

# Surf van USA



## A skinny VW Bus conversion for sun and sand

*Story and photos by Roger Yu*

A recent Hawaiian Islands Model Car Club short-deadline contest inspired me to convert Revell's 1/24 scale Volkswagen Bus (kit No. 85-2355) into a one-person surfing van. I had just a few weeks to design, build, and finish my concept of the ultimate personal surf vehicle – one that's just

wide enough for one person.

I elected to make the van with a short pickup bed and outboard wheels with simple retro cycle fenders. I wanted to retain the signature "vee" relief at the front of the van, but instead of two headlights below the "eyebrows," my van has a single light

at the apex of the vee. I also retained the parking lights, but gave them a modern look using white LEDs from my scrap box.

Building a short-deadline model was a good way to keep limber for those seemingly endless "hero" projects. Although I had to make



Surf's up! Roger Yu shows how to transform a Revell Volkswagen bus into a one-person beach-ready vehicle.

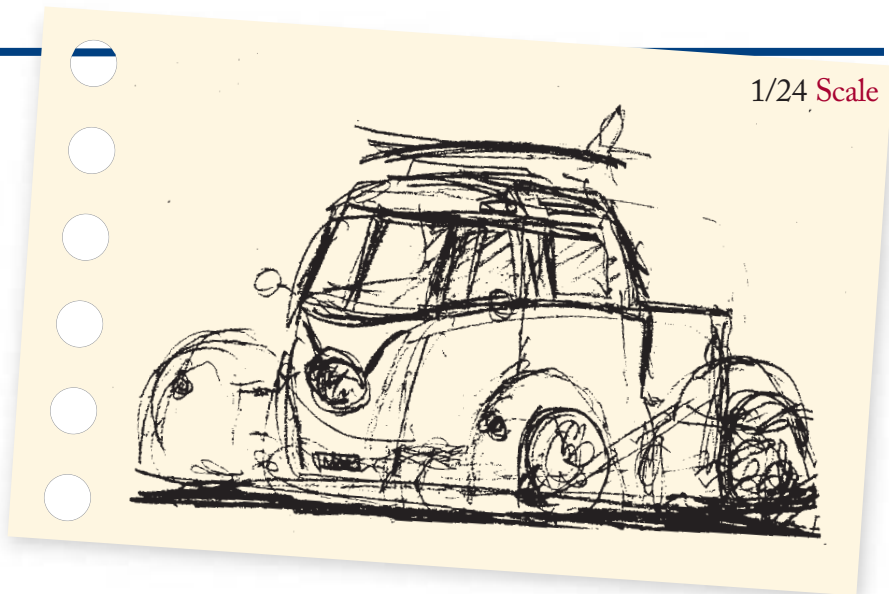
compromises and take shortcuts, it was an enjoyable project that didn't take two years to finish! **FSM**

#### SOURCES

**Fimo clay** distributed by Accent Import Export Inc., 1501 Loveridge Rd., Unit 3C, Box 16, Pittsburg, CA 94565, 800-989-2889, <http://fimozone.com>

**Flocking** Ken's Fuzzi Fur, distributed by Scale Dreams, 3593 Stamper Dr., Winchester, KY 40391, [info@scaledreams.com](mailto:info@scaledreams.com)

**Mahogany veneer** Midwest Products Co. Inc., Box 564, Hobart, IN 46342, 800-348-3497



Roger Yu's concept sketch shows the genesis of the one-person surf van he built for a short-deadline club contest.



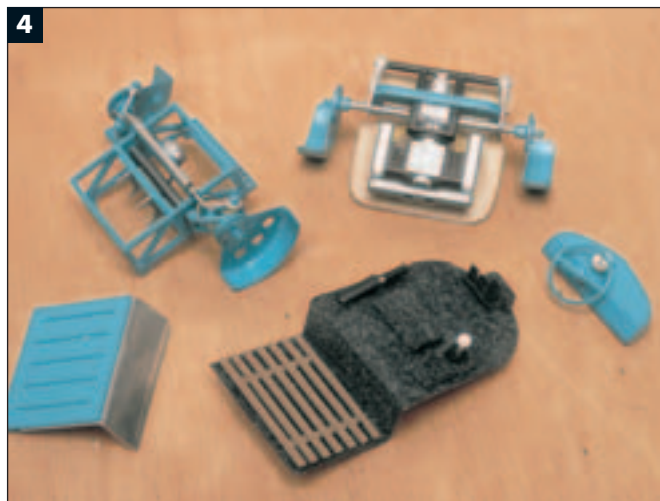
Roger started by sawing the body at the appropriate places. The van body was shortened, glued back together, then cut apart lengthwise to be narrowed.



Roger bent the passenger compartment floorboard from .030" brass sheet, removed the side door, cut out the tailgate, and cut a rectangular hole in the top for the sunroof. A sheet styrene divider separates the passenger cab from the pickup bed. He made the front suspension subframe from square styrene rod and modified the front axle by replacing its center section with a brass rod.



3 Roger cut some wood carpenter's shims into  $\frac{3}{32}$ "-wide strips and used a craft stick for the surfboard's center rib. He coated the layers of wood with white glue and clamped them together. After the glue dried, the board was shaped on a belt sander. The surfboard sits on a rack made from brass tubing.



4 The rear "power pod" is pretty much box-stock. Thin mahogany veneer under the engine and front suspension box adds interest and keeps things "surfy." The pedal assembly was scratchbuilt from metal and plastic bits, and the passenger floorboard was covered with dark gray flocking. The gearshift is a straight pin, aluminum tubing, and two squares of .030" styrene.



5 The van is painted Tamiya Coral Blue and Pearl White acrylic lacquer, with a  $\frac{1}{64}$ " gray pinstripe. Roger fastened the clear acetate window panels with Micro Kristal Kleer. The headlight bezel was turned from aluminum rod. The blanket is rolled-up

Fimo clay, and the retractable roof is accordion-folded wine-bottle lead. The kit's interior is plain, so Roger made interior panels and bed-liner panels from .020" styrene and covered them with white flocking.