

Text: David? Photography: Name?

**1971 CROSSOVER CAMPER**

# MINT BAY

Originally finished in Sierra Yellow / Pastel White, this former Devon has been lovingly restored and repainted in Lime Green and White, and is now a mint example of a custom crossover Bay.

**B**uilt in December 1971 (1972 Model Year) the bus is one of the "crossover" models featuring the restyled rear and old style front. Its M plate shows typical information for buses supplied for conversion by Devon: it was an Emden built Microbus (UK exports of this period were built in Emden not Hannover) and prepared for RHD market with belly plates for the fitting of an elevating roof and no rubber mat or seats in the rear.

By 2007 it was in a very sorry state. The owners had taken it to a garage to find the amount of work required was prohibitive. People had been squatting in the van as it had been left in a free public car park for a long time and it wasn't a pretty sight! The bottom 8 inches or so around was completely rusted out and the interior comprised of units which had been painted in cherry red emulsion and were falling apart, plus anything that could have been removed was ripped out, leaving a bus in serious need of TLC.

Jonny and Sadie Edwards were travelling down to the parents in Cornwall and, unsurprisingly, passed a number of VW campers on the road. Sadie was 8 months pregnant at the time and one of the buses they passed had a couple of children in the back and they thought that it was a very cool way of getting around. When they mentioned the idea to Jonny's dad, it turned out he knew of a sad bus that had recently been into his garage for some work. He knew that the owner wanted to sell as the amount of work



needed was far too much for him and so after a couple of phone calls to negotiate the price, the bus was soon theirs!

Mr Edwards Senior has been restoring cars for 40 years (panel beater and paint sprayer) and as a child Jonny had grown up around various classic cars that he'd owned or restored in his garages. Although buying a fully restored camper was an option Jonny was taken with the idea of being able to restore one with his Dad and this rusty old camper offered the chance to create something that would



The original cab seats have been refurbished and look like new.

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last another 38 years! So began three years of work...

After the interior had ripped out and thrown away, everything other than the door cards and front cab seats was binned giving had a complete blank canvass to work with. Cutting back rot to solid metal showed the extent of work needed: new cab door skins, both sills, front and rear wheel arches, new rear corners, sliding door cover and blanking panel on driver side.

Then the front panel, sliding door and tailgate had sheet metal work to get rid of the rot and the panels reshaped to bring them back to their original best. The bus was then stripped back to bare metal and the body prepped before and then the paint work could begin. Fiat Lime Green under Diamond White was chosen by Sadie and after the respray, the attention moved to the roof. New roof bellows and roof cap were fitted, with stronger springs to the hinges to help cope with the additional weight. The >>



The distinctive pop top roof is the only remaining part of its Devon heritage.



The interior has been kept clean and simple; the LCD screens above each single Buddy seat keep the children amused on long journeys.



The black and white interior theme ties in flooring, upholstery and curtains.

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roof cap headlining was then re-trimmed to finish the look of the roof. The doors were re-built with new door kits, seals, scrapers, felts, surrounds and quarter light uprights and the insides of doors were drilled at the bottom to give exit

points for any future unwanted water and wax oiled to ensure they will stay rust free. All nuts, bolts and screws throughout the van were replaced during the rebuild with stainless steel parts. All of the door seals, engine lid, roof and tailgate

seals were replaced along with new window rubbers all round. A new 1,584cc Vege Engine and sports exhaust were then fitted and the engine tin ware foam replaced along with battery tray and the whole area sprayed black. Finally a lowering job, hand crafted bumper over-riders (scratch built by Jonny's Dad) and chromed Fuchs replicas finish off the exterior look, with jail bars and front dual mounted aerial to keep period styling.

Now with two small children (3 years old and 8 months old), Jonny wanted to keep as much of the interior space free as possible, as well as having something that looks smart yet hardwearing and says, "The idea behind the interior was smart, spacious and durable!" The original front seats were refurbished and all carpets in the cab were replaced along with kick panels and all cabling tidied. The dash was then colour coded and a surfboard mirror and 8 ball gear knob added for a mild custom look. After installing a new floor in the rear it was finished with Black and White Checkerboard vinyl. In the rear there are

2 buddy seats, over head locker and a full with Rock and Roll Bed, which is finished with new bed boards and upholstered cushions. The material used is that used when re-trimming and upholstering boats, and so is very durable as well as good looking. The black and white theme has been carried through to the trimming, set

off with check curtains. As well as a new stereo, a DVD player with twin LCD screens, mounted above each buddy seat, keep he children entertained. ☺



The original engine has been replaced with a 1585cc Vege unit.

**Whilst much of the work has been done by Jonny and his dad, Jonny would also like to thank several people for their expertise and time.**

Justin @ Retrodubs "for all panels, seals, rubbers, exhaust, questions, wheels, his time and interest in the project." Tel: 01872 561194 www.retrodubs.co.uk  
Shaun and Petra at 50-67 for lowering the van, "cheers for fitting it in around your very busy schedule and for doing such a good job." Tel: 01872 561768 www.50-67.com

Colin @ VW Auto Trim for the headlining to the pop top roof Tel: 07794978914 www.autotrimvw.com

DubBuddys for the buddy seats and over head locker Tel: 07827916743 Email: jasinksi@jkaren3.orangehome.co.uk

Suzanne @ Cornish Camper Interiors (Basset Engineering) for the full width rock n roll bed Tel: 01736 753601 www.cornishcamperinteriors.com

Jackie @ RB Sails for the stunning upholstery to the bed cushions Tel: 01736 754659 www.rbsails.com

Sarah @ VW campers - all of the camper curtains and fittings Tel: 01406 422498 www.vwcampercurtains.co.uk

The Roof Bellows were supplied by The Campershop.



The original Devon interior was in a very sorry state.



The bus in original colour with new panels fitted ready for bare metalling.

**Special thanks to:** "Dad - for his hard work, dedication, patience, eye for detail, swearing, knowledge and faultless workmanship, a million Thank You's! And Sadie, Lola and Freddie - for putting up with 3 years of getting the van ready and with it, giving up lots of their weekends and of course, for the ham and cheese toasties..."

