

Van extraordinaire!



When Simon Elliott, Head of Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles, decided to go racing he had the perfect vehicle at his disposal...

THE RACING Caddy van is no stranger to readers of Volkswagen Driver; we've featured it on several occasions previously, but never has it been quite as noticeable out on track as it is this season, now racing in the bright orange colours of the RAC.

Initially considered just a novelty to make up the numbers, the Caddy has actually become increasingly competitive



over the past few years. Previous pilot Peter Wyhinny, now Head of SEAT UK, even put it into podium positions on several occasions, and it has often been running strongly in the top 10 and upper midfield, despite its all too obvious aerodynamic disadvantage.

This year the Caddy has a new man at the helm. Simon Elliott, who took over from Peter as Director of Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles in August 2008, has risen to the challenge to carry on where his predecessor left off and he's on a fast learning curve. Simon had his first taste

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of the racing game in the VW Racing Cup series, at Silverstone in August last year, when he drove a Racing Line-prepared Mk 5 Golf GTI, specially decorated in the colours of Scunthorpe United FC, of which he is a lifetime fan and a director.

'It's something I'd always wanted to do,' he said at the time, 'I've done track days and so on, but never had the opportunity before now to race competitively. Racing Line led me through passing my track test and getting my racing licence and, if I enjoy my debut I'll definitely look at doing some more.'



Pic: 121



And enjoy it he did. As it turned out, Simon got off to a superb start, both figuratively and literally, and finished a very creditable 11th place in both of the two races at Silverstone, ahead of many much more experienced racers. You can well imagine that he came away from that meeting fully fired up and eager to get back on track for a full racing season, and while the final round of 2009 at Brands Hatch didn't go quite so well, with a DNF and a 13th place, his enthusiasm was high for a full season in 2010.

Of course, now being a fully-fledged 'van man', it was only right that, rather than racing a Golf GTI, Simon took over the Caddy racer which was now going spare. Previous pilot Peter Wyhinny was now racing his SEAT Leon Cupra in the series, so all that Simon needed was an appropriate set of sponsors to help fund the van, and it was all systems go...

The RAC was a perfect candidate for the job; regardless of the superior visual appeal of its bright orange livery, compared with the previous subtle silver and grey colour scheme, the RAC was already closely associated with the Volkswagen Group, providing the Volkswagen Roadside Assistance service. It was clearly a mutually agreeable situation: Martin Quail, Head of RAC Corporate Partnerships, is quoted as saying, 'We were excited to be approached to sponsor the Caddy as it provides us not only with the opportunity to further strengthen our relationship with Volkswagen, but also to engage with business customers and motor racing fans alike.'

Apart from the standard series sponsors – Fuchs Lubricants, Augustus Martin, Ceva Logistics, ECM Vehicle Delivery, Hankook, Milltek Sport,

KW Automotive and Superchips – other sponsors for the Caddy include VW Commercial Vehicles Finance, Green Thumb, Iris and WRP.

After making a public debut in its new livery at the Autosport Show in January, it was back to the Racing Line workshops in Milton Keynes for final preparation for the new season. The basic specification is much as before, with the 2.0-litre 16-valve TDI unit, in conjunction with a free-flow Milltek exhaust and K&N filter, now tuned to produce 260 PS at a modest 3600 rpm and over 500 Nm of torque. A major improvement over the standard Caddy's 140 PS and 320 Nm, that's good for a 0-60 time of just 5.6 seconds and a quarter-mile ET of 14.2 seconds, as recently proven by Simon on the Sprint track at GTI International.

Of course, on a race circuit, it's the handling and braking which are just as



Technical specification

Racing Caddy Sportline 2.0 TDI PD

ENGINE

Configuration: 4-cylinder 16-valve TDI
Capacity: 2.0 litres (1968 cc)
Management: Volkswagen ECU with Superchips mapping
Lubricants: Fuchs Titan Race
Exhaust: Milltek bespoke system
Air filter: K&N
Power output: 270 PS @ 3600 rpm
Max torque: 512 Nm (377 lb.ft.) @ 3300 rpm
Drivetrain: Front-wheel drive, with 6-speed gearbox, limited-slip differential, Sachs sintered metal plate heavy-duty clutch and Volkswagen Racing quickshift gear selector

BODYSHELL

Production shell, welded-in multi-point roll cage, with Cobra racing seat, six-point Sparco harness, plumbed-in fire extinguisher system.



SUSPENSION

Front: KW 2-way adjustable race dampers with height-adjustable spring platforms, adjustable anti-roll bars, solid bushes
Rear: Converted to multi-link beam suspension, KW 2-way coil-over race dampers, adjustable anti-roll bars, solid bushes
Steering: Power assisted rack and pinion
Brakes: 355 mm ventilated front discs, production ventilated rear discs, Mintex racing pads, ABS disabled, adjustable front/rear bias
Wheels: 8 x 18-inch Team Dynamics alloys
Tyres: Hankook racing slicks
Weight: 1300 kg (standard Caddy van 1465 kg.)

Meet the driver



Simon Elliott

SIMON WAS appointed Director of Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles in August 2008, from his most recent position as Managing Director of Chrysler UK. Prior to this, Simon was President and CEO of Chrysler's China operations, where he was honoured with the title of China Automotive Industry CEO of the Year 2007.

Simon started his career at Volkswagen, in vehicle logistics and sales, before being promoted to a variety of sales and marketing roles. His career also includes a succession of positions within Toyota Lexus GB, including Dealer Development Manager, Regional General Manager and Director of Fleet Operations, before becoming Sales Director of Toyota Lexus Belgium SA.

Married to Kay, with three children, Laura, Josie and Cameron – one of the few families whose skilfully airbrushed portraits appear on a race helmet, along with illustrations of the Scunthorpe steel works – Simon now lives in Coggenhoe, Northants and drives a T5 Caravelle as his company vehicle.





important as outright performance, and it's here that the Caddy van needs the most help. The standard longitudinal leaf-spring rear suspension may be perfectly adequate and indeed fully functional for normal road use, capable of carrying large wide loads, but it can't compare in dynamic terms with the multi-link rear suspension fitted as standard on rival machinery like the Mk 5 GTI and Scirocco. Which is why Racing Line has totally re-engineered the rear end, welding in additional sections to accommodate a multi-link beam suspension set-up, using KW 2-way coil-over race dampers, adjustable anti-roll bars and solid bushes.

Simon reports that it handles just as confidently as the Golfs and Sciroccos, with the added advantage of the strong mid-range torque of the tuned TDI to help haul it through the bends, and its only real disadvantage comes on the long, fast circuits where the much taller bodywork adds aerodynamic drag and is more susceptible to side winds. In true 'van driver' style, though, we can't help



thinking that the sight of the Caddy closing fast in the rear-view mirrors must have a usefully intimidating effect on anyone ahead on circuit!

We met up with Simon at a recent track test day at Rockingham Motor Speedway, in preparation for the VW Cup race meeting scheduled there for July 17-18, just after this issue goes to press, and he was clearly well on the pace. The tight twisting infield part of the circuit should suit the characteristics of the Caddy well, and it's only out on the long banked section of the oval circuit that the bluff bodywork of the big van will hold it back.

Simon's first outing of the 2010 season, at Oulton Park in April, certainly went well enough, finishing a creditable 15th and



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16th out of a full field in both races. Having since been practicing his startline technique on the Sprint at GTI International, and now fully familiar with the Rockingham circuit, it bodes well for an exciting race. You can find a full report in our next issue, or log on at www.vw-cup.co.uk for the latest details. 🇩🇪