

# TVR POWER

## ITALIAN JOB

### Or How to Thrash a Supercharger to Within an Inch of It's Life...



I like things to work and I like them to work properly. If something doesn't work properly I either swap it, mend it or bin it. There is no room in my life for things that do not work.

I'm also quite good at breaking cars. I over-rev them, I out-brake them and I throw them around until they scream for me to stop. It's what I do. Ask John Kenyon; he has to mend my race car. If a vehicle has been designed to do 0-60 in however many seconds, then that is the speed at which I do it. A car shouldn't have an accelerator it should have a button that says '60 now'.

This in mind I was somewhat taken aback when Dom at TVR Power asked me if I would mind taking his new 4.0 litre Rover V8 supercharger conversion over the Alps to 'Give it a bit of a run'. I rang John Kenyon to tell him the news, his reaction was 'Oh Dear'. I rang Heather to ask if she could take the time off work and she voiced similar concern. Hey Ho!

We arranged to meet Dom at Power in Coventry to load up the car and set the Chimaera's ride height. With two adults and a week's worth of suitcases plus my Teng Toolkit in the boot, this was the heaviest the Chimaera had been in a long time.

Apart from pushing the car to its limits, we wanted to ascertain the worst possible mpg the supercharger would return, and a fully laden Chimaera with big Tuscan brakes being thrashed to within an inch of its life for 2000 miles up the Alps would pretty well do the job. So a quick jaunt to the filling station to brim the tank and set the trip meter for the first time and we were off.

Now warm, I opened the charger up from a standing start to see what she could do. Throwing her into second we were catapulted forward with a force that took both of us by surprise. Heather screamed. It was going to be a good week.

The trip to Dover was a steady run in typical rush hour traffic. Popping and banging our way southwards we drove quickly but steadily, never missing an opportunity to open the car up and explore the rev limiter. It should be noted here that the power delivery from the package is very smooth and drivable, which was nice bearing in mind we had another 1,850 miles to go. Stopping in Dover to brim the car for the following day, we had returned over 20 to the gallon. This is not dissimilar to what I would expect from my 400SE; the charger was off to a good start. We drove to the Ramada Dover and were greeted by Darren and Graham from Driving Adventures who showed us to our reserved parking area. The sight of 21 TVRs including Cerberas, Griffs, Chimaeras, Sags and a V8S alongside a BMW M3, a Corvette, two Aston Martins and a Lamborghini certainly set the pulse racing.

The following morning we all met up to be handed our Driving Adventures tour packs and two-way radios. The convoy formed up for the first time and we headed for the tunnel.

The drive to Dijon took us along great stretches of motorway with everyone jostling for position and having a play along the way. Bouncing the Chimaera off the rev limiter in every gear, much to the amusement of the convoy, we could keep up with the Cerberas through 140mph. Great fun. After stopping off at the old Reims GP circuit for a photo opportunity we continued on to Dijon; a total of 364 playful and heavy footed miles for the day returning us 17.21mpg.

Day three takes us from Dijon to Lake Brienz in Switzerland, a total of 220 miles. Topping the Rotrex supercharger reservoir with an egg-cupful of oil we set off to climb the steep and twisting roads over the hills towards Geneva and Lausanne. With the convoy still keeping up a good head of steam from the previous day, the charger was working hard. The huge torque is delivered so smoothly that even up the steepest of mountain climbs we had the choice of at least two gears and sometimes even three; very impressive indeed and perfect for touring. Stopping for lunch at Lausanne we travel rapidly towards Lake Brienz where we stop for another photo opportunity before continuing to the hotel.

Just short of 17mpg for the day sounds reasonably heavy, but considering the aggressive way in which we attacked the climb into Switzerland I feel that this return is not unreasonable. And to be fair, if we had climbed the hills any faster I would have been very tempted to pull over to screw on my Harewood timing strut. Over 260 bhp and with 260 lb ft of torque at the back wheels is a wonderful thing.



Just a note here to say that Lake Brienz is one of the most picturesque places we've ever visited and if we had returned zero miles with zero fills and zero mpg for the following 24 hours I really wouldn't have complained. A place to be highly recommended and somewhere we shall most certainly revisit.

Day four was not only a test for the charger, but a test of the charger at altitude. Filling up the Chimaera as we left the hotel, the convoy gained height rapidly as we set off in bright sunshine along the Brunig Pass towards the Susten Pass. Climbing steeply we drove through the cloud to reappear in brilliant sunshine once more, now looking down upon the tops of the clouds from 7500 feet. It was noticeable here that several cars were not breathing properly and most if not all of the engines rang a slightly different tone. Nevertheless, despite a couple of Griff 500s and a Chimaera overheating in the thinner air and having to remove their front number plates to aid cooling, the supercharger still hadn't missed a beat.

Maintaining 7,000 feet across the Gotthard Pass towards Andermatt and dropping down to the Oberalp Pass, we continued our ascent to Davos, returning around 16mpg from this our shortest and most strenuous day so far. Hardly surprising as Davos is not only the largest mountain sports resort and conference centre in the Alps, but also the highest town in Europe, standing at 9,300 feet. The hotel bar beckoned.



	Distance Covered Miles Per Day	Trip Total Miles	Fill Trip Miles	Fuel Used		Consumption MPG	
				Litres	Gallons		
Day 1 - Tuesday Coventry to Dover	183	Fill 1	0.0	0.0	47.60	10.47	-----
		Fill 2	177.9	177.9	39.24	8.63	20.61
Day 2 - Wednesday Dover to Dijon	364	Fill 3	273.2	95.3	25.17	5.54	17.21
		Fill 4	451.8	178.6	39.10	8.60	20.77
Day 3 - Thursday Dijon to Lake Brienz	220	Fill 5	566.7	114.9	33.97	7.47	15.38
		Fill 6	655.6	88.9	25.20	5.54	16.04
Day 4 - Friday Lake Brienz to Davos	133	Fill 7	767.7	112.1	28.90	6.36	17.63
Day 5 - Saturday Davos to Chur	165	Fill 8	942.0	174.3	49.66	10.92	15.96
		Fill 9	1,064.5	122.5	35.55	7.82	15.67
Day 6 - Sunday Chur to Metz	376	Fill 10	1,212.5	148.0	35.92	7.90	18.73
		Fill 11	1,390.3	177.8	43.54	9.58	18.56
Day 7 - Monday Metz to Silverstone	451	Fill 12	1,572.2	181.9	43.19	9.50	19.15
		Fill 13	1,748.5	176.3	43.85	9.65	18.28
Day 8 - Tuesday Silverstone to Coventry	67	Fill 14	1,959.0	210.5	47.08	10.36	20.33
<b>Trip Totals</b>	<b>1959</b>	<b>1,959.00</b>	<b>1,959.00</b>	<b>490.37</b>	<b>107.87</b>	<b>18.16</b>	

Day five; the one we had all been waiting for: Davos to Chur was to be a 165 mile extension of day four with the Fluela Pass at 8,000 feet and the Ofen Pass at something over 7,000 feet standing between us and the Italian Border and the infamous Stelvio Pass.

Looking up towards the tight hairpins of Stelvio was daunting, over 40 of them in all and with a 9,000 foot summit. We could drive up it slowly, or attack it like Harewood on a hot day. Sliding the car round the hairpins where we could, we climbed rapidly bouncing the charger off the rev limiter time and time again. We wanted to be the quickest thing up the Pass that day and the supercharger gave its all. The aim of the trip was to see how low we could take the fuel consumption, to either prove or disprove the myth that all blowers should be followed by their own personal oil tanker and today was the day.



Reaching the top of Stelvio for our lunch stop we exchanged stories of hairpins, more hairpins and altitude. It was an experience like no other. After lunch we traversed the Livigne National Park and the Bernia Pass before passing through St Moritz and following the Julia Pass towards Chur. Filling up at the end of the day I feel we had achieved our aim; to take the car to the edge of it's limits and bring the fuel consumption down as low as we could possibly take it. At a fraction under 16mpg for the day one can only be impressed. Returning such a figure speaks volumes for the development of the Rotrex unit and the installation skills of TVR Power. If this is the worst you'll ever get out of it then I for one would have one. Blowers have most certainly moved on.

Day six with 376 miles from Chur to Metz and day seven with 451 miles from Metz back through the tunnel to our final night's stop over at Silverstone saw both days returning a solid 19mpg. And this despite constantly playing with the Cerberas and leaving the Griff 500s for dead. Cruising in excess of 125mph and hitting top speeds of 150mph will do nothing for your fuel consumption in a Rover V8, so with this in mind I do feel that the 19mpg returned is a reasonably healthy figure and under the circumstances surprisingly good.

Day eight sees us driving back to Coventry and brimming the car for the final time before returning it to Bedworth Road. And I do have to say that I really didn't want to take the car back. The performance is outstanding and to be able to leave 5.0 litre Griff's standing and mix it with the Sags and Cerberas is quite a thing. Despite driving the car hard for the week it never moved above 90 degrees, we only used a spot of engine oil, about a cupful of water and no more than a healthy splash of supercharger oil. And that for 2,000 miles across the Alps has to be credit indeed.

We drove the car at altitude and as hard as we possibly could with two adults on board and a bootful of suitcases, bags and tools. We travelled a total of 1,959 miles and consumed 107.87 gallons of fuel, an average consumption of 18.16mpg. Not bad at all...

So would I have one; yes I would. Would I recommend one to my friends; yes I would. And would I take one over the Alps again; absolutely.

The TVR Power Supercharger works and it works well.

Howard Bryan



**"Sliding the car round the hairpins where we could, we climbed rapidly bouncing the charger off the rev limiter time and time again"**



Photographs courtesy of Heather Roberts & Jonathan Lowey