

A tall



Order

By Ian Lamming

Fact File

VW Golf SV
 Engine: 1.6 turbo diesel
 Power: 110PS
 0-62mph: 11.3 secs
 Top speed: 119mph
 Combined miles per gallon: 72.4
 Transmission: five-speed manual
 Insurance: 13E
 CO2 g/km: 101

WHITE van man; much maligned and misunderstood but what would we do without him?

Who would clear your pipes, de-coke your boiler, wire your house? What about the garden, the deliveries and who would keep our flag makers in a job, for the love of St George?

Bless them all, particularly the one who pulled out in front of me and the family while testing VW's new Golf SV – what an inspiration.

Without him how would I know how well this tallest of Golfs goes. No time to brake, it was time to drop a gear and floor the throttle exploiting the huge mid-range of the refined turbo-charged diesel.

Even though my friend in the white van did his best to get out of my way – by accelerating as hard as he possibly could without throwing a big end – the SV cruised on by; impressive that, who would have thought?

Then came the handling test courtesy of Mr W V Man's hot pursuit – he's so caring. How did he know I was a motoring correspondent in need? So intuitive, so considerate, so bulldog British workman-like.

The expression on his face through my rear mirrors

showed just how impressed he was with the handling of what is a very tall Golf, yet grips and handles with the poise of its sportier brethren. Even the most acute of bends was handled with aplomb. My boy in the back barley lifted an eye from his iPad, so smooth running was the SV in full flow.

When WVM was satisfied with the performance of the SV he peeled off with a cheery wave – no, your watch must be wrong, it's not 2pm – and I smiled, thankful of the help I had received from one of the motoring world's most accomplished and sometimes harshest critics.

The enthusiastic joint test revealed another blessing, just how economical the SV remained even when it was encouraged to stretch its legs – sticking in the 60s when it came to miles per gallon according to the trip computer.

What my friend won't have been able to appreciate was how good the SV was as a people carrier. The extra headroom seemed to swell the internal volume disproportionately making it a veritable cavern, a sort of min-Touran.

Everything else was recognizably Golf, it was just even more accommodating and I'm sure white van man would delight in the extra space.