

GOING YOKO

COULD THIS BE THE SWEETEST Mk1 CABRIO THE MODDED VW WORLD HAS SEEN? IT CERTAINLY KNOCKED OUR SOCKS OFF.

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We feature a wide range of cars at PW – Everything from VWs to Skodas, Golfs to Ibizas, Coupes to Cabrios. In a bid to 'try' and cater for all our

readers we also have to cover not only the big-buck machines but those projects built on realistic budgets, too. What's realistic to one person though isn't necessarily the case for another. And besides, it's usually the cheque book cars that get the most attention... for obvious reasons. Yoko Tan's amazing Mk1 rag-top did more than get our attention, though. It sent us absolutely loco.

The reason for this? I am staring at close to a ton of pictures and half a dozen pages of text describing one of the best Mk1 cabriolets I've ever come across (Don't get too excited, Mark! ~ Ed). In what must be a first, I haven't got a clue where to start. A car has stumped me. Completely.

In a bid to make some sense and not completely waste precious column inches, I think it's best to start this story at the beginning. The very beginning.

Some eight years ago, Californian resident Yoko Tan parted with \$3000 for what he describes as an average condition 1987 Mk1 Golf cabriolet. Resplendent in Alpine white, sporting small steel bumpers and enough US-spec 'markers' (huge indicator-cum-side-light things) to be seen from space, the cabby needed some serious work to turn it into the show winner you see here.

On the run up to 1998, a few minor upgrades were carried out. A set of



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Mk1 GOLF CABRIO



EVERY SURFACE
POSSIBLE HAS
BEEN RE-TRIMMED
IN ALCANTARA



coilovers lowered the body onto four Momo Quasars, the rear drums were switched to discs and the roll-bars received an upgrade. All good stuff, but Yoko wasn't going to be satisfied until the rag-top won some silverware. Enter Tim Tomas.

Back in '98, Tim was working at Berkeley Auto Service, where in a moment of weakness, his boss agreed to let him and Yoko start what was to become a five-year rebuild.

Without too much issue, the car was stripped to a shell and the smoothing work began. As the original plan was to fit a 2.0



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cross-flow (US-spec of course; us Europeans were denied that pleasure), the initial focus was to give the cabby a neat and tidy engine bay. To start with, the battery tray was shaved and smoothed along with the mounting points for such items as the coolant and power steering reservoirs.

To give the engine bay even more impact, Yoko decided to also take out the dividing wall to the scuttle tray, then to smooth the shelf as much as possible. This served to open out the whole area, dramatising the engine's installation and accenting the many

shiny bits on and around the motor.

Ah, the motor. Now, the more observant among you have probably noticed that what lies up front swathed in chrome is not a cross-flow, but the current engine of choice, a force-fed VAG 20v four-banger. Tim found the motor way back in 1998, hiding in Canada with only 2000 miles under its crankshaft and as per Yoko's instruction, had it shipped down to CA. Things were about to move up a gear.

In preparation for the motor's arrival, the engine mounting points were strengthened

before the shell was shipped off to the body shop for 12 months of nips and tucks.

The original small bumper setup has now been replaced by a more stylish Clipper kit, consisting of (modified) front and rear bumpers, side skirts and arch extensions.

A significant amount of work went into sculpting the body, in order to achieve the correct European/Low-Rider-look.

Up front, the bumper's indicator apertures have been smoothed over and the lower half has been modified to accept the new intercooler. The five-bar de-badged front

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grille apes the Mk2 Golf and bridges the crystal-clear light units beautifully.

The bonnet has been cleaned of its unsightly vents and washer jets, while the scuttle panel has also been neatened up. We're used to Europeans removing a front wiper, but Yoko has decided that the weather in California is so good that he doesn't need any wipers at all! The most annoying thing is, it looks fantastic and it's a mod us Brit's just don't have the weather to pull off.

Cleaning things up further, the unsightly US-spec side markers were removed, to be replaced by much sleeker Mk4 items. The standard chrome-look side trim and door handles have also been removed and the original fuel filler has been swapped for a 1968 Beetle flap! Most original.

Around the rear, anything superfluous was binned – meaning bye-bye to the car's badging, as well as its numberplate aperture. Yet, instead of going for the cut-and-shut smoothed hatch and frenched bumper look, Yoko decided to have the

recess from a Mk3 Golf welded in place. The new look suits the car to a tee.

Once the bodywork was completed, the whole car was re-sprayed a luscious shade of blue and shipped back to the workshop to meet its new powerplant. Unfortunately, by this point, Tim's boss at Berkeley wasn't too happy to see the return of the cabby.

This slight spanner in the works would halt the project for two years, until Tim took the plunge and opened up his own business – Tomas Sport Tuning. Fast forward to 2001 and with no whinging boss-type person, the pair restarted the project.

With the body fully painted, the main focus of attention would be the engine. As we mentioned earlier, the motor was a low-miler so its health was almost guaranteed. As such, the block and head were left as is, but many of the bolt-on bits were uprated.

Replacing the weedy K&K turbo is a Turbonetics T3/T4 hybrid blower, sitting on an ATP manifold. Air is drawn in through the cone air filter and passed across the smoothed scuttle tray using gorgeous chrome

Mk1 GOLF CABRIO

pipework. Once boosted, it then passes to the custom Sparco front-mounted intercooler via yet more sexy piping, before hitting the chromed inlet manifold.

Demonstrating his show-winning intent, Yoko also had the (modified) Golf fuel rail chromed, as well as the rocker cover. The coolant reservoir is custom-made and very shiny, as are the pipes running to and from it. Basically, where possible, Tim and Yoko used braided or chromed pipework to give the engine bay a fantastically classy look. Mission accomplished.

Other hardware around the not very oily bits is of a similar high-spec. As the plan is for 300bhp, the exhaust had to be efficient and the gearbox had to have the strength of a stone outhouse.

Spent gasses are passed via the custom made 3" downpipe and exhaust system, exiting through the Sebring back box. Power, however, is transmitted through a Sachs power clutch and Mk3 Golf gearbox, which itself contains a Quaife LSD.

Bringing the whole lot to a stop is a 280mm Corrado front disc set and the aforementioned rear disc conversion, helped along by braided fluid lines and Brembo discs.

On the inside, the race theme continues. The rear seats have been stripped out and the fronts have been replaced with a pair of Sparco Torinos with race harnesses.

Where chrome was the finish of choice under the bonnet, the interior is swathed in Alcantara. Every surface possible has been retrimmed in the stuff, including the Corrado dashboard.

A Mk3 Golf donated its column stalks and the steering wheel is yet another Sparco item, the Flash 5. Where you would normally find a stereo head unit, there now sits an Autometer boost gauge in a carbon fibre blanking plate.

Whichever angle you approach or scrutinise this car from, it leaves you both breath- and speech-less. It's no wonder on its maiden outing to DubWars 2003 that it won first place in the Vendor class, as well as Best in Show.

It may have taken five long years to get there, but boy, the end result was worth it. And while we'd all like to be able to spend as much money, time and effort on our cars, there's no denying Yoko Tan's Mk1 is something we can all aspire to ●

DUB DETAILS

ENGINE: 1999 Passat 1.8T Motor, T3/T4 Hybrid Turbo, Custom Sparco Intercooler, HKS Super sequential blow-off valve, Tial 35mm external wastegate, Golf 1.8T custom fuel rail, custom TST boost piping, Euro Audi 1.8T intake manifold, ATP exhaust manifold, PWR custom aluminum radiator, Mercedes radiator fan, Porsche 996 fuel pump, Goodrich braided fuel lines, custom billet TST coolant reservoir, custom 3" downpipe, custom 3" exhaust with Sebring back box, Mk3 Golf gearbox with Sachs power clutch and Quaife LSD, chrome, chrome, and more chrome! Removed scuttle/battery trays, other metal surfacing smoothed

CHASSIS: Corrado 280mm front disk conversion, rear disk conversion, Brembo cross drilled disks, Goodridge braided brake lines, H&R Ultra Low coilovers, polyurethane bushing all around, Neuspeed 28mm lower rear anti-roll bar, BBS RS wheels (7.5x15 front 8.5x15 rear), Yokohama tyres (195/45 front - 195/50 rear)

OUTSIDE: 1987 Mk1 Golf cabriolet, full re-spray in custom blue, removed door handles/side mouldings, vent holes and washer jets removed from bonnet, smoothed front bumper, Mattig single headlight de-badged grille, smoothed and de-badged rear hatch with Mk3 numberplate recess, smoked tail-lights, 1968 Beetle fuel flap, Mk4 side repeaters, M3 aerial, new canvas roof

INSIDE: Corrado dash re-covered with Alcantara, Mk3 Golf column stalks, AutoMeter boost gauge, Sparco Flash 5 steering wheel, Sparco Torino front seats, Sparco gear knob, modified Audi TT gear lever gaiter, custom carbon fibre door panels, rear seat and mounting points removed, Alcantara trim throughout the car

SHOUT: Tim Tomas at Tomas Sport Tuning ((510)235-2350/www.tomassporttuning.com), Ken and Rowan for helping us with the late night wrenching, Dave and TV from Panel Craft, George at ATP, Adrian, Tyson, and Mike at Sacramento Motoring Accessories, Dennis at Norman Racing, Jason at Brits, Eric at Genesis Auto Upholstery, and Gary at Electroplating, Matt Croke for introducing the car to PW



AROUND THE REAR, ANYTHING SUPERFLUOUS WAS BINNED

