

Big Bear Bash: 325-Buggy Rendezvous

Dune Buggies & Hot VWs

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# hot VWs

BITCHIN' RIDES'  
1950 HEBMÜLLER



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# THE RAREST

THE ULTIMATE RESTO MOD CONVERTIBLE BEETLE:

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BY CHADLY JOHNSON Lighting assistance by Jon Hageness

Many hours have been spent in heated debates between car enthusiasts discussing the rarest cars ever produced. In the VW world, there are a number to choose from. But when referring to the rarest of the rare regarding convertible Beetles, well, the Hebmüller is king. A total of 696 were coachbuilt utilizing the front section of a factory Cabriolet combined with a

coachbuilt rear section. Around 150 are known to exist according to the model's registry. The beautiful example unveiled here should be credited to owners Tracey and David Maxwell, and the incredibly talented crew at Kindig-It Designs. Let's take a look into how this ultimate "Resto Mod" Hebmüller was created.



# RESTO MOD

TRACEY MAXWELL'S 1950 HEBMÜLLER BUILT BY KINDIG-IT DESIGN



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## "WRECKING" A RARE CLASSIC HEBMÜLLER!

Before we even get into the build, we feel we should address the following question: "How could someone wreck such an incredibly rare Volkswagen?" Well, that's a fair question. First of all, let's not forget that Dave Kindig is a huge VW enthusiast himself, and has the utmost respect for the beauty and rarity of these cars. So, he and his team went above and beyond to ensure that the Hebmüller could be returned to stock form with little effort. Dave was influenced as a high school kid by the pages of hotVWs Magazine and fell in love with the Cal Look and styling of early air-cooled VWs. Right from the beginning, he would strive to have the lowest Beetle around, and create something unlike anyone else had, with a zero-dollar budget.

### DREAMS OF YOUNG MEN

He saw a picture of a Hebmüller as a young man and dreamed of hot rodding one even back then. If you are familiar with his early builds, you know of his aqua and white 1968 Beetle with 3-inch wider fenders, which he transformed into a roadster after cutting the roof off. Dave recalls that it seemed to rain every time he took it out with the Salt Lake VW Club, so he built a Carson top for it. This was one of many Volkswagens he has built over the years. He and his wife even drove to their honeymoon in Park City in the red '63 Beetle he built for her.

Now, let's jump into the Heb's build. Tracey Maxwell's experience with VWs started as a young girl, as her neighbor had a Bus that she fell in love with. In high school, she spent tons of time cruising in her friend's yellow Bug deepening her love of Volkswagens. Years later, her wonderful husband David purchased her a Volkswagen Thing, and that sparked a passion for collecting. He was having some vehicles restored by Kindig-It Designs and inquired about what the ultimate VW convertible would be, and if Dave would be interested in building it. He replied "of course", and the wheels were set in motion to build a Hebmüller. The goal was to preserve as much originality as possible, while delivering a drivable Beetle that was also comfortable and classy.

Gleaming in the CB SkyShare hanger, one would never suspect the Hebmüller's hood needed the front 10 inches hand built before the "Black Hole Black" & "Blood Red" paint colors were applied.





# RESTO MOD HEBMULLER, COMFORTABLE & CLASSY



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Now, deciding to build a Hebmüller is one thing, actually locating a good vehicle to start with is another. Luckily, Dave and Kevin (aka Kevdog) had spotted a silver and black model owned by Karl Schuler at a show earlier that Summer in Orange County, which had been restored back in the 1990s. A deal was struck, and things got underway. After a fun final drive, the 1950 Beetle was torn completely down to the ground with all of its ultra-rare parts cataloged, bagged, and tagged.

### UNTIL IT DIDN'T

The process went smoothly, until it was time to separate the body from the pan, which is typically just a matter of unbolting the two pieces. Unfortunately, when the car was restored in the '90s the body was welded directly to the pan with steel plates. This made for a real battle for the Kindig crew, but with patience and careful cutting and grinding, the body was freed from its stock pan. The final step was to send the body up to Eugene, Oregon for acid dipping at MetalWorks Paint and Rust Removal.

With the Hebmüller's body returned at ground zero, the build could start making forward progress. Being a Resto Mod build, but not wanting to ruin the stock pan, it was decided that the factory chassis and drivetrain would be restored to stock, and another chassis located to modify. The thought was that the Beetle could be enjoyed with the modified chassis, but set back on the original pan if it were ever decided to take it back to stock. During the resto-

Modern one-off wheels designed by Kindig-It Designs, and a lowered stance only accentuate the Hebmüller's graceful and flowing lines.



The overall stock appearance of the Beetle is not by mistake. The crew at Kindig-It Designs were careful to preserve as much originality as possible.



Rear perspective of the Hebmüller-specific decklid, this coachbuilt section of the Beetle is what visually sets a Heb apart from other early convertibles.



# STOCK 25HP WAS UPGRADED TO 176HP

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The wickedly beautiful pipes of the A-1 "Sidewinder" stainless steel exhaust system give a hint that more may be lurking under the decklid than the factory 25hp engine.



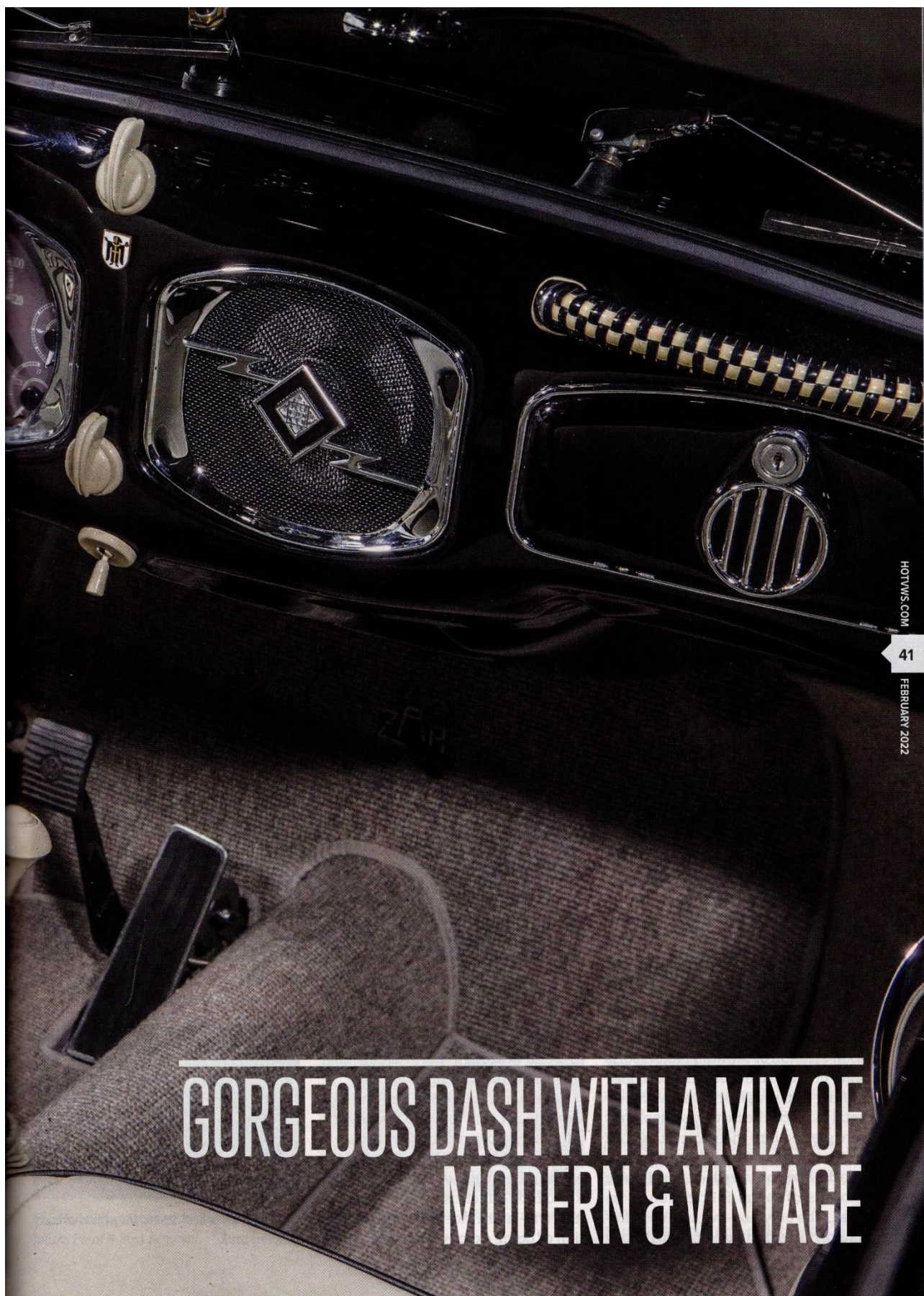


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GORGEOUS DASH WITH A MIX OF  
MODERN & VINTAGE





Monitoring the vitals is a custom-built set of Dakota Digital HDX gauges that fit perfectly in the early dash pod. The one-off set was built off early Bronco gauges.

ration, the body was set on both pans to ensure that it could in fact be easily swapped between the two chassis, even after the modifications were performed.

A 1970 IRS chassis was chosen for the Resto Mod version, which required typical pan halves and other minor rust repair. The most radical alteration performed was to allow for a Vanagon automatic transaxle. This modification required a Chromoly rear cage with coilovers, and a kit utilizing a ball bearing housing that allowed the torsion to move freely, and eliminated the use of torsion bars.

## REVEALING DAMAGE

The convertible's body required rocker panel replacement as well as convertible supports, which were fabricated by Kindig-It Designs. The acid dip process revealed that the Beetle had also been hit in the front end. Some pieces of the front sheet metal were incorrect, so the crew worked closely with Jason Stratton of Stratton Motorsports using proper panels. Jason also helped locating some original parts. With new metal in place, the factory semaphores were grafted into their correct factory location. The hood and Hebmüller-specific decklid both needed considerable amounts of metal fabrication to be saved. The only non-factory modifications performed on the Hebmüller's body

were around the shock towers, and the shifter opening, which had to be moved to allow for the automatic transmission.

## FULL METAL PREPPED

Once the body was fully metal prepped, it was massaged to Kindig-It Design's level of perfection, before being sprayed in a factory-style two-tone paint scheme. "Black Hole Black" and "Bad Blood" colors were chosen from Dave's personal "Modern Classikk" paint line to be applied. The convertible's factory stepped belt line trim was replaced by hand-fabricated pieces done in-house – they were then triple chrome plated.

The gorgeous leather upholstery was crafted by the amazing crew at Sewfine Interiors. EVOD built the one-off aluminum wheels, designed by Kindig-It. The stout 2276cc mill is putting out 176hp at the crank, sending plenty of wheel turning power to the Vanagon transaxle. Vitals are monitored by a custom set of Dakota Digital HDX gauges, while spent fuel exits through an A-1 Sidewinder stainless exhaust system.

The dedicated crew at Kindig-It Designs set out to build Tracey the ultimate VW convertible in rarity, style, and drivability... We'd say they hit the nail on the head. Watch for this rare Resto Mod out cruising as it was built to drive – and Tracey has every intention of doing exactly that! **hvw**



Restored Petri steering wheel against the dual glove box dash.



Modern electronics are hidden behind the gorgeous early Telefunken radio speaker grille.



Ultra cool and rare Telefunken center-mount radio antenna keeps the tunes crisp.



One-off spare wheel next to the period-correct gasoline tank.

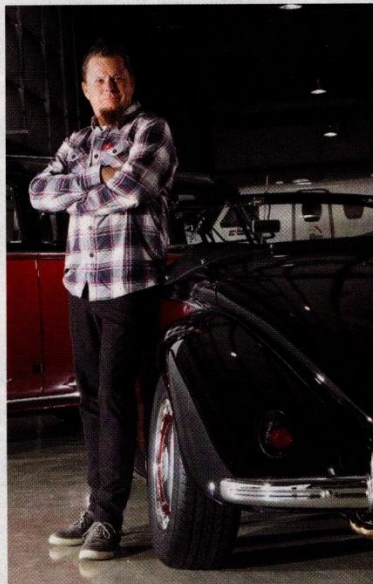




The hand-wound dash-mounted clock is an unrestored piece that adds great character.



VW exhaust systems have vastly improved over the years in both looks and performance.



Dave Kindig next to the Hebmüller he dreamed of modifying since his early design days.



Body color-matched "Blood Red" Bernie Bergmann fan shroud and dual Weber 48IDA carbs make for a clean and sexy engine bay.



The Hebmüller's shell post acid dip at Metal-Works Paint & Rust Removal.



Both the stock and 1970 IRS pans in pre-restoration condition.

## 1949 TYPE 14A HEBMÜLLER

OWNER/ Tracy Maxwell

### CHASSIS

**FRONT SUSPENSION** / Airkewld Stage 1 4" narrowed beam with Ridetech adjustable shocks

**REAR SUSPENSION** / Chromoly rear cage, Penski coilovers, aftermarket spring plates with no torsion bars.

**WHEELS** / Custom designed by Kindig, built by EVOD, sanded by Diamond Back Classics. 15x4.5 & 16x8

**TIRES** / Firestone 145-15 & 205/60-16

**BRAKES** / Airkewld discs with Wilwood calipers

**OTHER MODIFICATIONS** / Rear section modified to fit 1987 Vanagon automatic transaxle, 1970 IRS pan

### ENGINE

**CASE** / Autolinea raised roof aluminum Super Case

**DISPLACEMENT** / 2276cc

**BORE X STROKE** / 82x94 mm

**CRANK** / CB Performance 82 mm 4340, Chevy rod journal

**RODS** / CB Performance H-beam 5.5", Chevy journal

**CYLINDERS & PISTONS** / AA Performance Products 94mm, "B-style" pistons

**CAM** / Engle FK-8

**HEADS** / CB Performance 044 Wedge Port CNC

**VALVE SIZES** / 42mm intake, 37.5mm exhaust

**ROCKER ARMS** / CB Performance 1.4:1, Sweeper lifters

**COMPRESSION RATIO** / 8.7:1

**IGNITION** / Compu-Fire DIS-X

**CARBURATION** / Weber 48IDAs

**OIL SYSTEM** / Schadek 26mm

**EXHAUST SYSTEM** / A-1 Stainless "Sidewinder", 1-5/8" primary

**FAN SHROUD** / Bernie Bergmann (modified)

**OTHER MODIFICATIONS** / Stainless pushrods, straight-cut gears (steal), finned aluminum and vented valve covers

### TRANSMISSION

**BUILDER** / Transaxle Engineering Chatsworth, CA

**CASE** / 1987 Vanagon Automatic

**RING & PINION** / 4.09 factory R & P

**OTHER MODIFICATIONS** / 2.55 (1st) 1.45 (2nd) 1.1 (3rd), based on 3-speed 1983-1990 Vanagon style

### EXTERIOR

**COLOR** / Black Hole Black & Bad Blood, both colors from Dave Kindig's Modern Klassikk paint line.

**BODY & PAINT BY** / Kindig-It Designs Salt Lake City, Utah

### INTERIOR

**UPHOLSTERY BY** / Mike & Carol of Sewfine Products, Denver, CO

**SEATS** / Original frames recovered by Sewfine Products, Denver, CO

**DOOR PANELS** / Original recovered by Sewfine Products, Denver, CO

**STEERING WHEEL** / Petri Banjo

**CARPET KIT** / Light grey German square weave

**INSTRUMENT** / Dakota Digital HDX gauges

**AUDIO SYSTEM** / Kicker QS speakers, and Kicker KX800 amps

**SHIFTER** / Lokar

**PEDAL ASSEMBLY** / Stock removed clutch pedal