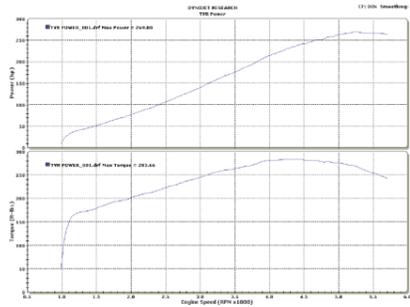
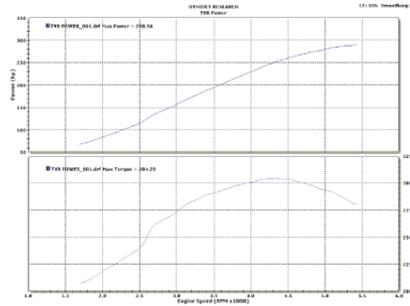


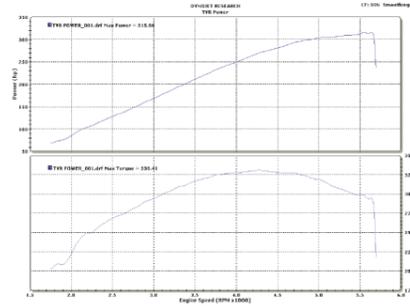
sc400



sc450



sc500



approximated figures point to the SC400 pushing out 317bhp and 334lb/ft of torque, the SC450 giving 342bhp with 358lb/ft and the SC500 372bhp with 389lb/ft - power gains in excess of 25%

290bhp at the rear wheels with 304lb/ft of torque; big numbers with usable power from the 4.5 litre motor. No complaints about the SC450 at all - the power delivery is progressive and feels like it is instantly available right across the range.

The smooth power delivery is down to the centrifugal Rotrex supercharger unit. The centrifugal type being linear generates power and torque progressively as the engine speed rises; a more even delivery than the fixed displacement superchargers which generate more torque and give increase performance lower down the rev range. So to my mind a 4x4 would benefit greatly from having a fixed displacement supercharger, as they need grunt lower down. For effective road and track driving in a lightweight sports car, a centrifugal type supercharger with a carefully designed induction system has to be the most viable option, due to its performance characteristics and the comparative size of the unit. And whilst the TVR Power superchargers are only set up to deliver an additional 5 or 6 pounds of boost, the improvement in performance is quite astonishing.

Watching Marc Hockin and Andy Race in the next session we could see the track slowly drying out and the times coming down. The smiles on the customer's faces were getting wider and wider. It was time for another go.

The SC400's dampers had been backed off a few clicks to give more compliance in the dreadfully damp conditions - and you could tell. Taking her out in the session before lunch, the combination of a slightly dryer track and the compliant damping was just what the doctor ordered. Pushing the car harder and harder the whole package was as smooth as silk and the power was so usable. Hanging the car into Gerrards and throwing her through the Esses our times nosedived and we were starting to fly, carrying plenty of speed right around the track. Jon Ellison had come down for the day with his Chevy powered Chimaera and whilst we weren't quite keeping up with him, we weren't that far away either. For a 4.0 litre Rover V8 I feel that is quite impressive. And it was damned good fun having a go too - we made him work for it.

The fact that the SC400 felt better planted and sure footed on the circuit made the world of difference to our confidence and how we were able to use the available power. Our times in the 400 were a couple of seconds a lap better than in the 450. On further investigation we discovered that the SC450 was set up with standard original factory dampers and brakes, whereas the SC400 is equipped with uprated brakes and adjustable dampers. The net result was a world of difference and I would recommend anybody looking for a serious track day option to have both these upgrades, starting with the adjustable dampers first - which is good because that's the cheapest option. After all it would be pointless having all that extra power if you were unable to use it on the track properly. The SC400 Alpine goat delivers a very smooth 269bhp with 283lb/ft of torque and is clearly going to be a big seller for Power when they release these monsters later in the year. A 4.0 litre Rover V8 which will keep up with a Cerbera has just got to be the thing to have.

After the lunch break it was time to try out the SC500 - the big daddy package which Marc Hockin will be racing this season in the Dunlop Tuscan Challenge. The difference between the SC450 and the SC400 had been hardly noticeable out on track due to the superior setup of the 400, but the SC500 was going to be a totally different beast.

With standard factory brakes but sporting new adjustable dampers which again had been backed off to suit the conditions, the SC500 flowed out of the pit lane and sat itself on Gerrards bend like it was born to be there, just in the same way as the SC400. But the difference was noticeable on the back straight. Jon Ellison's Chevy powered Chimaera was about 100 yards in front and this time I was keeping him in my sights.

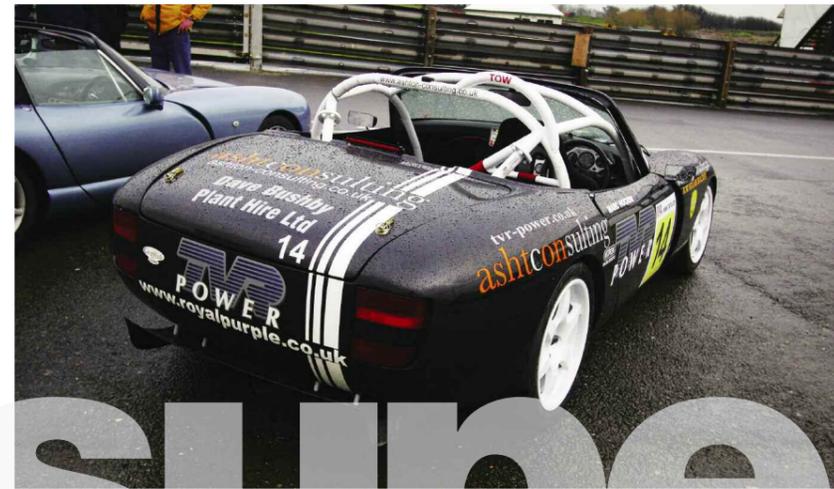


Making sure everything is just right on the day, a clear indication of the tireless commitment of Dom.



Just a small selection of some of the cars out on this very wet, cold and overcast day at Mallory Park

Will the rest of the group B challenge cars only ever see the back of Marc's car this year once the supercharger boost gets turned up?



Not the best of days to be putting the superchargers through their paces.

super

The acceleration of the SC500 was truly awesome and the straights on the track became shorter and shorter. The relatively quiet exhaust system on the car caught me out on a couple of occasions though, as the engine revs up so quickly that we were up to the red line before we knew it - in a matter of a second or so. So one modification I would recommend for the superchargers would be a dash-mounted shift light to tell you when to change up. Bouncing the engine off the rev limiter may sound cool the first couple of times, but it isn't the quickest way of getting from A to B.

With 315bhp and 330lb/ft of torque at the rear wheels, the SC500 is the ultimate RV8 TVR. More grunt than a WWF wrestler, lovingly blended with the charm and sophistication of Leslie Phillips, with perhaps just a splash of Vinnie Jones. With one of these under the bonnet and the correct setup on the car, nothing is going to get close.

All three of the TVR Power superchargers we tested at Mallory circuit delivered smooth power, usable grunt, no flat spots and instant throttle response. How many cars can claim that? And these aren't new cars either, but rather middle aged men with lung transplants - which makes it all the more impressive.

It does have to be said that the simplest of things work well for me and when talking about increasing power you have to involve the whole package. Tyres, springs, dampers and brakes all have their place. If any of these packages feel in any way compromised with 220bhp at the rear wheels, what are they going to feel like with 315 to play with, particularly in the wet, or on the wiggly bits, or indeed both? So seriously consider getting the simple things right first, it will pay you dividends in the long run.

And wouldn't it be a shame not to be able to use all of that available power. You also have to remember that we have been quoting rear wheel figures, not the more commonly bandied about approximated flywheel figures - so more impressive again. Assuming an 18% increase for flywheel figures, assuming again a conservative 15% drive line loss: the SC400 delivers 317bhp and 334lb/ft of torque, the SC450 gives 342 bhp with 358lb/ft and the SC500 372bhp with 389lb/ft - power gains in excess of 25%. And don't make the mistake of thinking that these performance improvements just happened over night. In total, the design process and development of the supercharger induction system took over 18 months and included in excess of 2000 hours of CAD time to perfect the solution.

A final session in the Hybrid Taraka Plus development car showed me why Marc Hockin was so quick last season. This 5.0 litre non-supercharged development is a master class in its own right and roars every time you so much as blip the throttle. Moving Marc into the SC500 this season is a natural progression for TVR Power, but heaven help the rest of us. The Taraka is still a viable option for your 5.0 litre RV8 and it would be worth discussing the characteristics of the package with TVR Power before deciding to go for the supercharger option.

The TVR Power supercharger range will not be released until Power is 100% happy with all the SC final setups and mapping, but gauging the commitment of Dom and his crew, that shouldn't be too far away. And with the queue already starting to form, it wouldn't hurt to give them a call to register your interest sooner rather than later. You never know, you might even get an invite to the next TVR Power test session.

So all in all the SC packages from TVR Power greatly impress. And as long as you have a Serpentine Rover V8 unit, the supercharger setup will fit under the bonnet of your Chimaera or Griffith with very little trouble indeed. And with second-hand prices falling through the floor recently; what better way of breathing new life into the old girl, and frightening a few of the neighbours at the same time.

So rather than trade your RV8 TVR in for something newer, invest in a supercharger instead. And then take it down to Mallory Park and say hello to Gerrard - he will be expecting you.

Howard Bryan