

GONE IN 60 SECONDS

We modify a Focus RS without the owner knowing anything about it. Taking a liberty? Not when we treated him to a full Mountune MR375 conversion – the lucky fella...

Words: Luke Pics: Prime Exposures/Luke



How do you make a grown man cry? Well, a kick to the nuts is usually a crude but effective way to get a bloke blubbing, or for more sensitive types then losing at football can often activate the water works, but there is another slightly more risky approach that is almost guaranteed to get a response – and that's to mess with his car.

This will only work if the chap in question is a bonafide petrolhead of course, but you can be sure that when it comes to getting emotional, then tinkering with another fella's wheels without his knowledge or consent is only going to end one way. So, when the idea was mooted that we should steal a car and modify it without the owner knowing about it 'for a surprise', let's just say that we were a tad anxious about how

the man in question was going to react to a bunch of strangers laying hands on his pride and joy while his back was turned.

As it happens, the idea for this stunt came from none other than Andy Burton of Burton Power and the target for this prank was to be Neil Springate and his Mk2 Focus RS. You might remember Neil and his RS from when we borrowed his car for a few laps of Bedford

Autodrome back in the November 2011 issue as well as when we experimented on it with a J1 Automotive induction kit a little while later, so while he's not adverse to letting others behind the wheel or under the bonnet, he's always been on hand to see what we were up to.

Andy, it seems, has a bit of a cruel streak, because as well as selling us the idea on the grounds that it would be a lot of fun, the real

clinch was when he claimed that it might just bring a tear to the big man's eye! Well, as we were promised that this would be a tear of joy not crazed anger we decided that there was no shame in making Neil show us his sensitive side, so we teamed up with Andy to make it all happen. Plus, as we were planning on taking his Focus to Mountune for one of its all-singing, all-dancing MR375 packages, it would give us a

great opportunity to see exactly what's involved in transforming the RS to this top-of-the-range specification. Andy was tasked with sourcing Neil's spare keys so all we had to do was wait for the right opportunity to pounce – so when Neil and his partner were otherwise engaged for a few days with the birth of their first born, we decided that this would be the perfect time to strike...

Intercooler

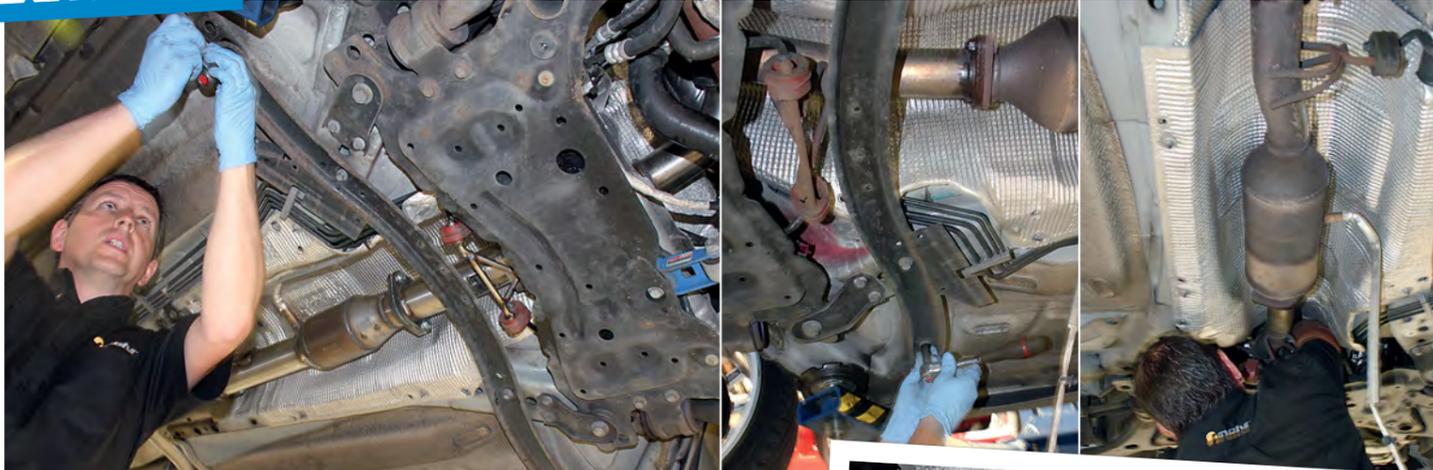
After successfully transporting the Mk2 to Mountune's Essex HQ, the first step was to get the car up on the ramps so that its technicians could get to work replacing all the parts necessary for the MR375 conversion. The first step was to replace the puny-looking standard intercooler for the larger item that was initially designed by Mountune and Team RS for the MP350 upgrade. As you can see from the photos, the difference in size between the original RS intercooler and the one that's used for the MP350/375 is substantial, although it's not just a case of 'bigger is better'. Simply bolting a huge 'cooler on the front of a car will probably do just as much harm as good, so the Mountune item has been designed to reduce charge air temperatures as well as maintaining the air-flow efficiency of the original equipment. In order to ensure that this bespoke intercooler was built to high standards, Mountune commissioned aluminium fabrication specialist Pro Alloy to manufacture it, and the finished article is top notch. And if you're looking at the pics of the standard intercooler and are wondering why Ford put such a weedy-looking thing on the RS, don't forget that its engineers spent many hours testing this to perform under a huge range of tolerances and temperatures to ensure that it could do the job every day on a 300bhp car. It works just fine, only not so well when we want to get more power from that beefy five-pot turbo!



Mountune designed Pro Alloy intercooler slots neatly into place. It's built to very high standards and is a fair bit larger than the original RS item as you can see

Exhaust

With the intercooler in place, the next step was to remove the exhaust in readiness for the sexy-looking Milltek item that also plays a vital role in the MR375 package. As with the intercooler, Mountune outsourced the production of its upgraded RS exhaust to one of the best known and well respected names in the business, and you only have to look at the photos here to see the quality of the fit and finish of the Milltek system. While it's similar to the one used on the MP350 conversion, the MR375 demands a larger 3" downpipe with anti-loosen bolts which combines with a 200-cell sports cat and the choice of either a Euro or UK spec 3" cat-back exhaust. The main difference between the two is noise, thanks to the design of the rear silencers (the louder UK version has two smaller boxes, while the EU one has one big box) so with Neil's car we decided to treat him to the more vocal UK item.



Removing OE exhaust is a relatively easy task. We fitted the UK-spec Milltek exhaust, which is a bit louder than the EU item thanks to two individual back boxes

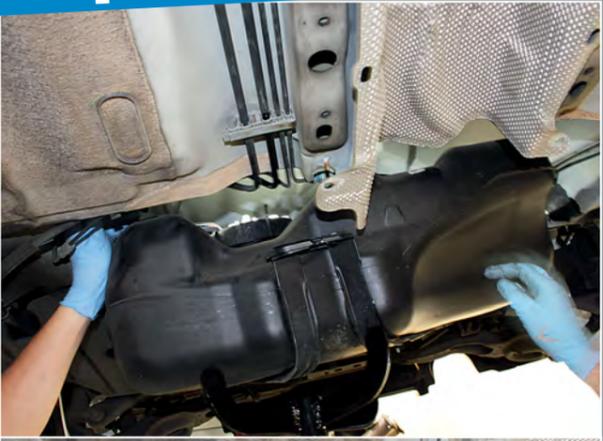


Original RS exhaust looks a bit sad compared to the Milltek upgrade!



Made from aircraft-grade stainless steel and featuring smooth radius mandrel bends and TIG-welded joints, Milltek exhaust is top notch

Fuel pump



Mountune's fuel pump (right) looks very similar to OE at first glance, but it's a hand-made item that's vital to the MR375 upgrade and is an expensive one at that

Exhaust

kit, as anyone who's tried to stretch the capabilities of the standard item on other high power conversions will confirm. If you were to buy one individually then this hand-built pump will set you back something in the region of £1500; a price tag that goes some way to explaining why most other tuning companies have resorted to hybrid pumps in their own big power conversions on the RS.

Once the fuel pump was in place, the Milltek exhaust could finally be fitted, and the superb build quality meant that it slotted into place with the precision you'd expect from 'factory finish' equipment, and with the eye-catching detail you'd expect from one of the industry's leading aftermarket specialists.

With the underside of the RS taken care of then, it was time for Mountune's technicians to turn their attention to the engine bay. In this case, they decided to remove the J1 induction kit that we'd previously fitted in favour of one their own air boxes. Designed to provide 60% more volume while still retaining the original air filter element, it's the same air box as used on the MP350 upgrade, although in the case of the MR375 package, it's also combined with one of Mountune's excellent cast inlet plenums. Also available to buy individually it's a popular mod on many a tuned Focus RS, and you'll likely have spotted identical ones under the bonnets of numerous cars at shows in the last 12 months or so.

The fitment of a bespoke recirculating valve is the last piece of the puzzle for the MR375 package, although as with all Mountune upgrades none of these components would work without the obligatory remap. It's in this department that Mountune really does hold a huge advantage over other tuning houses, because with that official Ford endorsement, comes an access-all-areas pass when it comes to the engine management. So, while others tend to rely on trial and error when it comes to cracking the code on the RS's ECU, Mountune is privy to uncensored information and with this in mind you can rest assured that the MR375 is going to be just as reliable as the standard 305PS engine that comes as standard from Ford. Interestingly, Mountune still prefer to physically remove the ECU and flash it directly rather than go through the OBD-II port to ensure a degree of extra security from outside sources.

With the ECU safely back in its box then, it had taken just a few hours to extract another 70bhp or so from Neil's RS, so we had plenty of time to smuggle the Focus back home in time before he could discover it. As an added bonus, it turned out that in that time he'd become a dad for the first time as well, so not only did he have a new addition to the family, but his other baby was now a lot more exciting than ever as well. As for his reaction on finding out what we'd been up to while he wasn't looking? Well, as Andy promised, it was a very emotional response indeed! ◦



With the uprated fuel pump fitted, Mountune's technicians could offer up the new Milltek exhaust into place

Mountune MR375 conversion

Price: £3750 inc VAT (plus fitting) or £2000 inc VAT (plus fitting) if upgrading from RS500 or MP350

Performance: (claimed)

0-60mph: 5.0-seconds

0-100mph: 11.3-seconds

Top speed: 165mph

Power: 370bhp at 6700rpm

Torque: 406lb ft at 3500rpm

Thanks & Contact:

Milltek Sport – www.millteksport.com

Pro Alloy – www.proalloy.co.uk

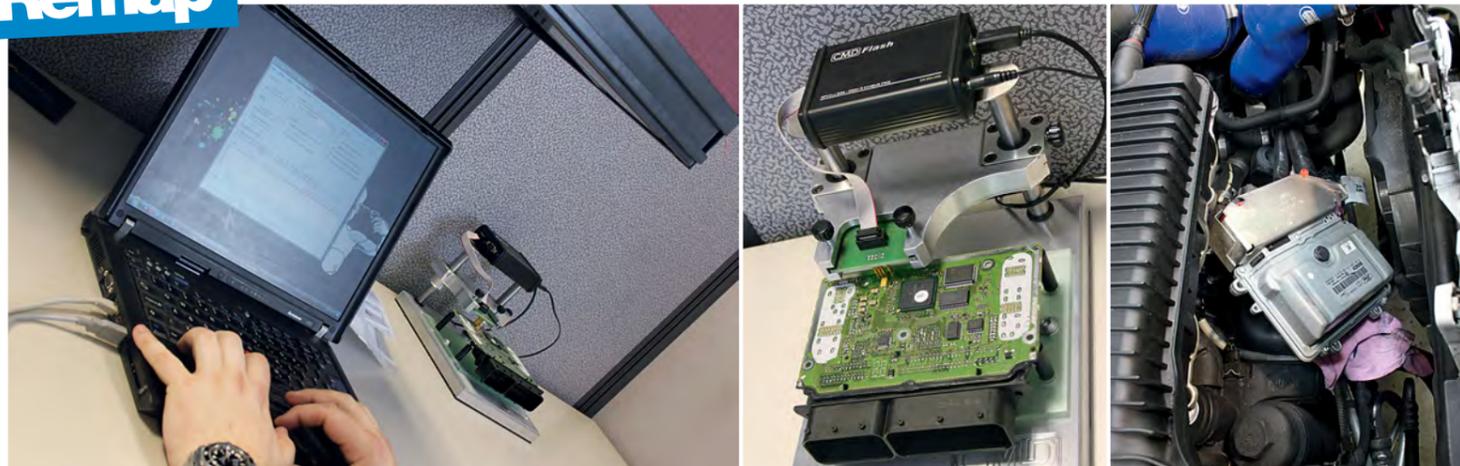
Mountune – www.mountunepformance.com

Engine



Mountune inlet, air box and recirculating valve are all part of the MR375 kit

Remap



The RS ECU is removed and flashed with Mountune's 'Ford Approved' MR375 engine map

