

# Cabrio 'Deluxe'

Take one excellent but rather plain cake (a Mk1 Golf Cabrio) add decoration, according to preference. Result: LINDSAY PORTER'S tasty Golf Convertible. Fancy a slice?

**T**HIS IS THE first in a series of articles looking at some of the improvements you can make to a Mk1 Golf Cabrio. If, like me, you want a real De Luxe version of the original. My wife Shan and I had always wanted a Golf Cabrio. Originally, we decided to start looking for a car that was solid and sound though possibly in need of some cosmetic work, so that we could easily bring it up to scratch and just, well,



Now pay attention 007... this is everything to be fitted to Lindsay Porter's Golf. Watch how the story progresses next month!



Thankfully, wings are easy to remove and replace. Be careful not to bash it!



Paint is applied in two stages. Primer first, then the two-pack top coat.

enjoy it. That was the theory! By the time we'd finished, we ended up with an original car in much the same way that Cher has ended up with the same body and face as before. Just the 'same' but better - much better! And boy, has it taken some work to make so many changes from the original! (Unlike Cher, of course...).

Over the next few months, we'll be taking a step-by-step look at those changes and improvements. Some of them are DIY-able, while others are strictly for the specialists.



Attention to detail and preparation is the key to any good DIY job.

## IN THE BEGINNING...

...there was the Golf, E862 YNM, a 1986 Golf Clipper Cabriolet with automatic gearbox - exactly what we prefer in a 'luxury' car. YNM was quite sound but it is amazing just how much you have to do if you want to make a car as near perfect as you can. We replaced everything that looked as if it didn't have a full life-span ahead of it - which only left the basics! Items that will always need replacing if you're splashing out on a total refurbishment include all the major electrical components, such as

ignition parts, alternator, starter motor and fuel pump. Electrical problems are the major cause of breakdown and of fire, and that applies to cars of all ages.

The front wings, bonnet and the front-panel were all replaced. The wings were changed because I couldn't bear to put old ones back on again, the bonnet was dinged but the front panel turned out to be the only part with rot in it, when it was thoroughly examined in its stripped-down form.

When you have everything stripped away, you have the perfect time – probably the once in a car's lifetime – to carry out a full respray. Owners of modified cars often go for exotic paintwork but YNM was always intended to be externally as original as possible. You'll need to know your Golfs to know that YNM is different!

And here's one way in which she's different under the skin. Volkswagen never built a GTI with auto – either because of concerns over the longevity of the auto 'box' if thrashed, but more likely because, at the time, the two just didn't seem to mix. Now, when you drive loads of cars with auto. 'boxes, you start to realise that there's nothing unsporty about them. For instance, if you want to overtake the car in front and you're waiting patiently for a gap in the traffic, you're going to have to change PDQ if you want to get past swiftly. And I'd defy anyone to change-down-and-go faster than the kick-down on an auto 'box. Oh, plus I'm a lazy s'd who can't see the need for stirring a shifter when I don't have to...

There was a surprising amount of work required to convert a carburettor engine to fuel injection, but nothing that couldn't be overcome with a careful selection of all-Volkswagen parts, thank goodness. Final job in the engine bay was to set the engine up in the approved, factory manner (and it's

not obvious if you don't know how) and now she runs wonderfully well!

Another aspect of the De Luxe treatment is the fitting of a TSR power steering kit. It's a bigger job even than the appearance of the parts laid out here would suggest, but what an improvement!

We went the whole hog – or two whole cows, to be exact – when fitting the interior out with Connolly leather. Top trimmers Aldridge Trimming fitted the new hood and one of their ace trimmers, Paul Aston, did the upholstery for me.

Though it's not exotic, the sound system is good enough – good enough to pinch, even. So the company who supply VW with some of their alarms, Scorpion Alarms, were called in to fit a Cat 1 system. Like the leatherwork and the soft-top fit, this is a job that definitely isn't for DIY-ers!

With all that GTI-inspired 'go', I wanted extra cornering ability and extra 'stop'. We fitted uprated Black Diamond front discs and new calipers with Aeroquip hoses at the front, while shock absorbers and springs were swapped for an uprated, adjustable Spax kit. Always go for adjustables if you can! (I'll tell you why in a later issue.) At the rear, we converted the drum brakes to disc – quite a simple job, but you need to know how! A larger master cylinder neatly overcomes the lack of 'thrust' from the brake pedal that often curses Mk1 Golf brakes.

From the outside, the finished car looks quite standard. In the picture, there are three visible clues that changes have been made to the car shown at the start of this article (not including the leather headrest). Can you spot them? If so, you know your Golfs!

Next month, we'll start the recipe book proper with details of ingredients and cooking times for uprating the Golf Mk1's notoriously average front brakes.

See you then!



Although the parts look simple, a power steering conversion is far from easy!



Paul Aston of Aldridge Trimming shows what can be done with quality leather.



An alarm system is a good idea on any car, even more so with a Golf GTI like this!



Lindsay is also M.O. of Porter Manuals, the first Colour Workshop Manuals. These telephone-directory sized manuals cover a wide range of everyday cars including Golf, Polos and derivatives and are available solely through all branches of Halfords.