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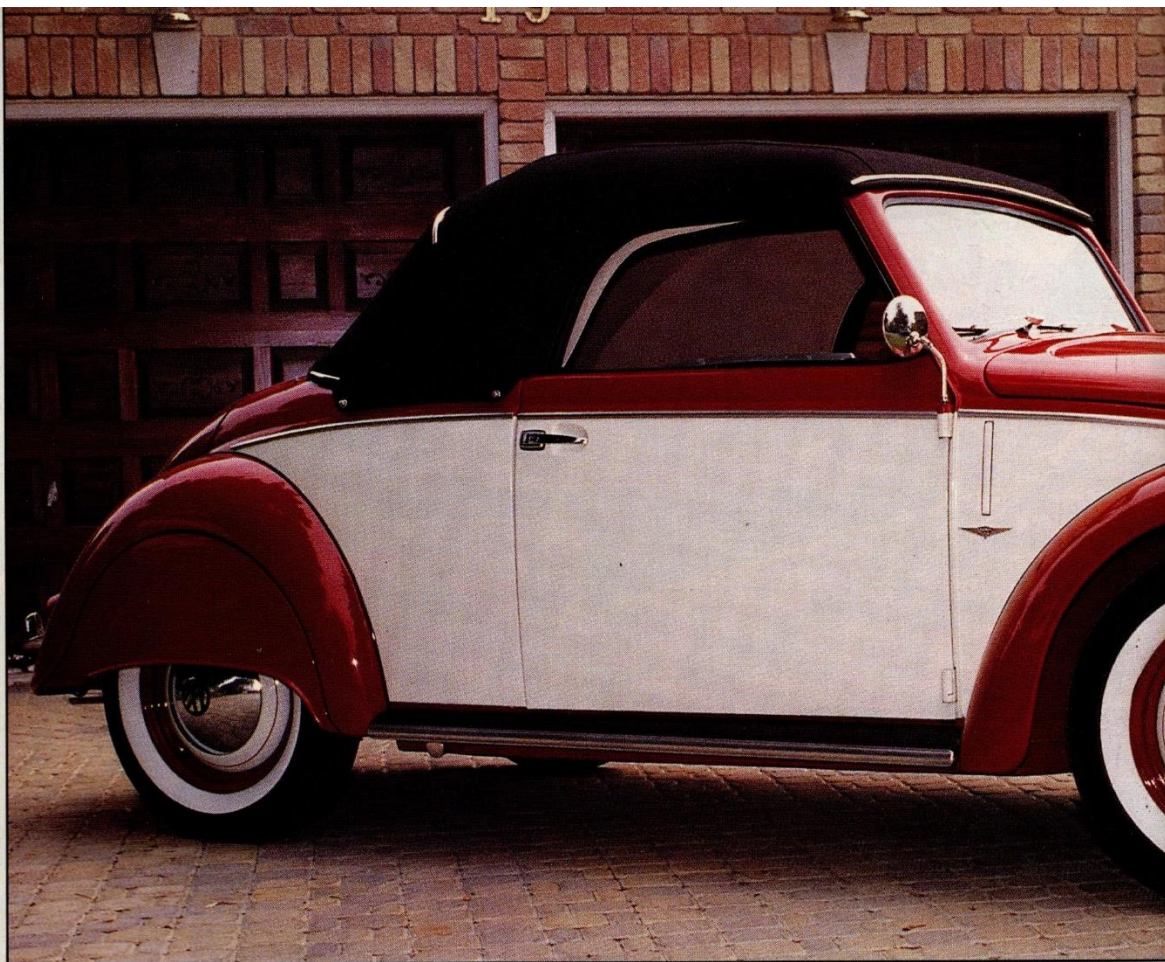
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INDUSTRY PROFILE: GENE BERG



CLASS ACT

A CLASSIC VOLKSWAGEN OF HIGHER CALIBER

by Robert Hallstrom

For someone who's restored classic Volkswagens as a hobby for the past quarter century, you'd think Bill Collins of Salem, New Hampshire, would've been driven to pursuing something else. But, that's not the case at all. In fact, Bill, who at age 50, still greets each new project with waiting anticipation.

Originally into model "A" Fords and other antique cars, Bill found Volkswagens very enticing and has since never strayed — having owned and restored

27 split windows! Yes, that's right twenty-seven! Well, now that we have Bill classified as a true Volkswagen aficionado, (not to mention your attention) we can better understand how this once incomplete 1949 Hebmüller is now the talk of the town.

Since he always wanted a Hebmüller, Bill took it upon himself to find one for his fiftieth birthday. Sort of like giving a birthday present to himself. After hearing word of a gentleman in Virginia who owned a '49 Hebmüller that had been reconstructed from two different Hebs in the late sixties, he decided to take a closer look at it. It appeared the

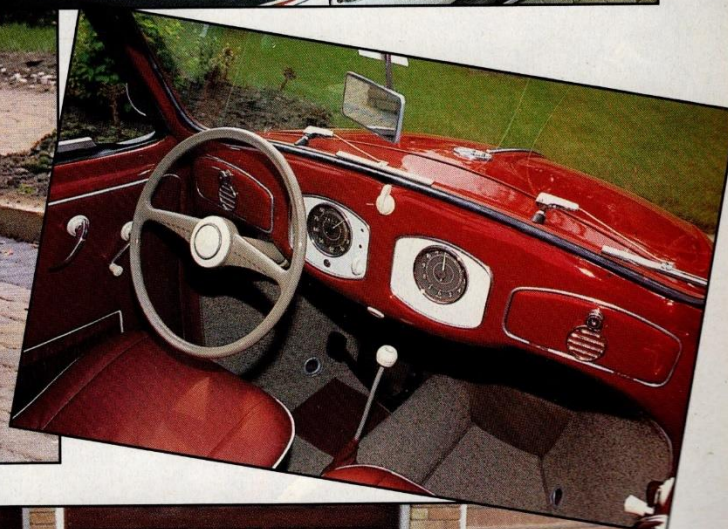
VW sat on a late model pan and was powered by a 1500 engine. Although being far from its original condition, it was, nonetheless, well preserved. Knowing this, Bill made several attempts to buy the car, but was denied every time.

After a year had gone by, Bill once again put his bid up for the car, but this time was successful and became the car's new owner. He immediately began a complete teardown of the Heb at Paint Your Wagen, a body shop in Lawrence, Massachusetts, owned by close friend, Lewis Santosuosso. It wasn't long after, Lew and a couple of key employees took a special interest in the project paying

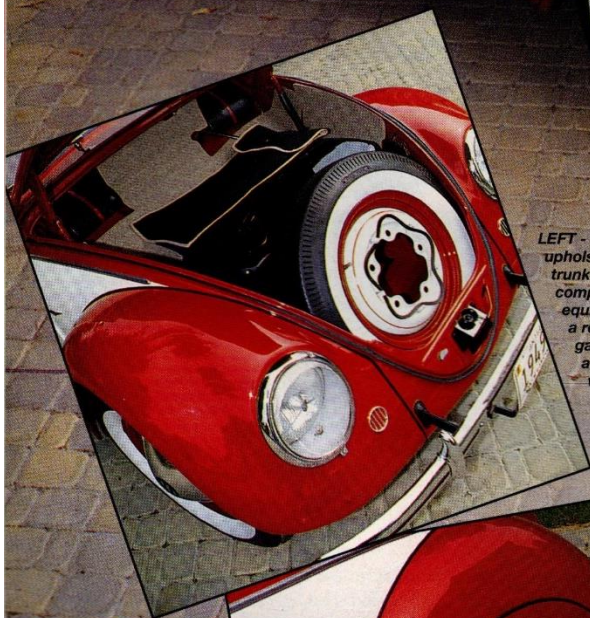
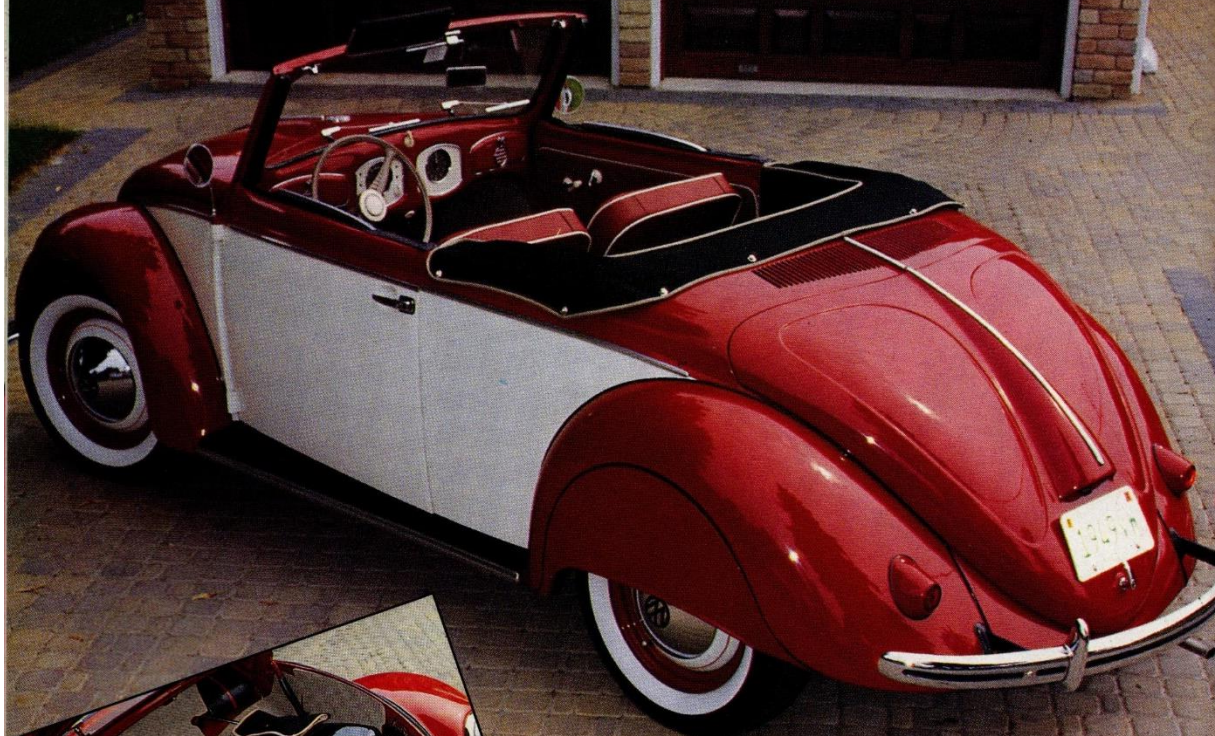
This incredible-looking 1949 convertible Hebmüller is a dream come true for VW enthusiast and Salem, New Hampshire, resident, Bill Collins.

RIGHT - Looking down on the interior shows the amount of pride and determined work that went into every stitch of the red leather upholstery.

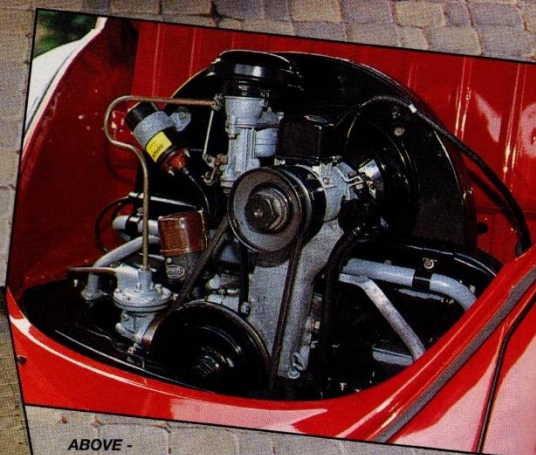
BELOW RIGHT - Original cockpit features include the split dash instrumentation, glove box and steering wheel.



CLASS ACT



LEFT - The upholstered trunk compartment is equipped with a restored '52 gas tank and a spare whitewall tire.



ABOVE - Powered by a 25 horsepower 1131cc engine, completely original featuring all stock internals, including tiny 75mm pistons. Note, the rare (Hebmüller offset) Mann mushroom air cleaner.

RIGHT - Probably the only aftermarket accessory on the entire car is a pair of rare NOS Folsom fender skirts.



VW Trends

close attention to detail and making sure everything was done correctly.

Since a restored pan had already been installed sometime during the sixties and was still in great shape, there was really no need to replace it, which undoubtedly made the job much easier. But, that's not to say it was all cut and dry either. On the contrary, the body underwent many hours of re-engineering. For example, the front fenders displayed oval horn grills, so they were filled and re-cut for early-model round horn grills. The parking light holes were also eliminated and both semaphores were reconstructed.

With the body's quick progression, the exterior received its final prepping and was primed for paint. Two-tone Chianti red and ivory were chosen for the acrylic enamel paint as it matched the original Hebmüller color scheme. After spraying, the paint was buffed to a brilliant shine. All exterior items and accessories were installed soon thereafter, including the original chrome side molding. A very rare set of (NOS) Foxcraft fender skirts were also installed for added detail.

Before starting on the interior, the engine and wiring had to be installed. Fortunately, Bill had completed a 25-horsepower engine restoration prior to the body work. The stock 1131cc powerplant, equipped with 75mm bore and

an original Solex 25 VFIS carburetor was installed with the help of Bob Donalds of Boston Engine in Needham, Massachusetts. Later, the engine received several very rare accessories, one being an original (Hebmüller offset) Mann mushroom air cleaner. A stock mid-1950's tranny was also rebuilt and installed rounding out the mechanical components.

When the time came to find a suitable upholsterer to take care of the interior, Bill's good fortune led him to Sal Messina of Columbia Auto Seat Cover also located in Lawrence. Since Volkswagen originally offered cloth, vinyl or leather as interior choices, Bill naturally opted for Connolly leather. The stock front seats, door panels and (pull-up) rear bench were then covered in sporty red leather with attractive ivory piping, while German square weave carpeting was installed throughout the floorboarding. Other cockpit features include the original dash instrumentation, glove box and steering wheel. Finally, the Heb received a black "Haartz Cloth" German canvas top with a wool headliner, matched to look identical to the original. Even a black boot with ivory piping was fabricated from Haartz cloth — and adds a nice finishing touch.

To ready the VW in time for the Great Canadian Bug Show, Bill began the

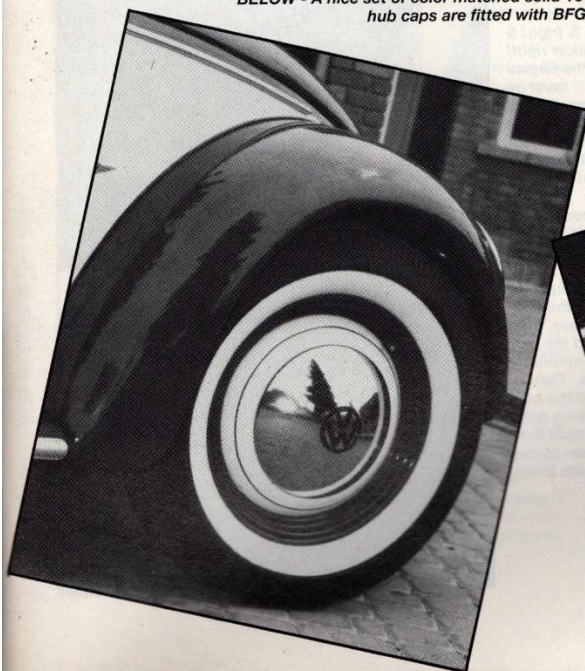
final detail and installation of the remaining items, including a pair of rechromed grooved bumpers, a set of new 16-inch wheels wrapped in BFGoodrich (500x16) white walled Silvertowns — and lastly, the placement of an original Hebmüller badge on the right front side panel.

Just for the record, Bill finished better than ever with a first-time show car, winning 1st in the Convertible Class, Best Restored and the coveted President's Choice award. A miraculous feat considering the complete restoration took only four months after purchasing the car! What a birthday present, huh! Future plans for the Heb call for an NOS engine case and a complete Okrasa kit. Our hats off to ya', Bill.



LEFT - Having been previously filled, the semaphores had to be completely reconstructed.

BELOW - A nice set of color matched solid 16-inch wheels with stock hub caps are fitted with BFGoodrich whitewall tires.



BELOW - Since Bill could not find an original combination brake/license plate light, one was fabricated from a '55 Chevy taillight. It turned out so well, most people can't tell it apart from the original.

