

White lightning

David Neil owned this Escort for 20 years and spent 10 years restoring it and fitting a Cosworth YB engine. The day after he finished, he sold it. Will Holman asks why

I WAS a slightly rusty, Sebring Red RS2000 20 years ago. But David wanted it and enjoyed driving it until the thirst for more power sent him on a tuning route that ended up with the Cosworth YB-powered, bubble-arched beauty you see here.

In the beginning things were more simple. 'At first I just fitted a DGAS carb to the 2-litre Pinto engine,' says David. The DGAS is a twin choke carb that was standard issue on three-litre Essex V6s. 'That worked okay but then I got hold of a copy of David Vizard's Pinto tuning book.

'He reckoned that the inlet ports on the Pinto head were too big for maximum power and needed to be made smaller. I tried doing it with chemical metal at first but that didn't work out too well so I ended up welding the ports with an arc welder and special cast iron rods.

'That worked fine so I also followed Vizard's recommended combustion chamber shape for maximum squish – I had to weld the chambers to achieve this as well.'

By this time David's RS2000 was beginning to look like it might make some serious power, so David added a pair of Weber 45 DCOEs and a Burton BF63 sprint cam.

'I got the power up to around 180bhp and it was running well but it did feel a little highly stressed.' Then David's mate fitted

his Mk II Escort with a Warrior twin-cam conversion. It was producing around 230bhp and suddenly the tuning stakes had been raised.

'I really fancied a Warrior twin-cam

head but they were expensive and I was chatting to a guy who suggested it would be cheaper to fit a Sierra Cosworth engine instead.' So David started looking out for the parts he needed to build himself one.





And in the meantime set about sorting out the Escort's shell.

'The floorpans were rusty and I ended up fitting two front wings, a new bonnet, a pair of doors and, of course, the bubble arches.

Which I bought new from a Ford dealer. But then this was 10 years ago.'

By this time David had collected together a Cosworth YB block, crank, rods and head.

'I didn't fancy a turbo and planned to

run the engine normally aspirated so I had to get the compression ratio up.' To achieve this he had the head and the block skimmed and ended up with an 11:1 CR. That's pretty high for an engine





running pump fuel but with the engine management that David planned to use he reckoned it would be all right. And with the Cosworth's steel crank and rods there was no doubt that the engine would be able to take the strain.

'But I made a costly mistake following some iffy advice. I was told to use Group A head bolts and tighten them to 95lb/ft. I did, and the block cracked. Group A bolts have no stretch in them – I should have used standard Ford bolts, which I did, when I finally managed to find another block!

David fitted Omega pistons and Piper cams, then looked around for an induction system. He came across the Titan throttle assembly you see now and thought that the theory of it seemed sound. The Titan system has one large plate which slides



the length of all the inlet ports, the four cut-aways in it exposing more port as you open the throttle.

The theory is that with the throttle fully open the ports have no obstruction in them at all, unlike standard throttle bodies which

force the air to flow around the butterflies' spindles even on full throttle. The theory's sound but in practice the throttle plate can stick, causing erratic idling.

Even so, the system looks the part and lends the engine an almost standard





If only you could still nip down to the local Ford dealer for a set of Escort MK1 steel bubble arches.

appearance. Nothing standard about the exhaust manifold though. It's a Burton Power part and David was relieved when it fitted perfectly without fouling anything in the engine bay.

'I fitted an Emerald M3D ECU to control

the engine but at first it wouldn't rev properly. So I got hold of Dave Walker and he fitted new drivers in the ECU. Then I went to him for rolling road mapping. Now it runs beautifully.'

Maximum power is now 205bhp

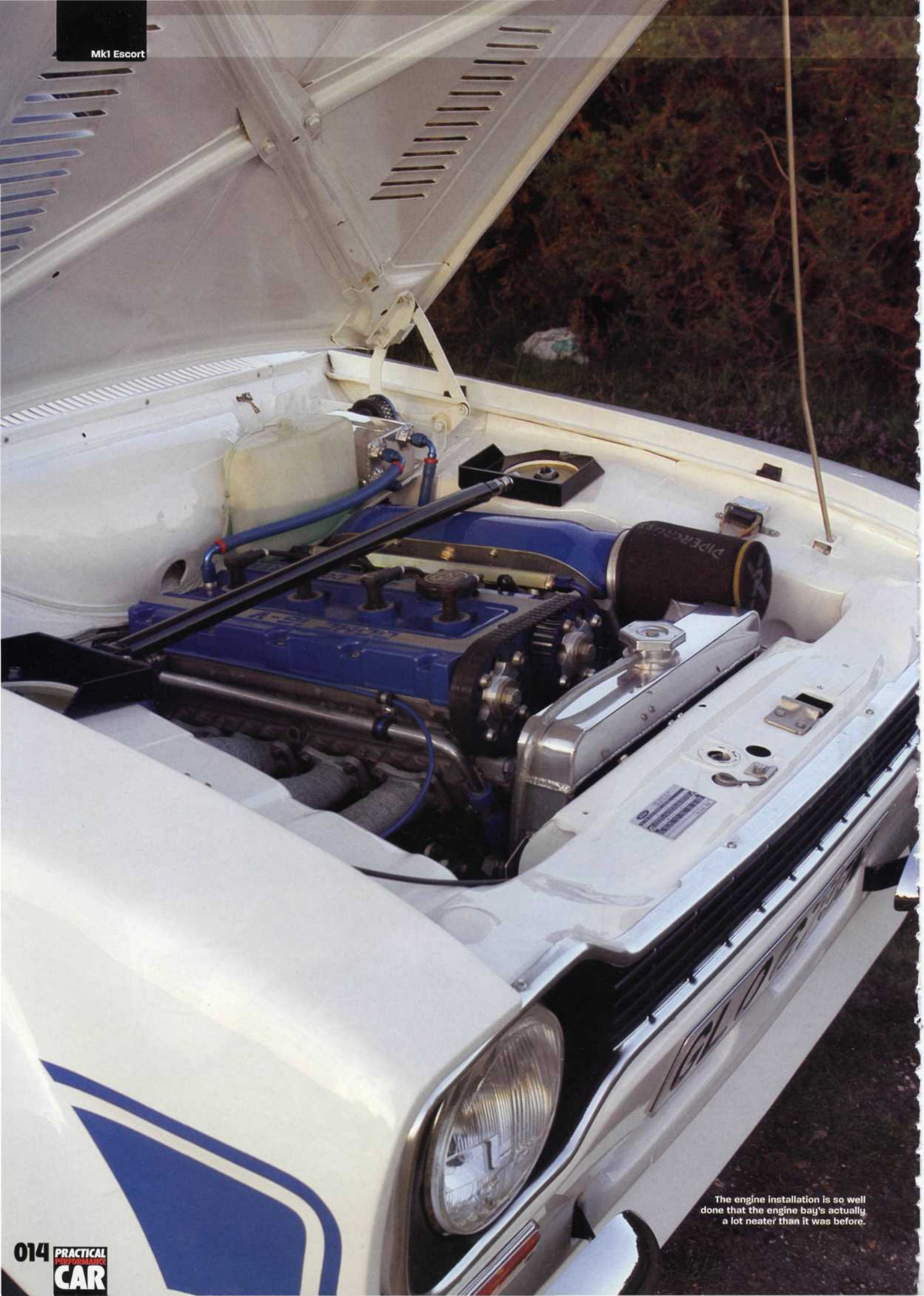
– uncanny, as the original Sierra Cosworth produced 204bhp with aid of a turbo.

Behind the engine is a modified Ford Type-9 five-speed box. 'It's the 2.8i Capri version, but I had it modified by Brain Hill at BGH Geartech. He removed the original first gear and fitted a higher ratio.' This got round the Type-9's big gap between first and second cogs.

A standard RS 2000 one-piece prop takes the drive to the English axle, in which sits a Quaife ATB limited slip diff.

'The axle's still on cart springs, although they're Ford Motorsport single leaf items. And because it's an RS it has anti-tramp bars too. I've rose-jointed the ends of them which allows me to adjust the axle position. I fitted a Panhard Rod too and the set-up gets the power down well.'





The engine installation is so well done that the engine bay's actually a lot neater than it was before.

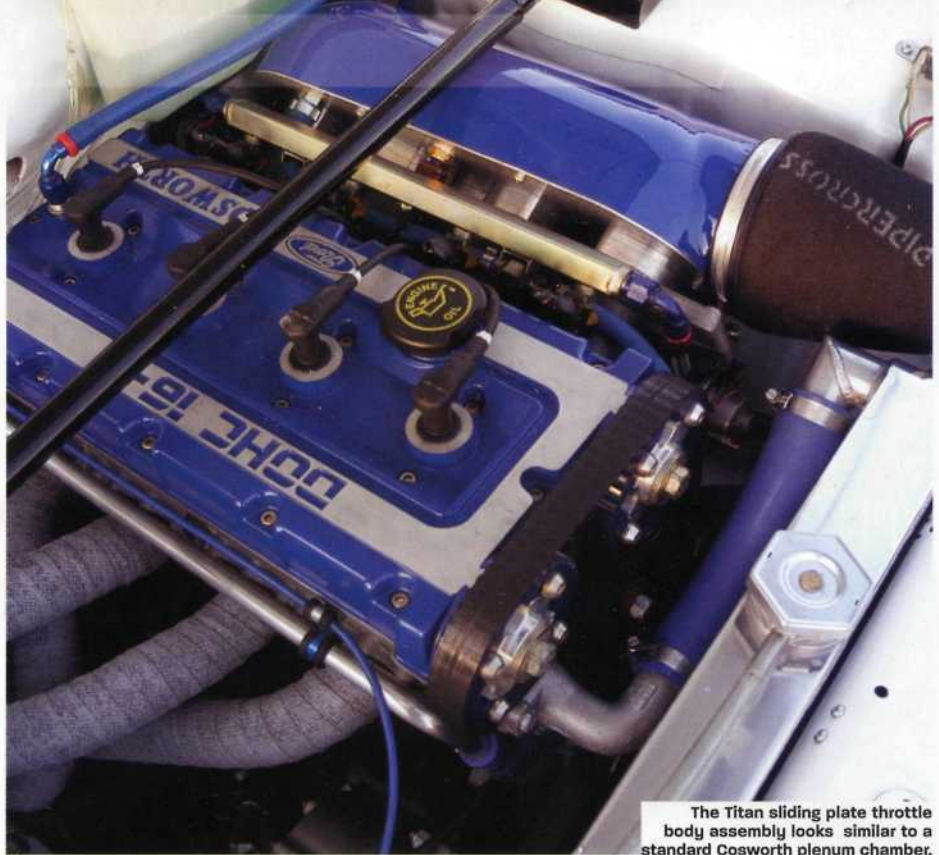
The disc brakes on the rear axle come courtesy of Ford's Scorpio (see PPC issue two for details of how to do this conversion), while at the front, 315mm discs are gripped by Wilwood four-pot alloy calipers.

'I took the front anti-roll bar off too, and replaced it with two compression struts. I started off with 185lb springs on the front but they were way too hard. They're now 140lb but it's still very firm. But I had problems with the suspension set-up because the wheels are 16in diameter.

'By the time I'd lowered the car enough to get them under the arches I had no suspension movement left so I had to fit the Bilstein struts with shortened inserts.' Talking of wheels, they may look like Minilites but they're actually three-piece split rims made by Image Wheels.

But all this work had taken its toll on David and the Escort was off the road for 10 years while he did all the work.

'It was an ongoing project for so long that I just grew tired of it. By the time I'd finished it I was fed up with the car.' Enter Glyn Baker. Glyn owns a mint Sierra Cosworth



The Titan sliding plate throttle body assembly looks similar to a standard Cosworth plenum chamber.

RS500 and spotted David's Escort at an RS Owners Club show. 'The moment I saw it, I knew I had to have it,' says Glyn. 'It just looks so right – all credit to David. He made a beautiful job of it.'

So, less than 24 hours after finishing a 10 year project, David's car moved to its

new home in Glyn's garage. David's happy because selling the Escort has enabled him to buy a Jag XJR. I guess if a supercharged V8 doesn't make you happy then very little in life will.

As for Glyn; he's so happy he drove off before we could even take his picture.



Single leaf springs, a Panhard Rod and wide rubber make for limpet like handling. In the dry, anyway.