

H[👹]-wa^{👹👹}an Look

Words Gordie Woollacott Pics Michael Whitestone

Spend a fortune on a shiny paintjob or let Mother Nature create a head-turning ride instead? No prizes for guessing which route Jason Cooper took with the Rust Bus



Some say, when it rains he pours salt over himself and rushes outside. Others believe his blood runs brown and that two-pack paint is his Kryptonite. All we know is his name is Jason Cooper and he drives this mad as a box of frogs bare metal Hi-Top Split!

Jason is clearly the kind of guy who likes to stand out from the crowd. I had the pleasure of meeting up with him at Vanfest this year. Pushing through the crowds standing around his Bus, I asked if he was about and a friend of his told me to look out for the guy in the loud shirt holding a beer! It wasn't long before I tracked him down and, for final proof of his individuality he was at Vanfest without a dog! I know, incredible huh?

Getting started

And so our story begins with Jason becoming hooked on VWs and German motoring in general from an early age thanks to his Uncle Wally. Jason says, "I've been involved with and loved Volkswagens since my teens and have a special place for Split Screens and anything Type 3."

Having previously owned a Fastback and a Notchback, along with a Hi-Top Bay and a T4, the one thing missing from Jason's life was a Split – a situation that was rectified early in 2008, having 'met' this awesome Bus at Vanfest in 2007. Jason's partner,

Probably the only time a beaded seat has been acceptable in a Split – ever!

Stand by your van
Jason Cooper
'63 Hi-Top

Jason Cooper is a 40-year-old retired gas pipe liner, living in Caerphilly, Wales along with partner Anmarie and four children Josh [18], Aimee [16], Poppy [5] and Zhari [2]. And if that's not enough to keep him busy through retirement, then there's always Volkswagens!



This Bus certainly has character



She's got the looks, and now the personality to match

Anmarie, wasn't so convinced as you can imagine, but Jason was confident things would turn out ok and, fortunately for Jason, he was right!

It would be impossible to present this Bus to you in its current guise without a nod to its original creators over at T2D. Many of you will be familiar with the story as, at the time it generated a huge amount of interest across numerous internet forums.

Taking a rare creature like this 1963 Hi-Top and 'allowing' it to simply rust away outside in bare metal through a harsh UK winter before slamming and rimming it certainly split opinion [sorry, no pun intended!]. But clearly there was far more involved in the process, and the fact that it still looks as good, if not better today more than four years after the rustification proves some critics wrong.

Taking on a well known Bus like this would generally be a non-starter for a lot of people as stamping your own mark on such a creation would seem almost impossible. But as the saying goes, impossible is nothing as Jason has

proved by heading inside and creating a masterpiece interior, which has now become the real heart and soul of this Bus. She's got the looks, and now has the personality to match and that's always the hardest combination to find!

The ol' bamboo

The interior transformation began with the Bus being fully insulated throughout before being lined with bamboo! The job of insulating was undertaken by Anmarie only two weeks before baby Zhari was born – hardcore mum skills!

Old potato and German postal sacks create an ingenious headlining together with more bamboo, and the sack theme is continued on the doorcards and in the footwell area. Jason then enlisted the help of friend Jason Williams, who laid the oak flooring. A full-width rock 'n' roll bed takes care of the seating and sleeping department with a 3000-watt inverter stashed underneath taking care of power.

The interior plans were drawn up in a drunken state at a VW show, just the way it should be, along with friend

It takes a lot of bamboo and alcohol to come up with an interior like this – crazy!



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The interior plans were drawn up in a drunken state at a VW show



Mild 1641cc engine is man enough to get this Hi-Top rolling

Richie Harrington. With help from buddy Clive Barzillia, the plan sprung into action and took a year to complete and is certainly a great advert for expanding the mind via the medium of alcohol!

Mechanically the Bus is propelled by a solid 1641cc engine with twin 40 Kadrons, built and fitted by Bugbox.

The family is kept safe from harm by CSP front discs and the steering box is cared for likewise, having been treated to a raise.

Front and rear Safaris are totally in keeping with the overall theme and those chromed JGE Raders give Jason

something to polish before hitting the shows! Oh, that and the 16 trophies his Bus has scooped to date, including two Vanfest rust 'n' prime first places and a Brighton Breeze win!

If you're still not convinced about the



longevity of a Bus rolling around the streets of the UK devoid of any form of paint protecting the bodywork then let me introduce to you Jason's secret, and that of countless other rat-look connoisseurs – Anchor Wax, and

gas pipe liner Jason used to constantly work away from home, which he understandably gave up when he could to spend more time with his family and, as he puts it, "the simple things in life". He won't be resting on his laurels

though, as through the amount of attention the rust Bus receives, a fledgling business has sprouted in the form of www.vintagevweddings.co.uk. Be sure to

check it out – you'll be the talk of the town pulling up outside the local church in this, and if your other half agrees with you, you're onto a winner!

Finally, Jason would like to thank Paul at PDP Motors for all of his help. ☺

Devoid of any form of paint protecting the bodywork

copious amounts of it!

Jason has plenty of time on his hands to look after the Bus and keep up the application of Anchor Wax as, at only 40 years old, he's retired! But don't get too jealous as he's earned it. As a former

You'd certainly need a head for heights to reach that Coke coolbox

