

**Canadian pilot Andy Nelson rescued a 1965 Woody and turned it into this turbocharged beauty**  
**Words and photos: Iain Ayre**

# Flying High



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**A**ndy and Rachel Nelson's turbo'd Woody really flies and so do they. Andy is a FedEx pilot and Rachel works for Harbour Air in Vancouver.

Andy spent 12 years as a mechanic before taking up flying for a living and can't keep away from both mechanics and Minis. Their excellent Mini stable consists mainly of faithfully restored Cooper Ss so they felt entitled to have a bit of fun with this Woody. It would have been uncool to make a street rod out of a pristine '59 barn find Mini but they paid \$500 Canadian (around £220) for most of a '65 Traveller with no engine. The timber was piled in the back and only fit for firewood.

This Woody was bought in 1989 when Andy was 19 and doing his apprenticeship at the local British car restoration shop. As he was learning to weld sheet metal at the time, retrieving the car from the scrap heap made

reasonable sense. Most of the Woody is from a '65 car but purists will notice that the filler cap is in the wrong place for that year. Most of the bodywork actually came from another pretty nasty 1961 Woody but the available paperwork and original components of the car date from 1965.

The bodyshell was finally completely stripped in 1992, showing it needed a new floorpan, sills, rear valance, front wings and grille panel, plus numerous hand-fabricated repair panels. For Canadian residents it's quite often better option just to make something rather than wait for shipping from the UK. Moving house around the country several times delayed things quite a bit too.

An ERA replica bonnet scoop was chosen to hint at something special under the bonnet and, after three years of working on the Mini

at weekends, the 'shell was at last ready for paint. As always, things went wrong and one of the low points was dropping a rear window on the bonnet, which had to be prepped and painted all over again. And when it came to the woodwork it was fairly hard going as the pieces didn't fit very well. But the fact that the wood had dried out nicely in the long period between buying and fitting it did help.

The interior of the Woody is as nicely finished as the outside with a pair of black Cobra recliners up front with the back seat trimmed to match. The same applies to the carpet. It's mostly from Newton Commercial with the spare wheel well trimmed to match.

In August 2000 their Woody finally hit the road again. Driving the resto Mini, the first thing that grabs you is how unexpectedly fast it is and the second is how smooth. Turbo

**"Given a thorough spanking"**



**Above Right:** The comprehensive cooling system is designed to deal with track use in a hot Canadian summer. There are four fans, two water radiators, and one oil cooler

**Below:** On an uncharacteristically freezing Vancouver day with the wind chill at the airport taking the temperature down to -11-degrees. The poor engine is so well cooled it still needs the choke after it's been idling for 20 minutes!



Interior is kept simple yet effective. Note driver's harness for those track days



Note the petrol filler cap below the rear side window. Later Travellers had the filler cap on the other side of the car in a recess lower down the body. Later tanks were located under the body rather than in the rear load area

Minis don't usually feature subtle power curves but this one has nice silky smooth punch up to 7000rpm and the useful fifth gear in the straight-cut, five-speed Jack Knight box allows for civilised cruising, apart from the drop gear noise. There's also the funky whoosh noise from the dump valve on the turbo so the soundtrack is pretty cool which is why there's no sound system in the car at all.

The engine is balanced throughout, and with its light steel flywheel and turbo it whips up to 7000rpm with no bother. So far the engine has been completely reliable and, with the boost at a reasonable 10psi peak, and good balancing, there's no reason why it shouldn't keep going for a good long time to come unless abused, of course.

The list of engine mods is hardcore

but not extreme so the Mini is still useful in the city as well. Why all this performance for a mere estate car? For track days of course. The car is frequently taken out and given a thorough spanking on whatever circuit or airfield can be found to play on and it responds well. The torque spread is wide and the lag at zero boost was ironed out by Avonbar carburettor mods. There are enough gears and enough power to produce serious track speed so the Yokos and the Metro brakes are used to their full capacity.

This Mini isn't quite finished as it is still waiting for a new steering wheel, Autometer gauges, KAD callipers, coil-over dampers, an intercooler, anti-roll bar and an alloy radiator. It's also likely that Andy might take a few more years to gather those together and fit them.

**Although this car is used whatever the weather, it gets most exercise in the summer and the rear load area gets plenty of use. The longest trip so far has been to Rockford, Illinois, which is about as far as driving to Russia from London**



**Andy would like to thank:** Mini Spares, Classic Motorworks, Somerford, Mini Mania, Avonbar, KAD, M-Machine, Newton Commercial and wife Rachel

### Andy Nelson

**Pets:** 2 cats, Mini and Racer.

**Favourite food:** Greek.

**Most embarrassing Mini moment?** Running out of petrol two blocks from a petrol station.

**Worst Mini moment?** Sleeping in one.

**Dream job?** Pilot for Michael Schumacher.

**Simpsons or South Park?** South Park.

**McDonalds or Burger King?** Yuk!

**Music of the moment?** A Perfect Circle.

**Hobbies?** Flying, restoring Minis, travel.

**Fave drink:** Sleemans Honey Brown Lager.

**Describe yourself in 3 words?** Way too obsessed.



## SPECIFICATION

### 1965 Custom Morris Traveller

#### Engine:

Metro Turbo A+ 1275 . 1312cc . balanced Metro crank . MEGA turbo pistons . chrome rings . MiniSpares turbo cam . vernier adjustable timing gear set . turbo sodium-cooled 29mm exhaust valves . 35mm inlet valves . MiniSpares uprated anti-coil-bind springs . 1.5:1-ratio roller rockers . Stage 3 polished head . Avonbar/Aldon turbo distributor . Lucas coil . Pertronix electronic ignition . NGK plugs . copper leads . NGK motorcycle plug caps . MG Metro Turbo 1.75-inch HIF44 SU carb . Avonbar high-boost needle, dashpot spring . K&N air filter . Metro Turbo high-volume fuel pump, special regulator . Garrett T3 turbocharger . 10psi peak wastegate actuator . Metro Turbo inlet and exhaust manifolds . Maniflow downpipe . 2-inch Maniflow twin-bore exhaust system . MiniSpares 2-core rad . 6-blade tropical fan . extra electric fan . extra rad in offside inner wing . 16-row oil cooler, twin electric fans . braided oil lines . large-impeller water pump . bulkhead modified to clear turbo . estimated 120-130bhp at wheels

#### Gearbox:

Jack Knight five-speed straight-cut, close-ratio . drop gears . Metro Turbo clutch . orange diaphragm . lightweight steel flywheel and backplate . 3.4:1 final drive . 4-pin diff . KAD quickshift conversion

#### Brakes:

Non-servo assisted . silicone fluid . Front: Metro Turbo 8.4-inch vented discs . Metro 4-pot callipers . standard pads . Rear: standard cylinders, linings, Super Minifin alloy drums

#### Suspension:

Hi-Los . standard rubber cones . Spax dampers . Front: 1.5-degree lower arms . adjustable tie bars . poly bushes . Rear: adjustable camber brackets . new subframe with aluminium tie down plates . MK4 rack . Cooper S steering arms

#### Wheels/Tyres:

Minitor 5x12-inch alloy wheels . 165/60x12 Yokohama A510 tyres

#### Interior:

Cobra Le Mans recliners in Blackrock fabric . rear seats trimmed to match . Newton Commercial/ custom trim, carpets . driver's Leaf six-point harness . passenger lap/diagonal belt . standard main dash dial . MG oil/water gauge . Autometer boost gauge . period Smiths tacho

#### Exterior:

ERA replica bonnet scoop . Wood & Pickett wheel arches at front . Cibie halogen headlights . Viper red paint . tinted windows . Cooper grille

