

ALL THE THREE'S 33

Straight line speed does nothing for me. Personally I don't care how fast a car goes. What I really enjoy is a fast blast down country lanes, flicking gearchanges and revelling in the sheer driveability of a car. That is more or less why I enjoy driving small spaceframe chassied cars such as the Westfield or the Raffo. Having said that, there is definitely a dedicated bunch of enthusiasts out there whose idea of motoring bliss is to be able to do speeds approaching 150 mph and, have acceleration that will leave Ferrari Mondials, or Lotus Esprit Turbos, behind at traffic lights. The problem with this sort of machine is that it tends to be incredibly expensive. Enter UVA and the F33. It is also known as the Can Am, but for the purposes of this feature we'll just stick with F33.

The concept

When Alan Arnold sat down to design the F33 his parameters revolved around several known reference points. The first of these was that he would utilize his experiences with the Fugitive Two on/off road rail which is basically a tubular steel space-frame, the Rover 3.5 litre engine mated to a VW transaxle and a combination of wishbone/coil-over shock front suspension and a divided torsion bar/trailing arm rear suspension. This concept would be clothed with a fairly stark, but at the same time

dramatic, body that had aerodynamic qualities as well as simple construction. The first prototype was named the F30 and was primarily intended as a clubmans car for the person who wanted a fairly dramatic everyday car that could be used in competitions. The original had cycle front wings but a very aerodynamic rear end, with huge Testa Rossa air intakes emphasising the undoubted drama of the car. As time went by, Alan responded to popular opinion and has introduced a stunning new one piece front section to complement the rear. After a period of development, Alan has pronounced himself happy with the car and showed it at this year's Motor Show. The F30 is still available with its cycle wings should you want it, however the F33 that serves as the demo car at UVA is, in my opinion, far more dramatic and more likely to sell.

The kit

I am not going to write down everything that you can get in any one of the four stages but, suffice to say, that the starter kit will provide you with the body, the superbly rigid mid engine chassis, the majority of the suspension components and the beautifully manufactured, dual, balanced and adjustable, brake pedal assembly complete with master cylinders and throttle pedal. This little lot, plus many other parts will set you back a not unreasonable £2226.56 plus VAT. You then

go on through stages two, three and four. The fourth stage being everything you will need to build the car (with almost everything fitted for you) bar a Rover 3.5 engine, a VW transaxle from a 1600cc Variant or 1302S/1303s, and the trailing arms from the same donor. You will also need the steering rack and column from a Metro, and two Golf GTI radiators with either the standard electric cooling fans, or after-market items.

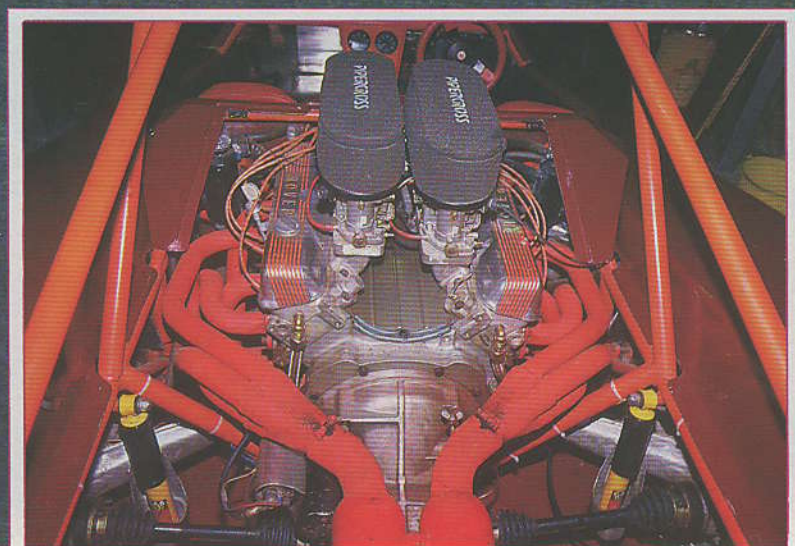
As members of the Specialist Car Manufacturers Group, UVA adhere to the Code of Practice so that engineering standards and customer service are of a known high degree, the result being that you can buy with total confidence. It is most certainly worth bearing this in mind because it serves as your guarantee and, should you go for a fully built car to suit your purposes, UVA can do it and you can be assured that you will have recourse, should you be dissatisfied. Anyway enough of this negatory stuff and on with the real meat of the job. What is it like to drive? Well quite frankly it's an experience that I will not quickly forget.

I have to admit that due to the usual foresight and planning, I can not fit into the space allotted for this feature, all the bits and pieces that I gleaned from spending a day at UVA. What I will tell you is this; The F33, and for that matter, all UVA products, are properly developed, and much attention to getting everything correct has been paid. There is far too much to tell you here but safety at speed is a field in which UVA are pre-eminent, and when you put together a car that is capable of 150 mph, it is important to know that the four wheel disc brakes will not fade,

'motoring bliss is to be able to do speeds approaching 150mph.'



In the space of seven days Pen Roberts managed to drive two of the fastest cars in Great Britain, The Lamborghini Countach and The UVA F33. Now he's got his breath back he brings you this report.



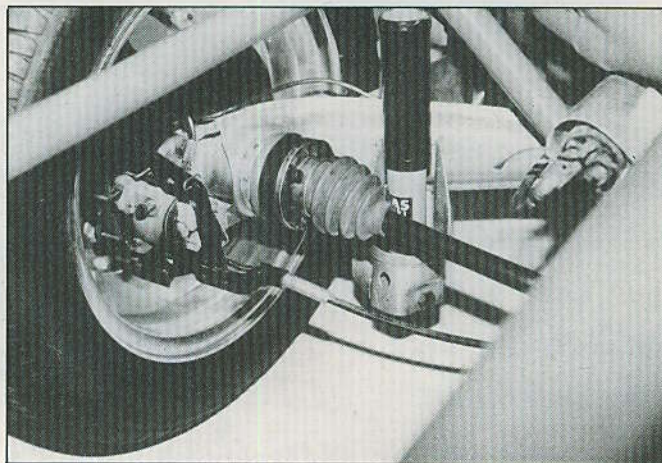
nor will the pedals collapse under heavy pressure. Although that bodywork may look simple, there have been at least three different versions of it culminating in the present item. Things like proper pop up headlights have been perfected and all stresses have been properly calculated.

Sorry about the diversification there, but I suddenly realised that I was not going to be able to put the company into its proper context in the space available.

On the road

On a day when floods were reported in Wales, and gale force winds were making driving difficult on motorways, I was strapped into the driving seat of

supply all the parts necessary to handle that kind of power, so no problem. After a few well chosen words from Mr. Arnold, I fired up. Dear me, what a noise. (I didn't actually say that by the way.) I blipped the throttle and was answered with an incredible roar compounded from induction noise, exhaust noise, valve train chatter, and a myriad others that I could not identify. Selecting first I gingerly pressed the throttle and promptly stalled. Oh, the embarrassment! With more determination and a heavier right foot I started up again. This time I got it right and shot forward at a hell of a rate of knots. I had no time to check on the rev counter and concentrated on changing gear, staying on the road, and looking out for other maniacs. The figure



The trailing arm rear suspension and drive shaft from the VW Variant gearbox.

'quite frankly it's an experience that I will not forget quickly.'

the F33 and told to enjoy myself. My first sensation was that I hated the driving seat. It laid back far too much for me and was not adjustable for rake. Nevertheless I could reach the pedals with ease and everything fell to hand. The instrument pod, situated in the centre of the car, contains all the necessary dials and gauges that monitor the performance of some 260bhp of Rover engine. The specification of this engine is really something else, solid lifters, balanced, blueprinted, half race cam, four Dellortos, tubular manifolds etc, etc. You may be lulled into thinking that 260bhp through a VW transaxle would have dire effects, resulting in cogs flying everywhere. Not so; UVA

quoted for 0 to 60mph is 5.3 seconds. I can well believe it, and after my first fumbling attempts with the car, got down to some acclimatisational cruising. I was able to get the feel of the car much better with this, and it was not until I had done a few miles that I fully realised that this 'cruising' was taking place at between 80 and 90mph. Whoops. Staying off the main roads suited my purposes a lot better, and I found a forest of some sort that had these wonderful little roads running through it. Blasting off down these fairly uneven bits of tarmac, I was able to appreciate how well the car rode, the suspension absorbing all the bumps in a perfect compromise of settings.



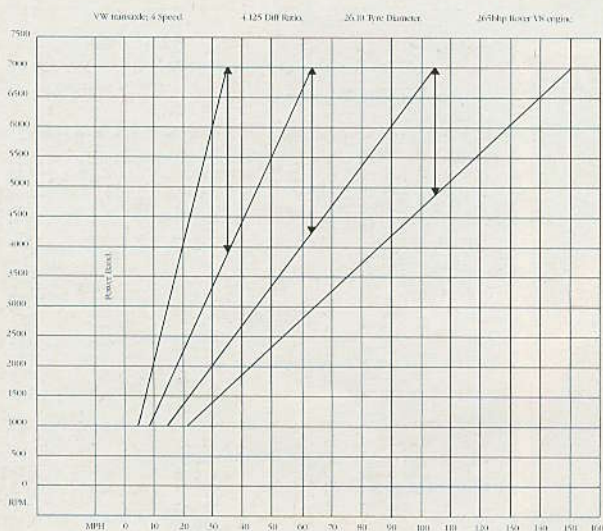
This UVA hydraulic clutch cylinder converts the VW cable system.

The brakes too seemed perfect, the 11 inch discs hauling me down from some ridiculous speeds. No fade and no dramas. Cornering held no fears, and I was able to go progressively faster as the car's abilities inspired confidence. I would say that the car is more or less neutral, which is really how it should be with all the weight concentrated in the middle. There are few concessions to everyday use, but there again you would really have to be something of an enthusiast to own an F33. Which is where we came in.

Conclusion

Because of the immense amount of noise generated by the engine, I was not really aware of what this remarkable car could achieve. I

only used 5500 revs in each gear and later discovered that you can use 6500 on a regular basis. 7000 is attainable and at that limit, the F33 is doing 150mph. To prove this Alan gave me a performance graph with the diff ratios and wheel sizes taken into account, and I can well believe the figures. It is a most shatteringly fast car to drive, if expensive. However it is only expensive in terms of the kit car market and you would have to part with fortunes to get this kind of performance in the production car sphere. Although this feature is necessarily brief you can get full chapter and verse from the comprehensive information pack supplied at £1.50 from UVA Ltd. **Argents Mere High Technology Park, Hambridge Lane, Newbury, Berkshire. RG14 5TU. Tel: 0635 33888.**



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