

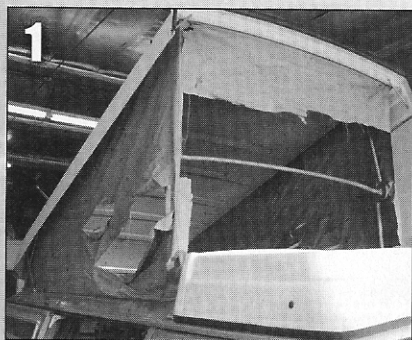
# WESTFALIA CANV

You Will Need Some Patience and a Couple of Friends to Replace the Pop-Top Tent of a Bay-Window Westfalia!

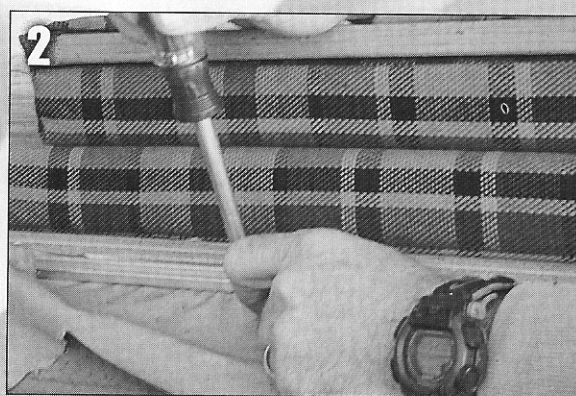


**P**roduced between 1968 and 1979, Bay Window Westfalias are still plentiful in the United States. But let's face it... the last model came out of the German factory a quarter of a century ago; as a result some of the specific camper equipment can look rather shabby. Point in case, this 1977 Westy, purchased by our good friend Bill Schwimmer last fall. He located it in a local newspaper and paid a mere \$600 for the non-running but rust-free vehicle. Besides the dents covering the green body, one cosmetic area that needed attention was the pop-top canvas. It literally fell apart!

Westfalia produced two types of canvas and pop-top combos. The 1968 to 1973 models are hinged in the front, while the later versions (1974-'79) received scissors-style hinges in the back. We located brand new canvases from Wolfsburg West (Corona, Calif.), a reputable company specializing in VW restoration prod-



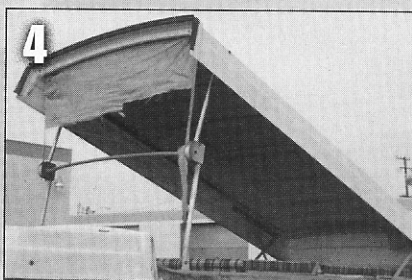
Here is how the original canvas looked, before starting to work on it. Yuck!



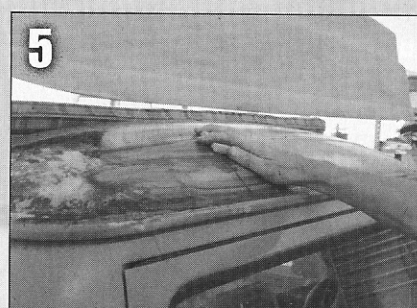
**Left:** The canvas is clamped between the roof and aluminum moldings – two on the sides, one in front, one in back. We first started by removing the side moldings, fitted to the body with a series of screws. Take careful notice of exactly how the tent is fastened to the body. Wolfsburg West even recommends using a digital camera, which will help if you get lost reinstalling the canvas.



The front and rear moldings came next.



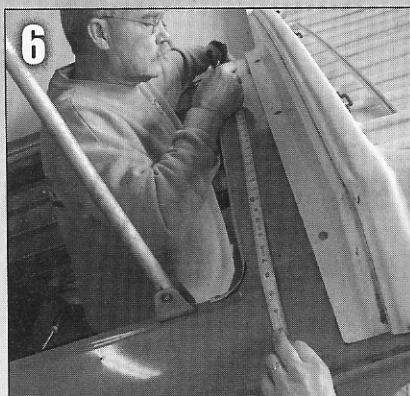
We were then able to remove what was left of the canvas. It didn't take much energy... The old material was so brittle, it literally fell apart.



It seems that the roof hasn't been cleaned for ages. It looked much nicer after a nice wash!



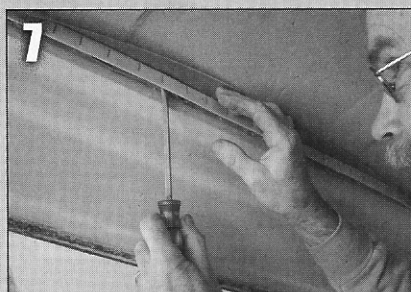
# CANVAS REPLACEMENT



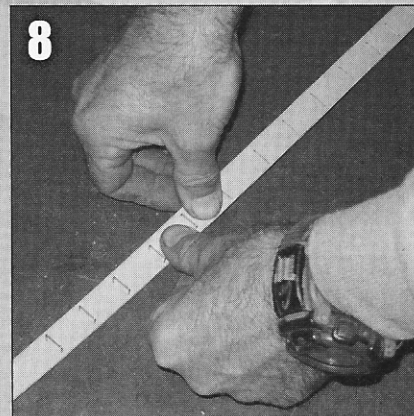
As Wolfsburg West states in its instruction sheet: "It is your responsibility to insure that the tent is right before you try to install it! Double and triple check all dimensions and edges." At this point, we decided to take some measurements on the Type II and compare them to the new tent.

ucts. For our 1977 Westy—and any other Bay Window models for that matter—we had the choice between two colors: either yellow or a shade of beige/gold which ended up being Bill's choice.

Before removing your old canvas, be aware that the process of installing a new piece can take between four and nine hours. The steps are identical if you work on a 1968-'73 model, or a 1974-'79 model. This is also a task you cannot complete on your own. At times, you will need at least two more people (three might be better), especially when lifting the top off of the vehicle. As you will see, it isn't necessarily complicated... It's just time consuming!



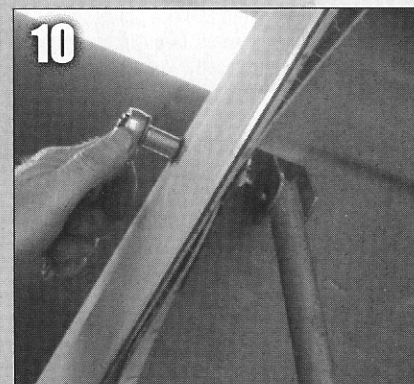
All Bay Window tents are attached to the pop-top with tack strips and staples. You can easily remove the tack strips with a screwdriver for example. As a side note, had the old tent still been in decent shape (i.e., if we hadn't taken it off earlier), we could have removed the tack strips while the top was upside down, as seen in picture number 14. Then we could have laid out the old tent on the ground, and laid the new tent on top to make sure the new tent was the correct type and size.



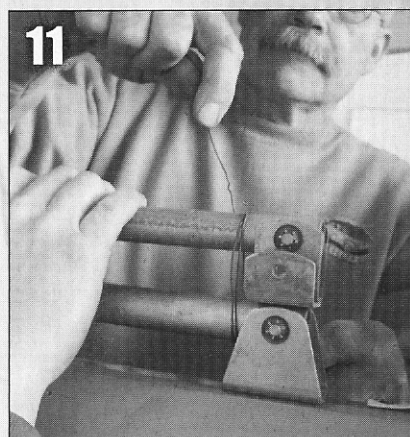
Even though new tack strips and nails are available from Wolfsburg West, we chose to reuse the original tack strips that were still in decent shape. We removed the staples by laying each tack strip on the floor, and pushing it down like this...



Remove the reinforcement bar, held with three bolts, in the front of the pop-top. *[With the smell that old campers' canvas tops can make, it is no wonder they left up the Christmas Tree air freshener until the very last minute!—Ed.]*



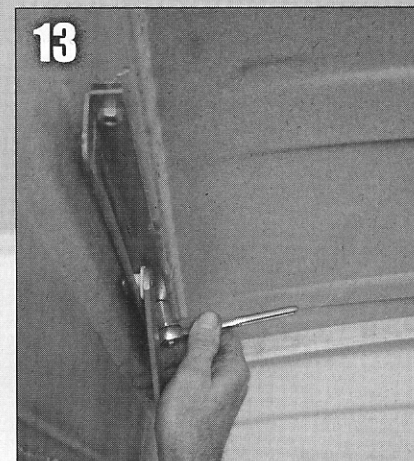
To remove the complete pop-top unit, you first need to unbolt the lifting gear (located in the front of the top on 1974-'79 models). On each side, there is one bolt on the flank, and another on top.



It helps to have long wires to tie the lifting gear, so they do not expand when you lift the top off of the vehicle.



Since the lifting gear is folded and wired, you need to hold the top partially open with a piece of wood so you can still access the hinges. This 2x4 found unexpectedly in the shop came in handy.

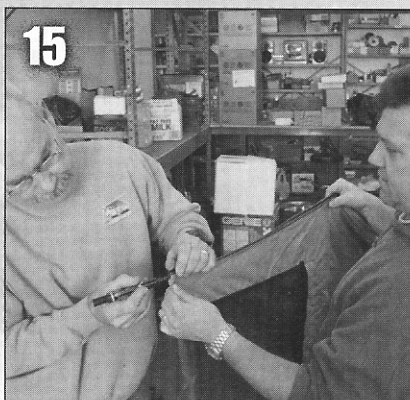


Now remove the top from the hinges. Each hinge is held with three nuts to the top.

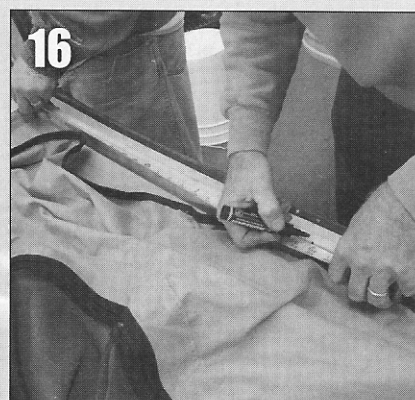




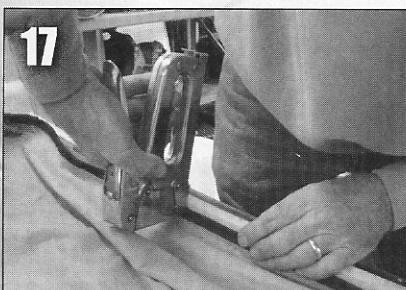
**14**  
You can now remove the whole pop-top unit from the vehicle. Place it upside down on a pair of sawhorses.



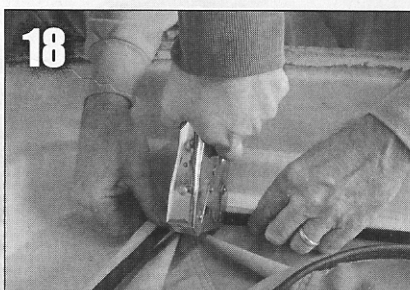
**15**  
After Bill (right) and friend Darrell (left) have marked the center of each side of the tent...



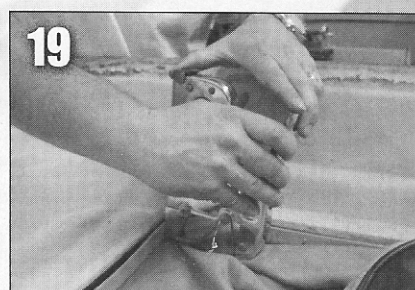
**16**  
...then they mark the center of the top's front, rear and sides.



**17**  
The next step will be to line up those marks and install the tent to the top at those points first. Get your staple gun out, so as to put a staple (size 17/32, 13mm in our case) at the center of each side. You will then work your way to each corner.



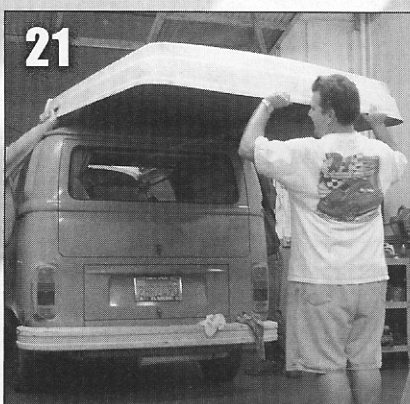
**18**  
You don't need to put too many staples at this point. One staple every four or six inches will work fine. A few staples in each corner might be required. As you can see, the corners aren't very easy to access. Take your time.



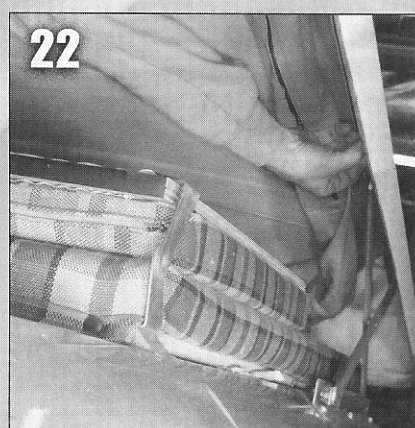
**19**  
From there, put the tack strip over the areas you have already stapled. You will need quite a few staples to tackle the job! Put the staples at about the same interval as on the original tack strip, as seen in pictures numbered seven and eight.



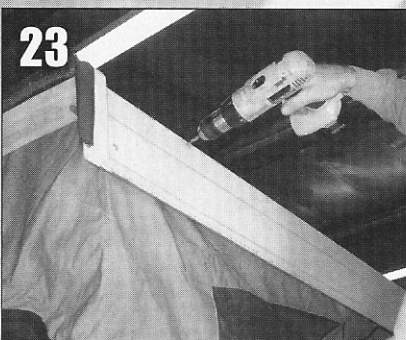
**20**  
We wanted to make sure the tent wouldn't be in our way, when turning the top upside. One way to achieve this is to clamp the material with some clothespins.



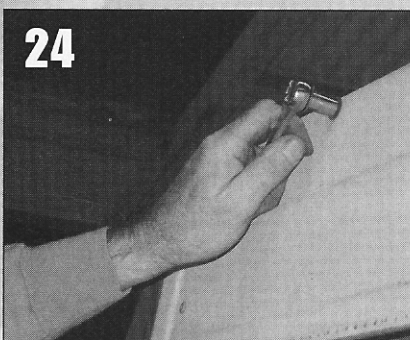
**21**  
With plenty of help, put the top back onto the vehicle.



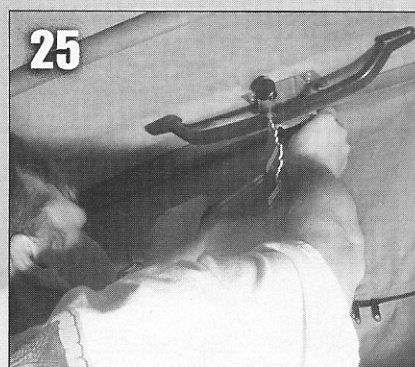
**22**  
Start by bolting the top to the hinges.



**23**  
In order to reinstall the lifting gear to the top, you will first need to carefully drill through the canvas and the tack strip.



**24**  
Secure the lifting gear to the pop-top with the four bolts. Remember, on each side, there is one on the flank and another on top.



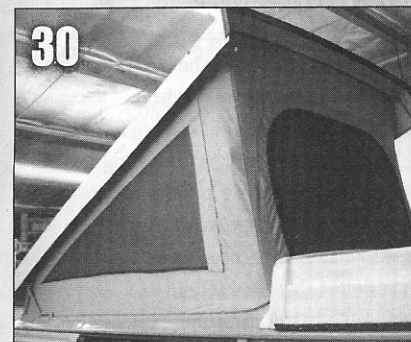
**25**  
Install the reinforcement bar, held with three bolts, in the front of the pop-top.



Time to install the canvas to the body. As seen earlier in our installation, the canvas is clamped between the roof and four aluminum moldings. Start with the shortest molding, located on the lifting gear side. Make sure the center point of the roof is aligned with the center of the canvas before securing this molding to the roof. We found it easier to slide the long side moldings, as seen here, afterwards.



You will need to notch the plastic welting in the corners in order to make the turn. It may also be necessary to take-up extra material in the corners. A little wrinkling in the corners is acceptable. They will straighten out over time.



Here is the final product! Don't worry too much about the wrinkles. This is a textile product and some stretching is to be expected.

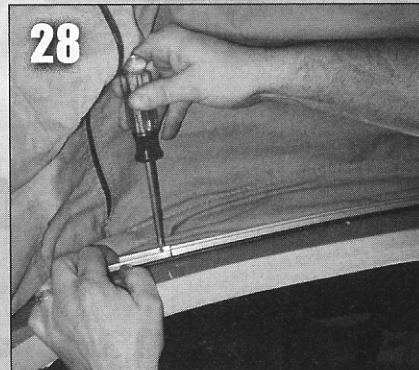
## SOURCE

**Wolfsburg West**  
2850 Palisades Dr., Corona, CA 92880  
(909) 549-0525

Special thanks to Mark Herbert of MPH, a VW hot rod shop located in Fullerton, California, for letting us use his facility!



For the two side moldings and the other short molding (on the hinged side), you also need to install the tent to the body at the center point of each run first, and then work towards the corners. Putting the screws back on is rather time consuming, but we found it easier to access the area near the hinges by removing the mattress – you can see the latter in Picture Number Two.



Finish the installation with the corners.

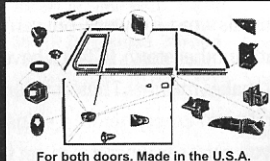
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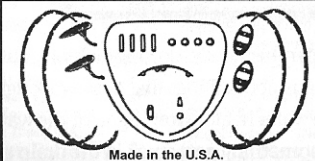
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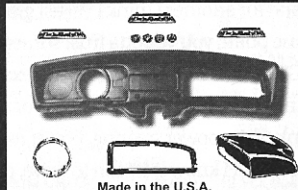


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