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Alternative view

I DON'T CARE what else is in the news, by far the most important development in the pages of *Volkswagen Driver* this month is that I have a new Golf! Yes indeed, I am now finally the actual owner of a Golf Estate GT 1.5 TSI EVO (150 PS).

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I had initially wanted to take advantage of the scrappage scheme to trade in a Euro 4 Jaguar X-Type, but a technicality prevented that. It wasn't a VW. So, I had a chat with my friendly neighbourhood VW dealer (Cameron Motors in Perth) and the lovely Carlo talked me through some options that would add up to a better deal.

It was also a fascinating opportunity to go through the sales experience at first hand, as I've spent so many years working in the automotive sector at the manufacturer level, with very little opportunity to view the process from the typical customer perspective.

So, off I toddled to see Carlo and talk about my grand plan for VW ownership. Like many customers these days, I had a clear view of what I wanted. It had to be an estate – I have one child and a springer spaniel, I like the versatility of a rear hatch but want more load space, and I like a low-down seating position, so no SUVs. The Passat Estate is too big, leaving the Golf as the obvious choice. I had to have DSG (the best gearbox ever made by any car manufacturer in the world – ever!) and I also wanted a nav system but not fabric upholstery. The rest didn't bother me that much.

The first thing I noticed about the dealership experience (aside from being a friendly bunch that serve decent coffee) is that there's a whole lot of gobbledegook they are now obliged to spout in the name of compliance. Although I put a fair bit of effort into listening, I seem to have archived most of it in the Room 101 of my mind – ah well!

Once we had established what I wanted, Carlo suggested he'd first find out what was already built, before looking at a factory order. As luck would have it, sitting in Emden awaiting shipment were two RHD Golf GT 1.5 TSI Estates, one of which was DSG!

It was Indium grey metallic with 'Art Velours' upholstery, 2Zone climate control and the Winter pack. Although the latter were not options I had specifically sought, I was particularly pleased to have the Winter pack, which provides heated front seats and heated washer jets (it can get a bit chilly in these parts!).



PHOTO: CARLO CORVI

And that was probably the fastest £28,000 I've ever spent. Although, to be fair, I haven't actually spent it – Volkswagen Finance has spent most of it...

Perhaps I should have gone through the whole digital configuration process to get the full 'spec your car' experience, but I just didn't feel it was necessary. The GT spec has everything I wanted, plus a whole bunch of other bells and whistles that I didn't know I wanted and now won't be able to live without.

The rest of my Saturday afternoon at Cameron Motors was spent going through the compliance gobbledegook, some obligatory video watching and assorted finance stuff to make all the figures fit. I then headed home with a bunch of printouts to consider my decision before calling in the following Monday to commit and make a down payment.

Carlo advised that it would probably take three to five weeks for the car to make its way to Perth. That was Monday October 2, but just 10 days later I received a call to say my car had arrived. That ship must have been docked in Emden with its engines revving, just waiting for the say-so from Perth. I could have booked my handover for October 19 had it not been for my own diary getting in the way. How's that for speed – just 17 days from order to handover?

As it was, I took delivery on Monday October 23 – a rather dull and dreary day that kind of matched the Golf's dark grey paintwork. I wasn't entirely sure what to expect and, on arriving at Cameron's, I marched straight past the LED screen welcoming me by name and telling me how pleased they were to have my custom, but by the time Carlo pointed it out to me, the name had already

changed to someone else. Although I had completed all the finance paperwork at a previous appointment, there was still a surprising amount of stuff to sign – mostly to do with consumer rights and compliance associated with things like Gap insurance.

Turns out, the whole time I was sitting there signing stuff, chatting and drinking coffee, my new car had been waiting patiently just a few metres away in a glass cubicle cloaked in a close-fitting blue cover stating 'I'm ready to go home now' (how adorable is that?).

Once Carlo did the grand unveil, I gleefully took up my rightful place in the driver's seat and took in my new automotive surroundings. Carlo asked me if I was happy with it. Perhaps I wasn't effusive enough. Perhaps I've sat in too many new cars. Perhaps it just hadn't quite sunk in that this one is actually mine. Either way, I assured him that I was.

I must admit, though, as I sat in my pristine new car with just five miles on the clock inside a glass cubicle and looked out into the damp, grey afternoon, I felt a certain reluctance to drive it away into the harsh reality of the cruel world, where nasty things like rain, dirt, salt, stones and other vehicles would all be waiting to attack it. There's no denying that, as I pulled out onto the main road, I could almost hear the sound of its value plummeting.

But all that quickly faded as I headed for home, to be replaced by the satisfied anticipation of spending the next few years enjoying trouble-free motoring in a spectacularly engineered car with lots of yummy bells and whistles – oh, and an endless source of material for future columns... 🇩🇪