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# VANISHING POINT

A silver arrow with a vengeance, the FVD 996 GT2 is a 730bhp monster, propelling us towards the horizon faster than a howitzer shell

Words: Johnny Tipler Photographer: Antony Fraser



**730BHP FVD GT2**



“It’s most fun when it’s 650bhp max, then the handling is nice. You still have control over the car, not the car over you”





*Above: To achieve its capacity increase to 4.1 litres, FVD uses bigger pistons and barrels*

*Below: FVD's Willy Brombacher tells it how it is, which is usually fast and loud!*

### DYNO SOARS

Want to find out how powerful your Porsche is without revving its guts out on a dyno? FVD have taken on the franchise for a small sensor the size of an ashtray that bonds with double-sided tape onto one of your car's driven wheel-hubs. Then you go for a spin. Made in Switzerland and originally developed for tyre manufacturers, the Insovic "Dyno-System" comes in a box the size of a laptop case, with a Windows programme for Mac and PC, barometer and thermometer, plus a slide-rule to measure the diameter of your wheel. The sensor becomes active once the car is in motion, recording up to 88 minutes of your driving cycle. Basically, you accelerate in 2nd gear from 30kph until you reach maximum revs and then back off, and while coasting it measures the drag, best of two ways. Then off comes the module, having recorded the curve as you accelerate and coast. You hook it up to your computer with a USB cable and read off the data checklist, telling you how it's been performing in every gear. Crucial settings are barometric pressure, air temperature and weight of car, in order to evaluate the logged data. It can be presented as PS or BHP. It's been cross-checked with regular dynamometers and comes up with identical figures. Come to think of it, such a portable device would be a useful tool for magazine road testers, now able to stifle bullshit horsepower claims! Check it out on FVD's website.

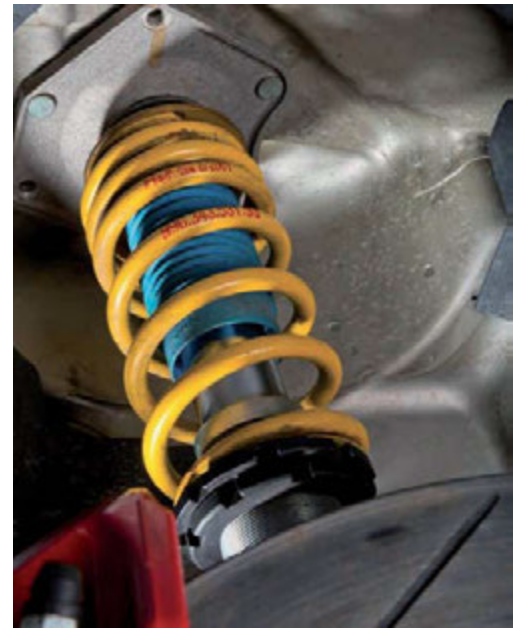
at each corner, another 964 coupe on the ramp with its engine missing, in the throes of a complete overhaul, and a short-wheelbase 2.0-litre 911 also with its engine out. They've got a 997 having Ohlins shock absorbers fitted, the subject of FVD's latest venture in the damper department. There's a Volkswagen camper still here that was being restored on our last visit, and half a dozen engines and gearboxes in various states of disassembly. Our GT2 test car has been at FVD longer than expected because the owner had a slight accident bringing it over, which required a new front end, though the technical aspect then took priority, beefing up engine and brakes. Evidently it had previously received mechanical work in its home country that needed rectification. 'I tried my hardest to convince him that it will have enough power with normal sport cams and not race cams, but he wouldn't listen. And we don't need to have an exhaust system that exceeds the legal noise level, because noise doesn't mean it's powerful, but if I was his age maybe I would do the same. The customer is king!'

I'd been expecting something a little more ostentatious,

but then this is a customer car. Apart from the FVD graphics that identify the car for our shoot, there are no modifications to the regular bodywork, nor the wild striping that bedecks other FVD specials. Anyway, silver is still understated cool. Compared with some GT2 rear wing excesses, this one is not excessive. There are four exhaust pipes, paired in different diameters. 'The sports exhaust system is a little bit noisy,' Willy acknowledges, 'but he demanded that. Maybe in Malaysia there's no law against it like there is in Germany.'

Willy explains the methodology of extracting 730bhp from the GT2's Mezger motor. First off they fit bigger bores, taking it up to 4.1-litres. That in itself has become an area of FVD expertise. Then it's down to more subtle adjustments. 'We control it by adjusting the turbo boost and the timing, and it is easy to do that now with electronics, but actually it's most fun when it's 650bhp max, then the handling is nice, you still have control over the car not the car over you. It's actually sport mode, what you'd normally use in a racecar, so that's fundamentally the secret, but we were able to





programme it so it's working perfectly at 2,000rpm, even though it's a turbo, so you don't need to change gear because it's very torquey – 980Nm at 4,500rpm. Nothing novel in the transmission department: the gear ratios are standard GT2. 'It's really a racecar for the street,' avers Willy, noting that it will actually do 343kph at 7,300rpm – 213mph. Some racecar; some street!

All well and good, but you need big stoppers to match. Accordingly, the brakes are six-piston Brembo calipers on 380mm ventilated discs. 'That is the best combination for street use,' says Willy. 'Eight piston calipers are ok for racetracks but six pistons are fine for the street. That's the system that we've been selling for almost 10 years without any changes, for all cars, and it works really well. That's the system we get from Brembo, it's black and grey so there is not much to do, it's that easy to install when you change the original brake discs during routine maintenance.' The split-rim BBS wheels are shod with Michelin Sport Pilot Cup tyres, which work well when they're on a dry track but are said to be less grippy on a wet road. On the backs they are 325/30ZR19s and on the front they are 255/55ZR19s. 'When it's dry on a warm road it's like a go-kart, but you need to be very respectful

with the tyres when there are wet spots because it's a little bit nervous, but you get used to it.' Sure! Chance would be a fine thing, getting used to 700bhp on a damp road on trackday tyres.

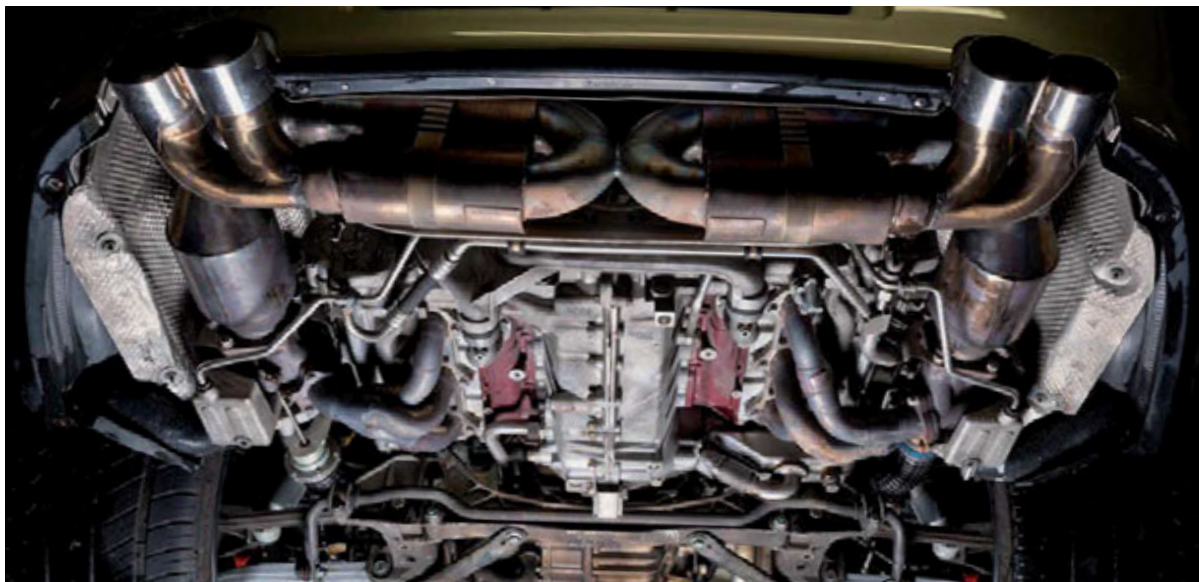
The cabin is seductively purposeful. Odd, though, that I'm in Germany and it's a right-hooker; transpires it belongs to a customer from Malaysia and it's bound for Singapore, a slice of Old England where they drive on the left. Though there are decent roads in the south of Malaysia there are no derestricted sections so the power-hungry owner will be hard-pressed to perform a legal max-out. Guarding against a worst-case scenario, FVD installed a Porsche original equipment Eisenmann roll cage. 'If you have a car like this I always highly recommend fitting a roll-over cage, because it's better you have it as a safety feature than not.' There's also an FVD-supplied Momo steering wheel, specially tailored in Alcantara and exquisite to the touch.

Let's have a go, then. Nestle into the all-embracing Recaro seat and embrace the controls. Fire up the 996 GT2 flat-six and it plunges into a colossal booming cacophony. The noise of the lightweight flywheel in concert with the gearbox is also quite noticeable. There's

*Above: Better hang on to your hat! Interior is largely standard, but FVD have installed a custom Eisenmann roll cage.*

*Adjustable Bilstein coilovers add to handling composure*

*Below: Custom exhaust system is an essential part of the FVD tuning mix*

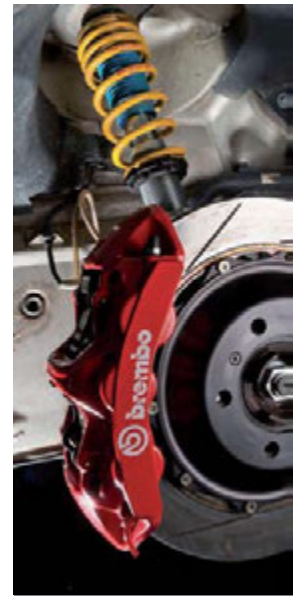


## **PARTY ON**

A couple of months ago, FVD held an open day at its Umkirch premises to celebrate the firm's 30 years in business. Guests included customers and suppliers who were treated to BBQ and refreshments, workshop tours, racecar simulator, and able to check out a selection of FVD prepared Porsches and a variety of highly desirable tuning components, moving on to a local hostelry and nightclub to party in style into the small hours. Here's to the next 30 years!

**730BHP FVD GT2**





specialised tuning and bodywork restoration side, so Willy takes us on a guided tour. Pure gems sit in lockups, a 964 Turbo 2, a 964 RS and 2.7 RS, all newly restored in the hands of an ex-Zuffenhausen painter, while a very special project is under construction in the bodyshop. It's embargoed for now, but we'll be revealing that in a forthcoming issue of *g11&PW*. 'We also do normal maintenance stuff, small things like suspension and brake system changing, the regular tuning, and that is not a big deal, but when it comes to restoration that means actually building a complete car, and that takes a lot more time.' The activities roster goes on: 'We are also involved in the Supercup series through our Swiss company FVD Switzerland, and we have two Supercup cars – we won the Belgian GP support race at Spa for the first time ever! We started a couple of years ago in GT Masters, and now we have customers who bring their cars to us, but it's a totally different kind of business, it's pure racing, nothing else.'

But in terms of FVD's core components business, the particular trends that Willy's noticed are that more people from the air-cooled segment are queuing up to buy parts than the water-cooled. 'Yeah, we can see actually it's more the air-cooled than the water-cooled market, though that's still good, but in the last 12 months we saw a significant increase for original spare parts for the air cooled cars, especially for the 964s and the 993s. So we

have more and more dealers buying parts from us because in the old days a lot of cars got transformed, facelifted with fancy bodykits by Strosek, Gemballa and so on, or updated to 964s and 993s, and now the people who buy these cars – the collectors – of course they want to make them original again, so they need fenders, front bumpers, everything original to give the car back its original look.' It's no surprise that FVD is abreast of, and indeed catering to, the zeitgeist. 'And then the cars get driven so they need maintenance, and you need the parts to repair them because they drive them more, so it has really been an increase in the last 12 months for spares for the air-cooled cars; but then we always did specialise in the air-cooled cars a little bit more than water-cooled.' Willy also has an eye on the future: the 996 GT2? 'I told him we need to get this car in nice shape,' he says, 'because in 10 years it will be worth a lot of money, collectable, definitely, because they didn't make that many 996 GT2s.'

And this one is different again, goalposts widened in a typically logical FVD manner. It's no different externally to a factory GT2, yet it operates in an even more hard-core fashion. There can be few cars capable of delivering such performance, transporting you across continents in such a robust way. Put into perspective, the vanishing point may be an unobtainable goal, but FVD's GT2 will have a darned good stab at getting you there. **PW**

*Above and below: BBS cross spoke wheels in black offset the silver, while big Brembo six pot calipers do an efficient job of killing speed*

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