

# BLOWN AWAY!

Pete's at it again and this time he's supercharged an R8. We're blown away.

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Tiny badge gives the game away.

Somewhere between fourth and fifth gear, the R8 crossed 200kph. You expect the shove in the small of your back to ease off, but it just doesn't. Both passenger and Milltek exhaust system are howling like banshees, and somewhere past 200kph, I'm vaguely aware of the engine bouncing off its 8000rpm rev-limiter in fifth. There's more of the same thump in sixth and when the speedo crosses 260kph, common sense gently taps me on the shoulder and I back off. The engine was still pulling hard and it felt like it had at least another 80kph in its arsenal – I, on the other hand, didn't. To say it's easy to

get carried away in this 550bhp (claimed) supercharged Audi R8 would be a gross understatement. It insists, and sometimes dares you to do so, every time you find a half-decent stretch of road. Two hundred kilometres per hour is a joke for this car and given the space 260kph is almost as easy as boiling an egg.

To give you some perspective of what this beefier R8 will do to your senses, here are a few hard facts. 100kph comes up in 5.4sec, 200kph in 15.44sec and 240 in a shade over 23sec! The in-gear times are as mental. 20-80kph before you can say 'R8', and 40-100kph before you say 'Holy!' Phenomenal as these numbers are, this R8's party trick bit is the way it pulls

so hard in the higher gears. It pulls so effortlessly through the last third of its rev band, even in fifth gear, that you feel like you're in the sling of a big catapult being flung down the road with unrelenting force. If there's a downside to this, it is that it all feels a bit too civilised, a bit too sterile. There are no tyre-smoking antics, no bottom-clenching moments, no sideways heroics, nothing. If you are expecting a handful of bad behaviour from your 550bhp supercar, you may be disappointed. Or pleasantly surprised.

You need to pay attention to what your foot is doing with the throttle though – think of going fast and you've already crossed 200kph! Chew your nails

absent-mindedly and you'll be in the next district before you realise it! And it does all this while making sounds ranging from the ominous growl of distant thunder to the loud trumpeting of a few hundred elephants!

We're on this restricted eight-lane highway outside Hyderabad because Peter Chacko of Pete's Performance asked if we wanted to drive his latest offering. We've driven Pete's cars before – remember that wild horse of a 500bhp Octavia RS? Or the grunting 220bhp Laura? We've never come away disappointed. This project however, is new for Pete's. A proper performance upgrade on a proper supercar – something they're doing for →



The catapult.

## TALKING TO: PETER CHACKO

**What kind of demand have you seen for supercar performance kits in India?**

Right now, the market is small but we see potential. Tuning supercars is a relatively new art in India, so most owners are waiting to see how well the cars we modify run and whether they are reliable. This will change after a couple of our cars are on the road, and people start talking about them.

**Can I get this kit fitted anywhere in India? And what about support?**

Yes, we will go to the customer and fit the kit wherever the car is. It takes three to four days and this includes tuning the engine. As for support, the supercharger needs no maintenance. If anything, it's the belt that drives the supercharger that needs to be changed at around 50,000km. We supply a spare belt when you buy the kit.

**Any kits for other supercars?**

We have kits for the Audi RS4, R8 (V8 and V10), Lamborghini Gallardo LP560, Porsche 911s (including supercharging the 911 Turbo) and a whole range of BMWs.

**Which car would be your dream project?**

The Gallardo and the R8 V10. We can go upto 760bhp on these cars with our kit. We have a customer in Delhi who's interested in fitting it, and we are really excited about it.



← the first time. Peter's roped in the Southern California-based VF Engineering to provide the supercharger kit and the engine remap to get the V8 R8 to make more power than the R8 V10!

The good thing is that VF Engineering has not messed with any of the R8's friendly supercar character. Power delivery is linear with no sudden peaks and this car feels as docile as the standard R8 when you're trying to dodge autorickshaws on your way to that open road. There's a solid 'whup' from the

transmission on full bore shifts, but it just adds to the supercar experience.

The R8's brilliant weight balance and all-wheel-drive system easily copes with the extra power – around corners you have a lot more go and if you feed it too much when leaned over, it'll step into predictable understeer. And because the suspension is stock, the R8's friendly ride is unchanged as well – it dealt with Hyderabad's bumps and lumps reasonably

well. That it looks like a stock R8 may disappoint some who want more show for their newfound go.

Still, this is really one of those supercars you can use everyday. The extra 130bhp the forced induction kit brings with it is easily contained by the stock stability program and tyres though the brakes could do with an upgrade. Slowing →

**Supercharger is a neat fit under the hood and boosts power to a claimed 550bhp.**



## BOOST IS THE SECRET...

**Pulls like a train everywhere in the rev band.**



THE SUPERCHARGER USED is an Eaton Twin Vortices Series 1900 four-lobe supercharger making 6psi of boost. It is mounted on the engine with a CNC-machined billet aluminium housing containing an air-to-water heat exchanger (to cool the charged air going into the engine) and an extra radiator in the nose cools the water. The R8's generous engine

bay allows for a neat and easy fit. The supercharger is driven off the crank via a Goodyear serpentine belt system and the stock belt has been upgraded from five to seven ribs. VF's engineers re-wrote the ECU's code from scratch and 'flashed' it into the car's two ECUs through the OBD2 port. The ECU's new code also omits the top-speed limiter. There's also a Milltek exhaust system.

VF claims the engine's internals are the same and there's no beefing up to handle the extra power and also that it is running the same compression ratio as the stock R8. VF Engineering says it will run on 91-Octane fuel.

And, they say it's not necessary to upgrade the clutch, but an R8 V10's clutch is a direct fit and will handle the extra torque better. The system takes about four days to install.

← down from beyond 200kph repeatedly did lead to slight brake fade and that horrible grinding/squealing noise that tortured brakes make. Oh, and the robotised clutch did heat up after a few repeated standing-start acceleration runs, and it's why this car doesn't match Audi's claimed 0-100kph time of 4.6sec. But, to be fair, the high ambient temperatures may also have been at fault (it was 35deg C that day). There's also that small issue of warranty – fitting this kit will void it.

The supercharged R8 is staggering. It manages to be more exploitable, cossetting and docile than you would imagine and yet is every bit as fast as you expect it to be.

As is, the R8 kit costs Rs 20 lakh – that's for the supercharger, the intercooler, the ECU remap and the Milltek exhaust. It is expensive but you'll realise why it's worth it every time you put your foot down. **AI**

### ACCELERATION

Kph	Sec
0	0.00
20	1.40
40	2.40
60	3.13
80	4.34
100	5.40
120	7.05
140	8.54
160	10.59
180	12.78
200	15.44
220	18.94
240	23.02

### In gear acceleration

20-80kph	2.96
40-100kph	3.11

'260kph in this car is almost as easy as boiling an egg.'