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Australians are notorious for the understatement. So whilst on assignment for Cars around Adelaide at the 2009 Volksfest when I heard comments of "Beaut car mate." and the South Australian vernacular "Heaps Good.", I had to investigate. I started shooting and as I did, I too fell under the spell of Ringo. I snapped too when someone compared it to the famed Holden Efijy. "No way." I went to remonstrate, but it caught in my throat. Even after meeting Her Royal Majesty Efijy in the flesh, I could not deny Ringo his appeal. But this is just a chop job, home made. The Efijy is a full blown factory concept car, this little beetle hot rod is home made, to mention even a comparison is mind spinning in the birth place of the Australian legend, Holden Leathergoods.

Apparently a Hot Rod must meet three requirements, pre 1948, American and a rail chassis, which means sadly that Ringo is not a hot rod. It was designed in the correct time frame, the American requirement would be contended by any country outside the states that built cars before 1948. A rail chassis limits the idea to technology that was outdated in Germany at the time. So we can't call Ringo a hot rod then maybe it could be a Volks rod. The suicide doors gives it an American tone and it now has a hot rod front suspension, so it is some sort of rod. Whatever you call Ringo, he is a head turning stage grabbing stunner of superstar proportions.

When Rob Brown of the Volkswagen Enthusiasts Club of South Australia first started to turn a 1965 Type one Volkswagen into a Rod, he thought he would build a Rat Rod for about \$AU5000, little did he expect to end up spending nine years building one of the best looking cars on the planet. Starting with a Beetle and a budget of five, upping the budget to twelve, then twenty, through forty to finally finish at around one hundred thousand dollars. The project Rat Rod soon changed to be a effort to make a rod how he thought Volkswagen would build.

A five inch windscreen chop, a lot of motorbike parts and a few bits from odd cars, themed together with Audi styling influences and this two seater melds into a cohesive and stylish vehicle. Every panel has been hand modified and finished, including cutting down the door sills to create flow in the sidelines. Every added part caused Rob many hours of searching for the pieces that would all enhance the look. This has at times caused many reworks and adjustments that have changed the rod over the nine years.

A beautiful Isotta steering wheel greets you in front of a dash in blue neon. A Dakota dashboard display, which shows oil pressure and temp, speed, tacho and volts. There is also a reversing camera, Dvd player and speakers all round. These are set in the typical Audi TT theme of ring and screws, as is the centre console, gear stick, fuel cap and exhaust tips, giving a cohesion that is enhanced by the car's second more important Volks theme, the whale tongue. The removal of the front wings of the vehicle creates a whale tongue shape that Rob enhanced with the door chop and mirrors, also emulated in the door trim and handles from a Holden Commodore which were inverted and placed in sideways. The Carson roof is made of Mercedes Haartz roof cloth lined in macro suede to match the Sandalwood leather. It is held in place by bolts at the front and Holden seat belt clips at the back. More Australian parts were used for the brakes, front discs from a Mitsubishi Scorpion, the rears a mix of Ford Falcon and Holden Commodore.

Rob has set his standards high enough to ensure all the front end metal parts are brushed or polished stainless steel not chromed. The exterior colour is from the Ducati 999, chosen at the same time as the exterior mirrors, this enhances the interior of Gosh leather in a colour called Sandalwood which is used in Ferrari and on Ducati scooters. The Honda Prelude seats and interior panels were reupholstered by Stateside Trim from Nuriootpa in the Barossa Valley.

A further example of his standards is the recent change to the front suspension which was setup as coil over trailer arm and has been completely revised to Hot Rod shocks over inverted leaf spring. This had to be done to reduce some minor tram lining the original setup suffered from. A further reduction in the width of the front tyres may also occur in the near future, if Rob feels that the changes do not give an impeccable result. The vehicle has a flow that any automotive designer would be proud of, if Volkswagen can do better, bring it on. I want one.....NOW.

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