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HPA Motorsports 2004 VW Beetle RSI

# BEEETLE JUICED

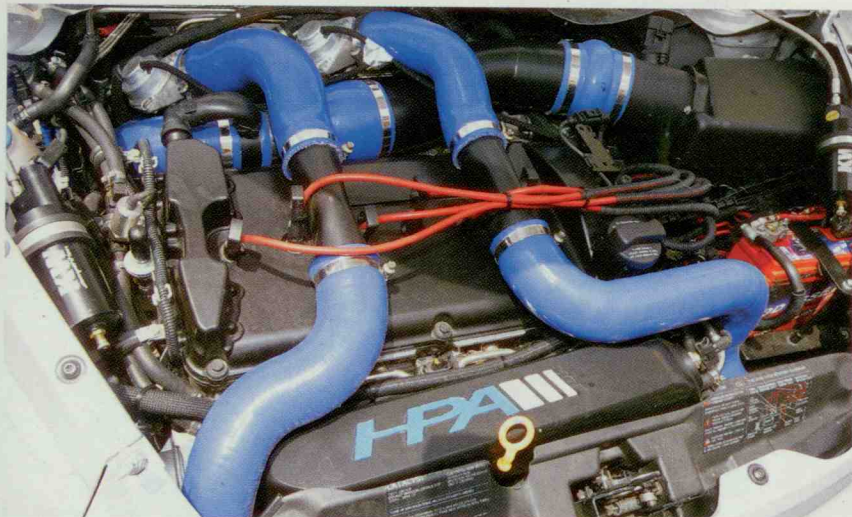




BY DAN FRIO • PHOTOGRAPHY BARRY HATHAWAY

**HPA Motorsports holds a slight advantage in USCC 2006.** This will be their third appearance. In 2005, they entered a twin-turbo Audi TT. The year before, a ripped VW R32. This year, they've chosen an oddball, a car that struggles for respect in most performance circles: a 2004 VW Beetle.





When HPA revealed their plan to enter USCC with a New Beetle, "people laughed at us," says HPA's general manager, Melanie Hastings. "It has a little bit of that chick car personality."

Chick car or not, HPA's Beetle — built for a customer to run the One Lap of America race — is all balls. Six cylinders and two turbos' worth. The 3.2-liter V6 comes from the limited edition RSI, and is joined by dual Garrett GT28R ball-bearing turbos modified to HPA specs, dual custom

intercoolers and an NX nitrous spray bar to hyper-cool the intake charge. On HPA's in-house dyno, the Beetle put down 427 wheel-hp and 483lb-ft.

That kind of power reaches the ground through VW's 4Motion all-wheel drive system, an option on Beetles in other parts of the world, but one that requires an extensive nip and tuck to a standard US Beetle's floorpan. Power and delivery are impressive, but also come with inherent weight penalties.



"Our dyno curve numbers are what our cars are all about," Hastings says. "The nature of our cars is that they're heavy, all-wheel-drive. Torque is king."

HPA's plan is simple: Stay in the top three in all events. After two previous appearances, they now have a smart strategy in place. The Beetle will face perhaps the toughest test of its reliability on the road course. Although it survived One Lap's grueling endurance challenges, a few tight and twisty hot laps will reveal the all-wheel-drive conversion's true mettle.

They needn't worry too much. The Beetle sits atop a KW three-way adjustable coilover setup with 22mm anti-roll bars front and rear. It will run big 285/30 Kumho Ecsta V70A rubber on 18-inch OZ Racing Beetle Cup wheels that keep unsprung weight manageable while providing a thick footprint.

HPA's workmanship and attention to detail always scores well with our gurus, any chinks in their armor meticulously seam-welded away. As Hastings says, HPA prides itself on turning out cars that are well-rounded, "not dyno queens or drag cars, but something that's versatile."

Can that versatility make HPA's third time a charm? They finished fourth last year, up from seventh in 2004. A similarly dramatic rate of improvement could put them in first place this year. Hastings insists that prior experience is helpful, but only by a margin. In the end, the car still needs to bring it home.

"Every year has been different, but we know what to expect. We're familiar with [Southern California's] road circuits and the K&N dyno facility, so that may help somewhat. But ultimately, the car speaks for itself."

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** If a Beetle in USCC brings a giggle, the fact it comes from HPA should sober you up. Stellar performance and reliability. Plus, they're from Canada. —EL

## HPA's 2004 VOLKSWAGEN BEETLE RSI

### ENGINE

#### Engine code: RSI

**Type:** 3189cc V6, cast iron block and aluminium head, turbocharged and intercooled

**Internal modifications:** HPA rod bearings

**External mods:** Twin custom HPA GT28R turbos, HPA cast iron exhaust manifold, custom silicone plumbing, twin HPA side mount IC, port matched head, stainless steel exhaust system, cast aluminum short runner intake manifold, NOS IC foggers, VW R32 radiator

**Engine management mods:** In-line transfer fuel pump, HPA ECU flash remap, 440cc/min injectors

### DRIVETRAIN

**Layout:** Transverse front engine, all-wheel drive

**Drivetrain mods:** Complete 4Motion AWD system, Sinter metal clutch, lengthened and hardened gearset, Haldex performance controller and Quaife front LSD

### SUSPENSION

**Front:** KW three-way competition coilovers, 22mm anti-roll bar, wheel stud conversion

**Rear:** KW three-way competition coilovers, 22mm anti-roll bar, wheel stud conversion

### BRAKES

**Front:** 14.4-in. J-slotted floating rotor w/eight-pot fixed caliper

**Rear:** 13.2-in. J-slotted floating rotor w/two-pot fixed caliper

### WHEELS AND TIRES

**Wheels:** 18x9 Beetle RSI Cup

**Tires:** 285/30R18 Kumho V70A

### EXTERIOR

Beetle RSI widebody conversion

### INTERIOR

Custom six-point roll cage, Cobra Misano seats, Sparco four-pt. harness, R32 steering wheel w/integrated Stack display, Auto Meter gauges, onboard fire suppression system