



# Sound system!

**Milltek's new ValveSonic system provides two exhausts in one – quiet and restrained, or rorty and sporty, at the touch of a button.**

OVER THE LAST few years or so, we've seen a number of performance upgrades and conversions which are not just manually adjustable, but operate under electronic control. There are now a variety of re-maps and suspension set-ups which can be electronically adjusted, and it's no surprise that the prospect of a switchable exhaust system wasn't far behind...

As a manufacturer of high-quality high-performance exhaust systems, Milltek Sport has long had to balance the requirements for a sporting exhaust note with the everyday expectations for something more civilised. Indeed, as their upmarket systems tend to be favoured more by the sophisticated and mature owner, they've generally erred on the side of mellow, rather than 'mega' for the outright rorty requirement.

But the truth is that there's a bit of the 'boy racer' in all of us, and the ideal solution is a sports exhaust system that is comfortably quiet when cruising, but which can be switched to provide a more pleasingly sporting note when accelerating harder.

That's what Milltek Sport has achieved with its new ValveSonic system and we were recently invited to sample its performance on an S5 Sportback, ahead of the system's full public release at Autosport International in January (12-13).

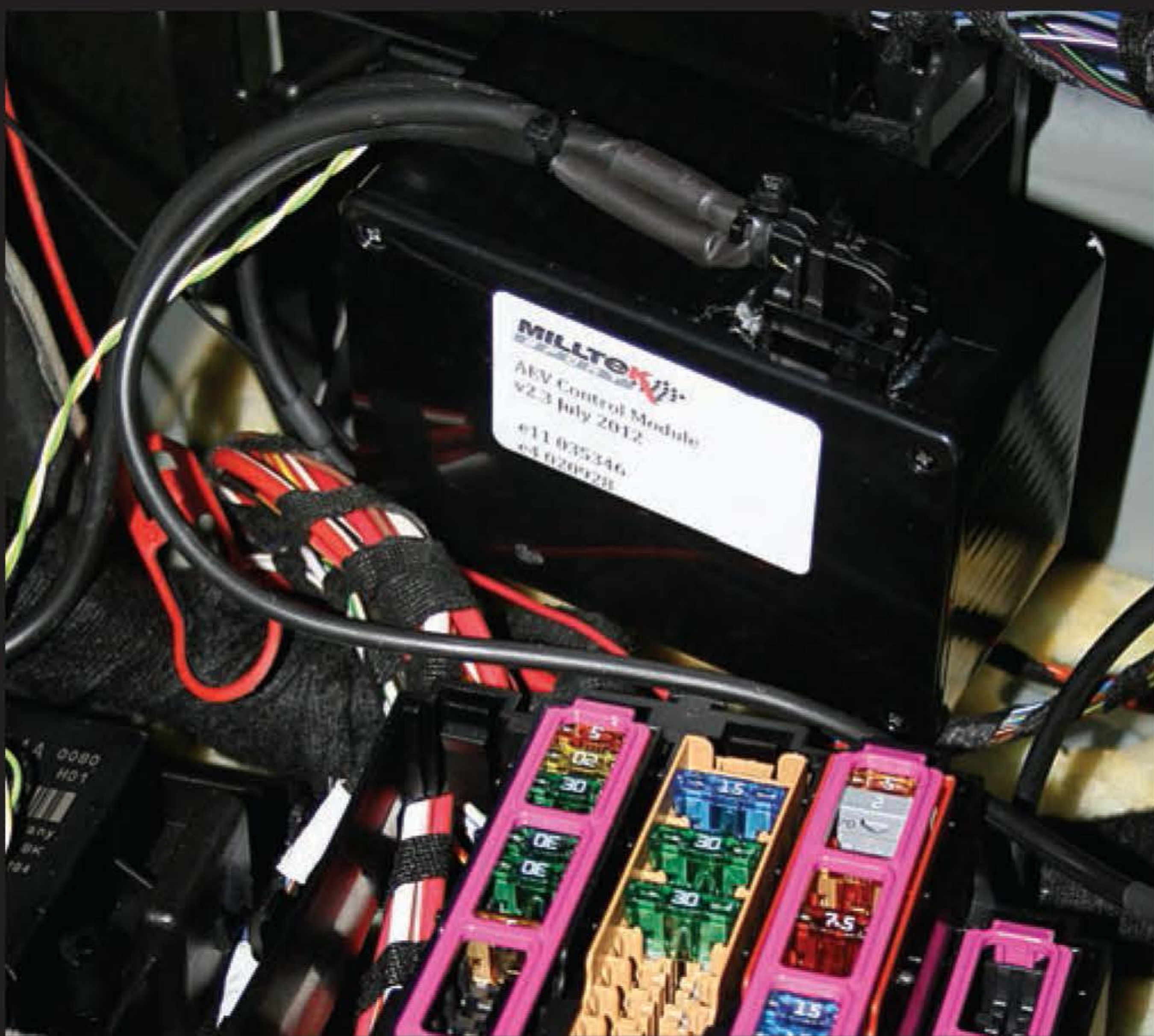
Introduced originally on the Mk 4 Golf R32, vacuum-operated valves in the rear silencer of an exhaust system are nothing new, but Milltek's system adds a fully integrated digital control module. This allows the system to be reactive to a combination of factors and Milltek's engineers have spent quite some time driving, testing and tuning

the set-up on the S5 to provide the right characteristics for road use.

It's certainly not just an on/off switching arrangement, as it takes account of engine rpm and vehicle speed, and just as important as the point at which it opens is the shut-off, so that the sporting exhaust note tails off progressively rather than having a sudden shutdown when the throttle pedal is lifted.

Furthermore, the system also provides a separate switch that can be operated by the driver to manually select the sporting note whenever desired, by keeping the valves open at any engine speed. After testing, Milltek has chosen not to provide a complete 'off' mode as this could cause back pressure problems at higher engine speeds.

The result is a high-performance aftermarket stainless-steel exhaust system that has a very restrained,



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virtually resonance-free, tone at normal cruising speeds, with sound levels very similar to those of the standard original system. Then, when the engine speed exceeds the predetermined trigger point, which is typically just over 3,000 rpm, or if the sport button is pressed, the valves in the rear silencer are opened and the depth and tone of the exhaust note are increased, to give a more performance-focused sound.

In combination with a Revo Technik engine management re-map which provides three separate modes, for use with different fuel grades, providing a power increase of between 60 and 70 bhp, this Milltek-modified S5 might not be quite the classic ‘Jekyll and Hyde’, but it does have a distinctly sporting nature to its performance, and comes

with the choice of accompanying soundtrack.

Milltek Sport has gone to great lengths to get this conversion right, something which involved MD Phil Millington riding in the back seat all the way from Derby to Anglesey while they tweaked the settings, to make sure that the correct sound characteristics were achieved, not just for the driver but also for his all-important passengers.

Although not primarily intended as a DIY conversion, the system is designed to plug in to the existing electrical systems within the vehicle, with no cutting of the CANBUS wiring and using correct plugs and fittings into the original fusebox for power supply. Speaking of which, the only thing which will change for final production

versions is that the control button will be fitted into a replacement panel where the coin holder now sits, rather than in place of the original 12-volt power socket under the ashtray lid.

With an R8 V10 system to follow shortly, Milltek Sport is concentrating on the other Audi applications for the foreseeable future, with the concept then expanded to the other Volkswagen Group models. It doesn’t take too much imagination to realise that, in combination with switchable engine mapping and suspension settings, an aftermarket version of Drive Select is not far away. //

### Contact

**Milltek Sport**  
Tel: 01332 227 280  
[www.millteksport.com](http://www.millteksport.com)  
[www.valvesonic.com](http://www.valvesonic.com)