

THE HOT SECOND GENERATION VWs

THEY'RE EXPENSIVE—BUT, BOY, ARE THEY FUN!

Not too long ago you could buy a new VW Bug for less than \$2000, spend perhaps \$1000 on modifying it, and end up with a nicely customized car. But times have changed: a new VW now costs from \$5000 up to \$9000, and the cost of customizing ranges from \$1000 to \$10,000 or more. Of course in the old days one only took home \$5000 a year and now people hopefully earn around \$20,000, but still . . .

The new generation of VWs is starting to become as popular with enthusiasts as the Bug. However, the Bug is bought by younger drivers, who then do most of the work themselves over a long period, spending a small amount at a time. But the Rabbit and its derivatives, due no doubt to their high initial cost, tend to be bought by older, more affluent buyers who spend a considerable amount of money on improving the car at the time of purchase. They then pay for the improvements by monthly installment plans rather than having to put out a lump sum. Because of this, many of the companies specializing in providing parts for the new generation of VWs work through VW dealers. So for those second-generation fans, we present a selection of customized VWs from this country and from Germany.



b+b GOLFS

Rainer Buchmann and his brother have become world-famous during the last few years for producing some incredible Porsche conversions, grafting 928 front ends onto 911s. Earlier this year, b+b built 10 rather special Golf GTIs with full electronic digital instrumentation. Just about every function imaginable can be read on the digital displays located in the instrument pod in front of the driver. The two main readouts for the speedometer and the tachometer also have a visual graphic display as well as the digital readout. The advantage of this is that the driver can glance at the display quickly and get an immediate idea of his road or engine speed without having to read the actual number.

To the right of the main display there are 10 buttons that are used for changing the functions of the readouts for such information as oil temperature, water, interior and exterior temperatures. The microcomputer on board the car will also calculate the average speed and fuel consumption at any point on a journey and at the end of the trip it will also inform the driver of the maximum speed, temperatures, etc., reached during the trip. All that's missing is a computer printout for a permanent record! But even that would not be too difficult to arrange in the future.

In addition to digital instrumentation, the Golfs are also fitted with a new, Bosch developed, traffic-information display that actually uses a liquid crystal display to show a map of the area in which the car is being driven, indicating traffic tie-ups and giving alternative routes. Eventually every city in Germany will have such a system, but at present only Cologne boasts such a futuristic "map" display. The electrically controlled Recaro seats are connected to a memory that can recall seat positions for up to three different drivers, and will set them up at the touch of a button. Each of the ten cars also has an incredible stereo system with every conceivable aid for superb sound reproduction.

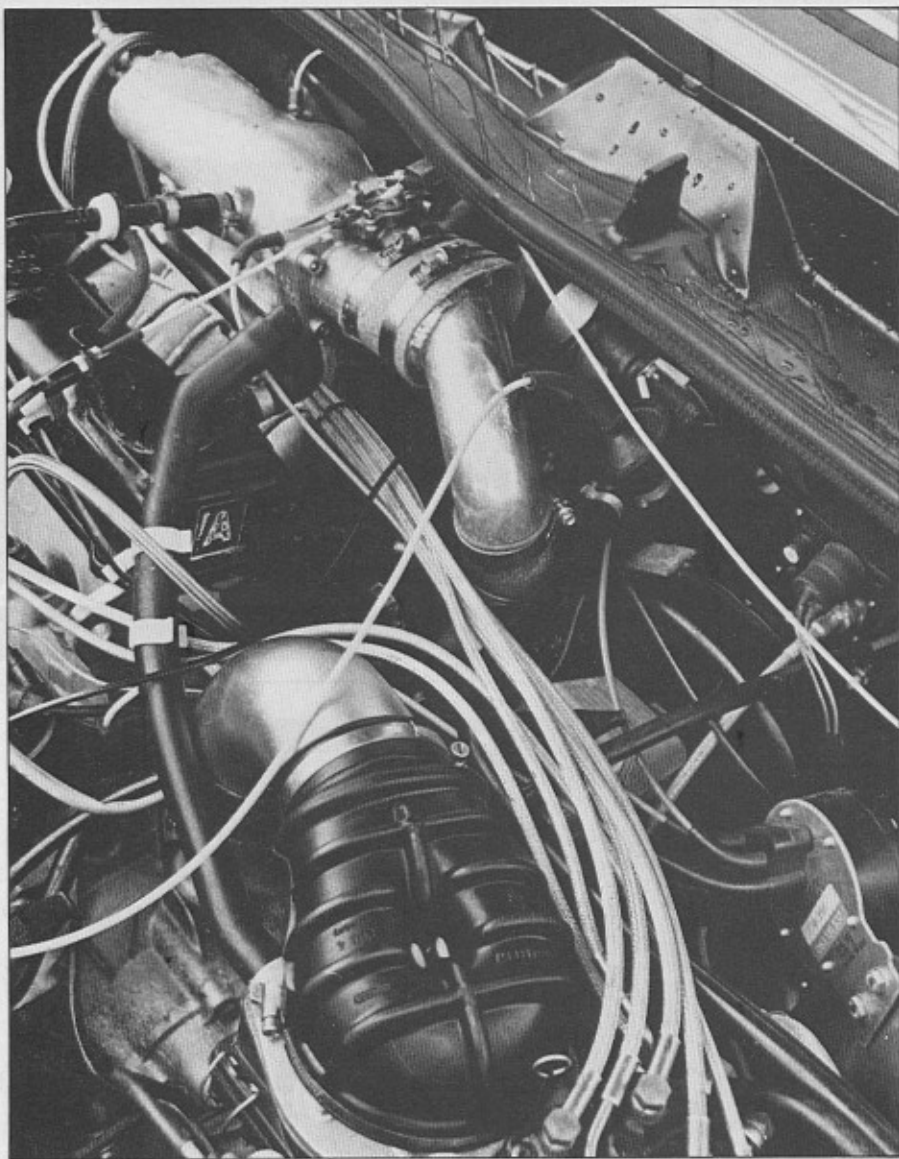
As shown in the color photo, the cars have unique pearl-paint finishes. The three colors are Rubin (pink), Saphir (blue) and Topas (bronze). Also available on other cars are Diamant (white) and Onyx. The flares are of a new design and made by BBS (of wheel fame) especially for these cars. At present b+b has no intention of selling these 10 cars as they are development vehicles for use in testing and perfecting the sophisticated electronic instrumentation. However, once everything is working reliably the cars will probably go on sale at a cost of about \$30,000 each!



ABOVE, they may look to you like colorful Rabbits, but in reality they are \$30,000 Golf GTIs which are specially produced by B+B in Frankfurt, West Germany. You may be asking yourself what makes them so special, well, looking at the dash (RIGHT) tells you immediately that those aren't stock gauges: digital instruments monitor just about everything you can imagine.

BOTH PHOTOS, BOTTOM, Ken Schwoerer was kind enough to furnish us with these dynamic pictures of a GMP-built convertible. The car was prepared for Paul Robinson and features all the tricks that GMP has for the second generation VWs.







GMP PERFORMANCE VEHICLES

Regular readers of Hot VWs who have been following the tremendous increase in interest toward new-generation VWs may have noticed that GMP Performance from Charlotte, North Carolina, has been supplying parts for Rabbits and Sciroccos almost since those cars first appeared. It does not surprise us, therefore, to find that Joe Klitzsch, the owner and founder of GMP, now has a thriving and profitable business supplying accessories and goodies only for Rabbits and Sciroccos. GMP also builds finished cars nowadays for customers all over the country and in Mexico.

When we were in Charlotte at the recent FSV race, we were lucky enough to be able to try out one of GMP's latest customer cars, a Rabbit convertible about to be delivered to Paul Robinson in Missouri. This is the second customized car Paul has bought from GMP. The convertible's engine has been turbocharged and enlarged to 1716cc by using the stroker crank from the Chrysler Omni/Horizon. The BAE turbo was only set at 4 lbs boost when we drove the car, so the power output was probably not much more than 100 hp. However the car moved along very nicely and with the GTI suspension it also handled well.

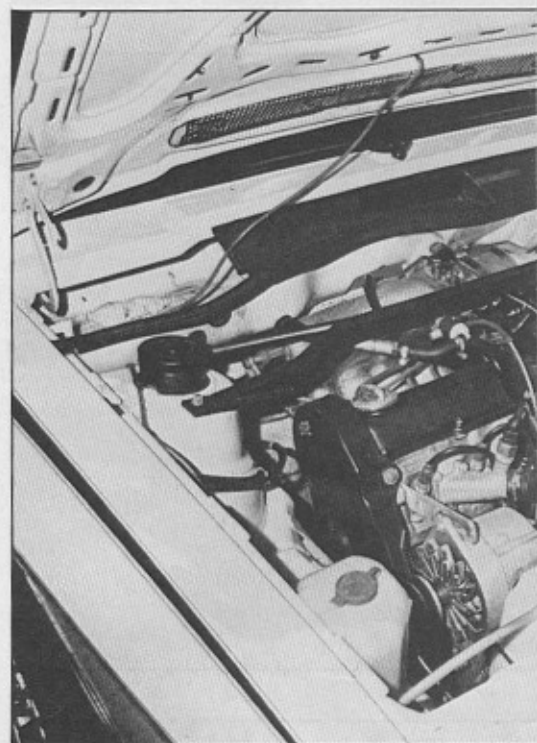
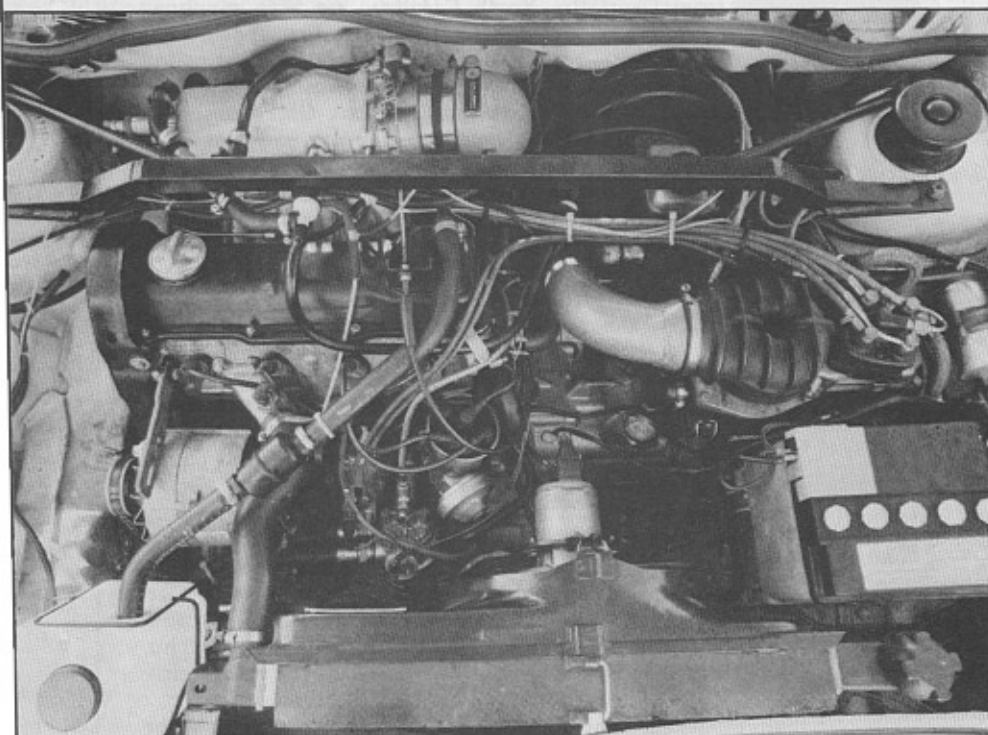
The Rabbit's Zender spoiler and matching flares are painted in the same metallic bronze as the car and look as though they came from the factory that way. Nothing has been done to the interior, as the convertible comes in stock form with very comfortable Recaro-type bucket seats.

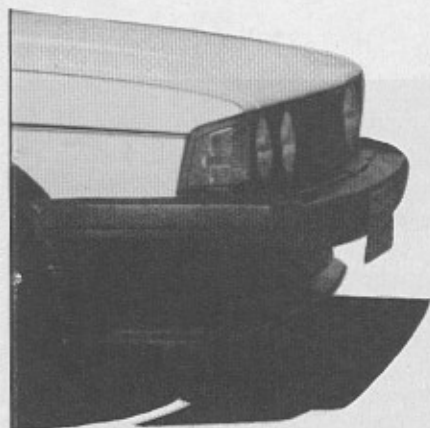
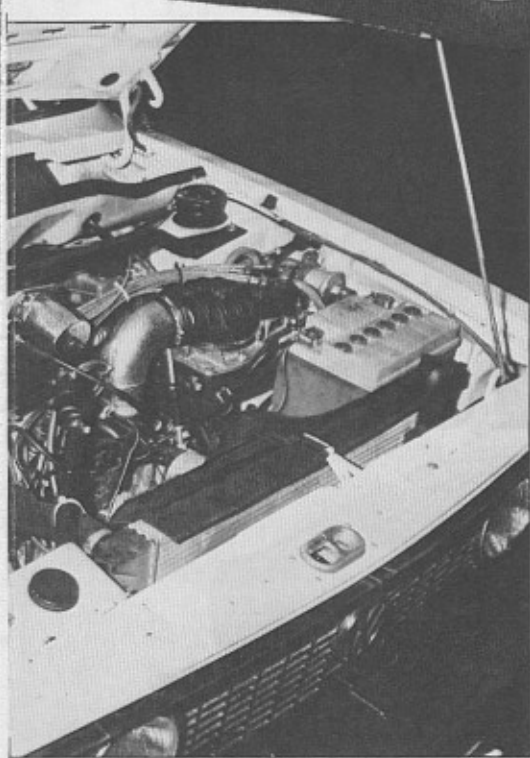
The one other GMP vehicle we have had a chance to try is a heavily modified VW pickup. Apart from the roll-bar, this has to be the neatest looking mini pickup around, and it is American made. GMP has tuned the engine by installing all the parts from a genuine GTI engine from Germany. By spending approximately \$1000 on a GTI head, pistons, distributor and camshaft, the power output was made to rise from 76 to 110 hp. The increase in performance is well worth the money, as the truck fairly flies.

With a handling package similar to that found on the convertible, the pickup will go around corners as well as any vehicle we have driven in a long time. To give the pickup the real sporty look (as opposed to the all-too-common off-road look of most mini pickups), this one is fitted with color-matched spoiler and fenders with 6-in. gold-alloy wheels shod with Goodyear Wingfoot tires. A quad-headlight grille of a different design from the one on the convertible finishes off the overall look. Inside, no expense has been spared: the furnishings include Recaro seats complete with matching Recaro door panels and floor mats, and a Grundig stereo radio with four speakers in the doors.

The Rabbit-based pickup in stock form is the most expensive mini pickup on the market (at least until the Japanese have to start charging 25% import duty in a few months). Added to a basic cost of about \$6500 is almost \$6300 worth of extras, and we have a \$13,000 mini pickup. Sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? But consider that this vehicle offers the practicality of a pickup, the economy of a small sedan, the looks of a sports car, AND that it goes round corners better than a Porsche 924, has better performance and that it is still cheaper. Yes, one can convince oneself quite easily that it is worth 13 grand. If you want any of these goodies for your Rabbit or Scirocco send \$2 for a catalog to GMP Performance, P.O. Box 240008, Dept. HVW, Charlotte, NC 28224.







R&A APPLIED ARTS

If you ever happen to take Riverside Drive in Lyndhurst, New Jersey, you might notice some rather snappy looking VWs parked beside the Three County VW dealership. If so, they probably will have been produced by Andy King. Andy, who happens to be the son of comedian Alan King, used to work as a service advisor for Volkswagen of America in New York City. A couple of years ago he decided to start customizing Sciroccos and Rabbits. He quickly found that there was a ready market for individualized VWs and that quite a few dealerships were interested in selling such cars. Soon after leaving VW he set up a shop behind the Three County VW dealership and started producing finished conversions as well as selling components to dealers.

R&A's trademark is strong graphic lettering on the sides of the cars rather than a full paint job. But the main modification Andrew carries out is turbocharging. The first 16 or so cars Andy built used BAE turbochargers. He found these to be very satisfactory but is now trying the Calloway system, which is a lot more sophisticated but also more complicated. R&A obtains most of the suspension and bodywork components like flares and spoilers from GMP, with whom he works closely. However, Andy has developed a couple of rather neat parts himself. One is a plastic insert that fits in place of the radio on the Rabbit and Scirocco dashboard, and holds three instruments. The other is a modified center console that will hold a radio instead of the two instruments normally installed.

A typical special Scirocco from R&A costs about \$20,000, and includes increasing the engine displacement to 1716cc, and installing the Turbo complete with wastegate, water injection and electronic ignition with a detonation sensor. In this form the power output of the engine is claimed to be 160+ hp, with a 0-60 mph time of around 7 seconds. An oil cooler and an oil pan with a windage tray is also installed. Suspension is basically GTI, obtained from GMP complete with GTI disc brakes, springs, anti-sway bars and Bilstein shock absorbers. To finish the package off, the interior naturally sports a good stereo system, Recaro seats and full instrumentation.

R&A is finding that most of its customers are people who used to own Mercedes, Porsches, and the like but now want a practical, economical, sporty car in keeping with the times. Full information can be obtained from R&A Applied Arts, 701 Riverside Avenue, Dept. HVW, Lyndhurst, NJ 07071, phone (201) 933-8833.



Run 'N Boards



A HANDY ADDITION TO ANY SECOND-GENERATION VW

We were shooting the bull around the office the other day when the subject of cars came up (surprised?)

It seems that one of our staffers was looking for a pair of ordinary (he thought) seat belts for his van, and after practically exhausting all avenues, he was finally able to have a pair ordered. Well of course the subject arose then of some of the more common items we used to take for granted on early automobiles that are no longer offered. Of course safety belts aren't one of these, as every car must be equipped with them now, but they bear no resemblance (with good reason) to the plain old ordinary lap belt that you

could buy at Pep Boys or J.C. Whitney less than 10 years ago. It didn't take us long to come up with a variety of items, but when the subject of running boards came up, we all agreed that they were one of the most-missed ingredients.

For all you pre-running board readers, some of the advantages of having your vehicle equipped with running boards, besides the obvious one of helping you step-up and enter the vehicle, was protection; they helped protect the side of your car or truck from mud, dirt, rocks, road tars, and in some cases salt, thrown up by the tires of passing vehicles. Besides that, many people felt that the looks and style



TOP, we couldn't think of a better application for a running board than on a new VW Vanagon. If you think we're wrong, take into account that a three-year-old kid can't step up like you can. BOTTOM LEFT, installation is fairly easy, but does require some tools and two hydraulic jacks. It's not a bad idea to have a friend help, too. BOTTOM RIGHT, "boards" are also available for the new VW pickup. Looks good with the Kamei flares and spoiler added.

of some vehicles were enhanced with the addition of "boards."

The second-generation VWs are not equipped with running boards (Rabbit, Scirocco, Vanagon and pickup), but there is a company which has running boards to fit most second-generation vehicles as well as all mini-trucks, vans, most import and domestic autos, pickups, Blazers, Broncos, etc. The company, which is headed by Tom Mathews, is called Run-N-Boards, Inc. of Clackamas, Oregon. The running boards are vinyl-covered steel, are accented with non-slip molding, and are available in 11 standard colors.

Installation is easy, requiring approximately three hours of your time and a few simple tools; including a drill and ¼-in. drill bit, two hydraulic jacks (easily borrowed from friends or neighbors), a couple of socket wrenches and a hand level. For the VW vehicles they can also be installed in conjunction with Kamei flares, but with or without the flares they look great.

The Run-N-Board kit comes with boards, nuts, bolts, braces and easy step-by-step instructions. More information is available from Run-N-Boards, Inc., 10325 S.E. Hwy 212, Dept. HVW, Clackamas, OR 97015 (503) 656-0081. ●