

A Polo GTI with added bite for Petter and Johan

The shape's familiar. The silhouette's become an icon of success. Of domination in the dirt. But beneath the skin of this Volkswagen Polo lies a bigger heart, a stronger punch and a bite more fierce than ever before.

Team main sponsor Monster Energy has helped create a Polo more dramatic and more menacing than ever before. Not for nothing the nomenclature, Volkswagen Polo GTI *Supercar*.

Petter Solberg and Johan Kristoffersson's new car couldn't look leaner, meaner or more beautiful if it tried.

Watch it on track and the sun kisses the stunning, electric blue flared arches, but bounces off a matte-black middle, which sits, scored only by the slash of menace.

Welcome to 2017, PSRX Volkswagen World RX Sweden-style. It's going to be a big one.

Born in Germany and raised in Sweden, this Polo GTI Supercar is something special. It's the realisation of a dream for PSRX and a glorious new dawn for Volkswagen Sweden.

"This is the dream for me," said two-time FIA World RX champion Petter. "We've been working on this for so long and to have finally landed it... well, words cannot say how happy I am. Apart from one word, there's only one word for this car, my team, Johan and Volkswagen Sweden and that word is: unbelievable!"

"We have spent some time testing the Volkswagen Polo GTI Supercar and every time I step out of it, I do so with a big smile on my face. And then I just want to get back into it and drive some more. It's a real monster, but it's a beautiful monster made by those brilliant people in Hannover, Volkswagen Motorsport.

"I'm so happy to be working with Volkswagen Sweden and Volkswagen Motorsport this year, we have a real opportunity to make a dream come true now. But at the same time I have to say a very, very big thank you to all of our other sponsors who have made this year possible. All of the effort everybody has put in for the pre-season will be rewarded through 2017, I have no doubt about that."

Petter's enthusiasm is shared by his team-mate Johan. Both have one word (and this time, it's not unbelievable) on their minds going into the new season.

*Framgång.*

Success. That's all the Swede – and the man who lives in Sweden married to a Swede – want from arguably the most exciting partnership in the history of the FIA World Rallycross Championship.

"I think it is," said Johan, "really, it is *that* exciting. To be starting the season alongside Petter, PSRX and Volkswagen Sweden is perfect for me. What we have to do now is use that perfect start, make it into a perfect middle and a totally perfect finish!

"We want the World RX teams' championship this year and, of course, we want the drivers' title. Petter has had two of those, so maybe it's time for him to help me get one of my own!"

There's that Hollywood smile, the one that masks an iron will.

"Johan's right," said Petter. "We want both titles, but if he wants his own gold, he's going to have to fight!

"Seriously though, we will work as a team. I have known Johan for so long now, I know him and he knows me and we trust each other completely. We will work as the team and we race this year completely equal; we are joint number one and, I guess, joint number two as well! Everything is shared, all the data, the tyre choices. We don't want secrets, just success."

Pre-season has been a success and that success has brought expectation and interest, not least from team partner Volkswagen Sweden.

"We have followed the preparations of the team with great interest and it surely looks promising. Volkswagen Sweden and our dealers are looking forward to see the season opener of the championship. Petter, Johan, the team and a great car – this is a set up that we are very proud to be part of," said Sten Forsberg, head of Volkswagen Sweden.

Solberg smiles at the memory of a good winter, saying: "Our pre-season has gone really well, probably the best ever for the PSRX team – as you would expect having Volkswagen Sweden and Volkswagen Motorsport with us and behind us. But, we know very well just how much of a battle lies ahead. The cars around us are quick and getting quicker and the competition will be fierce."

Talking of fierce, it's time to go back to black and look once more at that Supercar of ours. Out of a four-time World Rally Champion has grown a beast that's up and running faster than any other competition car in a FIA-governed series. And, yes, that includes Formula 1. Johan and Petter will be doing 100kph in far less time than it takes you to say: "What's that out-accelerating a Formula 1 car?"

And getting them to that speed in that time will be engineering from Hannover. Volkswagen Motorsport director Sven Smeets is eager to see the team's Polo GTI Supercar in its natural habitat, at the front of the pack on the track.

Smeets said: "We have worked really hard with PSRX and Volkswagen Sweden to get the Polo GTI Supercar ready in a fairly short period of time. Now, with the car built and tested, we're all looking forward to the first race in Barcelona. We all

want to see how Petter, Johan and the Polo get on against a very strong field of competition in a very exciting championship.”

The time is now for the FIA World Rallycross Championship. We’ve got the cars, the power, the glamour and the hammer. And, from today (Monday March 20) in Stockholm, we’ve got the best of PSRX, Volkswagen Sweden and Volkswagen Motorsport.

Let’s go. Barcelona here we come.