

Wild Thing



Words and photos by Craig Watson.

Once in a while a project car jumps out at me, and screams to be featured when it is finally finished. Jamie Wall's 1963 Morris 850 is one such car.

Jamie lives in the Barossa Valley, and has the advantage of having a brother-in-law, Alex, who is manager of Barossa Valley Collision in Tanunda – and an enthusiastic driving force behind Jamie's project.

"I was 14 and Alex wanted me to get something that we could work on together", Jamie recalls. "He didn't have any brothers, so it was good to be able to work on something together. Alex and my sister, Tammy, bought me the car. They saw it advertised in the *Cars Guide* in the *Sunday Mail*, went over to Christies Beach to buy it, and drove it home on three cylinders."

Jamie's now 18 and an apprentice chef, in his second year, but when the Mini turned up he was only making a little money as a part-time dish washer at the local pub. Being on a tight

budget, the original plan was to give the car a quick repaint, get it mechanically sound, and use it as a daily driver when he turned 16 (the legal age of getting one's licence in South Australia).

Such are the plans of so many cars that go on to have complete make-overs, and Jamie's was no exception.

While flicking through one of the English magazines on Minis, he came across an ad for a body kit that was similar in design to the famed Zeemax, but considerably cheaper. It is often said that you get what you pay for, and after more than 18 months of difficult communication and negotiation, the body kit was finally delivered to a winery in the UK that is managed by Jamie's uncle, Paul Bartholomoeus.

When it came to fitting the kit to the car, it was found that the two side skirts were different lengths and the wheel arches were far from a neat fit.

After many hours work, with the wheel-arches each cut into six pieces to make them fit, the body kit was finally in place, and a very neat job too. To add salt to the wound, just as the work was getting under way, Minisport in Adelaide became the Australian distributor for the Zeemax body kits.

Jamie admits he knew nothing about working on a car when the project started, but was given plenty of help, advice and opportunity to learn, from Alex. "I was just a little kid with no idea what I was doing. The way to describe it is, it was Alex's project car and I was designing it and paying for it."

Although the body kit could best be described as a good learning experience, Jamie did come in for his share of good fortune with the Mini.

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Headlining was a headache for trimmer.



Rear seat got similar treatment.



Room in the boot for a few CDs.