

MORE ZIP FOR ZR



This MG looks like a rally car, but the car in its standard guise just doesn't perform like one. But with help, it soon will...

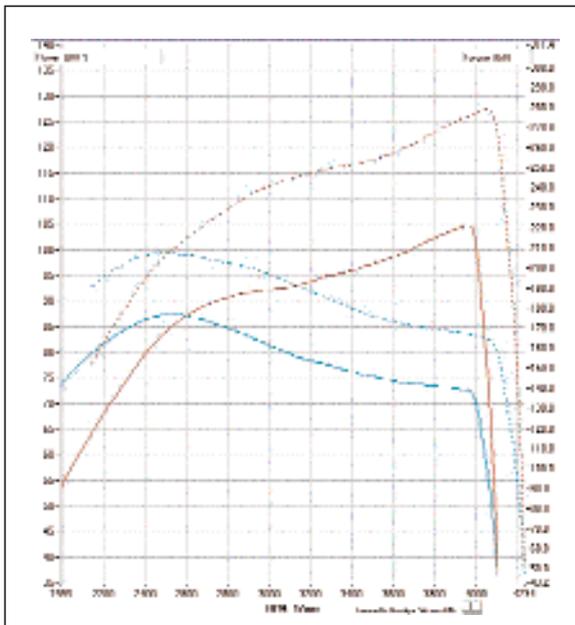
A

As any accomplished Diesel-spotter will know, the MG ZR and ZS, (and their humbler stablemates, the Rover 25 and 45) are now available with two alternative levels of turbodiesel power. Their venerable 2.0 litre DI motor has appeared over the years in various guises and levels of tune, but in mid-2003 a 115bhp variant was added to the 100bhp version, offering a more sporting variant for a small extra cost. The actual extra 12bhp (the engines are rated at 101 and 113PS/bhp) will cost you precisely £500, which works out to a not unreasonable £40 odd per bhp.

But past experience has shown that there's plenty of scope in the old MG-Rover TD motor for extraction of significantly more power and torque, and it was the value offered by a Tunit® conversion that is under the microscope, starting with a ZR TD in the humbler of the two levels of standard tune, kindly provided by Lancashire MG-Rover dealer Phoenix Chorley, who've already fitted Tunit® conversions to quite a number of customer cars. Bromley's started by taking the best of a number of rolling road dynamometer runs on the as-new ZR, which naturally was a little tight on account of very few running hours. It would certainly loosen up in time,

"It was quite a zippy performer, offering taut and responsive handling."

adding a few more horses to the best power figure of 104.8bhp (at 3,975rpm) and extra pulling power to the 176lb.ft peak torque recorded at 2,500rpm – which in themselves are pretty good figures. A short road run in order to get the feel of the little ZR confirmed impressions of an engine with plenty of scope to loosen up, and yet it was still quite a zippy performer, offering taut and responsive handling and lively performance, together with ride comfort that was little compromised by the sporty suspension set-up. Back at HQ, the compact Tunit® V-VP module was connected into the ECU box, which is housed in the nearside front under-bonnet area. There's probably more time



The box gives you a lot more bang for your buck.



It looks so docile, but with that Tunit® box in place, this will be a beast of an engine.

Bromley's Performance Tuning
Tel: 01257 274100 or visit
www.tunit.co.uk

ZR means a pretty impressive power to weight ratio of 115bhp per tonne, which on paper puts the car up with Golf GT TDI 130 PDs that typically measure around 138-140bhp on the dynamometer.

There's a valid observation to be made on torque though, where the two-litre MG-Rover engine struggles to compete with the TDI, the converted MG still falling 10% short of the torque offered by a standard 130 TDI Golf. But on the road the ZR felt a vastly different car, with impressive extra response right through the power band – particularly around 2,000rpm, where the dynamometer curve showed 20% odd torque gains that are not always seen from such conversions at low engine speeds. This immediacy of response to the gentle flexing of the right foot, (which is ultimately down to torque as much as power), continues unabated right up to beyond 4,000rpm, and is confirmed in a torque curve that reveals higher figures than the maximum clocked by the standard engine – all the way from 2,000rpm to 3,500rpm. Power is similarly impressive, with the Tunit® car's figures exceeding the standard car's 105bhp peak (at just over 4,000rpm) all the way from 2,500rpm and up.

But back to the cost of power – and reflection on MG-Rover's not unreasonable charge of £500 for 12 extra brake horsepower; with a Tunit® conversion priced at £468 inclusive, plus maybe £60-75 for fitting at your nearest dealer, you end up with not far short of twice the extra bang for your bucks! It all makes the Tunit® conversion excellent value and, whilst it's not actually been put it to the test, there's probably 140bhp plus potential in view if you started with the punchier ZR TD 115! You can find Tunit® at www.tunit.co.uk, or call HQ on 01257 274100, for details of their conversions to most diesels, and location of your nearest agent. They cover every budget range, showing useful gains on modest non-turbo 1.7 and 1.9 SDI powered Lupos, Polos, and Golfs, right up to road-burners like the BMW 330d, where the end result will blow the socks off most petrol Beemers bar M3s and M5s!



A few hundred miles at the wheel will give you 130bhp to play with.

spent in identifying and confirming the correct wires than there is on making the actual connections, but the end result is a very tidy installation, allowing the easily-removable Tunit® box itself to be clipped neatly to one side, well out of harm's way. It's not something beyond a competent DIY mechanic, but those of nervous disposition might wish to take their car to the nearest of a dozen or more UK Tunit® agents for professional fitting.

With installation completed, the MG went back on the rolling road for the first test run, with the Tunit's® variable setting initially fixed at a fairly modest level, leaving scope for further increase in the power and

"After a few hundred miles or more of loosening up, this will be a 130bhp car."

torque boost. Early power returns came out at around 120bhp, showing 15% odd gains, whilst a clean exhaust (emitting negligible black smoke under full power) showed that there was plenty more in hand. After a total of maybe six or seven acceleration runs the Tunit® technicians felt that they'd sensibly optimised the conversion, without possibly taking it to the ultimate potential, but still happy with very satisfactory figures of 127.4bhp of power at 4,050rpm, and 207.6lb.ft torque at 2,270rpm. These figures show gains of 21.5% and 17.5% respectively, leaving little doubt that, after a few hundred miles or more of loosening up, this will be a 130bhp car. The modest 1,130kg kerb weight of the 3-door