

Oil BAHN

Text and photos by Paul Rachwal

It seems almost every Volkswagen driver is born with endless passion. I have yet to run into a Volkswagen enthusiast whose previous ride wasn't a German-made "Vee-Dub," as this rare breed of loyalty is exactly what makes them so unique. Luke Niebylski, the proud owner of this 2001 Volkswagen Golf TDI, is no exception and has been a fan of German engineering for years. Before owning this custom TDI oil-burner, Niebylski had his fair share of... let's call them adventures, with an '85 MkII VW GTI.

Instead of replacing his old and worn GTI with a newer version of the hot hatch, the 23-year-old Mississauga, ON resident had to settle for the

1.9L TDI turbo-diesel version (thanks largely to "the thieves that we call insurance companies," jokes Niebylski). The TDI proved to be a bonus in the fuel consumption department, plus it shared the same sleek styling of the GTI. As with most enthusiasts, modifying the TDI began with a few subtle upgrades; Niebylski started small, but soon became obsessed upon stumbling onto the comprehensive online VW community of www.vwvortex.com. It was around this time when Niebylski realized his TDI wasn't such a bad choice after all, since it was more unique than the legions of 1.8T boostheads or VR6 fanatics out there. As his mod list continued to grow, Niebylski quickly moved

through the ranks at local VW Club meets and show & shines to competing in big-name events throughout Canada and the United States.

Niebylski brought back plenty of hardware from these trips, including highlights such as the top prize from the TDI / 2.0L class at WaterFest 10. As the competition got fiercer, Niebylski's mod and sponsor lists grew. Heck, Niebylski became totally submerged in the scene and even started a show team, dubbed Section 8 Imports. Let's take a closer look at Niebylski's efforts on this VW TDI, as he informed us of plans to move on to a new project with a younger version of his old crush: a new MkV VW GTI.





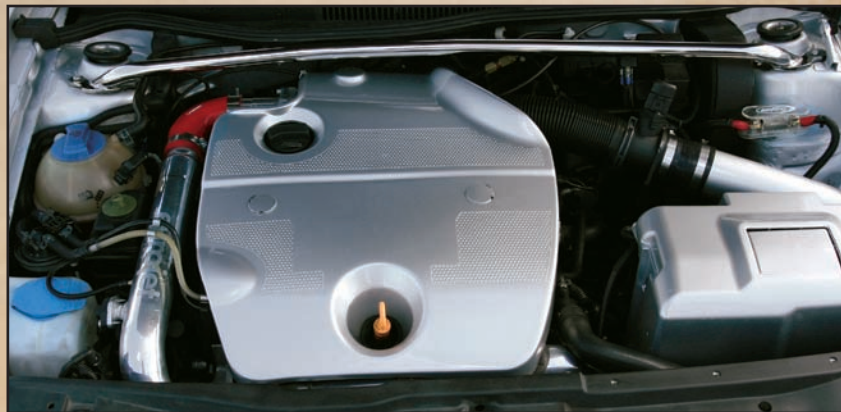
The body of this TDI wears a Eurogear USA body kit, made to mimic VW's ultimate factory Golf, the R32, a ride never officially sold in Canada. The R-series front bumper flows into the sides and rear bumper seamlessly, while taking the beating of daily driving thanks to its tough urethane construction. To stand out, Niebylski then finished off that fascia with a Seat Cupra R front lip (Seat is a Spanish car brand under the VAG umbrella since 1990). Not done there, the Golf's engine bay is covered by Eurogear's 'Boser' carbon fibre hood while the heavy steel hatch was replaced with a featherweight carbon fibre piece out of the VIS Racing Sports catalogue. To bring those two elements together visually, Niebylski paid Shinzowerks a visit. Here, the roof was covered in black vinyl, and at the same time, the chrome sponsor decals were created.

The lights were swapped out courtesy of Hella, with MKV headlights and smoked Magic Colour rear tails. The headlights were also stuffed with an Ignited 6,000K HID kit, their housings painted black and lenses covered with yellow Lamin-X, giving the TDI a decidedly touring / JDM car look. Speaking of JDM, Niebylski strayed from the Euro crowd yet again with his choice of rolling stock. The JLine 6RL2 rollers are forged, perfectly enhancing VW's perceived solid-as-a-tank build quality and certainly add some new age bling to the silver exterior while complementing it and the matching chrome decals. It's a simple yet satisfying look.

The 19- x 8-inch front rollers and 19 x 10s are enveloped in Dunlop SP Sport Maxx rubber bands, sized at 225/35-19 up front and 235/35-19 out back. As on a JDM or drift car, the rubber is wrapped tightly, with the rim sticking out past the rubber's edge.

The hatch body was dropped over these exotic hoops thanks to Intrax ARS adjustable coil-over shocks, tuned for a surprisingly good ride and handling compromise. They are supplanted by an Intrax Anti Roll Bar kit, and the chassis has been plumbed with the company's urethane bushings. Under the weaved hood is a Neuspeed polished strut tower brace to stiffen up the engine box of the two-box Golf. Niebylski wanted GTi performance, remember, so the diesel got some attention courtesy of the pros at Euro-line Tuning in Mississauga, ON.

Niebylski tells us his creation now makes 140whp and nearly 300lb-ft of torque, along with returning a 1,000km cruising range per tank, meaning he out-torques VR6s and 1.8Ts alike and literally leaves them sucking on black diesel fumes. Making serious diesel power basically involves throwing boost and fuel at the motor, accomplished here with TDIRacing PP502 injectors and a custom Tech9 Tuning chip to watch over the engine's operating parameters. A Dieselgeek race pipe replaces the EGR for more



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power, while breathing is otherwise improved with a 20 Valve Tuners 3-inch cold air intake and custom 2.5-inch mandrel-bent exhaust capped off by a Vibrant 4-inch tip. A Eurojet Racing inter-cooler is adorned by DEI's CryO² intercooler spray halo and system. The 12psi of stock boost is now more like a peak of 22, holding 19, and we even saw 31psi on the gauge when driving around during our photoshoot.

Putting down this prodigious torque is a SPEC Stage 2+ clutch munching on a lightened Spec flywheel and an otherwise stock drivetrain. The SPEC performance clutch pairs a high clamp pressure plate with composite multi-friction carbon-kevlar material and offers very comfortable daily driving characteristics.

At the other end of the car, Niebylski loaded in some hardware to help overcome the "diesel clatter." This is where Perfect Tones located in Milton, ON came in. Chris and Paul at Perfect Tones fabricated the custom enclosure / amp rack that

holds the trio of Arc Audio KAR-10D4 10-inch subwoofers and the KAR 900.1D amplifier that powers them. The fiberglass creation was then covered in the same Reflex Silver paint as the exterior of the Golf. To keep that bass contained, Niebylski had the spare tire well covered in DEI's Boom Mat sound deadening material. The doors benefited from the same Boom Mat treatment. An Optima Yellow Top battery provides the juice to run the sound system.

Up front, the signal originates from the Alpine CDA-9833 head unit that powers the Arc Audio component sets installed in the factory speaker locations. The rest of the cockpit sports subtle but functional upgrades, including an illuminated Reiger shift knob surrounded by a Reiger silver-stitched boot, a Euro GTi steering wheel with the Euro cluster and rare 25th anniversary pedals and painted dash pieces. Seating is improved with a pair of Corbeau Legacys in microsuede, complete with four-point Corbeau harnesses. Finally, a pair

of AutoMeter gauges (one for boost, the other for exhaust gas temperature) mounted on the A-pillar offer Niebylski data on what's going on under the hood.

Keeping in mind this is a daily driver, it's amazing how many heads this TDI turns and how clean Niebylski has kept it. Niebylski knows he couldn't have done it himself, and would like to send thanks to his many great sponsors SPEC Clutch, Dunlop Tires, Intrax Suspension, Eurogear USA, Kankar Marketing, Corbeau, JLine Wheels, Euroline Performance, Perfect Tones, Ignited HID, Meguiar's, Design Engineering and Tech 9 Tuning. Also, he couldn't have done it without his close friends, who spent countless hours wrenching on his ride in driveways and garages and of course the patience and understanding of his girlfriend. Overall, Niebylski's TDI experience has been great – just don't ask him for his thoughts on diesel fuel costing more than regular unleaded. **PAS**