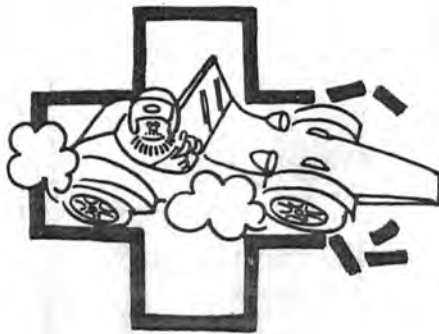


MOTORING PLUS



TUNGSTON TIPPED

Apart from one or two firms who undertook their own Volvo modifications there was, until now, nobody in Britain who could supply factory-approved tuning parts.

Ralph Steiner, dynamic director of Tungston Automobile Developments in Finchley, has put this right with a complete stock of

Volvo-manufactured parts. Perhaps "tuning" is not quite the right word for the equipment imported direct from Gothenburg ranges from GT engine kits, suspension mods, steering wheels etc to sweaters, T shirts and rally jackets. So the go-faster Volvo owner can look the part equally well in or out of the car.

We have been trying a basic 144 fitted with a complete GT kit, comprising an exchange head with beautifully machined combustion chambers and ports, a hotter camshaft, a free-flow exhaust manifold, a pair of Solex 45 DDHs on alloy manifolds, a special air box/silencer, lightened flywheel and all the necessary gaskets as well as the linkages for the new carburettors. This package works out at £210 plus fitting.

For this sort of money you expect results, and you get them. The improvement in top speed and acceleration is considerable and the car feels altogether more lively. No less than 5 seconds are shaved from the 0-60 mph time and over 15mph added to the top speed. This is hardly surprising when you note that the conversion has bumped the power up from a very modest 82bhp at 4700rpm to a claimed 140bhp at 6000rpm—quite an increase.

The engine starts immediately with a dab on the throttle, the choke being largely redundant with the new Solex carburettors. The tickover is slightly lumpy and there's not much torque below 3000 rpm. To be fair, the engine starts to pull at around 2000 rpm but is not fully on the cam until 3000 rpm with maximum torque rather high in the range at 4500 rpm instead of the original 3000 rpm. From 3000 rpm onwards, however, the unit pulls strongly all the way to 6500 rpm, with maximum power occurring at 6000. The torque curve is amply reflected by our top gear acceleration figures which show the GT to be noticeably more tardy to around 40 mph, when it starts to leap away.

Volvo's big "four" is not renowned for its smooth, unfussed performance and its harshness was certainly evident when revving to 6500 rpm. Intake roar from the Solex carbs was also obvious. In every other way, though, the modified engine is first class, not least in its fuel consumption. Although it uses slightly more fuel at low speeds than the standard car, it becomes more economical at the top end. Our computed touring consumption is lower only because of the tremendous increase in top speed, not because of a



greater thirst. The overall figure is heavy, but is the result of some very hard motoring. Most owners could bring it up to around 20 mpg especially with the optional overdrive, which our car lacked.

Tungston's test car was fitted with one or two other goodies as well, the handling being improved with a full set of Koni dampers. These didn't spoil the ride but they did stiffen the car sufficiently to cut out the rather floppy feel of the standard 144 when pressing on through the curves. The road-holding was then limited by lack of rubber—the car was still on 165 section tyres. The logical progression would be to fit bigger tyres, perhaps to a set of Volvo alloy wheels (also available from Mr. Steiner). The GT would then be quite hard to stay with.

A GT instrument cluster, steering wheel, gear knob, dual lamp kit and the GT emblems and side flashes also enhanced the machine, which as a complete package represents a very worthwhile improvement over the basic vehicle.

However, the lack of low speed flexibility makes the GT, already rather an unwieldy device by modern standards, unsuitable as a shopping car. We see it more as a sporting four-seater that will be enjoyed by an enthusiast who has forsaken that Healey 3000 or TR6 for family reasons. With this slight reservation we can recommend the GT conversion which Tungston will be happy to supply and fit for any B20 series car from 1969 onwards.

Gordon Bruce

Car: Volvo 144 de luxe.

Conversion by: Tungston Automobile Developments Ltd, 284 Nether Street, Finchley Central.

Tel: 01-346 6616.

Conversion: Volvo GT kit—made and distributed by Volvo, Sweden, via TAD.

	Std. 144	144 GL	Tungston GT
Maximum speed			
lap	91.8 mph	104.0 mph	107.1 mph
Best ¼ mile	95.0	104.0	109.7
Acceleration			
0-30	4.0 sec	3.1 sec	3.0 sec
0-40	6.4	5.0	4.7
0-50	9.8	7.3	6.7
0-60	14.1	10.3	9.0
0-70	20.5	14.2	12.5
0-80	30.7	19.5	16.5
0-90	—	28.5	23.7
Standing ¼ mile	19.6	17.4	16.9
Standing km	—	33.0	31.5
In Top			
20-40	9.7	9.6	12.0
30-50	9.5	9.5	10.2
40-60	9.6	9.0	8.7
50-70	12.1	9.4	9.3
60-80	16.8	11.5	10.4
70-90	—	15.5	12.6
80-100	—	—	19.5
In Third			
10-30	7.4	7.3	8.3
20-40	6.5	6.4	7.2
30-50	6.8	5.6	6.1
40-60	7.8	6.0	5.6
50-70	10.4	7.0	6.0
60-80	—	—	7.2

Fuel consumption		
30 mph	39.2 mpg	— 34.7 mpg
40	36.7	— 33.2
50	32.5	— 30.8
60	27.8	— 26.1
70	23.8	— 24.9
80	21.1	— 23.0
90	—	— 20.6
100	—	— 16.7
Overall	22.5	19.5 16.8
Touring	25.7	— 23.8
Modified head, 11:1 compression ratio		
Pair of Solex 45 DDH-1 carburettors on manifolds.		
Competition camshaft.		
Lightened flywheel.		
Freeflow exhaust manifold.		
Air cleaner.		
Other ancillaries.		

	£210.00
Plus	£
GT steering wheel	18.70
GT instrument cluster	46.64
GT leather gear knob	3.41
GT emblems and side flashes	10.12
Set of shock absorbers	9.10
Dual lamp kit	31.50
Total as tested	329.47



Right: things look a little different under the bonnet with a pair of Solex 45DDHs on neatly cast alloy manifolds. Below: note the GT steering wheel and the GT instrument cluster—both available from Turgston

