

Dating Miss June

By Paul Hatfield

From the front

Let's start with date codes for Hella parts. I am choosing to start here because the headlights were made by Hella. Headlights are a great place to demonstrate how a date-coded Hella part can help you understand the history of the car. With reference to my previous article, date codes for Hella parts made in 1964 start with the letter "A" which stood for the year 1964, and followed by digits which represented the week of the year. The photo at top left shows the date code stamped into the bottom of both headlights on Miss June. It is A27, which stands for the 27th week of 1964. So, how does this help us determine history on Miss June? Headlights tend to be the first thing on the car to arrive at the scene of an accident. Miss June still has her original headlights, telling us that she has not been in any serious front end collision. Fantastic! Got the fever yet? The only other Hella date code I could find on Miss June was on the turn signal flasher, A15, 12 weeks prior to the headlights manufacture.

Moving on to the Bosch parts on Miss June. It's good to provide a quick refresher on Bosch parts made in 1964. The first digit of the date code would be a 4 (for the year 1964), and the next two digits are the month of the year. On Miss June, there are 8 Bosch date code stamps. They are on the distributor (date code 405), coil (405), condenser (411), voltage regulator (405), generator (404), starter motor (403), and both horns (both 405). Actually, I thought this was amazing. Perhaps most cars have their original starter and generator, maybe even their distributor, but a condenser dated from 1964 impressed me. The history on the engine is that I have receipts for one engine rebuild done in 1982, which was only 8,000 miles ago.

In the January/February 2008 issue, I authored an article about manufacturing date codes and date stamps on our beloved cars. During my research for that article, I did not investigate the stamps on my own car, instead seeking out parts on cars with known provenance so that the codes could be verified. That article, which presented date code lists for Bosch, Hella, and SWF, is on-line at www.356registry.com/techinfo/research/manufacturing_date_codes.html

This article contains further research into this subject specific to my own car, who we call "Miss June". She is a 1965 C coupe, and quite original and low mileage. I am the third owner of the car.

This article is likely to keenly interest originality freaks like myself, but perhaps less so for others. For those who want to know more about original parts, date code and date stamps are very enlightening, and can even help an owner learn more of their car's history. Note: this article does not address casting dates for the engine case and cylinder heads, matching engine or transmission to the cars, or paint codes.



That brings our running total to 3 matching Hella stamps + 8 Bosch stamps equals 11 stamps, all in 1964 prior to the car's manufacture. Let's move on to actual date stamps. Miss June has 23 of them. Shown at right they are:

- Hubcaps 3 @ 4/65, 1 @ 2/ 64
- Wheels 5 @ 3/64
- Seat Hinges 2 @ 8/64
- Zenith carburetors 2 @ 5/64
- Air Filter Housings 2 @ 7/64
- Window Winders 2 @ 5/64
- VDO temperature sender 5/64
- Gauges (3),
 combo: 7/64, tach: 6/64, speedo: 1/65
- Clock 6/64
- Phoenix fan belt (now placed in tool kit) 6/63

Beginning to get the idea? The date stamps and date codes are not exactly the same, but they are all loosely grouped together, and all prior to the manufacture of my '65 C coupe. The Porsche factory assembly workers simply took parts from the shelf and used them. Inventory control back in the 356 production era was somewhat different than today's FIFO methods, but still the parts are closely grouped in age. This also seems to back up the previous owner's claim that the receipts presented and the mileage presented when sold to me are in fact accurate and complete. Please understand this in no way means that the parts in discussion are better than other parts, or that the car is better than another car that has replacement parts. The only claim made here is that the parts are original. The photos show these original parts.

I'll add to the above that the known places to look for original parts include looking for the last 3 digits of the vin number on the hood and deck lid, (shown below). *Continued page 63*






Both doors (above) also have the last three VIN digits (2). The stamps in these four locations also match on Miss June, which along with an uninked hood help further tell the history of the car. No serious impacts in the front, sides, or the rear. Good news.

Running total of the stamps: 3 Hella + 8 Bosch + 23 date stamps + 4 -3 VIN digits = 38.

One more number brings us to the number 39 and that is the serial number on the Blaupunkt radio. It is a V series Blaupunkt Frankfurt US model, which, according to the previous article was produced and put into 64 and 65 356 cars.

But wait, there's more... I have not removed and carefully inspected other parts that still might have date codes on them. These items include, but certainly are not limited to the SWF windshield wiper motor and the SWF foot pump for the windshield washer. There were likely date codes on the turn signal lights and the reverse (back up) light, but I have not removed and carefully cleaned for inspection. Also of note are a few other places one could look. Miss June rides on original mahogany colored Boge shocks. They have a lot of stamped information on them, and earlier cars with Boge shocks did have a date. Miss June's do not. I also could not find a date on the gas tank or the fuel pump, both of which are often (but not always) dated on earlier cars. Lastly, the VDO temperature sender is dated, but she has a oil pressure switch made by Messmer, not VDO. That part is stamped Messmer Radolfzoll, W. Germany, but no date. I believe this switch is also original as I have compared it with switches on other original C cars- but no stamp to prove it.



So, that's our girl, Miss June. She does not even qualify in concours in Preservation Class as she had a paint job 28 years ago plus some interior work, but I still consider her to be one very original 356. If you would like to see close up views of the photos in this article, you can see them at my website dedicated to the car. www.enginesinback.com is the site and it shows much more about the cars originality and accessories. Comments or feedback can be directed through that website as well. 

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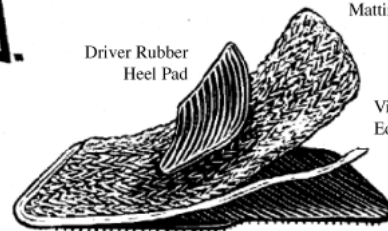
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