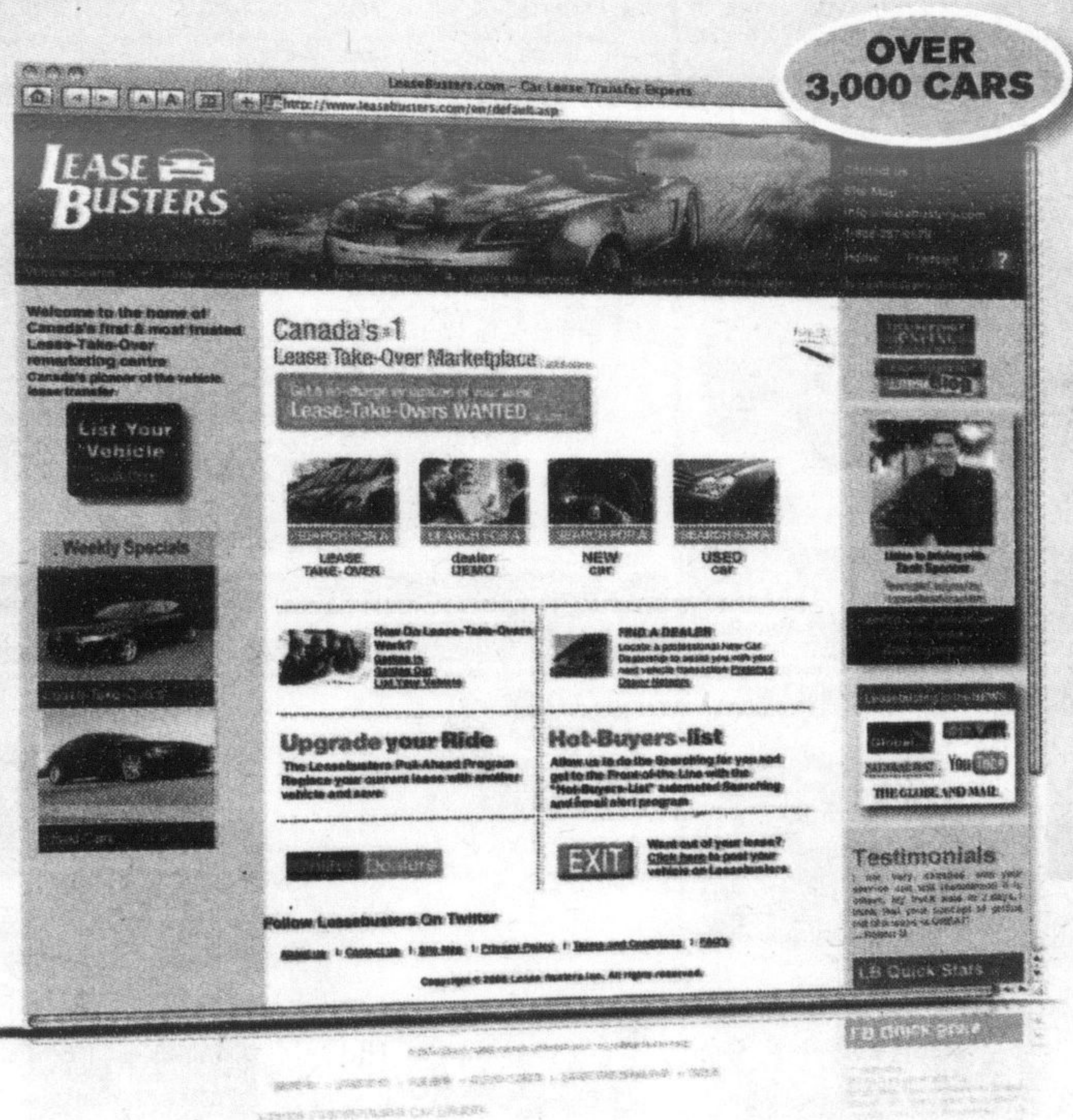


Upgrade your ride.

Get out of your lease and into another car with a LeaseBusters.com approved dealership.

With over 3,000 cars to pick from, its easy to find a great deal. Plus, with over 200,000 visitors a month, you'll find someone to take over your lease in no time.



**Not thinking of getting out?
...think again!**

We currently have more buyers than sellers, so now's the time to get out of your lease. Even if you weren't thinking about getting out of your lease, now could be the best time.

**Go to LeaseBusters.com Today
for a FREE EVALUATION of Your Lease.**

Over 100,000 successful lease take-overs since 1990!

**1-888-357-2678
LeaseBusters.com**

**LEASE
BUSTERS.COM**

Volkswagen Golf GTI - 2010

Story and photos by Rob Beintema
Metroland Newspapers, Carguide Magazine



The 2010 Volkswagen Golf GTI, as tested here, a three-door modern evolution of the "hot hatch" in Tornado red with optional 18-inch wheels, combining 200 hp "pocket rocket" performance with the friendly functionality of a versatile hatchback.

It wasn't exactly a snarl.

Nor was it brash enough to be labeled a roar.

It was a sound better described as a sort of baritone moan, reverberating through the floorboards, and singing out of the rear dual exhausts as I stomped the pedal flat to the floor and launched the VW Golf GTI towards the on-ramp.

I was barely two clicks out of Volkswagen's parking lot. I'd stopped at a gas station to top off the tank for a fuel economy test, and got a coffee for the ride home.

But before the monotony of the long ribbon-straight stretch of freeway, it was hard to resist the cheap thrill of a spiraling on-ramp. After the initial launch into the turn, I let up on the gas a little as the curve began to bite, trying to hold my speed as the lateral G-forces snugged me deep into the seat and side bolsters.

Yup, this was a decreasing radius ramp, just as I remembered, but my faith in the four contact patches was growing as the turn tightened, even though the GTI was dressed for winter in 225/40/18 Pirelli Snowsport tires.

The wheels stayed sticky, gripping the cold road and I was on the gas as soon as the ramp straightened, easily blipping up to highway speed before being spit into the collector lanes.

Hmm, a red GTI. I started wondering if this was the same car I had flogged around the racetrack at the AJAC Car of the Year competition. The cop two lanes over was probably wondering the same thing.

Fortunately, I'd spotted the police cruiser during my approach and had managed to curtail my takeoff speed to something resembling the legal limit.

I eased off the gas, slipped into the right hand lane and tried to look innocent, hard to do in sporty hatch as scarlet as sin. The GTI's pugnacious persona and off-the-wall wheels didn't help much either.

But somehow I got away with it. The cop paced me and we pretended to ignore each other for a few kilometers until he ramped off in search of a donut or more promising prey.

Whew! It's hard to stay out of that "race track" state of mind in a car like the 2010 VW GTI. Which is probably why Volkswagen Canada launched it at the legendary Circuit Mont-Tremblant racetrack

north of Montreal last fall.

"The new Golf GTI is an icon of sportiness," John White, President and CEO of Volkswagen Group Canada said at the time.

"From styling that pays homage to its roots in the Mark I, to its advanced technologies, all the way to its solid performance, this 6th generation Rocket represents the ultimate "Pocket Rocket" for all generations of GTI enthusiasts."

The GTI is the performance complement to the Golf lineup. It comes in either a three-door or five-door configuration, and the new 2010 Golf GTI echoes styling cues that have evolved from the original 1976 European Mark I and the Mark II version that first crossed the pond to Canada in 1984.

And, somehow, after setting the "hot hatch" benchmark, the Golf GTI has maintained the spirit and intent of that original Euro-inspired combination of performance and hatchback functionality.

The changes for 2010 are subtle but numerous. This latest version has new bumpers, new lights, thicker windows, better NVH sealing, a more streamlined design and other tweaks in character and content, both inside and out.

Two distinct red stripes across the black honeycomb grille separate the GTI from the rest of the Golf herd and they especially accented my Tornado Red tester, the only bright hue in the mainly monotone GTI palette.

Inside, there are more hotrod hints of red double-stitching across the gear shifter, hand brake and unique flat-bottomed steering wheel. The redesigned interior is anchored around a 6.5-inch touch screen surrounded by a handsome and ergonomic layout of instruments and controls with just the right mix of textures and chrome highlights. Plaid "Jacky" cloth Sport seats come standard or give way to optional leather buckets (as tested) courtesy of the Leather Luxury Package with Power Sunroof.

In its most basic form, the three-door six-speed manual version, the sixth generation 2010 Golf GTI has a starting price of \$28,675.

That may sound steep for a small hatchback but as the performance icon of the lineup, there's nothing "base" about the GTI. It comes well equipped with six airbags, 17-inch alloy wheels, eight-way manually

• see VOLKSWAGEN on page B23