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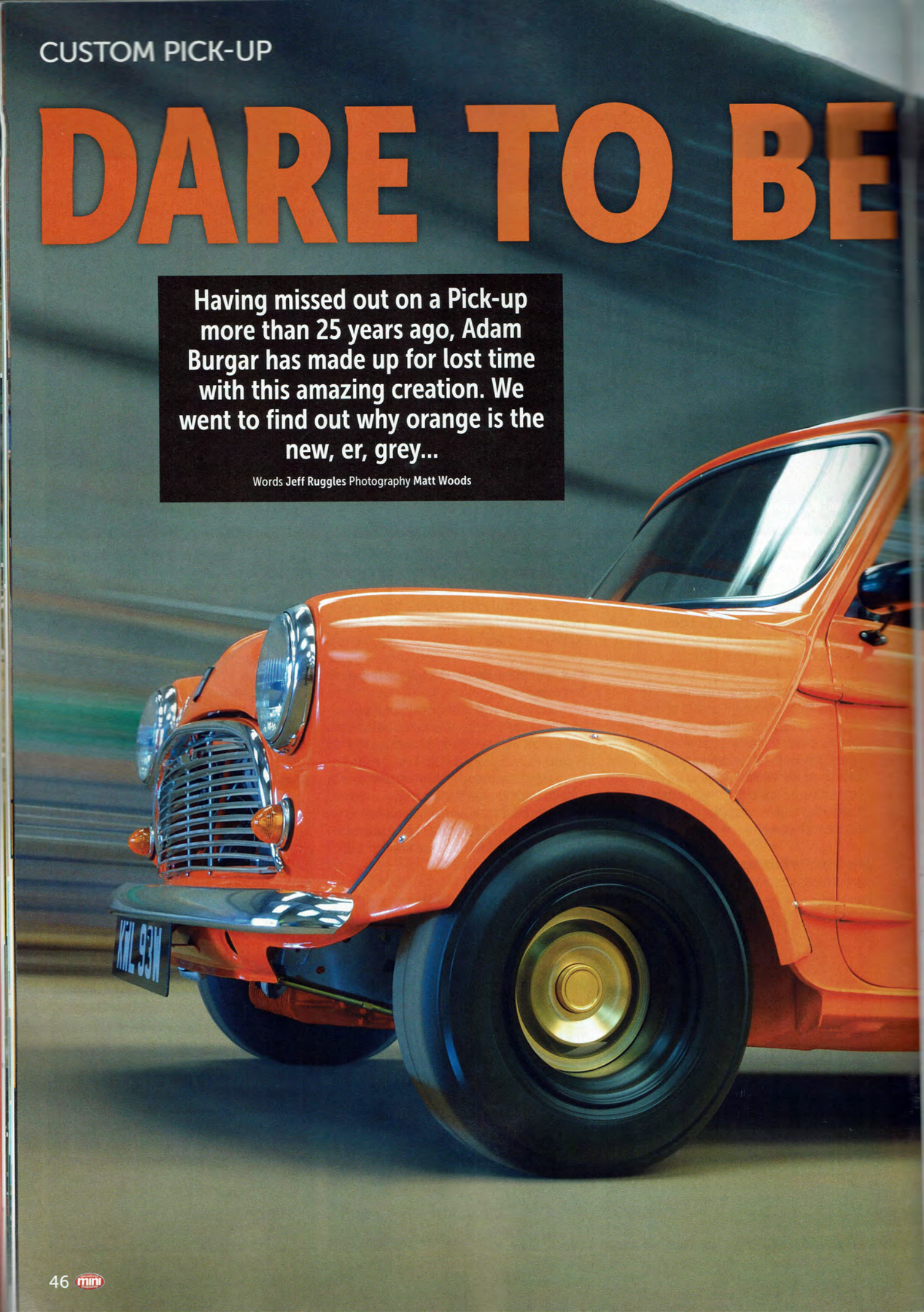
DARE TO BE

Having missed out on a Pick-up more than 25 years ago, Adam Burgar has made up for lost time with this amazing creation. We went to find out why orange is the new, er, grey...

Words **Jeff Ruggles** Photography **Matt Woods**



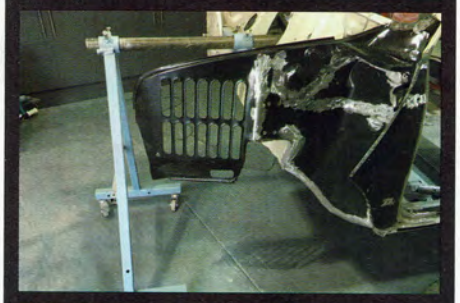
DIFFERENT

There's always one that gets away. Perhaps it's a potential partner, a property, or even more galling, a car. In Adam Burgar's case, that car was actually a Mini Pick-up, spotted for sale on a driveway in 1989 for a mere £550. That may sound like peanuts for even the most abused Pick-up nowadays, but back when some madcap inventor was shrinking his kids, shorts were short and second-hand Minis were cheap, shelling out over a monkey on an old commercial was a stretch too far for a teenage Adam.

These things have a habit of coming full circle though, as Adam's tale proves. Some 20 years later he finally had his hands on a Pick-up, and following a full restoration by Paul Preston, it was awarded the coveted trophy for the Best Modified Mini on its very first outing at Stanford Hall in September. Now we might be speculating a little here, but we can't imagine the original Pick-up even held a flickering sealed beam to this bright orange beauty.

THE BUILD

Adam's Pick-up looked good, but was hiding some real horrors underneath, It was stripped, blasted and treated to a whole new floor and front end, before being rebuilt with a bright orange paint scheme and racecar touches.



No rusty filler neck here - everything is new.

Later-type rear lights for this 1980 Pick-up.

Sacks of cement and old bricks? No thanks...

Black plates are a bit naughty, but look great.

7x10-inch Force Racing split-rims with Yokos.

Single-seater style mirrors for the doors.

"It all looked pretty straight and clean, but underneath I knew it wasn't particularly good..."

Adam's history with Minis begins a little earlier than the first Pick-up encounter, at the age of just 13. "My mum bought me my first Mini as a surprise Christmas present so I could run it around a local field," he remembers. "It was a 1974 Mini 850 that cost about £300, with plenty of rust and filler. That would've been around 1983/'84, and even then it was a rough old thing!"

With the Mini sold on, Adam's first road car was a Vauxhall Chevette inherited from his grandad. However, it wouldn't be long before he owned a Mini again. And having missed out on the Pick-up with its 1275 motor and Rostyle wheels, he duly bought a Minivan. "It was as rotten as a pear," he recalls. "A friend of mine put quite a lot of frontage on it, and I got one of those one-piece rear tailgates that you could never get to fit properly. It was sprayed in an unusual turquoise colour, then fitted with second-hand Wolfrace alloy wheels and bucket seats – I thought I was the kiddie! As soon as it rained for the first time, I hit the brakes and a tidal wave of water came rushing forward, and filled the whole floor area up because of the rear door. So I moved that on..."

Then came a sizeable gap without a Mini. "I restored a Triumph Spitfire with my father, and after that I've had some old BMWs for track days, because they were cheap and fast," says Adam. "Then, five

The bold paint and wide arches were inspired by Endaf Owens' Miglia racer.

years ago, I saw a Sandglow Pick-up for sale on the Car and Classic website. It was an older gentleman in the Oxford area that I bought it from, and he had various photos of restoration work. Visually outside it all looked pretty straight and clean, but underneath I knew it wasn't particularly good. Nevertheless, I used it to run around in from time to time."

EXPERT HELP

It was always in the back of Adam's mind to have the Pick-up rebuilt fully, and the trigger came when he hit upon Paul Preston Mini Restoration. Based near Market Harborough, Paul has been tinkering with Minis for over 25 years, and has specialised in bodywork for the past two decades. During that time he's built everything from standard, original examples to custom creations, including his own Lynx-AE R1-powered Riley Elf. "I'd seen Paul's website so I popped along to Stanford Hall and saw his Elf, and was impressed by the level of the work on it," Adam reports. "I bumped into him again the following week at Castle Combe, and decided around about last October to bring it up for him to look at. We had a brief discussion, then I brought it back in November for work to start. I wanted to show it at Stanford Hall the following year."

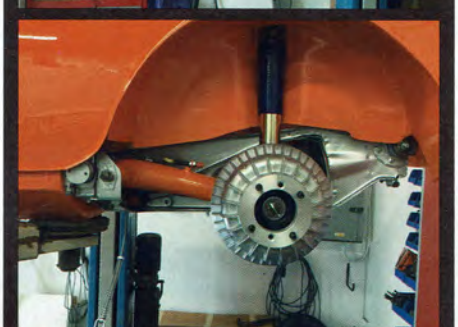
Tearing into the Pick-up revealed the true state of the bodywork. The front was showing signs of rust, so Paul cut it off and then had the shell blasted. The rebuild has included new full-length floorpans, sills, repaired doors, inner wings and a complete front end including inner and outer A-panels and the scuttle. "All that was really left was the roof and the rear panel behind the seats, though that had to be repaired," says Adam. "The rear wings are the originals but needed the lower sections replacing, and the rear load floor had to be repaired and straightened."

Minimal chrome and a Maniflow exhaust complete the back end.

Paul will generally use pattern panels to the original spec (i.e. not oversills) for the underside, bare-metalling them to ensure good paint adhesion. Then Heritage items will be used for the outer skins, where available. Adam opted not to go for a steel pressed grille, preferring to use a regular saloon front panel and a MkI Austin Cooper grille for a more classic look.

Indeed, a classic Cooper look was set to be Adam's theme. "Originally I was going

THE BUILD CONTINUED...



Adam has gone for Mkl Austin Cooper-style grille.

to go for Tweed Grey with a red interior," he says. "Then, walking around Bingley Hall in January, I decided that I didn't want to do that. I saw Endaf Owens' new race car, looked at the Miglia arches, and I thought I needed to do something different – there's a lot of Tweed Grey Pick-ups around. I bumped into Paul again while at the show, he was quite happy to change the plan, and it snowballed from there..."

ORANGE FUTURE

To suit the new ethos, a new colour had to be chosen. "I wanted something more prominent, and I'd seen BMW Fire Orange in a magazine," Adam explains. "But Paul did a test spray on a bonnet and it looked terrible, it just looked like a burnt autumn leaf next to the colour we've got now. So then we chose this orange. It was going to be all orange but we went down the route of a black roof. I could've had black arches too, but I decided to leave the bodywork predominantly orange and break it up using the wheel itself."

That meant having black alloys to fill those wide Miglia arches, but these aren't just a set of off-the-shelf jobs. Instead, Adam's gone for a set of 7x10-inch Force Racing split-rims, with gold centres, anodised black outers and sticky Yokohama rubber. The centres are a bit like the old Weller Motorsport steels, only a heck of a lot lighter. "I saw the Force Racing stand down at Brighton and had a chat with Carl. I noticed this style and decided to go for it. I think he'd only done the design as an example to showcase what he could do."

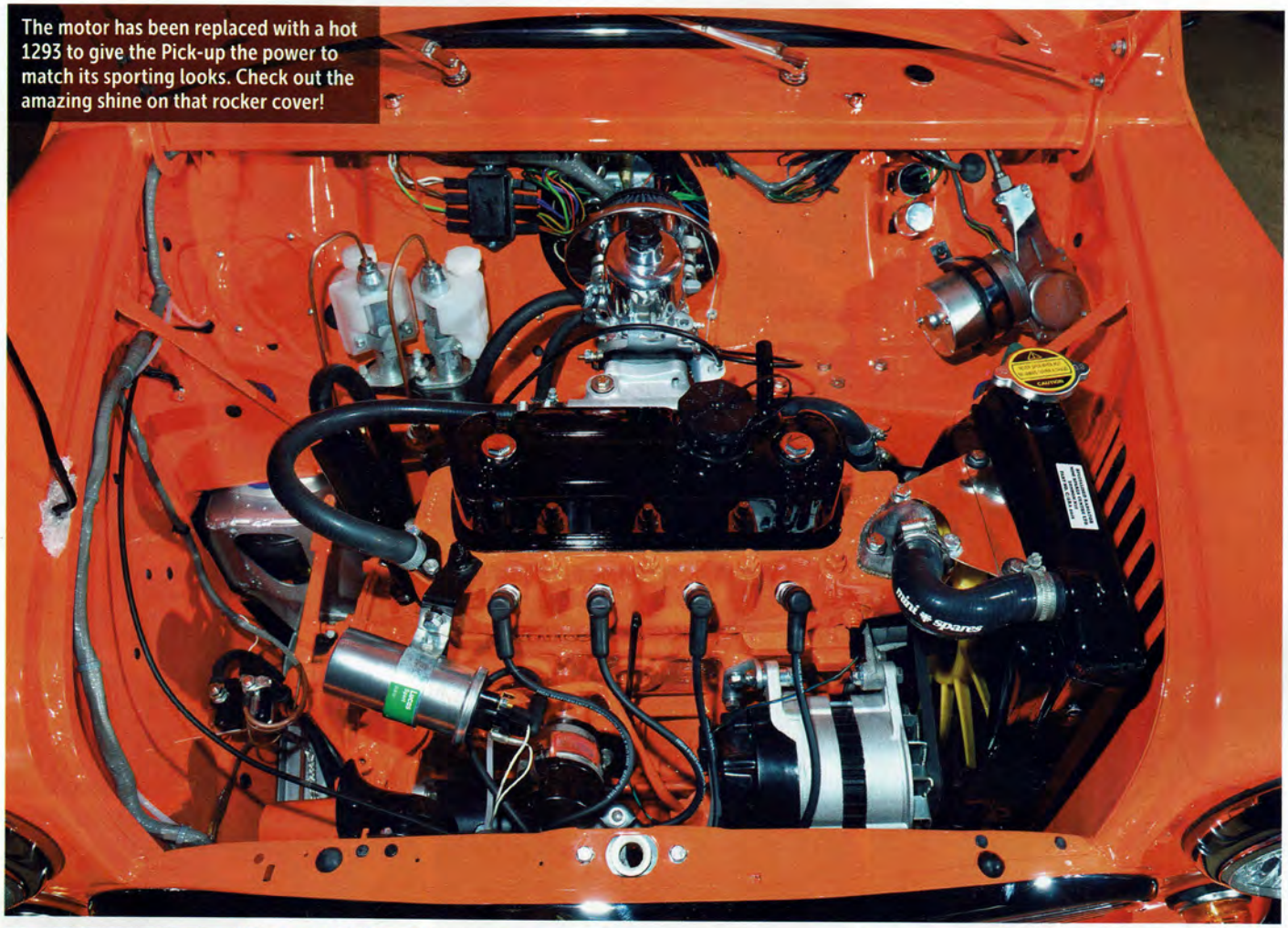
Mini 850? Now that's telling porkies, Adam!

Black was also chosen for the new interior, and is themed around a set of beautiful Newton Commercial Cooper S recliners, although their ability to recline in a Pick-up is obviously a little compromised! To complement the seats, Adam also plumped for a new Newton headliner, door and dash cards, and carpets. The original single centre speedo has been replaced by a 130mph Cooper S version in an oval three-clock binnacle, and though the painted dash rails remain, they're a whole lot brighter in their new orange hue, and are joined by an orange switch panel, pedals, steering column and gear lever. Finishing the job is a Momo Prototipo leather-rimmed steering wheel, which looks absolutely superb. "I thought I'd go for a Momo instead of the Mountney 50-pounder job I put on there first, to move it up a gear," says Adam.

SHOW AND GO

With the new striking colour scheme and wide stance, Adam's Pick-up now needed extra bite to match its bark. There may be a cheeky Mini 850 badge on the tailgate, but that's a bit of playful fibbing. "Paul said 'Look, if you're going make the car look aggressive, you can't end up with a one-litre

The motor has been replaced with a hot 1293 to give the Pick-up the power to match its sporting looks. Check out the amazing shine on that rocker cover!



Single HIF44 carburettor with K&N filter.

Everything on the car is new or refurbished.

The engine is superbly detailed and finished.

""Once you replace a couple of pieces you have to keep on going..."

engine in there. That would just be sad'," Adam laughs. "So after a conversation, we decided on a 1293 – fairly reliable, but punchy without stressing it too much. It should be producing about 85bhp when it's rolling roaded."

The spec includes high-compression pistons, a balanced rotating assembly, big-valve head, Kent 276 cam, duplex timing gear and an Aldon distributor. Cooling is dealt with by a super two-core rad, while an HIF44 carb deals with fuelling and gases exit via a Maniflow LCB and exhaust system. The gearbox has also been rebuilt, and now features a centre oil pick-up pipe and hardened diff pin. The whole lot is immaculately presented too, with the finish on the engine block better than the exterior of most cars, and the black rocker cover so shiny you could use it as a mirror.

It's just as clean underneath, too. The original front subframe and a new rear item have been painted silver, and the suspension arms orange to match the body. All the fixtures and fittings are new, including adjustable tie-rods, poly bushes all round, proper Mini Spares Hi-Los, new rubber springs and Gaz dampers. As for the brakes, Adam bought 7.5-inch drilled discs and four-pot aluminium callipers from Mini Sport while at Himley Hall, and there are finned aluminium drums at the back, too. Braided hoses have also gone on, while the rigid fuel and brake lines are run internally under the carpet. Old commercials were never meant to be as well prepared as this!

"Once you replace a couple of pieces you have to keep on going, as everything else looks terrible in comparison," says Adam. "The glass is all new apart from the rear screen, the wiring loom is new, the switches are new... In effect, it's basically a new car. Mainly the parts have come from Mini Sport or Mini Spares, who have been knowledgeable and helpful."

Adam finally has his hands on a Mini Pick-up.

Newton Commercial S recliners in black take centre stage inside.

TECH SPEC

BODY 1980 Mini Pick-up 95, restored with new full-length floorpans, sills, repaired doors, inner wings, saloon front panel, wings, inner and outer A-panels and scuttle, repaired rear wings, load bed and rear bulkhead, Miglia arches, single-seater-style wing mirrors, Mkl Austin Cooper grille, new bumpers, 850 tailgate badge. Paint: bright orange mix with black roof.

ENGINE A-plus A-Series block bored to 1293cc and painted body colour, high compression Nural pistons, balanced rotating assembly, Kent 276 camshaft, duplex timing gears, big-valve head with unleaded valve seat inserts, Aldon distributor, HIF44 carburettor, K&N filter, Maniflow LCB and exhaust, super two-core radiator, silicone hoses, gloss black rocker cover and fittings.

SUSPENSION Original front subframe and new rear subframe coated silver, adjustable tie-rods, suspension arms coated orange, new rubber springs, Mini Spares 'Ripspeed' Hi-Los, Gaz dampers, poly bushes all round.

TRANSMISSION Rebuilt four-speed rod-change gearbox, centre oil pick-up pipe, hardened diff pin, 3.4:1-ratio final drive.

BRAKES 7.5-inch drilled disc brake assemblies with Mini Sport four pot callipers (front), finned drums (rear), braided hoses, fuel and brake pipes run internally under the carpet.

WHEELS AND TYRES 7x10-inch Force Racing split-rim wheels with gold anodised centres and black anodised outers, Yokohama 165/70x10 A032R tyres.

INTERIOR Black Newton Commercial Cooper S recliners, Newton Commercial carpets, headliner, door and dash cards, 130mph Cooper S speedo in three-clock binnacle, painted dash rails, switch panel, column, pedals and gear lever, Momo Prototipo steering wheel, new wiring loom.

The gear lever has been brightened up...

Smart painted switch panel.

...and even the pedals and column are orange!

Cooper S speedo in three-clock binnacle.

Cool Momo Prototipo steering wheel.

SHOW STOPPER

After almost a year of work, the Pick-up was duly completed in time for the National Mini Show at Stanford Hall as planned. Paul's pal Martin began cleaning it at 6.30am, and his efforts were rewarded with first in class in the concours. "It was quite encouraging to get a trophy, and it seemed to go down well," says Adam. It's something a bit different, a bit of an eye catcher. I built if for myself, so if other people don't like it then so be it, but generally the response has been good.

"I've changed my mind with things a few times, but ultimately I haven't had to put something on and then get upset and take it off," he continues. "I'm really pleased with it, the whole team at Paul's have put together a really nice car. I've probably spent more than it's worth, if I ever decided to let it go, but I did it to get the Mini I wanted. It's a toy, something I got a bit carried away on, but I figured I'd rather do that than just have a car that's exactly the same as everything else."

So what's next for Adam? "Sometimes when you see other vehicles around, you think about doing another one. But I don't want to go gung ho, I'd better let the credit card recover first," he explains. And besides, he's got a show-stopping Pick-up to look after now. "It'll be nice to get it out on the road," he says. "I'm not usually that big on cleaning cars, but I'll have to take a bit of care with this one..."