

# a splash of Karmman



story Bill Holden



When Steve Taylor from 20th Century Fox called me one day enquiring about the availability of a left hand drive Karmann-Ghia to use in a movie being filmed in Queensland, my reply was 'what colour would you like?' It just so happened that at the time of his call I had six Karmann-Ghia Cabriolets lazing around in the garage, and each was a different colour. Steve was hoping to have one that could be repainted in the colour of their choice. Again, no problem. Two of the Ghia's were destined for complete restorations, so temporarily painting them would be quite okay.

It was agreed that they would use my Orange 1974 3 speed Semi-Auto Karmann-Ghia Cabriolet, and with shooting scheduled for just over a week away, they would need the car asap. Organising a car carrier at that short notice would not allow enough time for the re-spray before the first day of filming, so there was no other option but for me to drive the car to sunny Queensland - at car carrier rates of course!

There were a few things that needed doing to the car before I could commence on my Aussiewood adventure. Firstly, a new set of chrome wheels and five new tyres were thrown on, then a CD Car Stereo for in-car entertainment on the long trip, and lastly the fitting of a rear back seat with seat belts, a requirement for a scene in the movie.

On the Thursday morning of departure, a friend of mine and I got in to the Orange Karmann-Ghia, and headed to Queensland. From the moment we turned the key, the heavens opened and didn't stop for the entire trip. Worst still, the

drought breaking rain unearthed a few leaks in our 30 year old convertible, including the front windscreen seal and all the side windows. Visibility became nightmarish, with the torrential rain on the outside and the fogging windows from the inside. With wipers and arms going full song, we played a merry dance with passing Double B's. And then we had a fuel problem. Having just been serviced at the local garage, this seemed unusual. My skin soaked investigations discovered that the fuel filter, an item that was supposedly renewed, was clogged. Luckily, I follow the Volkswagen drivers creed of keeping a full set of spares, and the fuel problem was quickly rectified. Arriving at the Gold Coast three hours and 300mm later than planned, we handed the Karmann over and the clouds lifted. Murphy's Law!

While Steve Taylor immediately took Amber to the Paint and Body shoppe for a quick make over in Coral (Pink) paint, we decided that a fitting end to our journey would be to visit one of the water fun parks on the Gold Coast. Why not? We were already waterlogged. Meanwhile Amber was renamed "Princess" for her role in the movie "Aquamarine".

Aquamarine is an entertaining and fun mermaid movie for the teenage audience. Based on an Alice Hoffman book, a mermaid, by the name of Aqua, comes to land in search of true love. The usual chaos ensues with such a plot, and the movie boasts a number of top Australian acting talent. The biggest star, however, is Princess, the car of choice for the heroines of the movie to dart around in and save the day. Luckily, the Karmann came optionally fitted with rainwater for the mermaid. How thoughtful!

## About the Author...



Bill Holden completed his VW Mechanic apprenticeship with VW America when he was 15 years old, and worked as a VW, Audi, and Porsche mechanic until he was 22. A dramatic change in career path then led him to become a Scuba Instructor.

His first car was a 1971 VW Karmann-Ghia Coupe, in Bahia Red. Bill owned that car for 10 years - one of the best cars he ever owned. While a mechanic, Bill owned and restored about 10 Karmann-Ghias, along with a couple of Porsche 911's.

Currently he has 11 Karmann-Ghias, 3 coupes and 8 convertibles. He now imports and restores them.