

# 1967 Kombi Restoration : Part 5

## Making It Stop and Go

I had never really felt any pressure to finish my Kombi, that is until a friend's daughter announced she was getting married and would love to drive to the service in a kombi. Her dad had helped build the front and rear bars for the Baja which took us to Palm Valley and numerous other places around Alice in the early 80's and has a long VW association himself. So suddenly, in mid 2008 I had a target date to work to: March 2009.

Being one of the last splitties, mine was gifted with the largest motor used to that date – the humble 1500. However when test fitting a new exhaust, I was shocked when I found that it was too wide for the motor. A check of the case and other stamped parts revealed some news I didn't really want to hear: at some time my original motor had been removed and replaced with a recon motor, and a type 1 1200cc beastie at that. All the time I had spent cleaning up the motor and detailing all the parts was suddenly for nothing. Well and truly disappointed not to have the original motor, I began the search for an alternative.



The first candidate came from a 73 Fastback we ran for a few years. The body was eventually scrapped and the floor-pan went to a friend of my son's. I loved the fuel injected motor and thought it would make a unique power-plant for my splittie.

I had salvaged the wiring loom, electronics unit and all the sensors from the fastie. The engine has a stripped spark plug thread but in general was pretty sound. I bought a set of 1678 barrels and pistons to lift the capacity a touch and set everything aside ready for the day when it would be needed: I was quite looking forward to setting up all the electrics needed to run the fuel injected motor. I even scored a Treuhaft manual for the injected motors as a present.

I let the motor sit while I concentrated on other jobs. The rear end of my Kombi has been left

stock. After cleaning up my original front end and bolting it back on, I ended up with a '68 front beam (courtesy of Dave Furlong via Andrew). These are highly sought after: for 1968 VW made half the changes that would find their way into the Bay Window Kombis: curved windscreen, ball joint front end etc. The ball joint front ends are much easier to service than the early king pin units and make a good base for a disk brake conversion (that will have to wait). I don't know about other people's experiences but front ends seem to be damn hard to clean up. The grease that inevitably leaks from them gets covered in dust. After 40 years you are left with a baked on layer of 6mm of hard, greasy mud. Lots of effort with wire brushes, scrapers and a pressure cleaner were needed to get things clean again. Once clean the front end was primed and hit with a couple of coats of chassis black.

The brakes became another good filler job. Bit by bit I removed the hard lines and had them reproduced at my local brake shop. New soft lines were sourced through Volksfactory, as was a new master cylinder. Later splitties had pretty reasonable drum brakes (we are not blessed with lots of mountain roads so brake fade is not a



huge issue) and many were given power boosters to ease the load on the drivers braking foot. I salvaged a PBR booster kit from a scrapped kombi and made plans to fit it. However the cost of replacing all the seals etc was higher than the price of a new unit.....

When it comes to tyres and wheels, there is no end to the debate on what is best. My requirements were simple: they had to be 15". In 2005 Andrew purchased The Keen's 61 Karmann, when they replaced it with a convertible. We all loved that car: when brother Steven used to borrow it to drive to work, it used to upset his boss that all the patrons at the restaurant wanted to know what the beautiful red car was – and completely ignored his \$60k Monaro! As well as a terrific motor, this car had a beautiful set of wheels and tyres. In 2007 when Andrew decided to part with the KG in favour of "Filmore" a 61 kombi, the wheels and tyres stayed behind, eventually finding their way on to my kombi. They were everything I had ever wanted in a set of wheels.

Although progress through 2008 was pretty slow, the end of the year brought in some rapid developments. The engine debate was finally

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resolved when a 1648 unit became available through Rob Gilbert. This motor was fitted to a beetle he purchased but was soon replaced with an 1835, leaving the 1648 surplus. I jumped at the opportunity to purchase the motor when Rob told me he wanted to sell it. A price was negotiated and he kindly delivered the engine to my door.



The beauty of this motor is that it is totally complete and has done reasonably few kilometres since being rebuilt.

Next task to be tackled was paint. Having taken 3 weeks off over the Christmas – New Year period, I was determined to have the van painted before going back to work. Having lost the first week to all the Christmas festivities, the second week was spent doing more sanding and filling the countless scratches and dings which had occurred while the van was waiting for attention. During the third week we finally managed to get some paint on. The doors, tailgate and engine lid were removed so they could be painted separately. The interior was masked off and everything prepped. Six coats of solid colour were followed by two coats of 50:50 blend of base with clear, then a final 4 coats of clear. The end result simply confirmed my belief that Lotus White is one of the best colours VW ever produced.



Now to let the van sit for a few weeks so the paint could harden. Whenever possible the van and doors were left out in the full sun, then wheeled back into the shed overnight.

A job that could be done quickly was to add some sound proofing and insulation to the interior. A quick to Clark Rubber turned up their "Formshield" which is a medium density foam, backed with a layer of aluminium foil. The foam was cut shape and fixed with 3M spray adhesive to all the interior surfaces: underside of the roof, inside of door panels, below the windows etc. A layer was also applied to the inside of the engine bay and to the underside of my new engine inspection hatch.



During this time all the windows glass was cleaned up and dropped down to Scorpion Window Tinting to be tinted. All the rear windows were covered with 75% blockout and the driver and passenger door glass with 35% blockout. Tinting the glass out of the car is not only much quicker, it also allowed the glass to be laid out for a couple of weeks so the adhesive can cure properly.



After so many years of waiting, I finally had just about everything I needed to begin re-assembling my van.

To be continued...