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1959 BEETLE



Hot Chili

The 1967 was the best Beetle in the eyes of many VW fans. To the owner of this convertible, it was the basis for his ultimate VW

Words: Ivan McCutcheon.
Photos: Kiki de Bois





When our friend Bill Tsagrinos of the Las Vegas VW Club told us his buddy Scott Moses had a car we should feature, we couldn't wait to see it. And when we met up with Scott, we were really impressed – his '67 Cabriolet surpassed our expectations. It was more than special, it was absolutely full-on! This car not only looks brilliant, but it also has an insane powerplant – it can cruise in the Nevada sun, but whip all-comers off the stoplight.

So what's the story? First we asked Scott how his passion for VWs began: "Well, it all started back in 1990 prior to me even having a driver's licence," he told us. "I was always intrigued by Baja Bugs and Dune Buggies. Growing up in the middle of a desert in

Las Vegas, I'd seen them driving around and thought it would be fun to own one. It wasn't long before I noticed a *Hot VWs* magazine on the shelf of our local grocery store and on the front cover was this cool Baja with a giant air scoop.

"The following month, I checked out the next issue and on the cover was a headline that read *From rags to riches*. It featured a Teal convertible Bug on Porsche Alloys with a big motor. It was probably a 1776, but that would have seemed like a two-litre back then. What an impact that car had! Here I thought I loved Bajas and now all I could think about was owning a cool street car." [I remember this feature, but something in the back of my addled mind tells me it appeared in *VW Trends* rather than *Hot VWs*! IM.]



▲ Chris Hawkins of VIP Interiors in Arizona is well known for his high-quality trimming. He was responsible for this project. Note the leather-wrapped EMPI Wheel and Berg locking shifter



▲ Chris remodelled the original seats and covered them in high-quality tan leather. The carpets are German Square Weave

◀ The rear seat looks far better than the original VW rear seat – but that's exactly what it started out as! VIP Interiors clearly has what it takes to trim a car – and well!

“Now all I could think about was owning a cool street car”

So how did you turn your dream into reality, then, Scott? “Well, someone upstairs was looking out for me! During my sophomore year, I’m sitting in my French class and hear this kid talking to some girl about this Beetle he is selling to purchase this real cool convertible Bug. I knew very little then about the differences between the years of VWs, so I introduced myself to this kid, Sam Smith, and inquired about this VW he was selling. It was a 1958 sedan painted a deep red maroon colour. Later on it was given the nickname The Red Potato by Bill T.”

The best day of his life

Wow, what a lucky find! But the story doesn't end there... “I purchased that car for a whopping \$2,300 dollars and it was one of the best days of my life,” Scott continues. “Finally I owned one of the coolest Vee Dubs around. It was lowered on wide five Porsche alloys and had all the cool stuff already finished, like a GM tilt-steering column – that’s right, ‘tilt’ – and VDO gauges. It was the best. I still had two more weeks till I received my driver’s licence. Then I could start rolling this thing around the Vegas scene.”

A great first car to own – did it get you involved in the local VW scene? “Yes, shortly afterwards I met Noah Caccam while he was out driving his Notch. After that, it was Derek Campbell, President of Precious Metal VW Club. I joined the club and met more VW guys and girls. I wouldn’t have thought meeting this group of people would change my life in such a way. Soon we were hitting the VW shows in California and I met Bill and George

Tsagrinos. We thought our cars were the best and no one could tell us different.”

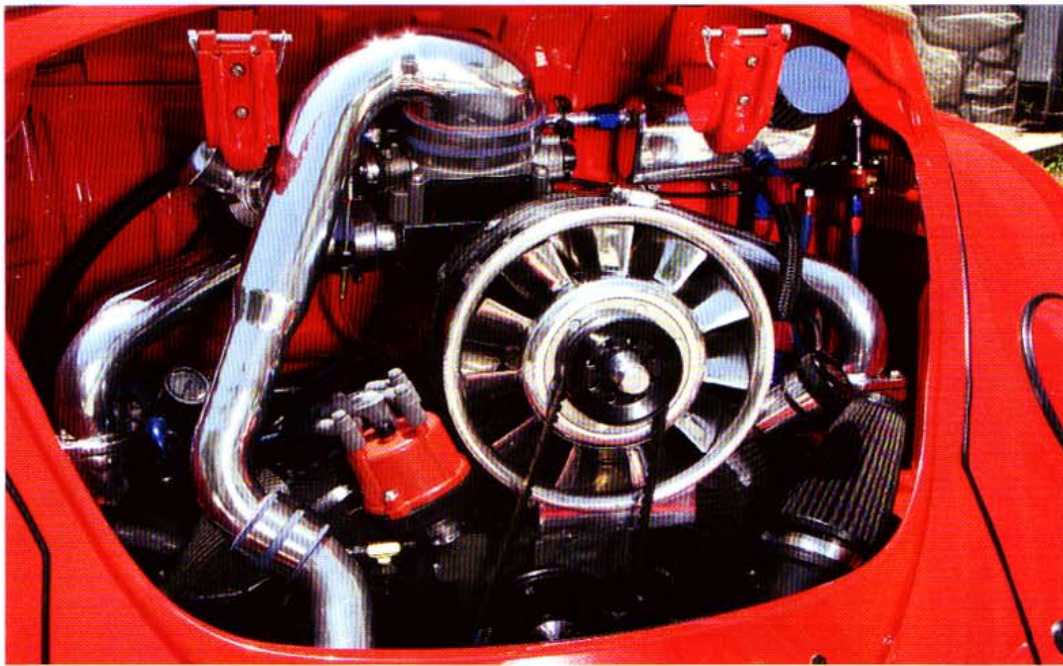
Obviously, this was the start of a growing passion, as Scott confirms: “It didn’t take long before I started obtaining many different types of VW. I was hooked and wanted one of everything. I purchased a ‘67 Squareback, a ‘64 Deluxe Bus, a ‘69 convertible Ghia and then a ‘67 convertible Bug.” Ahh, a ‘67 convertible – that’s what this feature is all about...

“I always loved ‘verts and it was a convertible Bug that steered me away from Bajos, so I decided I would build my ‘67 convertible into a show car. After a year of dumping lots of time and money into the project, I lost momentum and let the car sit. Soon after, it was sold at a loss and I moved on.”

Hang on a second, let’s get this straight: the ‘67 you’re talking about isn’t the one we’re looking at here? “No, and I always regret selling that car. Every day I wished I could buy it back, or find another ‘67 ‘vert. It was about two years later around Bug-In weekend in Las Vegas, and I overheard someone talking about a ‘67 convertible that’d been sitting in the garage for the past 15 years. They mentioned they might sell it and I jumped on the opportunity.” Was it a good deal? “Two thousand bucks and the car was mine! This time, I would spare no expense and build what I thought would be the ultimate convertible.”

From our perspective, you certainly did that, Scott, so what went into it? “This car needed a fair amount of bodywork and I wanted to keep the original fenders and pieces since they were all there. I hired Carlos Barahas to massage and





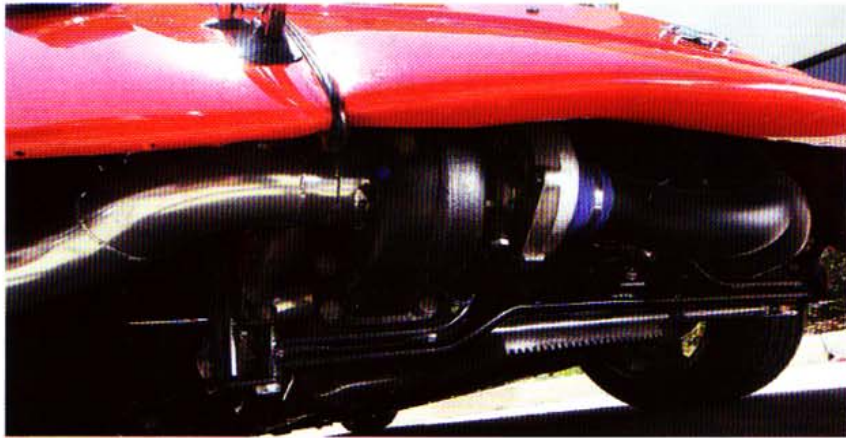
paint the body in Toner Red. This was the brightest red I could find. I knew if I was going to paint this car red like most convertibles, it had to have great attention to detail with every aspect of the car addressed. I tried to cover everything, from both front and rear of the bumpers being re-chromed to the leather-wrapped EMPI steering wheel to the custom-made traction bar. "After the 'vert was returned from paint, Mike Kennedy, a long-time friend, helped me assemble it. We spent hours making sure every part was clean enough. I knew it had to be over the top, so every nut and bolt was either chromed or powder-coated. The 'pan was sprayed gloss black and soon we had the body back on the 'pan. I couldn't believe it – all I could see was my car cruising down the street, real fast."

Boost... Whoosh!

As we said at the start, this '67 has a fiercely powerful engine, so we asked how it got that way. "I decided to contact someone with enough experience to build the motor of my dreams" Scott explains. "It was Dan Lawson, owner of Competition Engineering, who I reached out to. He had a reputation of building fast Vee Dubs, and since he was big into drag racing his own Notchback, I knew we would be on the same page when I said I wanted to go real fast.

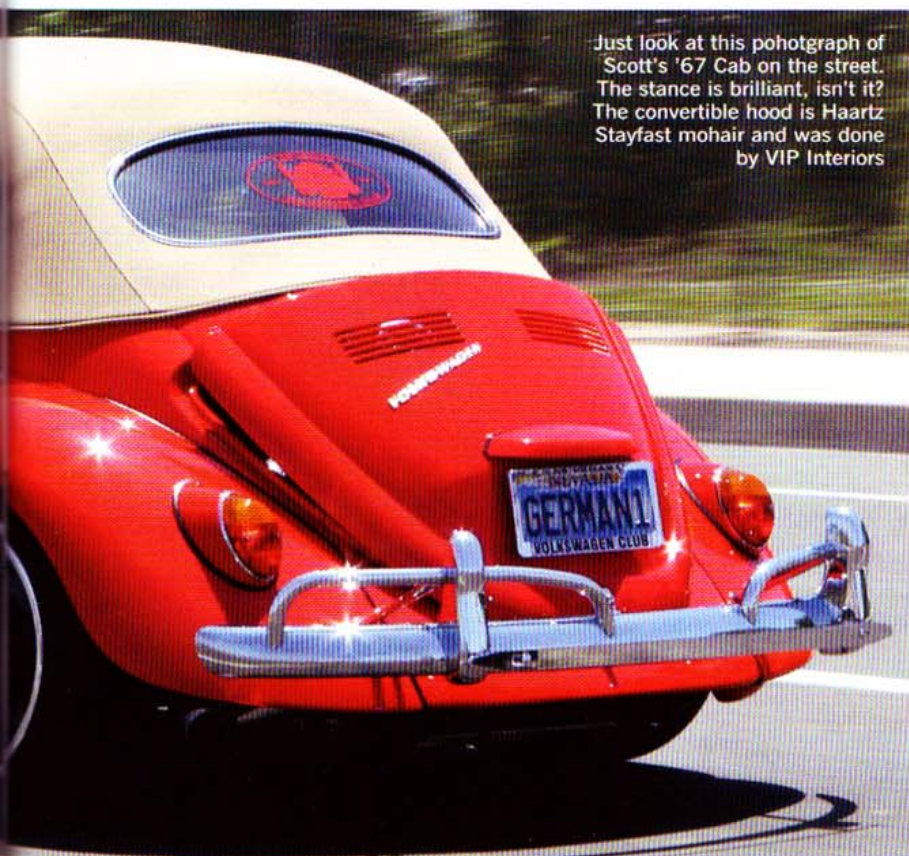
"We decided on a 2386cc fuel-injected, blow-through turbo set-up. It took a long time to build a one-off set-up, but with the help of the crew at CE, Mike Fisher, Shane Becker and I worked out which motor would have enough power to destroy any car on the street. I wanted it to look as fast as it ran."

The guys based the motor around an AS41 VW 'case fitted with CE's custom



▲ The engine is a real monster, a fuel-injected turbocharged 2386cc Type 1!

◀ Here's the blow-through T4 Turbo which Scott can run at anywhere between 10 and 18lb of boost



Just look at this photograph of Scott's '67 Cab on the street. The stance is brilliant, isn't it? The convertible hood is Haartz Stayfast mohair and was done by VIP Interiors



▲ Don't think for a minute that this car hasn't had the full treatment in every area. Look how clean it is!

full-flow and 9mm-head studs. Scott went on to tell us, "I chose an 86mm full-circle crank from the Demello Machine Shop, wedge-mated to a lightened flywheel. Attached was a set of 5.6 Demello H-beam rods and a custom-ground cam from CB Performance. We went with Wiseco Pistons and JE cylinders. The heads of choice were CB's O44, heavily modified by Mike Fisher to handle the forced induction."

Once they had a bulletproof-long block, it was on to the top end. A Porsche fan was used for cooling this monster, along with a custom-made intake forcing the air through a GM LS1 throttle body. All this air is moved by a T4 turbo and exits through a custom turbo header fabricated by Lawson.

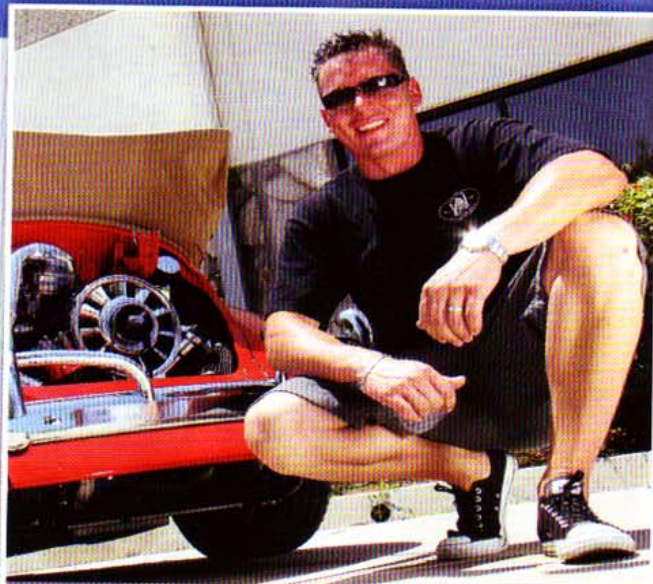
The system is kept in tune with a Redline computer and MSD Boost Time Management system. This allows for two different boost setting and can be switched from 10lb to 18lb at the flick of a switch.

At 18lb of boost, it must be absolutely mental to drive! The project sounds like it was coming together nicely at this point,

but what about the wheels? "It was rolling on Porsche Fuchs alloys, 4½s on the front and 6s on the rear. You get to love any Volkswagen that's sitting on those wheels, but I decided on a set of 17-inch Porsche Cup wheels custom-powder-coated and polished for that sick German Look.

"The black wheels against the Toner red paint just set the car off. Since the wheels were a little larger in diameter and the motor a little larger than stock, I thought it would be wise to run Porsche disc brakes with larger cross-drilled and vented rotors. Now it looks good and can throw you through the windshield while under hard braking! It was a long two-year build, but I didn't give up and learned from my mistakes.

"This car will not be sold any time soon. I built it to drive and I plan on racking up the miles. It's already received Best of Show at the Copper State Show in Arizona and I hope to show up at a few more events in it." Looking at the end result, we're certain those awards will keep on coming, wouldn't you agree? **VW**



▲ Scott wanted to say thanks to his wife Emy for the support, Mike Kennedy for all the long nights, Bill Tsagrinis for insisting he got rid of the Fuchs, and finally Dan and the team at CE



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