Audi A4 items. The only other protrusion from the sides – the door mirrors – have been deleted in favour of DTM-style mirrors on Mk3 Golf base plates which mount within the quarter light. Moved forward like this means the view behind is partially obscured by the window runner but certain compromises have to be accommodated in the quest for unbroken lines.

Our favourite part of the entire car has to be the innovative rear end, flushed but still with a narrowed number plate recess. This was achieved by leaving the plate in its original position and then extending the metal above, below and either side of it. The end result is a chunky, minimalist and modern all-metal look. We love it. So that nothing else disrupts the karma, clear rear lights continue the monochrome theme, the boot lock has been deleted (now unlocked by solenoid) and the panel joints have been filled. Superfluous lighting, such as the foglight, has been relocated within the rear clusters.

While many modifiers are opting for 'bigger-the-better' Jap-style exhausts, Kalpesh has chosen to tuck his Supersprint Magnum rear box behind the rear bumper. Although the tailpipe is pointed towards the ground, away from the bodywork, a metal heat shield was still required to stop heat bubbling the paint. The clever use of a Clipper front chin spoiler below the rear bumper has meant no exhaust cut-out interrupts the lines.

Kalpesh was relatively happy with his wheel/suspension combination, until he came across an ad in *PW's Classifieds* section for a set of 16" BBS RS alloys with a 5x130mm Porsche PCD. The owner had used a combined 20mm adaptor/spacer to fit them to his Corrado but the 8.5" (front) and 9" (rear) widths stopped him winding the ride height as low as he wanted. A lightbulb illuminated above





His and hers - while Kalpesh is happy with the rag, his wife 'Dee Vultton' is in love with Eric, her Mk4 Polo

Mk1 GOLF CONVERTIBLE

DUB DETAILS

ENGINE: 1.8 litre 8v, Jetex Response panel filter in drilled air box, custom induction pipe, Power Rohr, Supersprint 4-2-1 stainless steel manifold, Supersprint centre section leading to Supersprint Magnum rear box with custom hidden tailpipe, 90A alternator, uprated Bosch battery, 8mm silicon HT leads

CHASSIS: 8.5x16" (front) and 9x16" (rear) 5x130mm Porsche PCD BBS RS split-rim alloys fitted with 195/40 and 215/35 Dunlop SP9000 tyres respectively, five-stud wheel adaptors, FK Motorsport coilovers, Awesome GTI G60 brake conversion with 280mm drilled discs and Pagid fast road pads, standard rear drums, G60 master cylinder and servo

OUTSIDE: Resprayed VW Alpine white, Clipper body kit with VR6 front spoiler, indicator recesses and lower air intakes removed from front bumper, Rallye headlights, indicators relocated to inner lamps, new VAG front panel, wings extended, bad-boy bonnet, bonnet vents and washer jets removed and smoothed, smoothed scuttle panel, Awesome single wiper conversion, front wings modified to cover wheels, side repeater holes and aerial hole filled and smoothed, Audi A4 handles, Mk3 Golf DTM mirrors and base plates, Mocal fuel cap, custom de-locked and de-badged tailgate, clear rear lenses with foglight, tow eye smoothed, Clipper front spoiler mounted below rear bumper, custom exhaust deflector, power hood, rubbing strips removed and holes filled, panel joints filled and smoothed, clear rear arch protectors, top tint windscreen

INSIDE: Heated cream leather Rivage interior, Jaguar headrests, 280mm Momo Team steering wheel, Corrado gear knob, SWG Vortex centre console on modified Mk2 Golf centre console, Autostyle auxiliary gauges, Awesome white dials, alloy door pins and pedal covers, tinted windows

SHOUT: Payne's Body Repairs (01753 653424), Awesome GTI (0161 776 0777), Style Dynamix (020 8561 0001), Yaash Motorsport (020 8998 8900), Bishopsgate Autotint (01923 711562), Dee, Carl for the ICE install



Kalpesh's head. He'd already had his Clipper-equipped arches subtly widened to allow space for his own 15" BBS RS alloys, so why shouldn't he offer the narrower 15s in exchange for the guy's 16s? It was the ideal solution for both Dubsters. The Porsche alloys' higher offset means the inner section and rim of the front wheels sit almost flush with each other, while the wider rear wheels show a slight dish. Dunlop SP9000 tyres of 195/40 (front) and 215/35 (rear)

profiles look virtually identical in depth when viewed from the side, so there's no nose-down stance.

The interior's specification hasn't changed since the last time we featured the car. Its ivory leather scheme jarrs a little with the brilliant white exterior so it's next on Kalpesh's list to change. After seeing PW's Project Rallye, he fancies a stripped-out race-look, with bucket seats and a chrome roll-cage ideal for showing off when the power roof is down. He's also

thinking about a VR6 conversion; it may be heavy compared to the cutting-edge 1.8T but the six-pot burble can't be beaten cruising down the high street.

The only problem may come from a source close to home. Having seen the care and attention lavished on the Golf, Kalpesh's wife, Dee, has demanded that equal money be spent on her and the car. So if you're the owner of a bag shop in the Harrow area, we advise you to double your Louis Vuitton stock ●




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