

How to: project '77 resto part 1



You've already seen Project '76, the awesome blue custom Rabbit restored by Futrell Autowerks in Oregon, USA (Jan '04 issue). Now meet Project '77, an amazing ground-up Mk1 restoration, built and chronicled exclusively for *The Golf* magazine by Futrell. Over the next three issues, we join Dean and the boys to show you how to complete a stunning retro restoration in the style of the Futrell experts. Enjoy...

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In North America, the Golf Mk1s – or Rabbits – only had round headlights on the '75-'78 models. After that the cars were built in a different factory and had square headlights. So to build a true old school car in the United States you have to pick a car from that four year period.

Few things changed between the '75 to '78 cars, with the '77 and '78 cars being near identical and the '75 and '76 Golfs sharing a two year only bonnet, unique door strikers and some other cosmetic differences.

With that in mind we began our search for a clean '75-'78 Rabbit and, luckily for us, we

didn't have to look any further than the Futrell Autowerks web forum. A customer had placed a white, 2-door 1977 Rabbit on it several months back and so we called him up and asked him to bring the car by for inspection and evaluation. The '77 proved to be a good car as a starting point, but it also had its



1) Unfortunately, this is one of the only pictures we have of the original car. We know it's poor quality, but you can just make out some spots of rust on the white bodywork. White cars are usually the worst colour to be

ravaged by rust as the paint is not given a clear coat on top of the white to protect it. Luckily for us though there was only surface corrosion in this case, nothing too major

2) The funky old skool red and plaid interior was spot on for the look we were heading for, and we hoped to keep these for the finished car. Unfortunately the seats had too much wear and the original door panels had been butchered to allow the fitting of speakers. So instead, the entire interior was gutted and most of it (save for the seats) thrown away. This took about 90-minutes. We did keep the seats though, as they will be re-upholstered for a future job



3) Next we took the old 1.6-litre engine out of the bay. It already had some mods but we wanted something a bit more special so it was bye bye to the old lump and hello to three hours



4) All rusting and unused brackets were binned. We used a spot weld drill bit to cut the metal around the spot welds, rather than drilling into the centre of the weld where the metal is thicker. This tool is cheap and

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