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REFRESH

FROM
THIS...



We've all looked at a feature car's engine bay at some point and thought, "I wish mine looked like that." To be honest, most engine bays look pretty average. In recent years, rather than trying to make a good-looking engine, manufacturers have

taken to simply hiding everything under a plastic cover, which often compounds the problem. The sceptics among you may think that if all you care about is performance, then a shiny engine bay shouldn't concern you, but you can't fail to notice that the vast majority of racecar engine bays are works of art.

Above The TT's formerly manky engine bay was totally transformed

Right A good scrub under the bonnet at the local valet was the first step

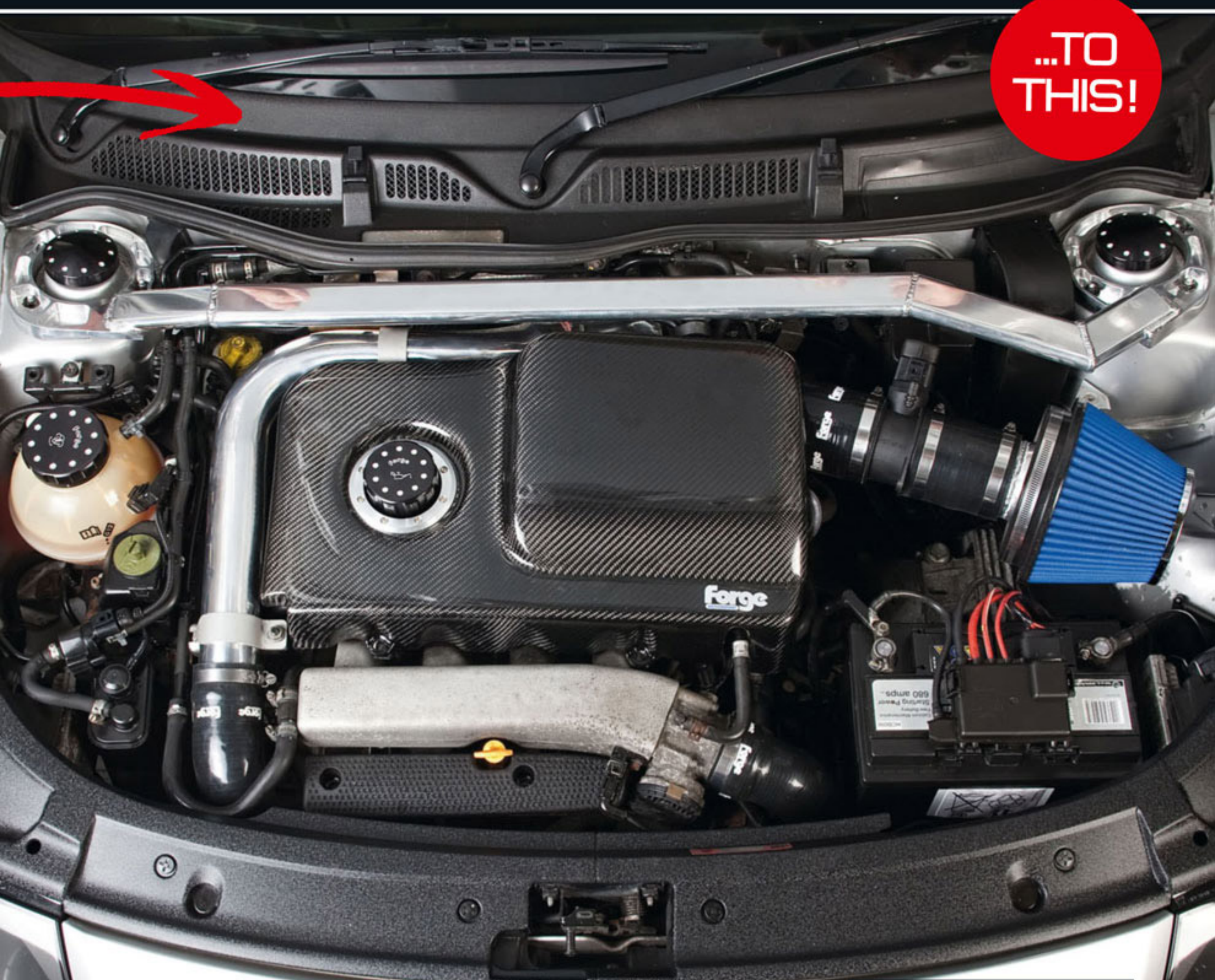
This is because performance and good looks generally go hand-in-hand under the bonnet.

To prove this, we took our Audi TT to Forge Motorsport to see if we could turn our grotty-looking engine bay into a stunner with some simple bolt-on parts that will improve both looks and performance. 

YOUR CAR'S ENGINE BAY

Giving your engine bay a comprehensive makeover can improve both its looks and your car's performance – we show you how

...TO THIS!



1. CLEAN IT!

After a decade of use and well over 100,000 miles, the TT's engine bay looked pretty terrible, with dirt and dust covering everything. With a bay looking that bad, it's easy to give up before you even begin, but a trip to the local valeters had the engine looking significantly better for just £5. This is well worth doing, even if you don't plan to make any other big changes. A clean engine bay not only looks better, but is also much nicer to work on. Plus, it makes spotting tell-tale fluid leaks a lot easier.



2. STRUT BRACE

As we proved in the last issue, strut braces make a small, but noticeable difference to your car's handling, and are well worth considering for the money. Add to that the fact that they look great and are easy to fit and you have a winning upgrade! The one we fitted to the TT looks absolutely incredible, and with just six, easily accessible bolts that need turning to fit it, it's one of the simplest ways to improve your engine bay.



3. SILICONE HOSES

One of the best known and most common ways to improve your engine bay, silicone hoses not only look good, but also cure the problem of old rubber hoses splitting, especially when you're running higher than standard boost pressures or corrosive engine oil. On the TT, a few of the pipes were more complex to fit than most cars, involving headlamp and front bumper removal, but the final result is well worth it. While removing the old hoses, we noticed many of the oil breather hoses had corroded to the extent that you could put your finger through the rubber, so the silicone hoses were a vital replacement.



"Performance and good looks go hand-in-hand under the bonnet"

4. TURBO INLET PIPE

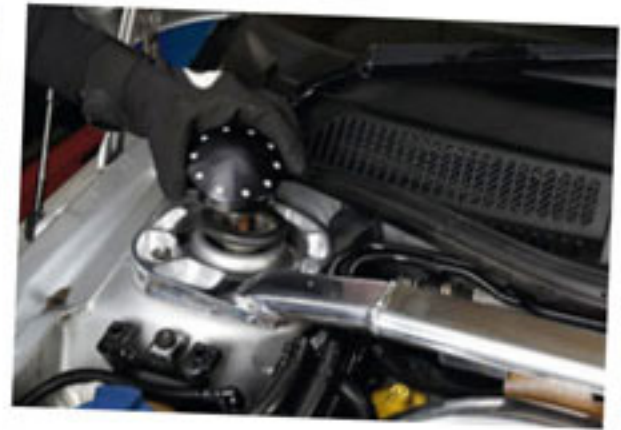
As this pipe has to endure strong vacuums due to the turbo furiously sucking in air, it's common on many tuned cars for the standard inlet pipe to be sucked shut when you accelerate hard. This causes a lack of power, or even full power loss, so fitting a stronger one is a very wise move. On the TT, the pipe goes around to the back of the engine and has various pipes connecting to it, and while most car's inlet pipes are simpler to fit, the result is always well worth it.





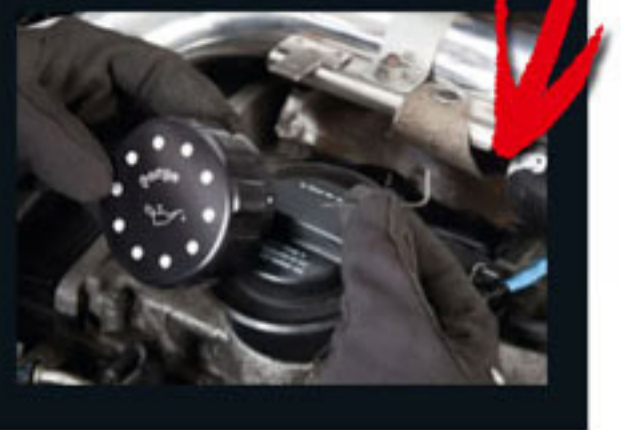
5. TURBO OUTLET PIPE

Solid alloy boost pipes are available for most popular turbo cars, and are certainly worth considering, as they are as easy to fit as normal hoses, literally unburstable and look great, too. Replacing the standard outlet pipe with this alloy one had a secondary improvement on the TT, as the standard one has a built-in silencer, which not only muffles turbo noise but also slightly restricts flow. With the new one fitted, the car now sounds fantastic, with very loud turbo chatter as you lift the throttle – more like an Audi Group B rally car than your average tuned TT!



6. STRUT TOP AND OIL/WATER CAP COVERS

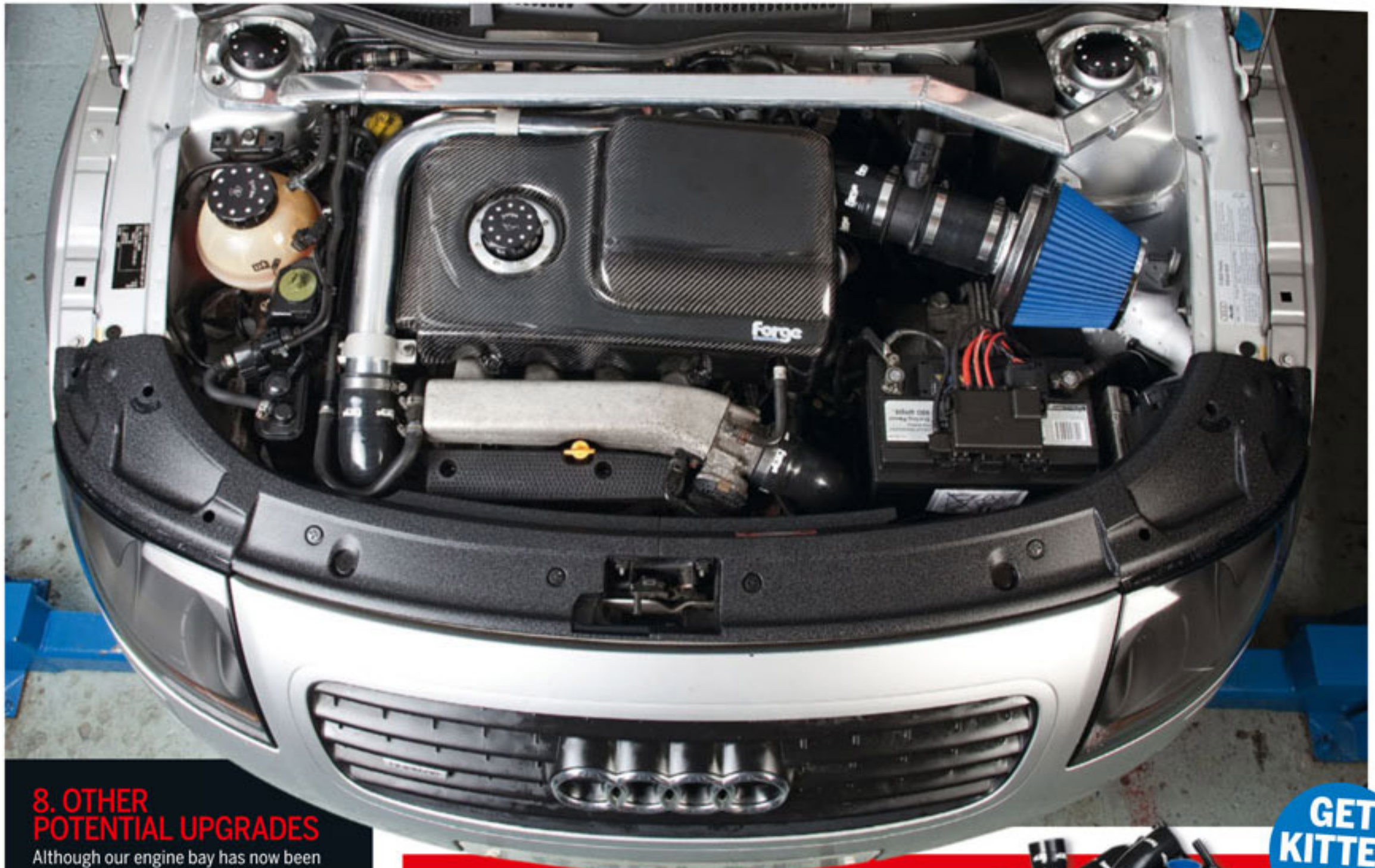
These are non-performance, but they're a great way to improve any engine bay with minimal work. On some cars, the caps are slip-on covers, while on others they are full replacement caps, but the price, ease of fitting and great-looking final result is the same.





7. ENGINE COVER

This is something that the majority of modern engines have as standard to hide the ugly mess of wires underneath. The standard item is generally far from pretty, but luckily there are a variety of aftermarket ones available for most modern cars – from simple spark-plug covers to full carbon engine covers like this one. Fitting couldn't be easier: there's only a few bolts and clips holding them in place. If you have a car without an engine cover, then there is always the option of a polished or powder-coated cam cover, which looks just as good.



8. OTHER POTENTIAL UPGRADES

Although our engine bay has now been totally transformed, depending on your car, the upgrades we made can be just the start of it. Upgraded breather systems and oil catch tanks are the next logical step, as well as things like dump valves and induction kits (both of which we already had fitted). Going beyond this, aftermarket inlet and exhaust manifolds often look far better than standard, and of course give great performance gains. Also bear in mind that all of these upgrades can be done in gradual stages. You don't have to smash it all out in a day like we did.

PRICE LIST

Cleaning products/jet wash	£5
Strut brace	£250
Strut top,oil & water covers	£125
Silicone inlet hose	£145
Alloy boost pipe	£75
Boost hoses & ancillary hoses	£470
Engine cover	£150
Total	£1,220

Cheers to: www.forgemotorsport.co.uk

