

2BENNETT AUDIMOTIVE **S4 GTR**: HANDS-ON PERFORMANCE



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SUPERFLY

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997 SRS:
RUNNING
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SCISSORS**







Teutonic Terror

HPA builds a fierce TT

by Peter Wu
photography by Robert Hallström

It's been said that the race track is the cruelest place, cruel not just because of its ability to stress equipment, but equally merciless in its unbiased assessment of a car's abilities. The track speaks painful truths and can amplify strengths and weaknesses alike. Mild understeer becomes excessive push, good brakes on the street tend to fade after a few hot laps, and acceleration that seems over the top for the daily commute often leaves one wanting for more down a long back straight.

So it was with a sense of surprise, and even some disappointment, that lap after lap on the Streets of Willow, I couldn't find any glaring deficiencies with an Audi TT sporting HPA's new FT400 turbo kit. Sure, it was easy to overstep its limits of adhesion, but it was just as easy to tightrope the fine line, to walk that knife's edge. It seemed as though, in that dungeon of torture known as the race track, the TT was taking masochistic pleasure in the pain.

Until the arrival of the 3.2, the TT was more fun to look at than it was fun to flog. Even when tuned for more power and with more aggressive underpinnings, the A4 chassis was competent, but never felt like it was having fun. Then VAG got it right with the TT 3.2 and R32. All it asked for was more power.

HPA's twin-turbo R32 nearly won last year's Über Golf shootout. Its ballistic velocity left us speechless, but its price tag meant that only a few could enjoy it. HPA recently addressed this with its FT series of turbo kits for the 3.2-liter





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VR6. Using a single turbo instead of twins makes the kit a bit more affordable. In this case, the system is based around a Garrett GT30 turbo modified by HPA's technical partner, HGP out of Germany, with custom compressor and exhaust housings. It's attached to a cast exhaust manifold which then feeds into a 70mm downpipe. The kit also includes a short-runner intake manifold, side-mounted intercooler, high-flow injectors and upgraded fuel pump, a thicker head gasket to lower compression to 8.5:1, ECU reprogramming and all the required upgraded hosing and clamps. At maximum boost of 0.85 Bar, HPA

claims 400 bhp. The company's FT 360 kit, which uses the stock intake manifold and doesn't include the intercooler, is apparently good for 360 bhp.

What makes this particular project especially unique is the use of the DSG semi-automatic transmission. As the DSG/3.2 combination isn't offered for the R32, the customer went out and bought a TT even though an R32 was his first choice. HPA is confident that the DSG can withstand up to 600 bhp and 700 lb-ft of torque. One major modification to the DSG in this car was swapping the U.S. transmission control unit for a European-spec

version. This enables the car to go into "launch mode" (full-throttle starts at 3200 rpm) and maintains manual control when the driver overrides the Drive or Sport settings by pulling either one of the paddles.

From launch mode, the TT pulled effortlessly up the Streets' long, uphill straight with an impressive linear build-up toward redline and only the slightest tapering off before it was time to shift. Although most cars seem underpowered on the track, HPA's TT was fast enough to make one think twice about staying on the throttle for too long, which is always a good thing. The DSG, easily one of the best semi-autos

around, shuffled through the gears like a skilled croupier, dealing crisp upshifts and creamy downshifts.

When braking hard before and trailing into the corners, the TT showed great composure. HPA kept the stock calipers but replaced the stock rotors with slotted units and also changed the pads to more aggressive PBR sport pads, which didn't fade during the handful of laps I had in the car. The rolling stock received a plus-one upgrade, going from 18 to 19 inches using 8-inch-wide BBS CH wheels and Dunlop's SP 9000s (235/35-19), which gave good warning before their limits were breached.



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HPA set the car up with its Sport Handling System, a collover setup made to HPA's specs by KW using linear-rate springs in front and progressive springs in back. Neuspeed's 22mm anti-roll bar provides additional stiffness in the rear. The suspension changes mirror the characteristics of the agile 3.2 TT, albeit with a touch more body control from the firmer settings. Using throttle and steering, it was easy to induce near-neutral behavior through the corners and set it up for full-throttle exits to exploit the all-wheel-drive traction.

HPA sells the FT400 kit for \$11,900, which can be considered pricey when you realize it's about a fifth the price of a new 3.2 TT (and even more compared to the R32). But put it into the context of power-to-weight ratios (3,200 pounds and 400 bhp) and you won't find many cars in that price range that can keep up. Add in the fact that it's not afraid of the track and the argument becomes ever more persuasive. 🏁

CONTACT

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2004 AUDI TT 3.2 DSG

Drivetrain

Transverse front engine,
all-wheel drive

Engine

3.2-liter V6, dual overhead cams,
four valves per cylinder
HPA FT400 turbo upgrade

Transmission

Six-speed DSG
Euro-spec transmission controller

Suspension

HPA/KW collovers,
Neuspeed anti-roll bar (r)

Brakes

Slotted rotors, PBR sport pads

Wheels and Tires

BBS CH, 8x19
Dunlop SP9000, 235/35-19

Performance

Peak Power: 400 bhp

