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**One-On-One
23 window**

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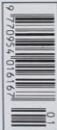


RESTO OVAL



Beastie Bug

DRAG RACE STYLING FOR THE STREET





Right on one!

This amazing 1956 23 window Deluxe Microbus is the latest to come out of the workshops of One On One Restorations in Burnley, Lancashire. True to form, it is another class act



There's no doubt about it. Restorations turn out so

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There's no doubt about it, One On One Restorations turn out some truly superb work

Quality is the word that immediately springs to mind on mention of Steve Gilbert's company, One On One Restorations. We can honestly say we've not seen a Volkswagen come out of this workshop that was not of the highest standard. The 1956 Samba you see here is the latest resto from the company and, as you can see, it's absolutely gorgeous. However, this is not strictly a restoration in the true sense of the word, as Mohammed Khaleeq, the owner of the '56, gave Steve Gilbert a slightly different brief to follow. As you will find out, this stock-looking Split screen is far from stock when you dig a little deeper under the surface. Kal, as he's known to his friends, wanted a classic Bus without the fuss, and this meant he wanted later mechanicals - but he didn't want any of the changes he'd planned to be obvious.

Stock with a shock

The brief from Kal was that the Bus should look like a stock 50s Samba and be able to get up a hill without wheezing like it smoked 40 tabs a day and stop like it should, rather than like it might. He wanted it to drive like a later Split or Bay window but not obvious that it had been tampered with.

Kal wanted quality in every area - and having seen Steve Gilbert's work, he knew this was where he was going to get it. As Kal told us, 'In my professional opinion, Steve Gilbert must rate among the top five restorers of VWs in the UK. The guy is a perfectionist and a true VW fanatic.'

So, we know why Kal went to One On One and that he's more than happy with the results of the company's work, but what's the full story? Well, Kal started off in 1999 with a Swedish import '56, which was a factory-built right hand drive vehicle. This was eight years after his first car, a VW

Beetle, which he bought for £650. Between then and now, he's owned some very special cars indeed - thankfully he's been able to fund his passion due to hard work, and is now a company director of a computer firm.

The list of cars Kal has had, and some of which he still owns, include: a Honda NSX, of which he says, 'is superb and fast'; a 1959 356A; a 1957 Karmann Ghia, which was, 'an excellent car, one of my all time favourites.'; and a Mercedes 300SL - the old shape and with just 14,000 miles on the clock. He's also had a BMW 840, which he thought was, 'an excellent design'. He's owned a 1960 Beetle, which was, 'Pure and simple - a beautiful car.' A '71 Beetle that was 'superb' and a Type 2 camper. Currently, Kal owns the NSX, the 356A, the Merc 300SL, a Mercedes motorhome and a VW Scirocco, along with this 23-

'This is more than a restoration, it's loaded with sneaky updates'



There's no easy way to make a Split look straight, it's all down to hard work. Taking this into account, this photo shows a lot of hard work has gone into this project. This 23-window Bus is truly amazing

SUPER SAMBA



The seats and panels are all original. A few pieces of stitching needed to be redone and they were all given a good clean. The headliner was ordered from Wolfsburg West and fitted by One On One

window Bus. So, we know this is a man who is clearly not just interested in VWs – he's passionate about them and has been since he was a child.

'I absolutely adore the Samba. We had Type 2 vans and minibuses in the family for a long time during the 70s and 80s. Can you imagine a family of 20 Asians in a Volkswagen going across Europe?' he says, laughing.

'I think the Samba is a design icon and can stand amongst Ferraris, Mercedes, Porsches and the like without any loss of face.' Well, we can only agree with Kai on that one, although there's not one of us here that'd actually want to own a Ferrari so long as they continue to produce Porsches on this planet.

The '56 23-window Bus Kai handed over to Steve Gilbert to restore was a very nice

'All of the interior trim on this Samba is original, it's just been cleaned up'

original Swedish import with an amazingly good interior, so it was a great basis for restoration. Steve still found it needed new rear corners, repairs to the back panel and rear light areas – as someone had fitted later lights. New rear arches were needed for the same reason and both cargo doors needed rust repairs, along with the outer sills on both sides.

A little bit of work was also needed on the outriggers and inner sills. The front arches had to be cut out and replaced for panels of the correct shape. The inner front arches needed to have 'invisible' patches welded in.

Along with all the new panels mentioned, a pair of New Old Stock cab doors were supplied by Alan H Schofield. The only problem was that the doors were not the correct year for the Samba, so the metal around the door handle area of each door had to be cut out of the old doors and grafted into the NOS doors. The cab floor needed repairs and the nose of the Bus had to have new metal inside and out. Finally, as far as metalwork is concerned – both bumpers had to be straightened.

A beautiful body

With the new panels welded in, Steve turned his attention to making the body straight. This is no easy task, especially along the side panel, which does not have cargo doors. Anyway, as the photographs show, this is now an extremely straight Type 2.



The deluxe Microbus came with the top-of-the-range interior – this shows what you would have got in 1956



OWNER PROFILE

Name: Mohammed Khaleeq
Age: 34

Are you married or single?

Married

Occupation? Company director

Favourite drink? Coffee, I don't drink alcohol

Favourite music? David Bowie

Best car you've ever owned? Well, that's got to be the 356, I think, or this Samba

Most expensive part? The restoration

What would be your dream car?

My dream car is a Lamborghini Miura and my dream VW is a Sambaor Samba

Any future project plans? Probably an early 356 convertible or an early Karmann Ghia

Any special shouts? All those who helped.

Steve obviously, Nezia my wife who had to wait two years longer for her new kitchen and Kusnet, my daughter who's only four but already thinks this is her very own Bial!



The engine is a nice reliable 1600cc Manchester, detailed to perfection

'The engine unit, which window a li

The next step was to etch and then paint it in Standox Wax Red. This sounds simple a sentence, but this is an arc considerable amount of time the finished article we can tell finish than when it was new. A Steve colour-sanded the whole with 2000 grade and then fully the whole van.

Exterior trim t

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WORK IN PROG



Here's the Samba stripped down in the road ahead was a long one from h



The engine is a nice reliable 1600cc unit, built by VW Speed Shop in Manchester, detailed to perfection and converted to 12 volts

'The engine is a 1600cc unit, which gives this 23-window a little more pep'

The next step was to etch prime the shell, then prime it, and then paint it in Standox Chestnut Brown over Sealing Wax Red. This sounds simple when written in a sentence, but this is an area One On One spends a considerable amount of time and labour on. Having seen the finished article we can tell you it now has a far better finish than when it was new. After getting it into paint, Steve colour-sanded the whole vehicle with 2000 grade and then fully polished the whole van.

Exterior trim time

Now, you don't need us to tell you Kal's 23-window would have looked pretty poor if it had a lovely body and paint but was refitted with horrid tarnished exterior trim and old rubbers. Well, don't worry, as this isn't the case. However, Kal is really pleased that it is not 'over-restored'. Wayne Tyas at Volkshaven in Doncaster supplied a set of reproduction rear air intake trims. The original exterior handles were all rechromed and all of the Deluxe trim was polished to make it look like new again. Karmann Konnection supplied all of the replacement rubber and, on a 23-window that's a lot. KK also supplied those lovely looking white walled tyres, which were

fitted to restored stock 15-inch Beetle wheels. The NOS hubcaps and beauty rings finish the exterior off to classic perfection. Now the cunning masterplan Kal had in mind could finally be implemented.

Under that stock body

The great thing about this Samba, as we've mentioned already, is it looks like a stock classic but there's more to it than meets the eye. The front drum brakes have been changed to wide 5 lug discs from Custom and Speed Parts in Germany. The suspension has been fully rebuilt with Wolfgang spindles from the US, then Steve fitted beefier gas shock absorbers all round. The engine is a rebuilt-1600 from VW Speed Shop in Manchester and it's bolted to a 1500 Beetle gearbox with earlier shafts and Split reduction boxes, which was done by John Maher Racing.

Finally, the Samba has been converted to 12-volt electrics and runs an alternator rather than a generator. So, Kal has a bus which drives like a more modern Type 2 but retains those classic looks. Is he happy with it? You bet!

'Steve Gilbert is the VW restoration maestro. The vehicle is way better than I imagined. However, having seen Steve's work in the past, I don't know why I was surprised! ●

One On One Restorations can be contacted on 01282 453434, but be warned - with a reputation for the highest levels of quality, they have a very long waiting list



WORK IN PROGRESS



Here's the Samba stripped down in the workshop. The road ahead was a long one from here on



The new panels needed included a pair of cab steps - but doesn't every right hand drive bus?



After only a few months, the Samba was in paint and looking good once more