

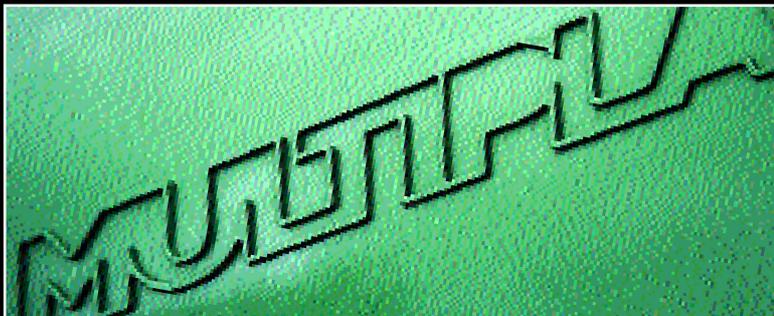


Fine

Our Victor pays another visit to our favourite tuning firm oop North – Bromleys Tuning. And this time round they've cast their magic over a great car that people just love to hate: Fiat's unorthodox Multipla.



WORDS: Victor Harman | PHOTOGRAPHY: Victor Harman



Bromleys wizard seeks out management control unit's secret location.

FIAT'S QUIRKY MULTIPLA PROVOKES extremes of love and hate, it seems, and fans are a tightly-knit bunch who wave enthusiastically to each other on the road in a way that we haven't seen (us old 'uns, that is) since the early days of the old Beetle. Word has it that a facelift is on the cards, with a more conventionally-styled front end, whilst retaining all the existing virtues.

Sparkling performance is not amongst these virtues, and yet it's a modest downside that's more easily rectified than any other shortcomings, as we found out on a trip to Bromleys Tuning Centre. The conversion job involved a fiddly 45-minute scramble under the nearside bulkhead down at ankle level for

Bromley's chief technician, Eric, who'll be very happy to see the imminent updated version of the V-CR Tunit module that will instead plug quickly and easily into a vital part of the ECU system under the bonnet.

Owner Tony Mitcham had purchased the car from a local dealer at a bargain price, knowing that it was an ex-Fiat management/demonstrator vehicle – albeit one that had covered a very modest mileage, and was in as-new condition. He wasn't particularly unhappy with the standard performance in most circumstances, and found the engine quite flexible, but felt that it would benefit from a little more "welly", particularly when fully loaded with grandchildren and friends. And more "welly"

"It certainly added significant punch to the Multipla's performance, making it decidedly brisk, yet still totally flexible and smooth."





Up and under; that she blows - one Italian control unit.



Eric the electronics guru will be happy the day that Bromleys introduces its V-CR plug-in module.



The beauty of modern diesel tuning is that it can be invisible.

it certainly produced, at the hands of Bromleys!

We took before and after power and torque figures on Bromley's new dynamometer, and they came up with increases of respectively 29% and 32% in these two parameters – meaning 145bhp at 4,100rpm, and a meaty 205 lb ft of torque, at 3,400rpm. The standard torque curve is quite impressive, in fact, with over 150 lb ft delivered from 2,600rpm right up to just over 3,500rpm. But there's a somewhat rapid fall-off thereafter - one that was entirely eliminated post-Tunit conversion, with torque exceeding the standard 150 lb ft figure all the way from around 1700rpm to over 4,500rpm., and this probably translates into a sub-10 second 0-

60mph figure, with 30-50mph in 3rd gear taking just 7 seconds or so.

Out on the road, with Tony at the wheel, the difference was noticeable within 100 yards, as he pulled out of a busy roundabout. After that it was all smiles. Mike Bromley had tweaked the adjustable Tunit module on the dynamometer to almost eliminate a slight suggestion of black exhaust smoke at peak power, and there was certainly none visible in brisk motoring. Mike could therefore have perhaps, maybe with the aid of a K&N air filter, (to reduce air intake restriction) have extracted a little more power, but Tony was more than happy, as he should have been, with the 145bhp on hand. It certainly added significant punch to the Multipla's

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performance making it decidedly brisk, yet still totally flexible and smooth, whilst overtaking was achieved with both added safety and power in hand.

"Beauty is in the eye of the beholder", it is said, but there's no disputing the fact that a Tunit-converted Multipla ploughs a somewhat individualistic furrow, with its spacious, three-by-three accommodation and swift performance. At the modest cost of £400 +VAT a similar Tunit conversion might make many Multipla owners wave even more enthusiastically, and who would we be to argue!

For full details of this, and other Bromley "Tunit" conversions, key in www.tunit.co.uk, or refer to their advertisement in this issue. ■