
Driving report: Sporty dual leadership in the VW Golf

Von Jens Meiners

While the sales figures for electric cars leave a lot to be desired, there is one segment in which the loyalty of VW customers is completely unbroken. We are talking about the sporty combustion engines, and in particular the top models of the Golf series: GTI and Co. With the revised Golf R and the GTI Clubsport, the Wolfsburg-based company has now presented two new variants that offer driving dynamics at a very high level.

Both are more powerful than the regular GTI, which also delivers 265 PS (195 kW). However, both the GTI Clubsport and the Golf R are equipped with a higher evolutionary stage of the EA 888 engine; software ensures that the output in the GTI Clubsport is 300 PS (221 kW) and in the Golf R 333 PS (245 kW). In both variants, the turbocharger is "preloaded" to build up boost pressure immediately.

The transmission software of the seven-speed dual-clutch automatic transmission is specific: in the Golf R, the lowest possible gear can be selected directly by pulling the lever. And it is equipped with variable all-wheel drive with torque distribution on the rear axle, while the GTI Clubsport - and this is the most serious difference - only has front-wheel drive, with torque distribution via electronic differential lock.

Visually, both models can be easily differentiated: The front aprons are designed independently, the Clubsport has a specific sticker and shows two tailpipes, the R has four. Both models can be fitted with an Akrapovic titanium system, which is not exactly cheap and is characterized by a bassier sound. Curious detail: the GTI Clubsport is available in ten attractive colors, while the color range of the Golf R is limited to just three shades.

Both models benefit from the improvements that have also been made to the normal Golf variants and the regular GTI: Refined in detail, easier to operate, meanwhile the electronics also work reliably. The Golf R is also available as a Variant.

The characters of the two models are quite different. The Golf R confidently puts its power on the road, the sprint from 0 to 100 km/h takes just 4.6 seconds, the speed limit can be raised from 250 km/h to 270 km/h. The turn-in behavior is unusually agile, the Golf R remains neutral for a long time, and a special drift program allows hearty lateral driving. The whole thing is accompanied by an unusually sharp sound (which, incidentally, the EU wants to regulate away in the next few years).

The GTI Clubsport, although front-wheel drive, is even more agile than the Golf R, can be positioned perfectly in fast bends and is actually the sportier car - not least because of the 90 kilogram weight reduction. The standard sprint here takes 5.6 seconds, more traction is not possible, but the top speed of 250 km/h or a fully open 267 km/h is almost on a par with the R.

The instrumentation can be configured relatively freely, but why the rev counter of all things cannot be displayed in all display modes - in contrast to a wide range of lower-ranking information - remains the secret of the Wolfsburg programmers.

In terms of price, the hierarchy is unmistakable: the snappy GTI Clubsport costs from 49,225 euros, which is 3600 euros more than the regular GTI; the Golf R starts at 54,945 euros as the technology-laden top model. One important feature - and this would be our urgent wish for the sporty Volkswagen R department - is currently not offered by any of the three models: A manual six-speed gearbox, which the modular system should actually provide - as it was still available on the regular GTI until the facelift and in the Golf R in the USA. Despite the perfection of the dual-clutch automatic transmission, the fun factor would be noticeably higher with a classic manual gearbox. (aum)

Images for article



Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Volkswagen



Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Volkswagen

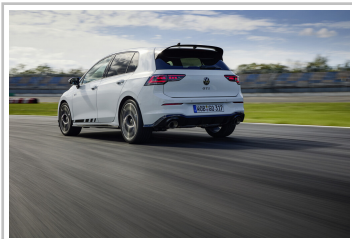


Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Volkswagen

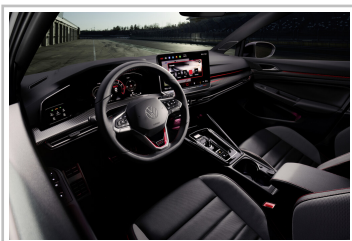


Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Volkswagen



Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Volkswagen



Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Volkswagen



Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Volkswagen



Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Volkswagen

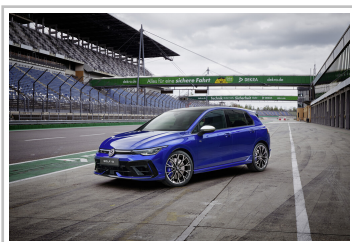


Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Volkswagen

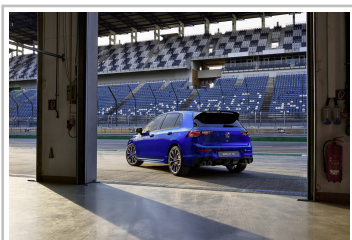


Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Volkswagen



Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Volkswagen



Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Volkswagen



Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Volkswagen



Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Volkswagen

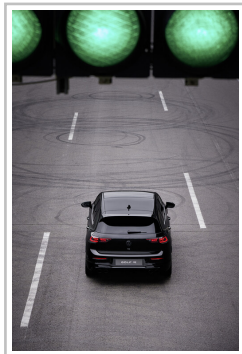


Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Volkswagen



Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Volkswagen



Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Volkswagen



Photo: Autoren-Union Mobilität/Volkswagen
