Acid Rush

When a car looks like a V8 Supercar, drives like a V8 Supercar and makes the same power as a V8 Supercar – surely it must be a V8 Supercar!

Avesco may not agree but this BA XR8 has all the right credentials, all that's missing are a few pushrods and about $4 million in sponsorship. From the outside, Ray Schoof's Acid Rush XR8 looks low and aggressive, especially with those 19x8 ROH Fury rims but the real story lies beneath.

When Ray ordered the car he wanted it lowered, fitted with a sunroof and rolling on those brand new wheels. So, WA Suspensions, in Fremantle, lowered the car with Lovells coils, Prestige Sunroofs, in Myaree, fitted the trick glass roof and Tyrepower Kelmscott supplied the Furys and the 245/35 x 19 tyres.

As Ray put a few clicks on the brand new speedo, he decided that more urgency was required when the right pedal touched the carpet so the car was taken to Eddy at Active Automotive, in Canning Vale, where the 3.23 gears were swapped for 3.46 cogs. Unfortunately that is the only alternate ratio currently available for the large M86 diff. Still, Ray was very happy with the car's improved response and the fact that he could actually use 5th gear now! The who's who list of Perth Street Car Magazine continued with a visit to Ben and the boys at Perth Exhaust Centre, in Perth. They crafted a twin 2.5-inch exhaust system that exits at each side of the rear bumper, giving the car a truly unique appearance from behind. Perth Exhaust also arranged for the supply of another bumper which was cut, plastic welded and painted to accommodate the extra exhaust tip. The resulting note is deep and unmistakably V8 (not an easy task with the quad-cammer at low rpm).

Now that the car was taking on a look of its own, Ray wanted to set it further apart from its stable mates so he left it with the team at McInerney Ford, in Morley, to have the XR8 wing replaced with a genuine GT wing. McInerney are really stepping up their range of aftermarket products and services for late model Falcons and one of their most popular offerings is a set of Herrod extractors. Naturally, a set found their way onto Ray's car! The new Tremec is a vast improvement over the old T5 gearbox but the shift still has the travel of a 16-speed Road Ranger, so Ray had McInerney slot in a Herrod billet short shifter while they had the car in the workshop. This transforms the shift, not only be reducing its travel but by making gear selection far more positive.

At this stage, most die hard Ford fans would be sitting back, with a wry smile and smoking a cigarette. That level of satisfaction would not come for Ray until he sorted out one last item on the list – the supercharger! Many people could be excused for thinking that 5.4 litres of flammable gas producing 260 kW would be enough but honestly, when the doughy bottom end performance and sheer weight of the car are factored in, it simply is not enough. So how much more do you need to make things right? Twenty, fifty or heaven forbid one hundred more Kilowatts? Not even close.

When it comes to fitting superchargers in WA, Mark's Workshop, in York has built an enviable reputation. Mark is not afraid to tackle the big jobs and his level of installation is superb so Ray had no hesitation taking his pride and joy to the home of the Motor Museum (plus he really enjoys the long, windy road that leads to York). Initially, the car was fitted with the stage one kit which produces 7.5 pounds of boost and around 400 hp at the tyres. But then Ray got wind of the intercooler kit and things started to get out of hand.

Mark took the car back into the workshop, pulled the front off again and virtually re-engineered the Stage 1 kit to fit the intercooler. Essentially, the kit comprises a water-to-air intercooler to cool the compressed intake charge, reducing the likelihood of detonation and creating a more dense charge in the cylinder to generate more power. The intercooler kit also allows a smaller blower pulley to be fitted to increase boost to around 9 psi. Apart from the intercooler itself, the kit also has a header tank (mounted behind the bumper on the driver's side) and a radiator core that mounts in front of the air conditioning condenser. Two electric pumps circulate the water and Redline Water Wetter mix through the intercooler radiator – where it is cooled – and into the tubes of the intercooler. From there it is returned to the header tank. The output pipe on the supercharger is also modified to allow the pipe to run forwards and down to the intercooler, from there the intake pipe runs upwards into the throttle body.

An essential fuel pump upgrade was also required. The supercharger kit uses an additional high-flow fuel pump to supply extra fuel to the engine under boost. The Stage 1 pump must be replaced with a 600 hp Bosch Motorsport unit for the intercooled 9 psi installation. Mark also modified the location and operation of the water injection and windscreen washer reservoir. In the Stage 1 kit these are one-and-the-same and the bottle resides under the front bumper on the passenger's side. This space is needed for the intercooler so the water bottle now sits next to the brake master cylinder.

Using a rising rate fuel pressure regulator, Mark was able to achieve a perfectly flat air/fuel ratio on dyno that not only eliminated detonation under boost but also produced a huge amount of power. To date the car has made a best dyno pull of 504 hp at the wheels on Mark's chassis dyno, which is around 100 hp more than the 7 psi, non-intercooled kit produces. On the road the car is rock solid and incredibly responsive, it also has incredibly long legs – Ray runs out of road long before the car stops pulling. On designated test tracks the car will bounce off the rev limiter in fourth gear and keep pulling like a Superbike in fifth. Sensational.

Unfortunately, the XR8's brakes were not up to the task of hauling down the acid rushing missile so Mark fitted a complete set of Herrod Motorsport Big Brakes. Now she really stops on the proverbial dime. One last trick from that man from York was to fit an operational shift light along side the Autometer boost gauge on the dashboard. Making the shift light operational with Ford's very complex (and highly frustrating) computer was a mission in itself. But the mission was accomplished and the shift light has not self-destructed yet!

Ray now has the perfect street car, it is totally driveable, looks sensational on the road, runs on premium unleaded, has nearly double the power of a standard XR8 and not a hint of brake fade. Imagine building a car like that 10 years ago – now that's an acid rush!