

ABOVE & BEYOND

Built for the road and modified for the track, these two Courtenay Sport creations go further than your average.

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When it comes to the weekend, some car fanatics like to spend some quality car time by lavishing their pride and joy with a layer of high-shine polish. Others get their kicks by partaking in an altogether more extreme pastime: track days. Taking your car to a track and is an addictive hobby. The rush of adrenaline that accompanies the thrill of driving your car on the limit of its and your abilities is something that only the most hardcore of 'Class A' drugs can match. But what happens when you start to get used to that hit and the thrill begins to fade? It's a common problem for track day addicts the world over, but luckily for those with petrol flowing through their veins, the solution is a lot more fun than a week of cold turkey at the Priory.

Enter Vauxhall legends Courtenay Sport. Now 25-years-old, Courtenay have been at the forefront of the

Vauxhall tuning scene for decades, and have the perfect remedy to put the thrill back into driving, no matter what Vauxhall you drive. 'The Astra VXR and the VX220 are both great cars to take on the track,' states Courtenay's boss Jon Shield. 'Even in standard trim, they are both serious pieces of kit. But with a few select modifications, they can be absolutely unbelievable!'

As two of the most popular Vauxhall models to modify, Courtenay have understandably put a lot of development work into producing components that turn the Astra and VX220 into true track weapons; one of the most comprehensive of which is the VXR-based Sprint package. Unveiled at their 25th anniversary celebrations, the Sprint package is a total reworking of the Astra to refocus what is an extremely capable road car and



FAST FACTS

- ★ Garrett 56-trim GT2871R ball bearing turbo
- ★ Custom 80 mm Astra 1.9 CDTi airbox
- ★ Custom exhaust
- ★ Custom intercooler with revised pipework
- ★ 343 mm grooved discs and Alcon 4-pot callipers



FAST FACTS

- ★ Eaton M62 supercharger
- ★ Milltek stainless steel exhaust
- ★ Chargecooler
- ★ EBC discs with Pagid pads
- ★ Enlarged throttle body

VX220 AND ASTRA



Dave and Courtenay have transformed the styling and performance of the engine.



We think the yellow callipers look cool with the white wheels.



Direct its talents closer to the track. 'We saw a trend towards more track biased modifying and wanted to provide an upgrade package for Astra owners that would take the VXR to the next level,' explains Jon. 'At the time, even major manufacturers were jumping on the bandwagon, with cars such as Renault's Megane R26R featuring a stripped interior, race wheels and even a roll cage as standard. The word on the grapevine was that Vauxhall themselves were planning a stripped-out special edition of the VXR, however, when the credit crunch struck, the project was canned.

Luckily, this meant that the door was left wide open for us to make this kind of hardcore track special available to Vauxhall owners and at present, the Sprint package is available for both the Astra and Corsa.' Featuring uprated brakes, suspension and an overall weight loss of nearly 60 kilos, the Sprint package - named after the famous Nova Sprint special edition - takes the best attributes of the Astra and improves on them for use on the track, while still retaining its usability and practicality on the road. Courtenay customer Dave Addis was the second person to have

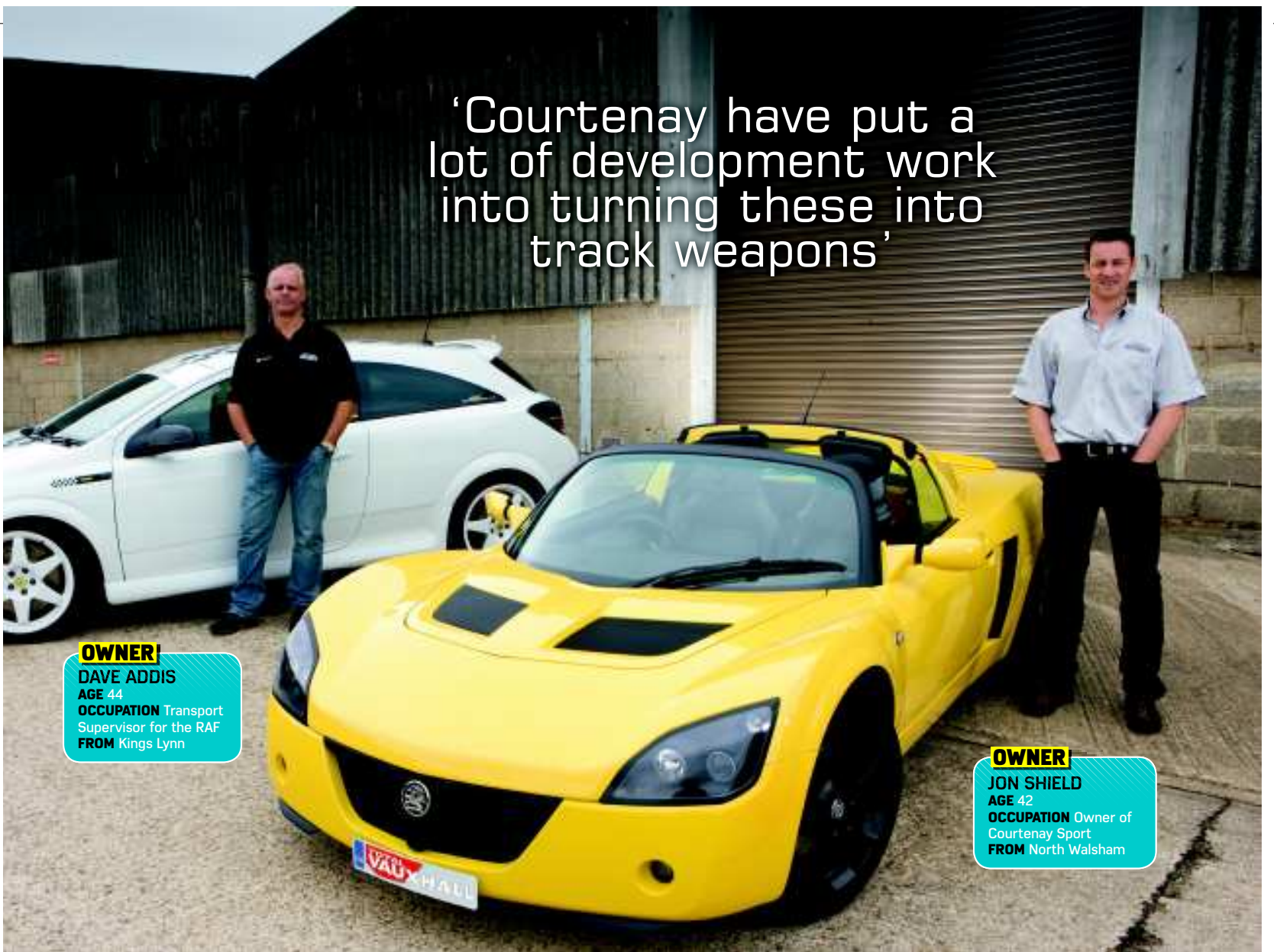
his VXR 'Sprintified' - the first was Jon himself with the original Sprint demo car. 'I bought the car from new back in May 2008 as soon as they came out,' says Dave of his immaculate Nürburgring edition Astra VXR. 'I've got a real thing for white cars, so my previous car, a highly modified red VXR had to make way for this one quickly.' As a seasoned regular at the North Walsham-based Vauxhall specialists, Dave was no stranger to the delights of a tuned VXR, with his previous car packing the full Courtenay Stage 3 engine package of uprated intercooler and radiator, 60 mm plenum chamber

and pipework, uprated actuator and bespoke Klasen engine map. 'When I bought the Nürburgring edition I transferred all the parts over from the red car straight away,' says Dave. 'It was then just a case of waiting 1500 miles until the car was run-in before Jon could add a remap to unleash its true power potential. Unsurprisingly, it made a massive difference!' In the swap, Dave replaced his previously red silicone hose kit with a yellow version and added an airbox from an Astra 1.9-litre CDTi and a Whiteline rear anti-roll bar. He also painted the callipers yellow to match

'Sprint' graphics are the sort of small thing that make this Astra special.



'Courtenay have put a lot of development work into turning these into track weapons'



OWNER

DAVE ADDIS
AGE 44
OCCUPATION Transport Supervisor for the RAF
FROM Kings Lynn

OWNER

JON SHIELD
AGE 42
OCCUPATION Owner of Courtenay Sport
FROM North Walsham



Recaro seats and Sabelt harnesses are track essentials.

and gave the cam cover a lick of white paint to add a neat contrast. 'At the time I was really happy with the car,' laughs Dave, 'however, as soon as I saw the Sprint package, I knew I had to have it. I'd never really felt that the standard seats sat low enough, so the chance to fit the excellent Recaro buckets with Sabelt four-point harnesses was just too good to miss.'

As Dave's car already had the engine work done, it was just a case of adding the other Sprint accoutrements to bring it up to spec. An AP Racing big brake kit has been fitted up front, while a Courtenay 292 mm disc and calliper upgrade takes care of the rear. A Quaife ATB limited slip diff aids traction and DAP lowering springs drop the ride height 25 mm. Connecting it all to the road, filling the arches and lending the VXR some motorsport style are the 8x18 inch Revolution Millennium lightweight racing wheels with Vredenstein tyres.

The most obviously radical change has been to the interior, where the factory seats have been binned in favour of a lone pair of buckets and harnesses. 'We thought about offering a roll cage as an option, however many people were struggling to get insured with a cage,' says Jon. 'It also adds weight, so we decided to leave it out.' With the rear stripped, it's

VX220 AND ASTRA

TECH SPEC

SUPERCHARGED VX220

ENGINE

2198cc Z22SE DOHC 16-valve, Courtenay Stage 2+ supercharger conversion including Eaton M62 supercharger, chargecooler, enlarged throttle body and Milltek stainless steel exhaust system, larger water radiator and pre-radiator, dual pass modification on inlet manifold.

TRANSMISSION

Factory five-speed manual, rear-wheel drive.

SUSPENSION

Factory springs and dampers.

BRAKES

Front: Uprated Pagid fast road pads, rear: standard discs and callipers.

WHEELS + TYRES

Standard wheels, front: 5.5x17 inch, rear: 7.5x17 inch, Bridgestone Potenza tyres.

BODY

2002 VX220 two-door, Lightning Yellow, VX220 Turbo black headlights and front and rear splitters.

INTERIOR

Factory leather interior.

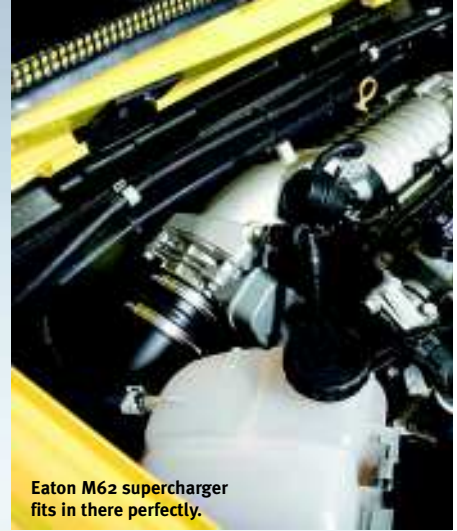
amazing how much louder the exhaust sounds, and it was for this reason that Dave has swapped the Remus system for a twin-box Blue Flame system, which has the added benefit of not only being quieter, but it also releases more power too. 'The car is totally transformed,' enthuses Dave, 'I can't wait to see how it'll perform on track. My old VXR was good, but with the weight loss and the diff and the suspension and brake upgrades, this should be amazing!'

Another car which could also be described as amazing on track is Jon's VX220. Originally bought back in 2007 with the intention of running it as a dedicated track car, it was only after a thorough inspection that Jon felt it was actually too nice to abuse. This has obviously led the VX to becoming more of a development tool than a track slag. 'I had another VX220 before this one,' explains Jon, 'which I'd always planned on supercharging, although I never got the chance. When I bought this one, I

wasn't going to let the opportunity pass me by.'

One of the most common complaints about the 2.2-litre Z22SE-engined VX220s is the relative lack of power compared to what the chassis can handle, and it has been this problem that Jon has so comprehensively addressed. 'Because the VX's chassis is so good it can take much more power than the standard 156 bhp,' says Jon. 'And this deficiency is accentuated on track, with owners finding that, although they are super fast through the twisties, they don't have the grunt to make use of the straights. The supercharger conversion sorts this out.'

Being pulley driven directly from the engine, as opposed to a turbocharger, which is driven by exhaust gases, a supercharger is the perfect way



Eaton M62 supercharger fits in there perfectly.

'The VX220 has been crying out for big power for years and we should be able to deliver it'

Thanks to Courtenay's modifications, these two are really ready for the track.

>WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

The Sprint designation has been attached to a number of GM products over the years, but for Courtenay boss Jon Shield, the name will always conjure images of the bonkers Corsa A / Nova Sprint. With its extreme bodykit, uprated suspension and technically-advanced-for-the-time 'fuel injected' 1.3-litre engine, it was the car that sparked a fire in a then-teenage Jon, who in turn inspired thousands of other Nova fans with his own 2-litre turbo creation some years later. Nova Sprint, we salute you!





Little in the way of comforts here,
but that's not why you buy a VX220.



VX220 AND ASTRA



The VX220 still looks bang up to date today, over ten years since its launch.



AP brakes do a fine job of bringing it to a halt.

to increase the power of a track car engine. This is due to the linear nature of a supercharger's torque curve and power delivery, meaning it is much more progressive and less twitchy when on the limit on track. Using an Eaton M62 supercharger, combined with a Milltek exhaust, chargecooler and enlarged throttle

body, Jon's VX is now running 256 bhp. That's a 100 bhp increase over standard, and more than enough to see the featherweight VX turn into a proper track tool. 'Fitted with a smaller pulley, the M62 is good for around 300 bhp on this engine,' reckons Jon. 'However, we are currently developing the car to be able to run a larger Harrop supercharger, along with larger injectors and cams to be able to extract nearer 360 bhp.'

At present, the 2.2's Delphi ECU is limiting the amount of power possible from the engine and is stopping Jon and the boys from slapping on the larger Harrop charger. However, by

converting the car to run the Bosch Motronic ECU from the VX220 Turbo, Courtenay believe they can unlock the engine's true potential and open it up to run much more potent modifications. 'If we can nail the ECU transplant over the next few months then soon we'll be able to produce some amazing VX220s,' smiles Jon. 'The car has been crying out for big power for years, and finally we should be able to deliver it. I'm just looking forward to testing it out on track. It'll be a proper animal and will give the boys in tuned hot hatches a real fright!'

Over the next few years Courtenay believe there is going to be increased

demand for more circuit focused modifying as people take to the track to be able to use their cars to their full potential. 'With the VXR brand, I think Vauxhall have really raised the game of what a road car can do,' says Jon. 'The cars are just so good on the road that people are wanting to see what the cars can really do on the limit, and that inevitably leads them to seek out somewhere to do it, which is the track. And when they then start modifying the cars, they get addicted and the effect just snowballs.' And with the increase in popularity of events such as Time Attack, Nürburgring trips and general track days, we believe them.

TECH SPEC

2008 ASTRA VXR NÜRBURGRING SPRINT

ENGINE

1998cc Z20LEH DOHC 16-valve, Courtenay Stage 3 conversion including Blueflame stainless steel exhaust system, larger Courtenay intercooler, enlarged plenum, 1.9 CDTi airbox and remap, yellow silicone hoses, white painted cam cover, aluminium caps, chrome covers, carbon wrapped Regal strut brace, engine mount bushes.

TRANSMISSION

M32 six-speed gearbox, Quaife ATB differential, front-wheel drive.

SUSPENSION

Lowered 25 mm on DAP springs and factory dampers, Whiteline rear anti-roll bar.

BRAKES

Front: 343 mm discs, AP Racing 4-pot callipers, Mintex pads, rear: Courtenay eight-groove discs, EBC Yellowstuff pads, Goodridge braided hoses all round.

WHEELS + TYRES

8x18 inch Revolution Millennium seven-spoke racing wheels, 235/40/18 Vredenstein Setanta tyres.

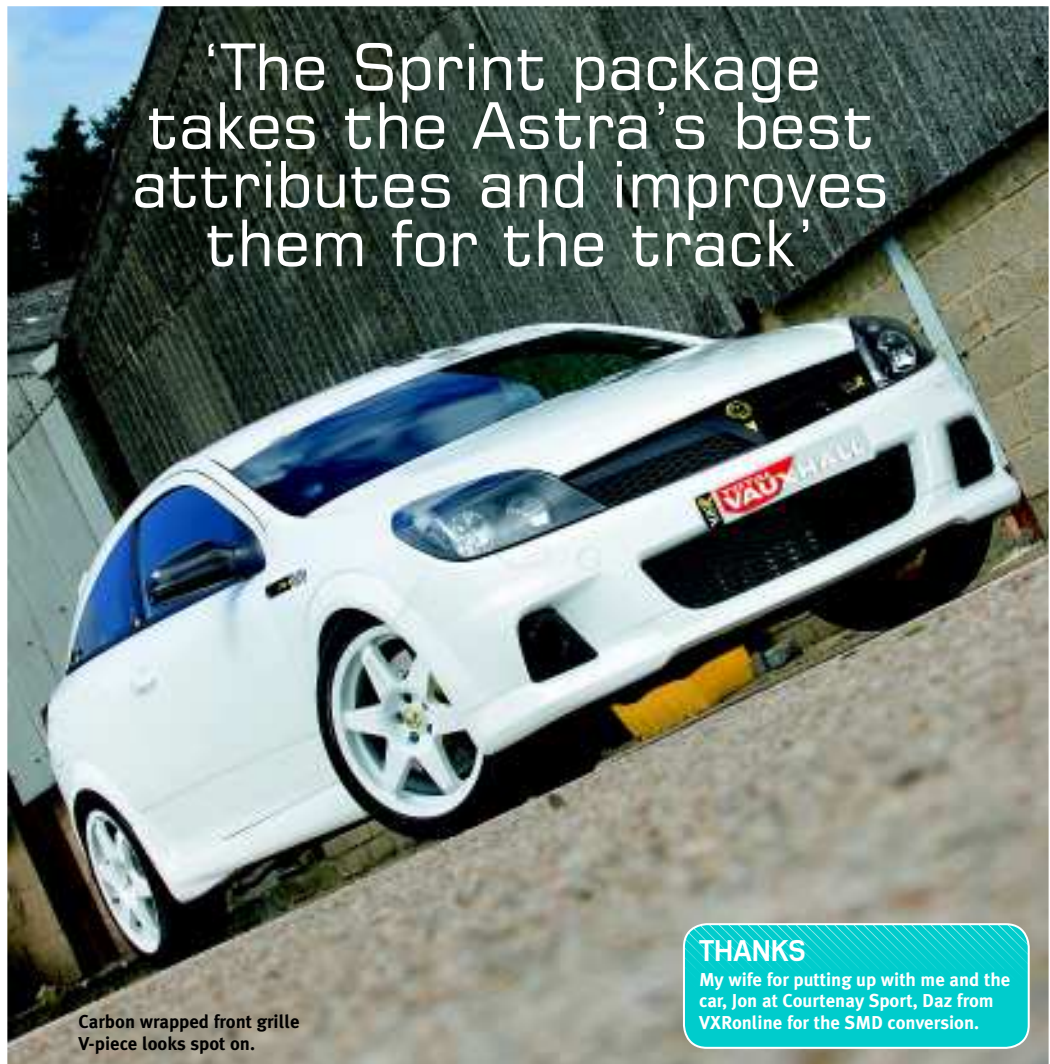
BODY

2008 Mk5 Astra VXR Nürburgring three-door, Glacier White, all chrome details removed, carbon wrapped front grille, satin black headlights, fog lights replaced with brake cooling ducts, carbon window strips, Sprint decals.

INTERIOR

Recaro Pole Position fixed bucket seats with Sabelt four-point harnesses, rear seats removed, rear harness bar, three gauge heater vent conversion - boost, oil pressure and oil temperature, yellow and carbon interior details, carbon wrapped door handles, green and red SMD conversion, Dash Hawk ECU monitor.

'The Sprint package takes the Astra's best attributes and improves them for the track'



Carbon wrapped front grille V-piece looks spot on.

THANKS

My wife for putting up with me and the car, Jon at Courtenay Sport, Daz from VXRonline for the SMD conversion.