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OME IDEAS are so good they're worth repeating. That's what the late, great Peter Brock did when he updated the original HDT Commodore from VC to VH back in the early 1980s.

He carried over many of the better bits (even the wheels were the same), gave the engine more grunt and made some subtle tweaks to the bodykit. But there was something special about the VH. When Brock was a guest speaker at a monthly meeting of the HDT Club of NSW a few years ago he was asked to name his favourite model.

He said the question was the one he was most often asked by HDT Commodore owners and he told the crowd he would answer it carefully, for he thought all his 'children' were special.

The upshot was that he wouldn't say outright that the VH was his favourite car, but said: "I have some very fond memories of that car. We got everything just right. They all seemed to go really hard. There was definitely something special about them."

So it should come as no surprise that the modern HDT – owned by Peter Champion, Australia's biggest collector of Brock road and race cars and memorabilia – is retracing Brock's route.

The VE remake of the VC HDT Commodore (check out our feature in *Street Machine Commodores 29*, on page 48) has been so successful that the company has released a retro version of the VH, also based on the VE.

As with the VC retro model, the VH is available in four price brackets and varying levels of performance. And while the VE/VC retro model is available in red, white or black, just like the original was, the VE/VH is available in two colours (white or red), just like the original VHs.

So far the retro program has been quite a success. HDT has built 11 VE/VC models since early 2008 and in the last five months of last year it produced its first six VE/VH retro cars (each individually numbered).

And all of these were sold by word-of-mouth.

"We just do the best job we can with the cars and we find that people discover us through friends of friends," says Champion. "The HDT community is small. They're real enthusiasts. Our cars are for people who want something unique and for people who admire and respect Peter Brock. A lot of our customers have VC or VH Brocks in their garages at home."

Most HDT retro-mobiles have been bought by collectors in Western Australia and North Queensland – no coincidence, perhaps, as the two regions recently enjoyed a resurgence of wealth thanks to the mining boom.

Champion can relate to that; he built his empire in the mines but got out a few years ago to focus on his passion: HDT.

He had been working on a revival plan for HDT while Brock was still alive; when he died, Champion said he felt a sense of duty to carry on with the dream Brock and he shared. It included the biggest and best collection of Brock history in Australia – and breathing new life into HDT.

HDT has moved to bigger headquarters on the outskirts of Sydney so it can ramp up production of retro VE models and to boost storage capacity of the parts that are vital to the surviving original HDT cars across Australia.

HDT still remakes most items for classic HDT Commodores, and even has some parts in the original boxes.

Indeed, HDT didn't need to go far to find the black rubber fins fitted to the top of the front guards: and the VE's are identical to those on the VH.

As with the original VC to VH update, the 19-inch Irmscher-look wheels from the VE/VC retro model are fitted to the VE/VH.

But unique to this model is the large bonnet scoop and four-post rear wing (a tribute to the VH bootlid spoiler), and a six-slat grille designed to mirror the look of the VH grille.



"I HAVE VERY FOND MEMORIES OF THAT CAR. WE GOT EVERYTHING JUST RIGHT"

- PETER BROCK, ON THE VH HDT

