

The Collectors

The Buzzing Hive

Words and photos by Craig Watson



Old or new, Peter loves his Minis.

Peter Dunbabin gets a real buzz out of Mini motoring - in both classic and new versions.

Peter is one of a growing number of people with as much interest in the new MINI as the original. With Classic Minis, he has strong tendencies towards the Van, with two and a half on hand at the moment. In the new MINI camp, open air motoring is the word.

Peter's first car was a red Morris 850, and it soon earned a name for itself, as he recalls. "I bought my first Mini in 1966. My father said, 'you'll get a buzzing in your ears running around in that all the time, so the car became known as the Buzz Box. When I bought the green van I named that Buzz Box 2. I've had about fifteen Minis in the meantime, but none of them ever had names."

The green van soon came in for a fair bit of modifying, with a worked motor, wheel arch flares, Superlite wheels, four driving lights, Webasto sunroof and silver bonnet stripes. Inside got green and black trim, Cobra racing seats, RPM harnesses, a roll cage, custom dash and more.

In March 2002 Peter bought a new MINI Cooper, almost on the spur of the moment, as he explains. "I went down to see Henry Draper and John Fitzmaurice pick up their cars. That one was sitting there, and it was exactly what I wanted, so I bought it"

But, with the new MINI on hand, the van had to go. "I decided I couldn't justify two cars (of course now I've got five), so I thought I'll sell the green van. Jan Small was going up to the Mini Muster in Qld, and she said she'd take some photos up there and put them on the stand, just to see what happens. A chap saw it, and decided he liked it, so he bought it and took it up there."

Peter had another van as a project, but this one actually pre-dated the green van. "I had another Mini Van that I was driving around,



Buzz Box 2 was in for a repaint.

and I got some drink coasters that had some illustrations of Minis. One of them had a picture on it I really liked, and I thought I wouldn't mind building one like it. It had no bumpers, a spoiler on the front with driving lights in it, and was very rounded."

"I went out and got this van from Henry Draper, which was pretty dilapidated, and promptly started to make up a mould for a fibreglass body kit."

"I'd imported a Lamm kit from England and thought I'd fit that to the van. But, the rear wouldn't work because the sedans are curved and the vans are straight, the side skirts wouldn't work because the vans are longer, and the front spoiler wouldn't work because it's a Clubman."

"I used the flares, but I ended up making new side skirts, a new rear bumper and a new front bumper. As inspiration for the front bumper I used the first Subaru WRX. It's also getting a Daihatsu Mira dash, and a one-piece fibreglass door on the back. I put the car on hold, while I built the moulds and got the fibreglass done, because I wanted to paint it all at the one time.

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Matching trailer for BuzzB 3.