

## MOTERING MATTERS *by Sandie Goodwin*

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS COUNT

The ever popular VW Golf is a great car, which exudes quality. It ticks all the boxes and is available in different specifications, so drivers can find the model to suit their needs. The test model I drove was the 1.4litre TSI 5 door. The Golf is well equipped and good to drive. With a comfortable driving position it handles all road types well and gives good fuel economy. For a car of its compact size, there is a surprising amount of legroom for rear seat passengers and plenty of luggage space. In some compact cars head room is limited but in the Golf you'll find even back seat passengers won't be complaining.

It is one of those cars which puts a smile on your face – and it is full of safety features car with including six airbags, anti-lock brakes, stability control and active front head restraints which limit whiplash. Visibility is good although the screen pillars are quite wide. Electric front windows and mirrors, a CD player, remote central locking and deadlocks are standard across the Golf range. The rain sensor wipers have a choice of four intermittent speeds, which are also dependent on road speed. VW Golf models have slow depreciation which is good news when you decide to trade in your Golf.

Perhaps one of the most well known VW models has been the original Golf GTI. 2007 marks the 30th anniversary of the original hot hatch – the Mk1 Golf GTI. At that time Leo Sayer was at number one, Star Wars gripped a generation of kids, Concorde was about to take flight for the first time and Volkswagen's new GTI cost £5,217. The Golf GTI, with its mix of a low kerb weight and a fast-revving four-cylinder engine, sharpened suspension and subtly aggressive looks, became an instant hit. By the time the Mk1 GTI was phased out in 1984 over 19,500 examples had been sold in the UK. 2.0-litre, ultra-responsive four-cylinder T-FSI engine fitted to the standard GTI.

What Car say the Golf is "hugely popular for all sorts of good reasons - a brilliant all round package" which sums up what I thought of my test car. The basic on the road price is £18,795 but there are plenty of extra goodies on offer. My model had a DVD sat nav system, a front centre armrest which hid the CD autochanger, bi-Xenon headlights with headlight washers and automatic range adjustment and leather upholstery. The front seats were also heated. The Golf continues to be the best selling VW model in the UK and comes with a three year mechanical warranty.



### CONSTRUCTION BEGINS AT NEW BIOETHANOL PRODUCTION PLANT

Secretary of State for the Environment, David Miliband, recently visited Teeside as work began on a new £250 million bioethanol production plant. Mr Miliband was transported to and from the site in a Saab 9-5 BioPower, a revolutionary vehicle that runs on bioethanol E85 and has the potential to reduce fossil CO2 emissions by between 50 and 70 per cent.

Mr Miliband witnessed the groundlaying ceremony at the plant. It will be the UK's largest bioethanol factory, producing some 400 million litres of bioethanol a year from home-grown wheat. Bioethanol is blended with petrol to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions from transport. In a recent ministerial speech, Mr Miliband said that the UK must consider the move to a post-oil economy and added that transport would be the biggest challenge. But he pointed to Brazil, where three-quarters of cars run on ethanol as proof that it would not be insurmountable.



### WHERE THERE'S SMOKE THERE'S NO BUYERS

Cigarette smells in a car puts off potential buyers, according to vehicle auction company, British Car Auctions. "We have conducted research amongst a representative sample of top professional motor trade buyers on the main factors that influenced the price of used cars. While specification remains the strongest price indicator, presentation is the next most important factor\*", says Tim Naylor, PR Manager at BCA. "Presentation is not just about how it looks, but how it smells! It's another good reason for smokers to avoid lighting up in their car. This will avoid the lingering smell of cigarettes hanging in the interior as well as eliminate the risk of discolouring and leaving scorch marks in the ashtray or on upholstery. All of these things will put buyers off, even if they smoke themselves."

### VEHICLE SPECIFIC OILS

According to the guide issued to over 8000 garage workshops across the UK by Comma, more than half the vehicles listed now require a vehicle-specific oil.

Failure to use the correct specification of oil can result in expensive damage to a car's petrol catalytic converter/diesel particulate filter, and unnecessary wear to moving engine parts. Car and engine technology is getting gets ever more sophisticated, so filling your vehicle with the correct oil is becoming more important than ever.

The Volkswagen/Audi Group (VAG) has led the automotive industry in making the use of the correct oil in all its models a warranty-critical issue, and General Motors has followed suit, with warranties now stating that use of an oil not specified by the manufacturer can nullify the cover provided by the warranty.