

5. Courtenay Sport VX-Racing Vauxhall Astra

Courtenay Sport and VX-Racing were two brands made for one another. CS are a well-respected and established Vauxhall tuner based in Norfolk, with a long tradition of intelligent, stealthy, factoriesque tuning of Vauxhalls, with attitude. And now Vauxhall have breathed new life into old models with their VX-Racing range of potent performance cars, CS were bound to want to play.

And this is their latest offering, CS's stage three demo Astra VX-R, putting out 287bhp and a thumping 303lbft, for £2610, fully fitted. Such punch is produced with a blend of CS/VX-Racing front mounted intercooler, full 2.5-inch Milltek stainless steel exhaust system with 200Cell HJS sports cat, Denso Iridium spark plugs and in-house stage three ECU remap, developed on their own 2WD rolling road. That's a lot of punch for your pound (taking the Astra up 50bhp and 65lbft from 237bhp/lbft).

For those with smaller pockets, CS also offer a stage one 'driveability' remap, taking out the 'overly-aggressive' throttle response of the OE map, and adding 25bhp/25lb ft, for £550 fitted (+ Panel filter, £22). Or there's the stage 1.5, deleting the expensive sports cat for a Milltek front pipe and cat back system with ECU remap, for £1168, adding 35bhp/lbft. Or, there's stage two, Milltek full exhaust with sport cat (& no FMIC), for £1695 fitted & mapped, adding 45bhp, and giving 290lbft torque. Phew.

Additionally, CS offer a range of chassis mods, some of which are fitted to this test car. They include a wonderful, confidence-inspiring and great VFM, 345mm AP Racing four-pot VX-Racing front brake kit, 8Groove rear discs, braided hoses, Dot 5.1 fluid and lower arm brake cooling ducts (the best bargain mod and so effective, at £17.50). And touching tarmac, there's tasty 8x18 Speedline Torini flow formed wheels with 225-40X18 Toyo Proxes T1R tyres.

CS also offer the option of uprated anti-roll bars, Eibach and Bilstein suspension springs, dampers and coilovers, and strut braces, for those with track persuasions. But this demo car feels settled on its OE (Lotus's Gavin Kershaw set-up) suspension, and it looks good too, aided by the stylish Speedlines, which are also lightweight.

One interesting additional feature CS have added is a two-stage boost set up; offering either 240lbft or all 303lbft of

