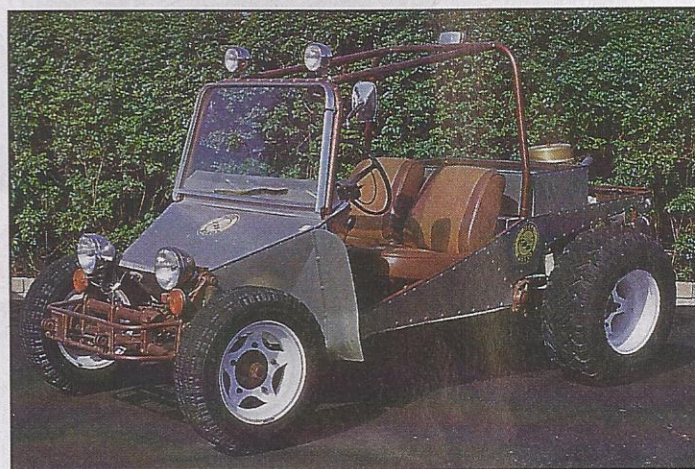


History of the Dune Buggy



June '68 issue of *Dune Buggies* magazine showed editor, Gene Booth, and the refurbished "Baja Bullet" race car that became the magazine's project vehicle at the time. **RIGHT**, shows a Burro on the opening day of Saddleback Park. **BELOW**, is Duane Dodson's Burro, which is still in very good original condition. Not only is this brown beauty street legal, Duane also drives it in the dunes from time to time, and local deserts in Southern California.



Auto Salvage, in Compton, California. With Tiny being interested mainly in the Corvair as a source of power for his Burros, Les introduced Tiny to the world of VWs and quickly convinced him of the German engine's potential. Les and Tiny worked out an arrangement where Les' shop would supply all the needed parts for Burro kits produced by Tiny and his crew of fabricators. And before you knew it, business between the two ran like clockwork and both were doing a brisk business in their respective fields.

It's really hard to determine exactly when Burro business began booming, but from what we've gathered Tiny's shop had manufactured about 200 or so Burro kits by the mid-1960s. They proved to be well received by many duners, people who were interested in off-roading and

have a "trendy" buggy just to drive around on the street. We say trendy because by the mid-'60s, dune buggies were the happening thing and if you wanted to be cool you had to own one. And, second to only Bruce Meyers' Manx, Tiny's Burro kit was one of the most produced buggy kits at the time. There may have been a few others who were just getting into the business, but it was once written that "Tiny Thompson's brainchild was one of the first kits on the market, and had become a solid member of the buggy world's own Big Three."

As the Burro became more and more popular in the mainstream, other sources wrote about Tiny's "factory," stating that it resembled a blacksmith shop in a cluster of other industrial buildings. And it was also beginning to make a name for itself as a scruffy-looking

car which was appealing to people looking for a disreputable-looking VW street buggy. So, upon entering Tiny's shop, the setting was rather appropriate for this scrappiest of all buggies. The frames were built from sturdy, high strength square steel tubing, and were assembled on a jig that held VW suspension components front and rear. The chassis were then rigidly reinforced with triangulated support members. The roll bar was an integral part of the frame assembly, and the engine was protected by a basket-type cage that prevented damage in the case of vehicle impact, or driving in rough terrain. Tiny had once made the comment that when he first started building the frames he was making them too stiff, and after a while he learned that the Burro worked a little better if they were more flexible. However, with the onset of off-road racing, and the Baja 1000 race in Mexico, Tiny spared no expense and added plenty of gus-