



Volvo with added vroom

Victor Harman proves that it is not
only cars with low mileages that
can benefit from a little
techno-trickery



Audi's 2.5-litre five-cylinder may be an old unit, but that didn't stop power being boosted by 34bhp and torque by 40 lb ft. Tunit module takes a swift 30 minutes to fit once the ECU is located. As you can see above, Tunit isn't the only product provided by the company...

We've always had great affection for VAG's 2.5-litre (2,460cc) TDI straight five, which first found a home in the old 115bhp Audi 100 of 1992 and, with a 140bhp option, later served in the first A6. It was well into middle life then, when it was subsequently selected by Volvo in 1995 to offer a diesel option in their 850. This was a car that represented something of a renaissance for the marque, in offering front-wheel drive and quite some driving entertainment, in addition to the traditional Volvo trademarks of dependability and safety. In late '96 a face-lifted 850 became the S70 and V70, whilst retaining the same 2.5 TDI engine.

In the A6 and 850, the 140bhp 2.5 TDI offered sub-10 seconds 0-60mph acceleration, and genuine 40mpg economy, along with flexible, long-legged performance that was a match for the best of the opposition. Only the arrival of Volvo's new home-grown 2.4 D5 last year saw its demise in the V70 and S80, and there are

plenty of these long-serving TDI fives still giving honest, reliable, if slightly smoky, service.

Brian Barry's N-reg 850 saloon is one of such examples, and one with some 185,000 miles under its belt. It might have seemed rather ambitious to give such an honest servant a dig of the spurs and feel of the whip in its later life, but Brian had every confidence in the ability and fitness of his steed to respond without distress. He's looked after it well since it's been in his care, and was therefore easily tempted by Bromley Tuning's offer to give it a 20%-plus power and torque boost, for the comparatively modest sum of £400+VAT.

Fitting of the Bromley Tunit module took only some 30-odd minutes, with the essential wiring and siting taking place in a somewhat cramped location forward of the engine block, where the TDI's ECU is located. We then put the 850 on Bromley Tuning's brand new, state-of-the-art TAT dynamometer, for before and after power and torque readings – retaining the option to

tweak the settings of the Tunit by simple screwdriver adjustment, to give a little more or less boost as necessary, before taking the 850 out to confirm its road performance.

The standard engine readings showed a 138bhp power peak at 4,260rpm, with maximum torque of 194 lb ft at 2,800rpm – fairly impressive figures that are testimony to the fitness of this particular power unit, in spite of its accrued miles. With the Tunit module powered up, and a few trial runs and adjustments, the final 'after' figures showed a 25% power boost to 172bhp (at 4,300rpm) and a 20% torque hike to 234 lb ft, at 2,800rpm. The unmodified torque figure was a little down on the factory figure, and at significantly higher rpm (claimed 214 lb ft @ 1,900rpm) but past experience has shown that this is fairly typical of this engine.

Out on the road, and with four up, the old Volvo had certainly become a noticeably more sprightly beast, with Brian immediately commenting on the

increased urge. The torque curve had shown a delightfully flat, if gently falling, plateau from 2,500rpm right up to over 4,000rpm, and yet there was no lack of urge at as little as 1,600rpm. Brian, who lives out in the wilds near Barnard Castle, Co Durham, has fitted 195/65 tyres in place of the standard 195/60s, giving a little added ground clearance and raising the standard gearing by about 3%, yet the car still pulled cleanly and willingly from 35mph in 4th, and 45mph in top with only a mere prod of the fast pedal.

So Brian departed for home with a wide smile on his face, and the added benefits of a long-life K&N air filter, together with further thoughts about replacing his standard seats with some leather ones that a search of Bromley's vast stock of used Volvo parts had revealed. His New Year treat had cost him a new cooker for his wife, but he thought the trade-off well worth the expense! For further details see Bromley's full-page advertisement, or take a look at www.tunit.co.uk.