

TWO GUYS FROM TEXAS PART 9 **By Bruce Fullerton and Robert Mace**

First of all, we've really enjoyed writing this column over the past two-plus years and want to thank Ernie Freestone for giving us the space in which to do it. All of your positive feedback has made it worth the effort.

There just seems to be a never-ending list of topics, details and general knit-pickin' to cover. This time, let's go over some of the small details that have come up over the course of bringing a couple of Isettas out of an eight year coma.



One Of Those Guys From Texas ... Bubba that is. Robert Mace and his green machine at the Duncanville show in September. Photo by Jim Janeczek.

One lesson learned in the final throes of assembly was to tighten everything down and double-check it. Sounds elementary but with all of the subassemblies involved, things tend to loosen up a bit over time. Some items were just hand tight and some got overlooked altogether.

You find this out real fast as soon as the gas goes in the tank and you turn that freshly rebuilt fuel tap. Bruce thought he had taken care of getting things in order before installing his gas tank but failed to wrench the fuel tap down nice and tight. Adding insult to injury, his carb had two leaks as well.

While Bing did a beautiful rebuild job, one culprit turned out to be uneven mating surfaces between the fuel bowl assembly and carburetor body. The differences were very slight but just enough that the thin gasket couldn't make up the difference. Careful sanding with 1000 grit sandpaper on a flat workbench surface solved that problem.

Bruce added an alcohol-proof fuel line from the Bing Agency. It runs around \$1.85 a foot and can be bought in any length. It comes in either clear or trendy blue. This is some tough stuff and can be twisted and routed for the shortest downhill route from your fuel tap to the carb ... very important point for proper fuel flow. Another nice touch is that the line doesn't require hose clamps in environments under 50 psi. If you're keeping score at home, gravity pulls around 15 psi of air pressure at sea level at 59 degrees Fahrenheit on odd numbered Thursdays if it isn't raining. This stuff really grabs onto the fuel fittings and stays put. The clear line also gives you a quick visual to ensure you have consistent fuel flow from tank to carb inlet. A two-foot section will do the trick for an Isetta. To repeat, routing of this line is very important. Certain things tend to run downhill.



Here's one of the goobers that caused some unexpected work. Those surfaces between the fuel bowl assembly and the carb body had to be sanded and polished for a good, tight fit. For you eagle-eyed readers, the fuel line has yet to be cut and hooked up in this shot.

Another area that required attention was the sloppy shift linkage. All of the bushings and fittings were brand new and at first blush, it just didn't make sense. A major improvement was made by simply re-tightening all of the bolts at both the front and rear of that shift tube. What started making sense was playing around with the linkage adjustments. While pretty simple looking, trying different lengths on those rear rod clevises brought things into perspective. For a car that has been totally dismantled and was farkled to begin with, this is a drive-and-tweak procedure. If you're going to do this, John Jensen's Tech Talk article in Minutia Volume 11, Number 2, is worth having with you out in the garage.

One more item that's worth mentioning concerns a small but important part, the steering column swivel. This is the small square-headed unit with a threaded bolt that attaches to the front of the instrument panel. As mentioned in the last issue, you'll want to secure it to the instrument panel before you install your wiring harness. Make sure that the castle nut is turned down as far as you can get it while still allowing free movement of the swivel. This will keep your steering column from wiggling and moving from side-to-side once together. Don't forget that cotter pin!

If you're the proud owner of a Deluxe/Tropical model, your inside air vent in the middle of the cowl may keep flopping open on you. BMW used the combination of a special star washer and fiber washer around the vent handle/shaft on either side of where the flap attaches to the interior air plenum. The washers put tension on the handle in order to keep it shut but allow for easy movement when the flap is opened. That combo may have worked in 1957 but ours just didn't have the oomph to do the job any longer. How do you fix that? Just grab a couple of round rubber grommets, one for either side of the shaft and replace those old units. They're much easier to slide in and line up plus they have plenty of tension to keep the flap shut. That's a 50-cent fix.

An interior detail that caused Bruce a minor hassle involved the side panels. The

upholstery shop didn't follow Firemarshal Bill Waite's templates 100% (Thanx for tracing 'em FB!) and failed to make a small notch at the top front to allow for the rear view mirror nuts. That blasted driver's side panel is enough of a contortionist's delight to put in but the absence of the notches added one more twist to it. While the passenger side panel is much easier to pop in than the driver's side panel, it's still a nuisance. Those panels are going back to the shop for mods to fix the problem.

On a similar note, Robert had to take his door panel back for a minor tweak to the area just below the wiper motor. If you're having upholstery work done, might not hurt to mount that motor on the door and install your mirror(s) just to be safe and have the job done right on the first pass.

A final note on that door panel. We put a small piece of shrink tubing on each of the metal tabs that secure the panel to the door. 3M makes an entire line of shrink tubing in different diameters and colors. Their generic part number for the entire product line is FP-301 and goes under the description of "Flexible Polyolethene Heat Shrink Tubing". The yellow tubing Bruce used on his car matched the paint almost to a T. Not only is it a nice touch, it sure softens the sharp corners on those tabs and will hopefully eliminate any tears to the upholstery fabric over time.

Jumping back up to the instrument panel, Bubba found himself in a quandary concerning knobs for his turn signal and high/low beam switches.

He couldn't find them anywhere. Terry Sayther, head honcho at Terry Sayther Automotive in South Austin, Texas to the rescue! We walked back into Terry's parts area straight to a box of BMW 1600 electrical goodies. Whaddaya know! Those 1600 knobs will do the trick folks. There are two minor differences to be aware of. Number One, there is a very thin raised rib around the middle of the knob. The Isetta's is smooth with a subtle crown in the middle. Number Two, the 1600 knobs are threaded for 4mm. The Isetta is threaded for 5mm. Just pooch a little WD-40 in the threads and re-tap 'em for 5mm. Take it

nice and slow. In under five minutes, they were cleaned, tapped, sanded and ready for some of that nice Krylon Appliance Epoxy Almond spray paint (#3202) and look great on Robert's car. By the way, that same knob will work just fine on your under-seat heater vent lever. One other option here is to locate early VW bus turn signal / high-low beam knobs.



With the bills paid and wills updated, those Two Guys From Texas prepare for blast-off. Actually, the Crash Test Dummies wanted to check out Central Texas Micronuts members Andy and Janie Amescua's Isetta at the Chuy's Children-Giving-To-Children Parade in Austin. The better part of 65,000 Austinites had the unexpected pleasure of seeing their first Isetta. To say it was a crowd-pleaser would be an understatement.

One other item we might touch on here is that center rear light we wired up in the last issue. We got some very good feedback on it and thought we'd pass this tidbit along, remembering that we're operating with electrically-challenged minds here. We wired that center light as a running light, either on or off. Bruce's proofreading backfired on him and he didn't catch the one spot he referred to it as a brake light. You could opt to run a hot wire to one side of this light back to the brake light switch (ground comes from the license plate light just below it) and have it function as a brake light. A connection at main terminal block 15 would appear to work well too but keep in mind that we haven't tried it. Wired this way, the light would only come on

when the brake pedal was pressed, just like the Euro models did. Keep in mind that you're dealing with a 5 watt bulb here so it's not going to blind anyone but may give you more peace-of-mind knowing it's back there. Now you have a choice in lighting motifs.



The Central Texas Micronuts Car Club violates just about every traffic law on the books as several members cruise the wrong way down Congress Avenue just south of the Capitol Building in Austin. All members are now out on bail but their cases look bleak given the number of witnesses.

By the time you read this, both of our cars should have most of the kinks worked out and will, make that better be, back on the road where they belong. Robert's car has some door alignment problems that need to be addressed and have the electrical system installed and tested along with a few miscellaneous parts.

Bruce's car took its quasi-maiden voyage, three blocks up the street to the neighborhood park in early March. The shift linkage is still somewhat sloppy but close to getting dialed in and the carb needs some tweaking as well. What Bing doesn't? It was a real payoff to drive a total of 50 feet and have two neighbors die laughing when they saw the car. At the end of the street, a family posing for a group shot was totally disrupted and then some woman driving a four-wheel-drive Suburban, jaw-jackin' on her cell phone (sound familiar?) almost lost it. That's two short trips and not even out of the neighborhood yet.

Thank you again for your kind words and feedback on all of the TGFT articles! We hope to continue to be Minutia contributors in future issues. If there is a topic that you would like to have covered in more depth, please email either one or both of us at the addresses at the end of the article. And if you or anyone else would like an electronic (MS Word .doc format) copy of any or all of the TGFT installments, let us know and we'll get them right out to you or a friend.

Finally, many of you have visited Robert's Web site, "Isetta Source". It is one of the best sites on the subject as it encompasses just about everything Isetta that's out there. Bruce has started work on a site, "Isetta Tech", that is more to the restoration side of things and includes online copies of these articles as well as others. It will eventually feature a couple of galleries of owner's cars and related graphics. Both sites are non-commercial.



It's Another Guy From Texas! Wayne Graefen from over yonder in Kerrville with that typical Isetta owner's grin. After restoring and owning several cherry Chrysler 300C's (not to mention writing a restoration book on the topic) and big-block DeSoto's, he couldn't resist "the other 300". Only thing missing is a set of deer antlers. Photo by Chris Graefen.

Building a Web site is a cumbersome, time-consuming task to say the least. There's much to be done but check it out when you get a chance. Bruce can be reached at the email address below or via the "Feedback" link on the site. Any input regarding suggestions, content, correcting bogus info or just a hello will be appreciated.

Lay rubber and if all the lines at the drive-in bank are full, go with Lane 3 ... BF & RM

BF: brucef@austin.rr.com

Web: www.isettatech.com

RM: bubba@whirlingpool.com

Web:

www.whirlingpool.com/isetta/isetta.htm

Photos by Bruce Fullerton except where noted.