

# Road trip



## Travels with my Van

**What do a couple of airline pilots do for their holiday? They go on tour in their Split, of course!**

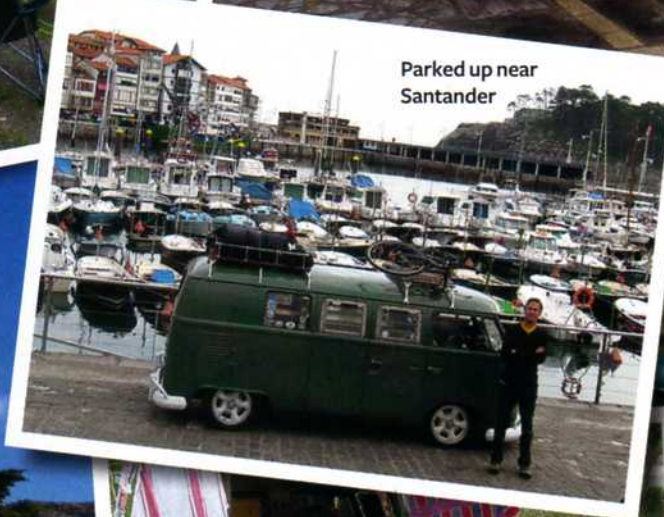




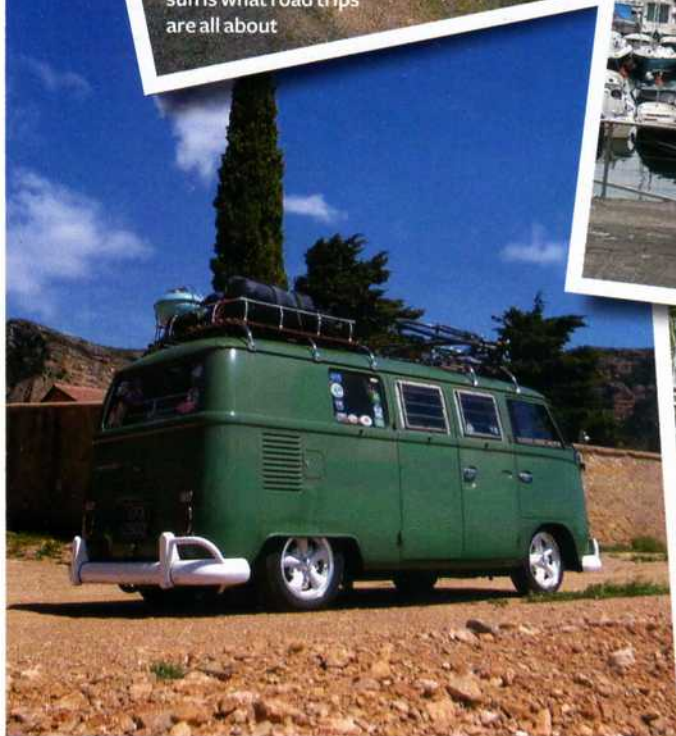
Kicking back in the sun is what road trips are all about



Parked up near Santander



Enjoying the sites in Reus



### Words and pics Andrew and Helen Berry

In our second year of ownership of Idris, our 1966 Split, we had travelled to Italy. It was a fabulous trip but, with reduction boxes whining more than me on an early morning, the oil light flickering at idle and the already hot running engine using fuel and oil in equal measures, we realised things were not all good and Idris was in need of some serious TLC...

So in the winter of year three we started with the reduction boxes. I wanted to get the ride height right and generally, when lowering a Split, the reduction boxes go, making way for a new gearbox with better road ratios. The engine, I hoped, would wait a little longer! Driving Idris home after having the work done was amazing – we could now cruise at 60mph, though only on the flat. The gear ratios may have been changed, but the engine was still the same, so we just cruised around, bedding everything in and making sure we were happy before moving on to the next stage. Gradually, though, the engine seemed to be getting worse. The oil light was now coming on at idle whether hot or cold! It was probably the higher demand to pull the Bus faster, as we all know you don't get speed for free. The already worn engine was now wearing faster and was, I thought, unlikely to push us around our planned trip to Spain in the spring. Something needed to be done.

Much as I would have liked a specialist built engine, it was just not an option, but nor did I want another low power one, so where would I start? Well, I had met a friend of a friend at a Christmas party. It was a great party and Jake and I talked

about VWs and engines for five hours! So I rang Jake up and he rang Steve and between them they had a proposal: if you want to tour, have reliability and want it to look good, be sensible. Don't go bigger than a 1776cc, for heat dissipation and reliability and choose the carburettor(s) carefully to balance power against torque for touring.

### Bolts on the loose

I wanted to learn, so we decided to do the engine change in my garage. Jake would drop by to oversee, I would pay Steve for his time and Helen and I would take the old engine out – only four bolts, and one of those was loose, it's mad! The new engine duly arrived, along with boxes of bits sorted by Jake. It was like your most expensive Christmas ever! Steve, Jake and I then set to building up the new engine. I think it would be safe to summarise the experience by saying that you get a load of new shiny bits, not many of them fit without a lot of faffing around, and some of them don't fit at all. But eventually the engine was in and she fired up beautifully.

After 500 miles of running in, it became clear that the external oil system needed far better piping than that supplied, and I was still paranoid about cooling after our experience in Italy. This all further wrecked the budget as I visited Pete Roberts down in Portsmouth ([www.funkenblitz.com](http://www.funkenblitz.com)) for some lessons on how to correct the oil piping, fit an external oil cooler and add air ducting to it. Like a piano tuner, he also fine tuned the carburettors.



