



RETRO Rabbit

Many of the UK's best Vee-dubs have been built as the result of an obsession... like Bruce Hutchinson's cool Cab. Paul Lewis reports



Neat detailing is to be found everywhere you look on this neat Cab



Smart alloy filler cap looks like the original

For some VW enthusiasts a hobby can soon turn into an obsession... as Bruce Hutchinson discovered. Bruce, whose day job is to drive a 44-tonne Scania truck for MacFarlanes of Leeds, resides in Fife and has owned loads of Mk 2 Golfs, plus the odd Mk 1.

However, it was a G-registered Cabriolet that really got Bruce's juices flowing. Finished in black, the forlorn Cabrio belonged to one of Bruce's workmates but it had been off the road for two years, parked up in the MacFarlane's yard in Leeds. Needless to say, it was in a very sorry state: the roof had literally collapsed, while inside the car was full of water. And when we say full, we mean full! Bruce had been

keeping an eye on the car for some time and in February 2003 the temptation proved too much and he offered the owner £1,200, which was graciously accepted.

Bruce knew that some serious work was needed to bring the Cabrio back to anywhere near reasonable condition, so he set about his quest with vigour. Although the car had been stood for a couple of years, once a battery was fitted it fired almost immediately - an encouraging sign. Sadly, it wasn't running particularly well so Bruce decided to work on the car at the Leeds depot for a couple of months before taking it home to Scotland. The brakes had also seized solid, so these were freed off to get the car rolling. After draining the interior (1) Bruce started to list the priority jobs.

Obviously a new hood and a full interior were needed, as well as carpets, but first the car had to run right. To this end, new injectors and a fuel pump were fitted, along with a fully reconditioned cylinder head and a K&N panel filter. This vastly improved things and the engine now purred like a kitten, but Bruce felt that the clutch wasn't right. Not one to mess around, he swiftly installed a genuine VAG clutch kit along with a new cable. The original exhaust manifold and downpipe was replaced with a 6-stud GTI item - simply because Bruce felt it was a far better design - and just for good measure a genuine VAG Cabrio exhaust system was bolted on.

Now that the Cabrio was running it was time to take it home to Scotland for the real transformation



to begin, Bruce just happens to have very good friend by the name of Stuart Mancrieff, who is the proprietor of SRM Automotive. Stuart is a renowned paint and body specialist and, over the years, had weaved his magic on all of Bruce's friends Golfs. After a serious valeting session and a good deal of polishing to remove the years of green mould that had accumulated it was decided that the car did not need a full respray (although one is now planned for early 2005). Amazingly only the bonnet, bumpers, mirrors and rear wheel arch mouldings required paint - a piece of cake!

While the paint was being sorted Bruce headed to Barnett's of St Andrews, where Andy was kept busy sourcing everything on Bruce's

and seats were required along with new window winder mechanisms as someone had replaced the originals with an after market kit which was junk. To match the new rubbers, new drop glass was installed, together with a top tint windscreen.

Stuart had certainly been busy because while he was applying paint to the required parts, he also de-badged the boot lid.

Clear indicator lenses and clear rear light clusters match the theme while an early-spec single-lamp front grille neatly embraces the smoked cross hair headlamps. To lift the dark front end, Bruce traced new chrome trim for the grill while a new chrome VW roundel and Trimspport alloy filler cap complete the picture.

From day one Bruce knew exactly



Cabby-Info.com

With a winning combination of retro and modern styling parts, this Cab has a



Cheeky Rabbit badge leaps off glovebox lid



fact they were one of his very first purchases. These 7x15 ATS Cups were brought back from Germany (it's handy being a truck driver with a depots all around the UK and Germany!) shod with 195/45/15 Toyo Proxes T1-S tyres.

The old hood had previously been removed and discarded as nothing was salvageable, however Bruce knew who he could trust to supply a new one, Snappy Gaiters. Andy of Snappy Gaiters had previously re-trimmed three of Bruce's other Golfs so he knew the quality of the workmanship and attention to detail would be first class - and it is, we couldn't fault it on the day. To ensure the new hood is kept in pristine condition when down, a new Dove Grey hood bag was sourced.

Now the exterior was looking resplendent and was fully water tight the interior became the focus of

attention. While the car was at Stuart's workshop Bruce had managed to get hold of a pair of old Recaro seats that had seen better times. Together with the rear bench, these were re-trimmed in Dove Grey leather by Snappy Gaiters - but not before the rear seat was fitted with headrests utilising a genuine VAG fitting kit. Not content with the freshly trimmed seats, Bruce also got Andy to craft matching gear and handbrake gaiters.

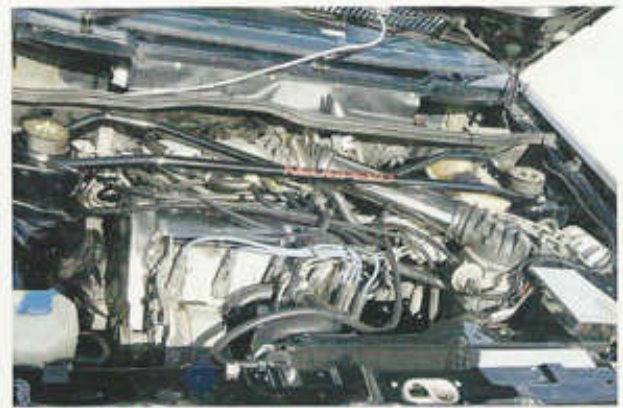
The suspension has also been vatty improved with the front wishbones getting fitted with polyurethane bushes, while the rest of the bushes have been replaced with new VAG items throughout. When it came to the choice of suspension kit Bruce originally fitted a Bilstein kit but within a couple of days he knew it was not for him, so swapped it for a Koni / Eibach kit. Once again this proved

unacceptable, much to his amazement. Bruce had long since been a Koni / Eibach fan having fitted the combination to several of his Mk 2's with no problems. However, on the Cabriolet they seemed to bottom out at every opportunity.

After lengthy conversations with Steve Creswell of C&R Enterprises, Bruce opted for a Weitec top adjustable kit with a 40mm drop in ride height. The kit was mated to uprated Febi top mounts with shortened polyurethane bump stops up front and G60 items at the rear.

The result was a tremendous improvement over all the other combinations and the addition of Neuspeed upper and lower strut braces reinforced things even further.

Bruce then moved onto the brakes, rebuilding the rear drums with new components and adding Goodridge braided hoses. The result



Engine is stock internally, but very clean and well presented



Cab interior has been thoroughly updated with Dove Grey leather - nice!



Classic Wolfsburg Edition gearknob



Chromed door handle surrounds are neat

is a good firm pedal with more feel. The front calipers were thoroughly examined for wear and the original discs replaced with grooved Black Diamond versions clamped by Ferodo DS Fast Road pads. This combination works very well together, according to Bruce.

As you can see, Bruce's hard work has certainly paid off and he's quick to point out that without Stuart's workshop none of what we see before us would have been possible. Some of the work mentioned has been a gradual progression and as with all projects the car is evolving as the months go by.

Everywhere Bruce takes the car people stop and make positive comments but the thing we like most about this particular example is that it is used every single day and in all weathers, proving that the venerable

TECH SPEC

ENGINE: 1,800cc 8-valve transverse mounted, new VAG clutch, reconditioned cylinder head, new injectors & fuel pump, Trimsport Power Rhor, K&N panel filter, six-stud exhaust manifold & down pipe, new genuine exhaust system, quick shift gear linkage, Trimsport stainless battery cover, Trimsport stainless radiator cover & brackets, Trimsport alloy dipstick & holder and oil filler cap

BRAKES: F - Black Diamond grooved discs, Ferodo DS fast road pads. R - rebuilt drums. Goodridge braided hoses

SUSPENSION: Weitec top adjustable suspension kit (40mm drop), Fibi top mounts & wishbones, Polyurethane wishbone bushes, new VAG bushes throughout rest of chassis, Fibi shortened polyurethane bump stops (front), G60 bump stops (rear), Neuspeed top & bottom strut braces, new steering rack (both ends adjust)

WHEELS/TYRES: 7x15 ATS Cups / 195/45-15 Toyo Proxes T1-S tyres

EXTERIOR: New electric Mahair hood, genuine Dove Grey roof bag, new top tint windscreen, new drop glass all round, new window mechanisms, new window seals & rubbers, early type single lamp grill with chrome surround & roundie, smoked cross-hair

headlamps, clear indicator lenses, Wolfsburg Edition badges, polished alloy filler cap, clear rear light clusters, de-badged boot lid with Wolfsburg Edition badge.

INTERIOR: Electric Recaro front seats, rear head rests, full Snappy Gaiters re-trim in Dove Grey leather, Dove Grey gear lever & handbrake gaiters, Wolfsburg Edition alloy golfball gearknob, alloy mirror adjusters and alloy door pins, new boot carpet with Wolfsburg logo.

SOUNDS: Kenwood KDC-3021 CD head unit, 2x130 watt custom components in door pockets, 2x250 watt 6x9's on custom stealth shelf.

SECURITY: Cat 1 alarm system operated via remote central locking

THANKS: Stuart Moncrieff SRM Automotive 01333 351613, Andy of Barnetts St Andrews 01384 473101, Trimsport 01460 242294, Jim & the lads at Awesome GTI 01617 760777, C&R Enterprises 01159 785740, Snappy Gaiters, Jon at VAG Dusseldorf, Bruce & Lee for taking the car to the photoshoot and lastly wife Wendy & 4-year old son George for coping with the obsession.