

3 Living with a Mk1 or Mk2 Golf

– will you get along together?



It is entirely realistic to suggest that a well maintained Mk1 or Mk2 GTI could be used as fast and furious daily transport. The same would be true of the less well-known models we have chosen to brand as specials – the Rallye Golf and the G60.

If these cars are perfectly capable of keeping pace with 21st century motoring, it's equally appropriate to declare them ideal as a second vehicle to be used as a practical classic at weekends and on holidays. While some owners delight in entering their pride and joy in the ever-growing number of Volkswagen Concours events held across the country, and others might be content to enjoy their GTI to the full on some of the open roads in less heavily populated areas, many trek miles to take part in quarter-mile sprints and fast track-day activities. Whether GTIs given extra breath to star in such events can legitimately be called practical classics is a matter of personal opinion. What we do know is that the beefed-up Mk1 or Mk2 GTI has a big, big following.



A reasonable number of owners are keen to participate in the rewarding Concours merry-go-round.



A popular pastime for many GTI owners is to attend a track day event, to give the car a thrashing not possible on public roads.



Check the condition of the mechanism and catches on a Cabriolet hood. Examine the hood fabric for signs of leaking. Untold damage may have been done to the interior if the hood is rotten.

Sound body, but with faded paintwork and tired plastic? T-cut, including that specifically for metallic finishes, and proprietary cosmetic products can work wonders. It's worth going to the next stage.

Heavily curbed alloys? Decent replacements won't be cheap, while a full refurbishment is just as pricey! It's a bargaining tool rather than an outright deterrent to purchasing.



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Interior

If originality is the great goal in life, a generally below par interior can be difficult to rectify.

It should be feasible, but not necessarily cheap, to replace a torn and otherwise scarred head-lining. Upholstery patterns varied over the years and, as all are cloth and inevitably age, sunlight, sharp objects in pockets and more will have taken their toll. Speaking to those who restored a GTI, some have come across just what they wanted, but you are likely to struggle to do the same. Worn carpets can be replaced. As long as the plastics aren't physically scarred or cracked, they can be brought back to life. The biggest walk away of the lot has to be soggy dripping carpets – easy enough to replace, but that solves nothing.

With the exceptions noted above – the Rallye and the earliest of GTIs – the cars are sufficiently plentiful that it shouldn't be necessary to go to the toil and trouble of remedial interior work. View another car.

The interior shown is from the earliest known Mk1 GTI and is in excellent condition. Shabby, torn upholstery and damaged door cards can be difficult to replace – if originality is the aim.



Interior

Seats

Ex 4 Gd 3 Av 2 Po 1

You won't find a Mk1 GTI or a Mk2 with vinyl upholstery, so at least you won't be stuck to the seat. You will find both generations with a variety of patterns of upholstery dependent on the age. Sadly, cloth wears out more quickly than plastic because it isn't as robust. The driver seat bolsters, and particularly the one close to the door, can often be beyond repair. Seat reupholstering isn't cheap if it is any good. Getting hold of the original fabric, or a really close copy is a nightmare, while a second-hand seat from a scrapyards is likely to suffer the same kind of problems. If it's not a Concours car, why not pay out for a decent upholstery of your choice, if it is ... keep your fingers crossed; we know of one chap in Norfolk who just happened to be in the right place at the right time!

The Rallye Golf has a leather/fabric combination trim. If the leather is OK, it means someone has fed it with conditioning cream over the years.

Stained or grubby upholstery can be cleaned, but beware, for a decent result this is no five minute job. Go for a suitable brand – and do read the instructions.



The driver's seat bolsters, particularly the one close to the door, can often be beyond repair.



The Rallye Golf has a leather/fabric combination trim.

Carpets

Ex 4 Gd 3 Av 2 Po 1

Beware of damp carpets; replacements won't solve the problem. Dirty carpets, on the other hand, can be cleaned, and it's not even necessary to call in the professionals. Worn carpets, particularly those in the driver's foot well can be replaced with reasonable copies, and think over-mats for future preservation purposes. Unless they are wet, we wouldn't be put off from purchasing by undesirable carpets.

Head-lining

Ex 4 Gd 3 Av 2 Po 1

There's quite a bit of black around when it comes to the GTI version of the Golf's head-lining. This helps if the car has been in the hands of a smoker. Rips and tears are a nuisance no matter what the material. Some owners fit new head-linings themselves – but tend to curse a good deal. Availability is reasonable. The Mk2 has a solid head-lining that is more robust, though the cloth used around the sunroof aperture is also prone to tearing if repairs to the mechanism become necessary.

14 Paint problems

– a bad complexion, including dimples, pimples and bubbles



Paint faults generally occur due to lack of protection/maintenance, or to poor preparation prior to a respray or touch-up. Some of the following conditions may be present in the car you're looking at:

Orange peel

This appears as an uneven paint surface, similar to the appearance of the skin of an orange. The fault is caused by the failure of atomised paint droplets to flow into each other when they hit the surface. It's sometimes possible to rub out the effect with proprietary paint cutting/rubbing compound or very fine grades of abrasive paper. A respray may be necessary in severe cases. Consult a bodywork repairer/paint shop for advice on the particular vehicle.

Cracking

Severe cases are likely to have been caused by too heavy an application of paint (or filler beneath the paint). Also, insufficient stirring of the paint before application can lead to the components being improperly mixed, and cracking can result. Incompatibility with the paint already on the panel can have a similar effect. To rectify, it is necessary to rub down to a smooth, sound finish before re-spraying the problem area.



Cracking, due here to the filler beneath the paint lifting.

Crazing

Sometimes the paint takes on a crazed, rather than a cracked, appearance when the problems mentioned under 'Cracking' are present. This problem can also be caused by a reaction between the underlying surface and the paint. Paint removal and re-spraying the problem area is usually the only solution.

Blistering

Almost always caused by corrosion of the metal beneath the paint. Usually perforation will be found in the metal and the damage will usually be worse than that suggested by the area of blistering. The metal will have to be repaired before repainting.



Blistering is usually caused by corroded metal beneath the paint surface. The metal is usually perforated with the damage more extensive than the blister would suggest. The affected metal will need replacing before the area is repainted.

Micro blistering

Usually the result of an economy re-spray where inadequate heating has allowed moisture to settle on the vehicle before spraying. Consult a paint specialist, but usually damaged paint will have to be removed before partial or full re-spraying. Can also be caused by vehicle covers that don't 'breathe.'



Micro blistering.

17 Vital statistics

– essential data at your fingertips



Number built – between 1976, the first year of GTI production, and 1991, the last full year of the Mk2, annual numbers for all Golfs varied from 527,000 to 908,000. As an example of the role the GTI played in such numbers, in 1983 71,000 such cars were sold in mainland Europe, with 6148 sales being made in the UK.

Mk1 GTI 1600 1976

Engine

Transversely mounted four cylinder in-line

Capacity	1588cc
Bore and stroke	79.5mm x 80mm
Compression ratio	9.5:1
Fuel injection	Bosch K-Jetronic
Max. power	110bhp at 6100rpm
Max. torque	103lb.ft at 5000rpm

Performance

Top speed	110mph
0-50mph	6.1sec
0-62mph	9.0sec

Transmission

Gearbox	4-speed manual
Ratios 1 st	3.45
2 nd	1.94
3 rd	1.37
4 th	0.97
Final drive	3.70 to 1

Suspension and steering

Front	MacPherson struts, coil springs, anti-roll bar
Rear	Torsion beam, trailing arms, coil springs, anti-roll bar

Suspension lowered by 15mm compared to other Mk1 Golfs

Steering Maintenance-free self-adjusting rack and pinion

Tyres	175/70 HR 13
Wheels	5.5Jx13 (Initially 12-spoke alloys – then steel for UK market until 1980)

Brakes

Type	Diagonally divided dual circuit with brake servo and brake pressure regulator
Size	Front 9.4in diameter discs, internally ventilated. Rear 7.1in diameter self-adjusting drums

Dimensions

Track	Front 1404mm (55.3in) Rear 1372mm (54.0in)
Wheelbase	2400mm (94.5in)
Overall length	3705mm (145.9in)
Overall width	1628mm (64.1in)
Overall height	1390mm (54.7in)
Unladen weight	810kg (1786lb)

Golf GTI MK1 1800, 1983 (Only differences to 1600 at launch listed)

Engine

Capacity	1781cc
Bore and stroke	81mm x 86.4mm
Compression ratio	10:1
Max. power	112bhp at 5800rpm
Max. torque	109lb.ft at 3500rpm

Performance

Top speed	114mph
0-50mph	6.2sec
0-62mph	8.2sec

Transmission

Gearbox	5-speed all indirect with synchromesh
Clutch	Single dry plate
Ratios 1 st	3.45
2 nd	2.12