



Victor Harman meets...

THE MASTER TUNERS

The new Punto 1.3 Multijet's no pocket rocket – until in a puff of less-than sulphurous smoke, the Tunit® guys work their magic under the bonnet...



I

t's not often that I have the privilege to see tuning

development work in action, so I was most pleased to join Crawley Fiat dealer and (all-makes) Tunit distributor Alan Trindade at Tunit HQ as they put a new Punto 1.3 Multijet through its paces on the rolling road dynamometer. This was one of the first projects using the new five-volt common rail VCR-R Tunit module, a new step forward in electronic tuning, which facilitates considerably more scope in modifying a number of vital ECU fuel injection parameters. It allows more precise modelling of the

many car manufacturers and their fuel injection equipment suppliers – in the form of multiple injection techniques, more and more real time feedback from engines, and response to emissions legislation such as the new tax-beating Euro 4 compliance demands.

Alan is the Service Operations

performance boost has persuaded many such dealers with a big-company sign on their forecourt that this is a valuable route to added customer service and satisfaction, and an added feature in delivering the all-important individuality and personalisation that many owners look for in their cars.

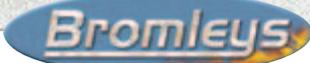


power and torque curves than previously, and in so doing represents a fresh generation of this ever developing technology. In many ways it will outdate earlier, and simpler, 'plug and play' add-on tuning units, and is a timely response to the increasing sophistication of injection electronics that is coming from

Manager at Fiat dealer Wilson Purves – a progressive and brand-enthusiastic dealership and one of an increasing number of franchised dealers of various marques who are seeing Tunit technology as a valuable added asset to their business. The respectability of the techniques and reputation for delivering a trouble-free

“The new five-volt common rail VCR-R Tunit module is a step forward.”

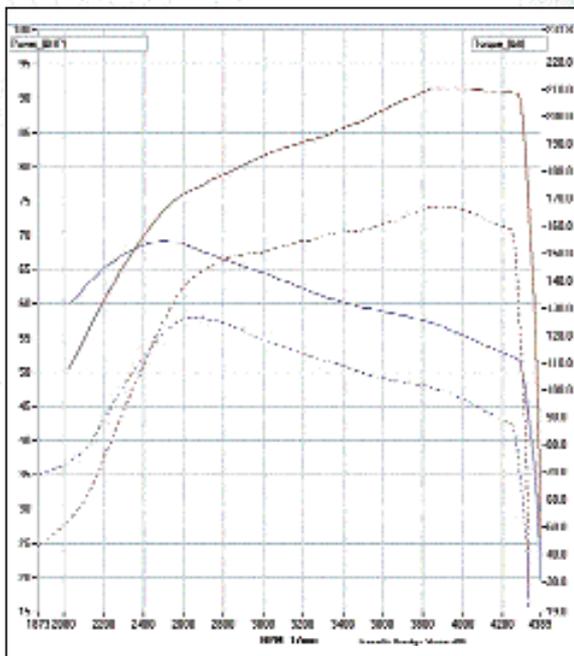
In fact there's more than a 'nudge nudge, wink wink' coming from the manufacturers themselves, and I know that a number are increasingly using the services of the top rank of electronic tuning specialists – both in their own development work, and in performance-related motor sport activities. There's also a very



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It's amazing how much power and torque you can get out of it!

healthy business developing for Wilson Purves in motorhome conversions – drawing on a comprehensive Tunit product range that covers many commercial-based engines in addition to those for passenger cars.

So here we had a 'fresh out of the box' (30 delivery miles only) Punto 1.3 Multijet, in appropriately named 'Active' trim, delivered by trailer to Tunit's Lancashire HQ, and awaiting the attentions of the Tunit development team. Standard power and torque figures were first established, at 74.2bhp, and 127lb ft, and with the former being

"You can almost forget it's a diesel, as there's just so much low-down punch."

already some 6% over the factory specification of 70bhp, the gauntlet was truly thrown down!

We watched (and heard!!) a good number of dynamometer runs, going well into double figures, as the power and torque gains steadily grew – seemingly heading towards, but not quite reaching, the magic 90bhp figure. Mike Bromley was not satisfied, even if Alan and I, as mere observers, were impressed. A few telephone conversations and hushed discussions followed a short halt in proceedings, and then suddenly we zoomed past Mike's target figure. This 'step too far' generated an excess of black exhaust smoke, resulting in a small strategic retreat, before a few final tweaks produced a result that brought a broad smile to all our faces, with the cracking 91.5bhp/154lb.ft. final result representing a gain of 23% in power, and 21% in torque.

I hadn't, unfortunately, been able to drive the as yet unregistered tuned Punto, (someone had run off with the trade plates!) although I'd driven the standard item on the Turin launch in May and been mightily impressed. But I caught up with Alan a day or two later, after he'd sampled the Tunit-converted car, and a few of his phrases convey his enthusiasm – "Just love it – and it's still so quiet and refined" and, "You can almost forget it's a diesel, and certainly one with only a 1.3 engine, as there's just so much low-down punch". He'll be marketing the 1.3 Multijet Tunit conversion strongly,



The 'incredible' tuned Punto.

and sees it as a very appropriate response to any customers who have doubts regarding the modest engine size, and yet don't want to go up to the 1.9JTD.



Well, it certainly is now, anyway!

So, all in all, it was a very satisfying result, after a pretty action-filled day for someone as old as me – I think I shall give myself a deserved pipeful of St. Bruno, and maybe even a mug of delicious Horlicks, before I retire!



A happy customer indeed.