

January/February 2023 | No. 525



# Autoist

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## RUNNING ROUGH



*Engine problems plague Taos AWD model*



# Autoist

Since 1955

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## HOW DO I SIGN UP?

New Family memberships are \$26 for the first year, then \$20 per year for renewal. Add \$6 to these amounts for residents outside the U.S. Pay by check to VWCA, P.O. Box 154, North Aurora, IL 60542, or visit VWClub.org, click the "Membership" tab and use a credit card to join or renew.

## ABOUT THE AUTOIST

The VW AUTOIST is published bimonthly by members of the Volkswagen Club of America Inc., which is dedicated to helping the VW and Audi owner enjoy his or her car to the fullest. Both members and non-members are welcome to submit manuscripts, letters to the editor, photographs and artwork. Contributions should be sent to the AUTOIST editor. Material must be submitted by the 10th of the month preceding publication (for example, Dec. 10 for the Jan/Feb issue).

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# Driver's Seat

BY CLIFF LEPPKE ✉ leppke.cliff@gmail.com

## On romance and a Volkswagen

Dean Martin's alcohol-infused boozy song, "Ain't That a Kick in the Head," expresses the tit-for-tat or yin-and-yang experience of love and other splendid affairs. And that's how it goes for many Volkswagens and their drivers.

In Dean's Brat Pack era song, an amorous woman is a "kick in the head" (he doesn't say whether it's anywhere else). This leads to romance (part of the first kick) and inevitability without Hugh Hefner's glossy alternative (Playboy's liberated playgirl) the drudgery of domestic containment — marriage, another kick in the head.

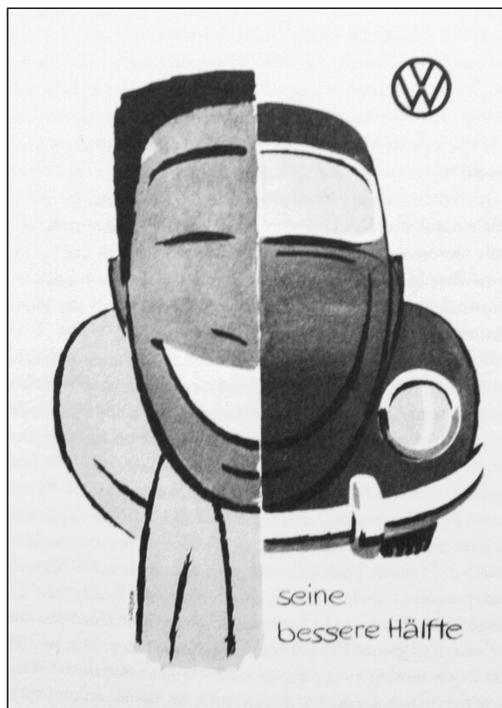
Those lyrics led me to think about a 1956 German Volkswagen ad. It pictorially celebrates the unity between the car and driver. It refers to the car as "his better half" (*seine bessere Hälfte*), casting the VW as a Tammy Wynette-approved automobile; it "stands by its man."

This ad's illustration pictorially merges the man's smiling face with a VW Beetle's fascia. It sanitizes the notion that cars are objects of male desire — often gendering the automobile as female and our ministrations to it (washing, waxing and wrenching) as akin to flirting or something more arousing. The tagline, previously mentioned, pronounced the car "his better half."

Life with a VW is supposedly not like those Hollywood-kindled stormy affairs (Liz Taylor and Richard Burton). Instead, it's about the stability of marriage

— a good marriage, hence the smile on the man's face morphs into the Beetle's U-shaped hood. Even his right eye has a counterpart — the hood's upper indentation near the wiper blade. And his eyebrow forms the completed arch of the Beetle's windshield's top.

Therefore, Disney got it wrong. A Volkswagen isn't about Herbie, it's about HERbie. Although these days you cannot assume that a man's better half is always his wife. As Jerry Seinfeld said, "not that there's anything wrong about that." Regardless, many imagine there are other persons or perhaps material artifacts meant to complement them.



## How a fling becomes a thing: Fealty

My own VW affair began with a 1300cc Bug (1966) — it wasn't lovable; it was so rusty, the Flintstones' car seemed sturdier. I replaced it with, arguably, its better half: a five-year-old 1972 VW Squareback, less rusty (it had floors) but yet another kick in the head with significant rust damage covered by Bondo. Plus, the heater boxes were eaten, spark-plug hole threads stripped and body structure buck-

► TURN TO PAGE 26

# Small Talk

VW + AUDI AT A GLANCE

## NEW & IMPROVED

**ID.GOLF?** When VW ended production of the e-Golf and stopped sale of the regular Golf in the U.S., the writing appeared to be on the wall for the company's iconic hatch. But VW CEO of passenger cars Thomas Schaefer raised hope for Golf fans at the LA Auto Show: "We have iconic brand names, Golf and GTI. It would be crazy to let them die and slip away. We will stick with the ID logic, but iconic models will carry a name."



## EV NEWS

**SALES MILESTONE:** VW has hit an EV milestone sooner than expected after the 500,000th sale in its ID model lineup. As of mid-November, VW said it still had some 135,000 orders in its books, which have been full for the year since May.

**AN UPDATE, FINALLY:** Owners of the buggy 2021 and some 2022 ID.4 models finally got the news they thought would never come. Long-ago promised software updates plus upgraded 12-volt battery installations are being scheduled.

**ALERT SOUNDS:** EVs are required to emit a sound when traveling up to 18.6 mph, and U.S. auto safety regulators have scrapped a 2019 proposal that would have allowed carmakers to offer a variety of

sound choices.

**SCOUT ONLINE:** VW is inviting potential Scout customers to check out the offroad brand's new website, Scoutmotors.com, which includes a community forum and job postings.

## COMPANY NEWS

**DISPLAY UPGRADES:** VW brand chief Thomas Schaefer told *CAR* magazine at the L.A. Auto Show that the universally panned infotainment display featuring capacitive buttons, non-illuminated volume and HVAC controls and some odd button placement on several models will get continuous updates over the next two years. "If you listen carefully," Schäfer said, "you find out what you should and shouldn't do."

**GIGAFACTORY SITE EYED:** Mineral-rich Canada is said to be a "logical option" for the site of VW's first battery cell factory in North America, Reuters reported. The plant would be VW's first gigafactory outside of Europe.

**SCOUT PRODUCTION:** VW is in talks with Taiwan-based Foxconn about a partnership to build new Scout-branded vehicles, German publication *Automobilwoche* reported. VW is targeting rollout of the off-road brand in 2026.

## MONEY MATTERS

**PRICE HIKE:** Customers awaiting their ID.4 orders got bad news over Christmas: If their car was being assembled on Jan. 4, 2023, or later, they'll be paying an additional \$1,500. In addition, because of the steady increase in production, reservations no longer will be accepted.

## SAFETY FIRST

**ID.BUZZ:** Testing in Europe reveals high safety scores for the ID.Buzz, which is scheduled to debut in North America next year. In Euro NCAP safety testing, the ID.Buzz scored 92% for adult occupants, 87% for child occupants, 60% for pedestrians and 90% for "safety assists" (collision avoidance), all considered excellent.

# Retro Autoist

FROM THE VWCA ARCHIVES

## 10 YEARS AGO

**JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2013:** The new Volkswagen Beetle Edition 53 is a special edition model made exclusively for Spain that pays tribute to Walt Disney Pictures' "Herbie" character. VW's real life Herbie gets a white paint job accentu-



ated by red and blue stripes on the doors, the hold and the rear tailgate along with the number "53" on the hold and "Escarabajo" (Spanish for Beetle) logo on the tailgate. Additional standard features include Park Pilot parking assist sensor and 17-inch wheels.

## 20 YEARS AGO

**JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2003:** VW has announced what it calls a sporty and economical automatic gearbox dubbed "DSG." This gearbox, with integrated dual clutch, will be used for the first time in the Golf R32. In the course of 2003, its use will be extended to other production series — primarily in conjunction with high-torque engines. VW was one of the first manufacturers to offer manual six-speed gearboxes as optional equipment in the volume segment for certain production series and models.

## 30 YEARS AGO

**JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1993:** Good news for enthusiasts who like the idea of a VR6-powered Golf. Volkswagen of America has told the parent company in Germany that it prefers the six-cylinder-powered model to the four-cylinder, 16-valve version. *Postscript: Germany to U.S.: You will get da four ... and like it. OK, fine — and we did.*

## 40 YEARS AGO

**JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1983:** Volkswagen of America will begin U.S. assembly of a domestic version of its imported Jetta and a redesigned Rabbit in the 1985 model year, according to the American Metal Market's *Metalworking News*, a trade journal. The cars will be built at the VW plant in Westmoreland, Pa., the publication said. A VW spokesman dismissed the report as "speculative." *Postscript: VW did produce the Jetta there briefly, and the plant closed in 1987.*

## 50 YEARS AGO

**JANUARY 1973:** It is time for us to pick up and shake the dust from our feet. We are resigning as the AUTOIST editors and are looking for volunteers. The pay is bad — like nothing — but the fringe benefits are good. You get to work with some of the best of VWCA (the AUTOIST writers and the national officers), get full use of the AUTOIST's IBM Selectric Typewriter, and you can even learn some stuff. — Chris and Mary Colombo (who toiled from 1971 to 1973).

**FEBRUARY 1973:** A letter from A.D. "Pitt" Pittinger was read at the VWCA executive meeting: "In accord with the bylaws of the defunct Seattle VW Club ... 'In the event of dissolution of the club, the assets are to be donated to a similar nonprofit organization engaged in similar activities.' Therefore, please accept the enclosed check (\$131.05) [\$850 in today's currency] and put it to best possible use now or in the future, with such use to be determined by VWCA officers."

## 60 YEARS AGO

**JANUARY 1963:** A proud young lady of the Volkswagen fleet, the Norwegian M/S Jane Stove, celebrated her 50th "golden crossing" on Nov. 26 when she arrived at Baltimore with 870 VWs for delivery to customers in the middle Atlantic states.



**D**espite Volkswagen's 2022 Taos 4Motion recall and engine control unit software update that led to a stop-sale order, VWoA's own documents reveal it's still playing automotive Whac-a-Mole. Since August 2022, VW issued three technical service bulletins, meant to chase engine management problems, which it doesn't consider a safety defect.

Asked whether VW believes it's resolved Taos' engine/transmission problems, VWoA representatives didn't respond. A VW dealer rep said customers who bought Taos models before February 2022 had troubles. Since then, the number of complaints has dropped.

*Consumer Reports*, however, predicts the 2023 model-year Taos to be the least reliable motor vehicle based on its data. Let's examine the NHTSA's Taos file



# SLOW MOTION

*Unresolved engine problems plague Taos AWD model*

... later, VW de Mexico's and VWAG's Product Safety Committees discussed the problem. They issued a recall. In October 2022, VW reported it developed a repair — a software update to the engine control unit.

to better understand what plagues VW's smallest SUV. On Aug. 3, 2021, VW issued a stop-sale order on its 2022 Taos 4Motion all-wheel drive SUV. VW told dealers that customers said Taos engines stalled unexpectedly when coming to a stop, though those engines could be restarted manually. At that moment, VW didn't have a cure. Days later, VW informed the NHTSA of its safety-related recall of 5,092 U.S. Taos 4Motion models because of the stalling issue.

A deeper dig into NHTSA's documents shows VW observed engine-stop failures on June 30, 2021, and conducted a technical analysis. A month

By Cliff Leppke ✉ [leppke.cliff@gmail.com](mailto:leppke.cliff@gmail.com)

By late December 2021, VW launched a recall campaign in the US market. VW said 100% of the 5,092 Taos 4Motion models built before early August 2021 were affected.

VW claimed software calibration caused engine stalling. It stated, “due to low set engine idle speeds in the ECU, in higher gears in combination with higher brake pressure the transmission is opening K1/K2 clutch (sic) quickly resulting into (sic) engine fail situations.”

CR’s January 2022 Taos road test said the Taos 4Motion “has a surprisingly roomy cabin, but its powertrain has serious hiccups.” It found the “manic” SUV’s “obstreperous powertrain” a deal breaker; it “suffers from a big initial delay when trying to accelerate from a stop, followed by an abrupt burst of power.” Taos drivers felt vulnerable. CR did not, however, report engine stalling.

I reviewed the FWD Taos in 2021. It has a different transmission and rear suspension. I noticed sluggish engine power delivery when climbing Milwaukee’s elevated highways. This didn’t feel unsafe. The FWD Taos wasn’t recalled for engine stalling.

The NHTSA’s Taos file includes customer complaints. Dig into these and you’ll understand why some Taos owners aren’t happy campers. State of Illinois’ Oct. 26, 2022, letter, a Lemon Law action, tells the larger story: problematic vehicles are even more frustrating due to parts shortages, service delays and no loaner vehicles. A consumer bought a Taos in 2021 and then received the first recall notice: a faulty fuel line/fuel connector. There was a two-month delay to fix the fuel problem, and the vehicle was out of service for one month.

The second recall service action involved a control module’s software update. The owner received the notice in March 2022; it wasn’t serviced until late May. This was followed by a dash light warning — the vehicle was towed. The dealer noticed several duplicate engine misfire error codes but couldn’t verify the faults. The dealer told the driver to use different fuel. Next, the engine-control system malfunctioned, rendering the vehicle undrivable. No loaner was provided. Total miles driven: 6,700.

Release Date	08/30/2022	<b>Technical Service Bulletin</b>	
<b>24HV UPDATE</b>			
<b>Engine Control Module Software Update – (FED_EMS)</b>			

Applicable Vehicles				
Country	Beginning Model Year	Ending Model Year	Vehicle	Vehicle Count
USA	2022	2022	TAOS	17,654
CAN	2022	2022	TAOS	671

Revision History		
Revision	Date	Purpose
1	December 09, 2021	Original publication
2	August 30, 2022	<p>Updated battery charger requirements</p> <p>Updated SVM code and removed workaround steps for P0606 fault</p> <p>Updated claiming instructions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Claims with a repair date on or after August 30, 2022 must use the revised labor operations found in the revised circular published to ELSA and ServiceNet.</li> <li>• Claims with a repair date prior to August 30, 2022 must be entered using the original labor operations (see Dealer Letter)</li> </ul> <p><i>NOTE: the updated software version should prevent the P0606 with symptom code 32902 from setting during the software flash process</i></p>

**Part of a technical service bulletin for Taos, issued in October 2022.**

Many Taos drivers have complained about engine stalling, stopping or non-linear acceleration. It’s not clear at this date whether VW’s recalls or service campaigns have resolved these complaints. Drivers report the vehicle’s engine start/stop system (meant to reduce engine idling emissions) doesn’t work properly. Others say the engine hesitates; they see engine malfunction warnings. Often after a restart, they’re able to drive their vehicles to a VW dealer, but the technicians cannot diagnose the problem.

VWoA’s dealer communication shows at least three service campaigns meant to improve engine operation and eliminate inaccurate stored trouble codes. Three (in August, September and October 2022) show VWoA chasing engine control and drivability faults. Service techs are told to ignore some trouble codes until they’ve updated vehicle software and run new diagnostics. This includes control-module tuning.

In addition to software updates, hardware upgrades include fuel tank valves. The October service bulletin prevents certain fault codes in the engine control module. It includes a performance improvement meant to address torque variations in 1,200-to-2,000 engine rev range with bad fuel, dissatisfaction

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# TAKE A TEST DRIVE

*You owe it to yourself to learn why the ID.4 is an easy choice*

Todd Allcock (right) gets an introduction to his new ID.4 at Fremont Motor Cars in Casper, Wyoming.

**A**lmost every family in America needs an all-electric Volkswagen ID.4. Convince me that I'm wrong!

I'm not the typical EV Evangelist who is going to try to convince you or anyone that EVs are perfect for every person in the world (at least not yet!). But I may convince you that they could be right for you, if not now, at least eventually. If your family is anything like mine — parents, a few kids, the dog, etc., — you've probably got at least two cars in your driveway/carport/garage/whatever. Maybe you've got a big comfortable SUV to haul the kids to soccer prac-

tice, and maybe a smaller, more fuel efficient car for work commutes (or like most of us, probably another SUV).

In the 1970s lower middle-class household I grew up in, we had the “good car” that Mom drove us kids to school in and ran the errands, and we had “Dad’s car,” the one that only started if you pumped the gas pedal just so while cranking the starter, and always had bald tires because new ones weren’t in the budget this week, and probably not next week either.

So, what does any of this have to do with EVs or the ID.4? Bear with me — we’re getting there...

By Todd Allcock ✉ [tallcock@aol.com](mailto:tallcock@aol.com)

I consider myself a lazy environmentalist. I recycle, I try to avoid single-use plastic, I don't litter, but I'm not attending protests or chaining myself to trees. While electric cars have appealed to me ever since I saw the then-new Nissan Leaf (with its 80-mile range!) on a dealer lot over 10 years ago, I never gave them any serious thought until fairly recently, when my daughter moved away to college in 2020 and took my commuter car with her.

My wife had a fairly new SUV, our "good car," so I was in the market for a "second car" — not a cheap unreliable "Dad's car" like my father typically owned, but an inexpensive (but reliable) commuter that could haul the (remaining) kids in a pinch. I set my sights on a cheap used EV with at least 100 miles of range, because my round-trip commute was just under 40 miles, and I wanted to have some spare range to run errands or pick up the kids if my wife was working late, etc.

But, as it turned out, used EVs were rare and pretty expensive. They sold in small enough numbers new that the used market wasn't full of them like Toyota Corollas or Honda Civics. Plus, with federal and state incentives, new EVs were only slightly more expensive than used.

Here in Colorado, the state currently gives us \$2,500 to help purchase an EV, but when I bought my first EV in 2020, the allowance was \$4,000! Long story short, (too late, I know) a new 150-mile-range Nissan Leaf set me back only \$15,000 after all factory rebates, incentives, tax credits and dealer dis-



The all-electric driveway at the Allcock household, a 2021 ID.4 First Edition and 2021 Nissan Leaf. A 2022 AWD Pro S ID.4 replaced the First Edition in September.

**▶ THE AUTHOR:** We welcome Todd Allcock of Denver to the AUTOIST as our ID.4 correspondent. He is a data analyst, EV enthusiast, coffee addict and father of three. Though more comfortable with a spreadsheet than a torque wrench, he can get his hands dirty when he needs to. His 2021 ID.4 First Edition was his first VW since owning a well-used 1972 Super Beetle with Auto Stick over 35 years ago.



counts (remember those? This was back before the current Carpcocalypse). Fifteen grand! That was about as cheap as a new car could get. I had our "second car," the crippled little low-range electric. And with the price of electricity in my area (\$0.13/kWh), it cost me less than 4 cents a mile to "gas up" my EV, compared to \$0.10-\$0.15 to fuel the SUV, depending where gas prices were at the moment.

So let's circle back to why almost every family needs an EV. I hear it on social media from friends and strangers alike. "I'd consider an EV if they could go 500 miles on a charge and I could recharge them in 10 minutes!"

Well, they don't, you can't and it doesn't matter! Your "good car" might need to go 500 miles without stopping and refuel in 10 minutes for road trips (it prob- >>

## ID.4

ably doesn't even then, but we'll revisit that in another issue). But your "second car"? The commuter? The grocery getter? The one the kids borrow to go to a movie? That one doesn't need to go "500 miles." That needs to go 100, maybe 200 on a long day? And if you can replace half of your gas usage with a car that plugs in at night for pennies a mile, that's good for the environment and your wallet?

So that's what we noticed. Replacing one gas car with an EV had dropped our gas spending significantly, (almost enough to cover the monthly payment!) and with the instant torque of the electric motor, it was fun and effortless to drive. It had an app that let you heat the cabin and defrost the windows before you went outside on a cold morning to scrape off the snow and frost. It wasn't just an inexpensive car, it was actually a great car.

Then a funny thing happened. The "second car" was getting used a lot more than the "good car" — we plugged it in the driveway every night so it was always fully charged in the morning. If my wife forgot to gas up her car, she took the EV to work. If we needed to run a quick errand, the zippy little EV was the weapon of choice. In fact, the "good car" was only getting used if it was the only car left in the driveway, or if it was summer vacation and all three kids were home (the Leaf is a pretty tight squeeze for four, let alone five), or if we were going on a road trip.

With "work from home" during the pandemic, we eventually realized that we went an entire month without gassing up the SUV because we weren't using it. Then two months... The gas SUV only got used when we needed the bigger car for something the Leaf couldn't do. It dawned on us that the "problem" with the Nissan Leaf wasn't the small size, or the short range; it was that we replaced the wrong car with an EV. Our "second car" didn't need to be electric, our "first car" did.

Back in 2020 when we bought the Leaf, there were

still relatively few inexpensive EV options in the USA compared to today, and most were compact hatchbacks. But in 2021, when Volkswagen, the company that invented the "People's Car," brought the ID.4, the "People's EV," to the United States, that changed. Here was a crossover/small SUV-size EV with decent range and a relatively low price, with room for five and a slew of creature comforts. When it debuted, we ordered one to replace our gas SUV (then got so impatient waiting for the order that we drove 280 miles from Denver to Casper, Wyoming, to buy the demo ID.4 off their lot, but that's a tale for another time).

We've been all-electric now since October 2021. I can hear you saying, "All your cars are electric?

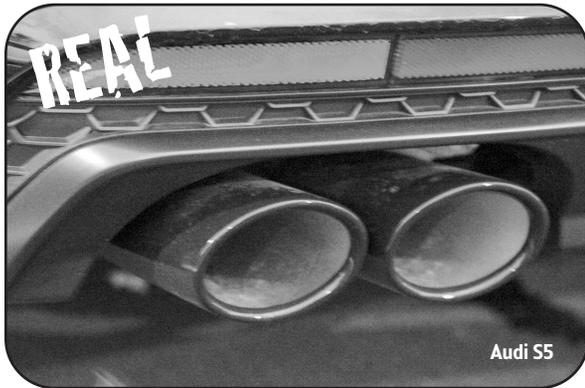
**“ It dawned on us that the 'problem' with the Nissan Leaf wasn't the small size, or the short range; it was that we replaced the wrong car with an EV.**

That'll never work for me and my family!" That's fine, it might not. I never thought it would work for us either, until we bought our first. But I'm asking you to look at the cars in your garage or driveway right

now. Find the one that rarely goes more than 100 or 150 miles in a day. The one that maybe only gets 15-20 miles a gallon and is pinching your wallet a little too hard. Are you telling me an ID.4 couldn't replace that car?

For model year 2023, VW introduced a cheaper (\$38K) ID.4 with a 200-mile range, compared to the 250+ mile range of the higher trims. Tax credits and incentives can get that down to the low \$30s. This is the Beetle of the 21st century, and you owe it to yourself to go take a look and a test drive, and then ask yourself what it would be like to never stop at a gas station again, unless you just really, really like crappy coffee? What it would be like to never sit in a Jiffy Lube waiting area like a hostage, telling the guy for the umpteenth time you don't need a new cabin air filter! Then after taking the plunge, in a few months, you might start looking at your other cars and start asking which ones of those could be replaced with an ID.4 too.

Convince me I'm wrong! **VWCA**



# EXIT STRATEGIES

Automobile styling seems inspired by the Exploding Cigar School of Design. Nothing is what it appears to be. To wit: late-model Audis fool the eye with bright-metal bumper accents implying exhaust pipes. Look closely and you'll discover they're merely eye candy. Honesty, it seems, isn't important.

Check out this **Audi Q5**. Its rear bumper has two, twin bright rings (left and right) broadcasting four exhaust tubes. Examine them. You'll see they aren't tailpipe garnishments. Instead, they're as artificial as vanillin — filled with plastic. And **Audi's A6** tricks the eye in a similar fashion with two metal frames aping flared pipes. They're just for show.

In contrast, the **Audi S5** would impress Bach — it has organ-like pipes. This car has an engine note worthy of motoring fugue. Meanwhile, this **Audi A4** routes the pea-shooter tailpipe through a flared surround — it brags too much. It might, however, produce a happy compromise — an easy-to-clean, no-tarnish exit strategy. **VWCA**



By Cliff Leppke ✉ [leppke.cliff@gmail.com](mailto:leppke.cliff@gmail.com)

# A LICENSE THAT HELPS TREAT A 'BUG'

*But first, you have to frame the depth of this illness*



**W**e've all encountered the flu "bug," and our bodies usually conquer the battle. There is another more serious "bug" that infects our brains, and for which there is no cure. That is the Volkswagen "bug," which is named after the car. I have been stricken with this bug, and it has taken over my life. I'm sure many others can relate.

Purchasing a '73 Beetle from California and shipping it to Illinois because I had to have a rust-free car is the just the beginning of this ailment. After refurbishing its interior, cleaning and detailing the exterior and engine, nothing else was left to do except to drive and enjoy it. But, that's not the way the "bug" works once it has infected our brains. I went on an internet search for anything related to a '73 Beetle:

dealer brochures, technical manuals, paint charts, a full-color brochure of options and magazine ads from 1973 featuring the Beetle.

Then, I found the holy grail of VW "stuff" — license plate frames! Not just generic frames, but authentic dealer frames from 1973! According to the owner's manual and related documents, my Beetle was originally purchased from Volkswagen West in Anaheim, California. I found license frames from that dealer, in reasonably good condition. Of course, I immediately purchased them, polished them and put them on my car.

Somehow they just didn't look right with Illinois license plates. That's the "bug" influencing my brain, again. Fortunately in Illinois, antique vehicles are al-

By Steve Midlock ✉ [SMidlock@stfrancis.edu](mailto:SMidlock@stfrancis.edu)

lowed to display historic plates representing the year of the car. Of course, the official plates have to be in the car and available should a police officer request to see them. Most of the cruise night participants display historic plates on the front and Illinois Antique Vehicle plates on the back of their cars.

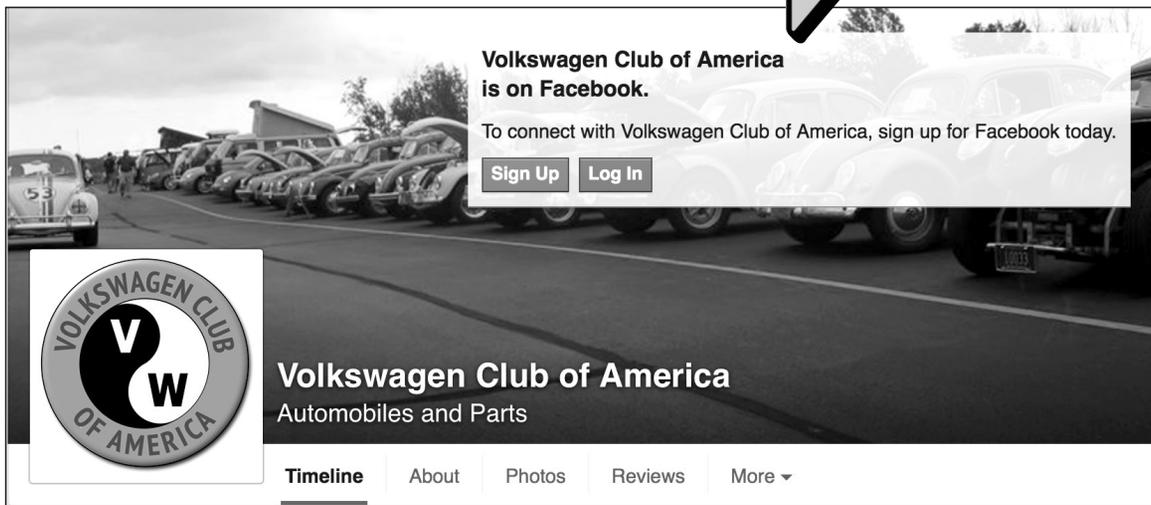
The next logical (??) step was for me to get a California plate from 1973 to put on the front of my Beetle. It wasn't too difficult of an internet search, leading me to a blue California plate with a 1973 sticker affixed to it. After a good cleaning and polishing, it looked so much better with my Volkswagen West plate frame. But, the "bug" still wasn't satisfied. In the world of California plates, the black plates are older and more desirable. But, they are more expensive. Then, I found a black plate replica bearing the number, OFP 857. Herbie the Love Bug fans know that this is the plate number that Herbie wore in the movies.

Of course, I purchased the replica plate, which was black with yellow characters. My Beetle is yellow

with a black interior — a perfect match! I carefully removed the 1973 California sticker from my blue plate and glued it onto the black plate. Not only does this enhance the dealer plate frame, but it also is a great conversation piece at cruise nights, as I not only explain my car's origin, but also the significance of the number.

According to the Herbie the Love Bug Fan Club and Historical Society (Herbiemania.com): "Herbie the Love Bug license plate, OFP 857 - Herbie has original 1963 yellow on black California plates. The Herbie detective, Tory Alonzo, discovered that the letters and numbers on Herbie's tag represent a code. The Love Bug's producer, Robert Stevenson, first worked with Walt Disney in August of 1957, so OFP 857 represents: Our First Production, 8-57."

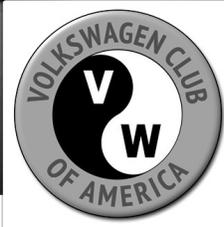
Presently, the VW "bug" seems to be content with the California replica license plate (and all the 1973 Beetle stuff). Conversations at cruise nights keep the "bug" happy. A license plate is more than a number! **VWCA**



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VW banners unfurled in DriveShop's Chicago garage.

**V**W skipped most US car shows, but *Automotive News'* Larry Vellequette says it presented what the now five-year old ID.Buzz at the 2022 Los Angeles Auto Show. People swarmed over it. He says VW's dealers, however, are miffed. They want a pickup — not a minivan. He claims dealers pleaded, practically screamed into VW's metaphorical ears, hoping VW would make the Atlas Tanoak or Tiguan-based Tarok concept a reality. About the only thing certain about VW is it's a slow-motion outfit.

Meanwhile, at the Midwest Automotive Media Association's holiday social in Chicago, I learned VW

## MAMA HOLIDAY SOCIAL

# NEWS 'N' VIEWS

*On VW pickups, cars in demand, Consumer Reports ratings and recalls*

provided just one vehicle to our press-fleet vendor (DriveShop) for media evaluation purposes this year — the Golf R.

We didn't see the new GTI, the 2022 Jetta (with the Taos' 1.5-liter engine) or the 2023 ID.4. Audi had some three-year old Q8s and an e-tron in the fleet. This one doesn't have the longer-range character of the newest e-tron. On the old e-tron, all side doors sport puddle lights, and there are charging ports

at the rear of each front fender — just to be doubly sure. Unlike VW's BEV, this one has some knobs, dials and buttons — not many but not the total touch-sensor affair VW's brass finally admitted went too far —

By Cliff Leppke ✉ [leppke.cliff@gmail.com](mailto:leppke.cliff@gmail.com)

so we're promised push buttons on future steering wheels.

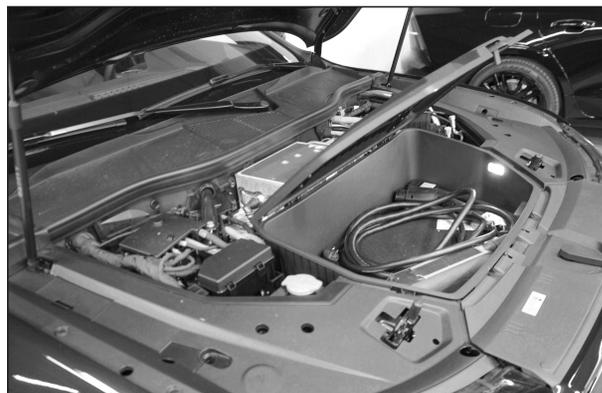
VWoA's official line: it's not wooing us with its latest machines, even the ID.4s it sent to the Chicago Drives Electric event were 2021 model-year vehicles. Why? It simply cannot obtain enough cars. Thus, it doesn't want to stir the pot and then tell the consumer you cannot taste it.

I've tried *Consumer Reports'* TrueCar shopping service. For me, *CR's* role in sending us to what looks like a profit-making buying service (*CR* receives compensation and does the same, sending you to, say, Best Buy to pick a top-rated TV) doesn't fit *CR's* stout, unbiased, non-profit mission. Anyhow, TrueCar confirms VW's story — the GTI and Golf R are scarce; you'll pay more than MSRP. The Arteon, however, sells at a discount.

Speaking of *CR*, it presented its updated automobile reliability scores before the Automotive Press Association in Detroit (November 2022). You'll see the results in its January issue and on its website. VW dropped two positions to 22nd out of 24 brands. Audi, however, is sixth, a radical difference. VW's tidy Taos received a dubious honor: it's the least reliable vehicle. *CR* didn't elaborate.

I'm aware the AWD Taos, which has a different transmission and rear suspension than the FWD version I reviewed, has a reputation for what I'll politely describe as non-linear acceleration. Sometimes it pauses and sometimes it surges. I noticed a slight hesitation with the eight-speed automatic FWD setup but nothing as dreadful as the stories I heard about the AWD. The vehicle's worse-than-average scores included engine major and minor. Customer satisfaction scores, likewise, weren't encouraging.

In contrast, *CR* now recommends Jetta and Atlas models. The latter was, at its inception, one of *CR's* 10-least reliable vehicles. *CR* no longer recommends the Ford Bronco Sport, Mustang Mach-E, Hyundai Elantra, Nissan Sentra, Toyota Tundra and Volvo XC60. Models with improved reliability include the



Another VW-Audi EV contrast: A charging cable in the e-tron's available frunk space. The ID.4 provides no up-front storage area.

... Audi Q3.

In Germany, VW announced it's delaying its Trinity flagship BEV debut. Meanwhile, we expect VW to compensate by updating its BEV platform (MEB+)—longer range, faster charging variation of its current MEB setup found under the ID.4. And VW announced it's finally ready to update the ID.4's software in 2021 and some 2022 models. Audi, meanwhile, has introduced the Q4 e-tron (using VW's MEB setup). Audi likely ditched the idea of e-tron as its BEV sub-brand; its new "SU-BEVs" wear the now familiar Q, followed by number and then e-tron.

... VW issued two noteworthy recalls — you should >>

have received a letter from VWoA by the time you read this. Some Atlas and Audi Q5 engines were assembled with flawed connecting rod bearings. Based on VW's NHTSA correspondence, I'd suspect these are turbocharged Mexican-made four-cylinder engines, although VW's published documents don't say so.

The defective bearings cause excessive engine noise and eventual engine failure. VW will inspect and replace defective engines; bad bearings release engine-damaging metal particles; two, some VW vehicles have non-compliant tire pressure monitoring systems. They take too long to alert the driver should all four tires lose pressure at the same rate. A software update should remedy this. VW asked for an exemption from the federal TPMS safety standard; the Feds said no.

Toyota's Amy Chao invited me to participate in its Crown (sort of an Avalon replacement) presentation. Toyota is reviving or honoring its former senior-car nameplate. She says Toyota benchmarked the VW's Arteon. The Crown is an alternative to VW's sleek couple-like four-door sedan. This sedan, however, has a higher ride height (up four inches from the Camry) following the current fashion trend seen on, say, VW's Atlas Cross Sport (or less comfortably for the eyes the 2010-2012 Honda Crosstour). It's available with what Toyota calls the Hybrid Max, with



Enlightening automotive progress: Headlights, taillights and now, for the lack of a better term, puddle lights, which illuminate the ground along the sides of this e-tron's doors.

340 horsepower. So equipped, it zooms to 60 mph in 5.7 seconds.

The Hybrid Max idea is significant; it's part of a larger mission to create exciting rather than boring hybrid vehicles. Chao says it uses a six-speed direct-shift gearbox transmission similar to VW/Audi. Toyota, instead of throwing all its resources into BEVs, thinks there's a market for the latter letters: EV — some electrification for motors meant to complement a turbocharged internal combustion engine.

Toyota's new, revamped Prius, likewise, has a more powerful powertrain intended to get rid of that CVT rubber banding and gutless takeoff. **VWCA**

GO DEEPER | **VWCLUB.ORG**

# IMAGINING



Illustration: Avarvari

# SCOUT

The electric revolution is changing the face of the car industry at breakneck speed. The Volkswagen Group is at the forefront of the transformation — and here's a new ace up its sleeve, the rugged Scout EV brand and its proposed electric pickup.

Our rendering, by computer artist Andrei Avarvari, uncovers the battery-powered truck on the drawing board for a 2026 launch. It's aimed squarely at the likes of the Ford F-150 Lightning and Rivian R1T: practical, puritanical utility vehicles that remove tailpipe emissions from the great outdoors.

Insiders at the VW Group have given a few details of the spec to whet our appetites: the Scout electric double-cab pick-up blueprint is built around a steel and aluminum monocoque with a dual-motor powertrain providing up to 469bhp of grunt and all-wheel drive to lug serious cargo in its flatbed loadbay.

The International Harvester Scout was one of the first SUVs — a cult classic in the '70s and '80s in North America and a name that still gets respect today. VW Group is reviving the name for a new

brand of vehicle: the “rugged” e-SUV and e-pickup that will be designed, engineered, built and sold entirely in the region.

Particularly in North America, the electric truck market is heating up fast. Rivian's R1T, GMC's Hummer EV and Ford's F-150 Lightning are already on sale and, if Tesla pulls its finger out, the Cybertruck could be another contender.

VW thinks it can stop the American brands having the market to themselves by acting now.

The Scout EV brand, led by former VW North America head Scott Keogh, plans to include an SUV (codenamed SC416) as well as the pickup truck (SC417).

The aim is to use the new PPE platform that'll be used in the coming years across myriad VW Group brands and products to make the initiative more cost-efficient.

Audi boss Markus Duesmann has pondered “a bulletproof zero-emission premium pickup, tailor-made for the great outdoors.” Audi partnering up with Scout would make the business case for such a model stack up. Audi's version could take a visual lead from the RS Q e-tron Dakar racer and command a price premium over the Scout. **VWCA**

▶ **REPRINT:** Story and artwork courtesy of UK-based *CAR* magazine. [carmagazine.co.uk](http://carmagazine.co.uk)

# 2023

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CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

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EVERGREEN PARK: BEETLE CRAFT SPORT TUNING, 9535 S. PULASKI RD., 708-422-7548, P-10 A-10 L-10 AC, AIR-COOLED VW SPECIALISTS

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# Local Volks

## Activities of VWCA affiliates

### When a golf outing goes 'puff'

We've always said that participation in local chapter activities is a huge part of "enjoying your VW to the fullest." It is the purpose of this column, therefore, to highlight these events and activities, give the planners and organizers a little recognition for their efforts and perhaps inspire other chapters to try some of the unique and fun ways we enjoy our VWs.

If there is no local chapter in your area and you'd like to start one, contact our vice president, Tom Janiszewski at [Volkstom@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Volkstom@sbcglobal.net), or the club office at [VWClub@aol.com](mailto:VWClub@aol.com).

Here's what some of the locals are up to of late: **BADGER BEETLES AUTOFUN CLUB, MILWAUKEE:** More details were received about the Badger group's annual Labor Day Campout. One phase of their new event, "Arm Chair Olympics," was called "Marshmallow Golf," where contestants were given a marshmallow and a golf club and ... well, use your imagination for the rest. In the works is the annual theater party, this year featuring "Elf The Musical" followed by dinner at an Italian restaurant.

**NORTHEAST ILLINOIS VW ASSN., LISLE:** The annual Fall Color Cruise was held with the caravan of cars winding through colorful tree-lined streets and parks, ending with a visit to the Volo Auto Museum. The annual holiday banquet was postponed and rescheduled for January due to the sudden closing of the

restaurant where it was traditionally held.

**STATELINE VOLKS FOLKS, ROCKFORD, ILL.:** The annual Festivus celebration was once again held this year after a two-year absence brought about by the COVID pandemic. It's good to see some of these events recovering and the membership gathering again in relative safety and comfort.

**CENTRAL FLORIDA VW CLUB, ORLANDO:** With some of the key officers sidelined, the regular meeting of the CFVWC was postponed. Meanwhile, their V-DUBBER newsletter examined the testing program for VW's all-electric ID.Buzz and ID.4 vehicles on the Greek island of Astypalea. For the fascinating details, visit [centralfloridavwclub.org](http://centralfloridavwclub.org) and click on "Newsletter."

Check our website, [VWClub.org](http://VWClub.org), for listings of these and future events. You'll always find the latest updates there — and even some events that were announced too late to make the AUTOIST publication schedule. Occasionally, photos and videos of these events appear live as they happen on our Facebook page, [facebook.com/vwclubofamerica](https://facebook.com/vwclubofamerica).

And if your local chapter is planning an event, contact us at [VWClub.org](http://VWClub.org) and we'll post it on our site.

Finally, this column is in need of a member to compile the activities of our local chapters and send them bimonthly to the AUTOIST editor. If you're the one, contact VWCA at [VWClub@aol.com](mailto:VWClub@aol.com) or directly to the AUTOIST editor at [VWAUTOIST@icloud.com](mailto:VWAUTOIST@icloud.com). **VWCA**



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Add value to your VWCA membership by registering at [VWClub.org](http://VWClub.org) to take advantage of discounts on exclusive Club Store merchandise and to renew your membership, using either PayPal or your credit card.

# The Frontdriver

BY RICHARD G. VANTREUREN ✉rvant1951@gmail.com

## It's not a submarine

**O**ur beloved VW Eos is no more. Hurricane Ian dumped a record 29 inches of rain last Sept. 29, flooding much of Volusia County, Florida, (declared a disaster area) as well as our house to 15 inches inside. Because the garage is a few inches lower, the water peaked just above the Eos axles — and the bottom of her electric seats.

After a few days, the floodwater receded enough to try a start. Water shot out from the muffler like a jet ski, but our hopes were soon dashed when the battery went dead and our charger's needle wrapped around its peg. State Farm sent an adjuster a few days later and declared our beloved Eos totaled. No discussion. No possible buyback. "You don't want this car now," he said.

We did not have rental coverage, but there were no cars to be had around here anyway. We relied on our

2008 Touareg, whose higher stance saved him from electrical shorts — but not all damage (more on him later).

The overwhelmed insurance company at first could not even take her away. When the wrecker did show, we did not want to give her up, not just because they had not paid our claim as promised. Amazingly, a jump started her, and she was moved into towing position with that battery pack sitting atop the engine. Windows inop but overall seemingly repairable, we nonetheless removed our personals and bid Eos a tearful goodbye as she was flatbedded away.

The next weeks were a comedy of errors, with a series of phone answerers rotating excuses until the claim was deposited ... twice! The settlement of 10 grand and change for our 2004 car (with 120,000 miles) was certainly fair, but after waiting for them to discover their mistake, we laughed when they took

two more weeks to cash our return check.

Eos never had a garage door opener built in like Mr. T, though the owner's manual shows one, and our eismeer blue exterior was the deluxe model with paddle shifters, fancy radio/CD player, etc. All the more reason to wonder where we put the garage door remote clicker we're sure we removed before towing. So when we arrive home in our new Taos (next issue's story) we're sure missing that remote.

## Open the door, Richard

A few issues back we discussed garage door openers, only to have our door not open after Hurricane Ian. Simple \$450 matter to have its broken



upper wheels (leading to snapped spring) and flooded lower sensors replaced.

Not so lucky with Mr. Touareg, whose four doors had last year developed a frustrating refusal to open — intermittently, and even a sort of random spread-the-pain lunacy that would find one side, then the other, then front, then back — refusing to open from outside, or inside — and eventually neither. After one particularly embarrassing incident of a rear seat passenger having to vault the back seat to escape through the hatchback, it was off to the cloud for research.

Numerous videos explained a small wire latch in the mechanism becomes feeble and won't always release. All suggested an expensive door-ripping was necessary to access and lube the offending hook — if not the whole assemblies.

Resigned to dreading trying to egress the car when



The Eos in sunnier times, posed near Launch Complex 39-A at Cape Canaveral in 2009.

the hangup could not be duplicated at our mechanic's shop, luckily a return visit's overnight stay found the driver's door inop. Our mechanic showed us the trick — just slap or punch the door sheet metal near the mechanism. We also found just pressing firmly on the fixed part of the handle usually yields the soft "click," releasing the offending hook inside. Evidently, most all the VW-Audis use the same setup and will eventually have the same problem — so keep that work-around in mind.

Eos was older and though she was a two-door with many more cycles, her doors never once refused to open. We're sure sad those beautiful blue doors are long gone. **VWCA**



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# ID. Insight

BY TODD ALLCOCK ✉ tallcock@aol.com

## Have we been scammed by 'Big Rubber'?

One of the things about Volkswagen's all-electric ID.4 that seems to concern some folks on ID.4 message boards and Facebook groups has nothing to do with the car being an EV — it's VW's decision to use "staggered tires"; wider tires on the rear of the vehicle than on the front. "But how will I rotate them?" seems to be the primary concern.

I assume VW made the decision to balance handling (*more* rubber/friction on the road is better) with range and efficiency (*less* rubber/friction on the road is better), and placed wider tires on the rear for better handling. This seems like a good compromise, but does make front/rear tire rotation impossible.

My usual answer to these concerns is "good riddance to rotation!" I'll happily add tire rotation to the list of annoying regular maintenance items, like oil changes, that I no longer need to do to my ID.4.

I've always been more of a "math guy" than a car guy, so forgive the nerdy numbers I'll throw at you below, but it's important to note that tire rotation doesn't actually extend the life of your tires. It's a "rob Peter to pay Paul" scenario. You're not extending the life of a \*set\* of tires. You're extending the life of the tires that would've worn out first by shortening the life of the ones that would've worn out more slowly, making them wear out at roughly the same

time.

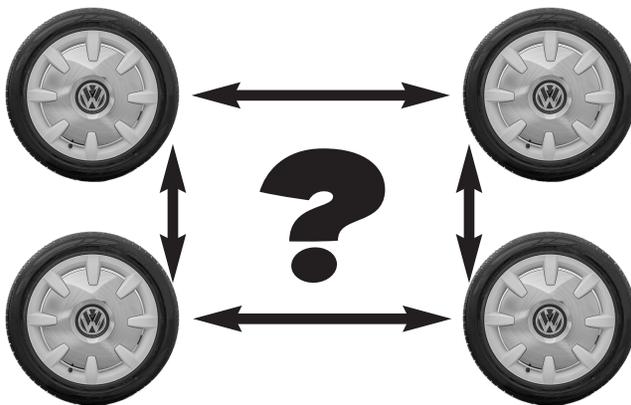
Let's take a hypothetical front-wheel drive car that wears the front tires out in 30,000 miles and the rears in 60,000. We'll rotate them every 10K or 20K miles, (it doesn't really matter which.) Every 20,000 miles each tire spends on the front, it loses two-thirds of its tread (20,000/30,000 is two-thirds). Every 20,000 miles on the rear, it loses the other one-third (20,000/60,000), so each tire lasts 40,000 miles when rotated.

If you rotate the tires, you'll wear out 12 tires over 120,000 miles, replacing all four at 40K, 80K, and 120K. If you *don't* rotate, you'll *also* wear out 12 tires; replacing the two fronts at 30K, 60, 90 and 120K, and the two rears at 60K and 120K.

But by not rotating, you'll only make four trips to the tire store in those 120K miles (at 60K and 120K you replace all four.) If you

rotate every 20K, you'll make six trips: the new tires at 40K, 80K, and 120K, and rotations at 20K, 60K and 100K. If you rotate every 10K instead of 20K, that's 12 trips total with the extra six rotations!

So if we're not making tires last longer, why do we do it? Why not just replace pairs of tires separately as they wear out, like any other car part? We don't rotate the front and rear brakes on cars to ensure they wear evenly, but somehow the industry decided that tires should all wear out simultaneously. Now that



staggered size tires like the ID.4's make rotation impossible, it's suddenly perfectly OK not to rotate tires anymore, according to the manufacturer. So maybe this is a good time to ask why we've been doing it all these years? I know many of you are reading this and yelling at the page "it's for safety, you idiot!" But is it?

Interestingly, when this topic came up on Reddit, a few European ID.4 owners mentioned that rotation isn't common in their countries. I found that fascinating, and when verifying this, came across a UK tire store website ([www.kwik-fit.com/tyres/information/tyre-rotation](http://www.kwik-fit.com/tyres/information/tyre-rotation)) and discovered they don't recommend it either! Apparently in some parts of the world, it's perfectly normal to just drive until two tires wear out and buy two replacements, putting them on the rear, and the oldest tires on the front. This insures the better tires are always on the back for safety. The web page even gives a list of reasons they think rotation is unsafe.

But I get it, change is hard. I know several folks on a Facebook ID.4 group who are rotating their left tires to the right and vice versa, assuming that will extend their tire life. None of these folks ever did left to right rotation before, but assume they need to now because they can't do front/rear and everyone knows tires must be rotated!

The only real advantage to tire rotation I can see is that many tire stores run "buy three tires get the fourth free" sales or give rebates on sets of four, so there is a cost savings to buying all four at once rather than two at a time. But you have to balance (no pun intended!) those savings with the time and money saved by not rotating tires every 5K, 10K, 20K (or whatever) miles.

I submit my thesis here that tire rotation may be a scam perpetuated by "Big Rubber" to keep tire stores and auto shops rolling in that sweet rotation money, because clearly Volkswagen tells us it's perfectly normal not to rotate tires on this car. If it's truly a safety issue, is Volkswagen intentionally making us unsafe? Of course not!

And for those still unconvinced, I'll offer this anecdote: I took my ID.4 in for its annual checkup at 12,000 miles. Three of my tires' tread were at 6/32"

and the fourth was at 5/32", so the equal weight distribution of the ID.4 seems to create very even tire wear. Maybe tire rotation actually *isn't* necessary for this car.--

## Where's the spare?

Tire rotation (or the lack of it) isn't the only tire-related change to get used to with the ID.4. It does not include any type of spare tire, not even a temporary "donut," just like a third of all new cars, according to *Consumer Reports*. Instead, you get an emergency repair kit, which includes a 12V air compressor and a bottle of sealant to temporarily seal a punctured tire and (hopefully) make it to a service center.

The advantages to the carmaker are obvious — the sealant kit costs less to provide than a wheel, tire, jack and tools. Also, because most carmakers include a few years of free roadside assistance, many owners might just call for a "free" tow anyway rather than get their hands dirty.

Despite the obvious disadvantage to the car owner of not having a spare on board, there are a few small advantages. First is extra space. While the ID.4 has a very generous cargo area, many cars do not, and not having tire, jack and tools that you may never need on board gives more room for you and your stuff. Also, there's less weight. The emergency kit weighs about 50 pounds less than the tire and tools, increasing fuel economy.

So, what do you do if this bothers you? I talk to lots of folks who say things like "I'd never buy a car without a spare tire!" and that's certainly a legitimate opinion to have, but I'm 56 years old and can still remember folks saying "I'll never buy a car without a full-size spare tire!" when donut spares were first introduced in the late 1970s.

Somehow, we managed to survive that transition, and I suspect we'll survive this one from donut to sealant, too. However, if you aren't ready, VW offers an optional spare wheel and jack kit for the ID.4, and a company called Modern Spare ([modernspare.com](http://modernspare.com)) sells kits for a variety of cars that don't include a spare. Prepare to pay \$400-\$500 for the privilege. Maybe that sealant kit doesn't sound too bad after all... **VWCA**

## DRIVER'S SEAT

### ► FROM PAGE 3

led. Worse, a VW dealer sold me this creampuff. Ain't that a kick in the head? Or a dent in one's wallet? Or a hole in the boat?

Eventually, I left the upper Midwest, traveled to Dallas and bought a clean 1974 Volvo 145 (wagon). I discovered I didn't like it. So, I employed it to find its replacement. I motored to Memphis, where I scored a Texas Yellow fuel-injected Type 3 wonder (another 1972 Squareback, which I towed home). This one was a keeper. It served me well until the allure of quicker front-drive subcompacts with air conditioning and more legroom kicked me in the head. I had a cramped, illicit interlude with a 1980 Toyota Corolla SR5 Liftback. It was pleasant but not quite right.

In response, I pointed the Squareback to the Southwest, seeking a more contemporary rust-free used commuter. Yes, I was looking for a Squareback alternative but didn't think a sporty, pricey Scirocco



**Cliff Leppke, a regular AUTOIST contributor since 1993, has upgraded his wheels since getting his first car in the early '60s.**

was in my future, until I met a 1983 Wolfsburg Edition Mars Red model, which became my longtime motoring companion. I found it in Mesa, Arizona, just about five years old and then towed it home with, brace yourself — the Squareback. You might call this serial monogamy (although the optics of the old one towing the new is

more like totting a tot than a seductive alternative).



**Cliff Leppke's 1972 Texas Yellow Squareback has a lofty relationship status.**

Regardless, I kept my Squareback. We've never parted, and we have an open marriage of sorts. But you need space and time for these machines — another kick in the head. Contrary to the famous Beetle ad, two cannot live as cheaply as one.

Apparently, Sciroccos have a law of selective automotive gravitation, as I bought more of them — most were parts cars. I haven't gendered them, kissed them or even named them. Although I've shortened their model names to RO or IROC and use either their model years or engine-valve totals as their IDs — '86 RO, 8V or 16V. Recently, I began driving an '84 RO — the bronze star of lousy cars, buying this \$850 disaster seven years ago in Seattle.

Sometimes the better, better half of a VW is the people you meet through shared affection for Volkswagens. I bought my first "other" 1986 Scirocco from a VW Club member in 1999 primarily as a parts donor or alternative ride while I sorted out the 1983's fifth-gear shifting troubles. It turned out another VW Club contact figured out that the tranny problem was my fault; years earlier I had improperly installed a taller fifth gear. He bulletproofed the differential, replacing the ring gear's rivet-on pinion re-

tainers with circlips and bolts. Despite my car's advanced mileage — more than 300,000 — the original's pieces, often dubbed the self-machining transaxle for their known propensity to pop apart with disastrous effect, were factory fresh. I'm kind to my better half.

I turned the '86 RO into my winter car, an imposter of sorts — its Mars Red hue confuses people. The puzzlement is most people don't know or cannot image that own five red Sciroccos — four of them Mars Red. And then there's the bronze sheep of the lot, an '84, my "new" winter car.

This kept the road salt off my favored '83. I rolled the odometers to 348,000 on the '83 and 300,000 on the '86. The former car wears its miles well, the latter one doesn't. In December 2022, I pushed the 1986 aside, (enter the '84 RO) due to corroded fuel, brake and power steering lines. The high-pressure power steering pipe near the steering rack blew all its fluid out in a screeching Exxon Valdez-like disaster — in my driveway. Before this, the fuel line on the firewall (interesting spot) sprayed a mist of 87 octane after I replaced a nearby power steering rack boot — again in my own driveway, saving me from an unspeakable fate. Talk about a kick in the head. The '86 has gone through two sets of fuel lines, two gas tanks and lots of brake lines — all eaten by the tin worm. In contrast, the rustproofed '83, which I drove on wintry roads for more than a decade, has its original metal fuel and brake lines.

At this point I should say a thing about *Consumer Reports'* guide toward longtime motoring. Their idea for hyper-mileage sounds more like you need a surgeon and a banker not a competent wrench wrencher. CR spouts all sorts of figures for new transmissions and engines needed to go the extra mile. Hogwash. These VWs went the distance sans such transplants. And my car still has its original starter and alternator. You can repair them.

You must, I've found, avoid incompetent service



Cliff's 1983 Wolfsburg Edition Scirocco.

technicians (VWs attract them), crackups, bad weather, lousy roads, rocks, sunlight, rodents and salt spray. And you'll find far more problems with body integrity and interior hardware — leaks, rattles, squeaks and cracked dashboards are more likely to sully your ride. Chase these and say engine mounts and suspension bushings and you'll love your Volkswagen — well some of them. I'd find it difficult to get cozy with a Routan — just saying it's not a "real" VW. But if you go googly eyes over one, what the heck ...

## Going the distance? Then go the distance

Instead of major engine/transmission transplants, you or your tech must attend to something as simple and overlooked such as a clutch pushrod bushing or seal. It turns out this pesky seal, later updated with better material, doesn't last. When it fails, transaxle's lubrication sprays onto the clutch assembly, either causing the clutch to stick — won't release when you press the left pedal in or slip when you're trying to climb up service ramps. Ain't that a kick?

Likewise, inner drive flange seals fail, letting gear lube fill the inner CV joints. Again, search for the improved replacement part. In fact, my longtime VW parts ace Steve Bush is a treasure, and so were the folks who ran the now defunct Metro Auto Parts. >>

## DRIVER'S SEAT

These people located the good goods at attractive prices. Mr. Bush introduced me to VW's extra-life parts. I bought a stainless-steel exhaust downpipe, a much-improved clutch cable and a heftier muffler.

On the engine, a coolant leak, perhaps a bad hose, radiator or water pump, broken exhaust manifold studs and oil cooler O-rings are its chief worries. Replace latter every five years; that's a life saver. VW, likely due to the 1970s valve-stem-seal fiasco, equipped this car with a two-stage oil-warning system. One circuit looks at idle speed oil pressure at the cylinder head and the other above 2,000 rpm near the oil filter/cooler assembly. If the former trips, you get a blinking oil light, if the later one trips it adds an audible alarm. This elaboration monitors the lubrication situation more precisely than the air-cooled VW's single sender. It sounds an annoying alarm, which shouldn't ignore. This prevented me from trashing the '86 RO's engine when the oil cooler O-ring failed! So don't ignore it; pending engine disaster is on you. Faulty senders, however, cry wolf, replace them.

For further insurance, I installed VW's coolant level sensor and relay. Now, I get a quick warning should the car suddenly lose coolant. That's a sweeter setup than warping a cylinder head and trashing a head gasket.

The list of items I massaged to go the distance is long. But the biggest mileage maker is rust proofing, which *CR* doesn't recommend. It's a necessity. I rust proofed my car myself, spraying thick life-preserving goo over metal fuel lines, engine brackets and body parts. It looks ugly but the results are beautiful; the car and its parts live longer.

I'm perfectly happy motoring in a 1983 Scirocco, a car shape as old as Lawrence Kasdan's neo-noir "Body Heat," Peter Weir's steamy "Year of Living Dangerously," or for that matter Jean-Jacques Beinex's stylish "Diva." But other people don't get it. First, younger of drivers don't know the Scirocco's provenance. What's a Scirocco? Many of them think it's a Subaru. What? Second, those who migrated to Tiguans and Atlases don't see its allure. The assump-

tion here is I married a hatchback coupe because of its seductive sheet metal (secret fact, it's the Mars Red paint, which they think is orange). For them, there's nothing fetching about it; it's outmoded. For me the attraction is more than skin deep. With care and attention, this VW is a blissful experience. It is, in a sense, forever young in my heart. Ain't that a kick!

### Hot Mess

Isn't it a kick when your VW owns the road? Over the decades, I've found my lowly — not a truck — VW is one of the few machines trekking through piles of snow or in frigid weather. One of my longtime winter motoring salves is an electric engine block heater (water-cooled vehicles) or oil strainer cover warmer (air cooled). I picked up this practice at home — blame my North Dakota-bred father. He was a stickler for various engine/coolant warming devices meant to assure easy engine starts, reduce engine wear and hurry interior warmth — especially during subzero weather.

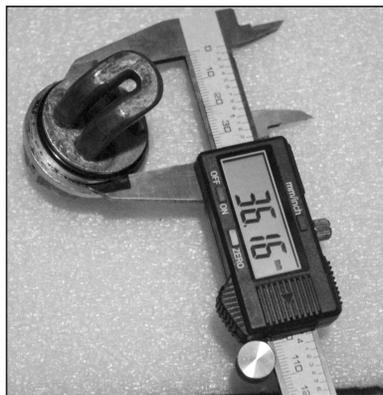
And over the years, I've installed heaters on my winter cars, ran extension cords from dorm rooms, apartments, workplace outlets and my garage's timer-controlled outlet. In turn, I was one of the few who made it to work during a cold snap or got to go home after work as my car started when others' wouldn't.

### Another kick in the head?

These days many vehicles with their lightweight motor oils and other new-fangled improvements likely get along just fine without a block heater — but diesel-engine drivers still use them.

This means those of us who drive older VW water-cooled vehicles that share a diesel-like engine block can install freeze plug/block heaters. I bought several Kat's heaters from Parts Place Inc. in Michigan. They're made or distributed by Five Star Manufacturing Company. There was a time when your VW dealer offered this perk, but these days you must rely on other sources.

Unfortunately, Kat's heaters are unreliable. Plus, you cannot get parts and they don't honor their warranty. In addition, sometimes the heater's installation instructions are incomplete. For example, there's a blank page in the section explaining where and how to position it. Moreover, the heater company's website isn't helpful. My Parts Place's rep wasn't considerate, either. So, I ended up buying three of them to get one that works.



A wrong O-ring size from this Kat's heater.

The first one came with the wrong size O-ring. You must remove an engine block freeze plug, insert this device in the resulting hole and then tighten its expanding anchoring hardware — same method as picture hanging on wallboard. You are hosed if it doesn't fit. Two O-rings seal it. One on the fastener screw and the other between the heater and the engine block. The latter one is the problematic item.

Because the first heater's O-ring was too thin, the unit didn't seal. This dumped freshly added coolant — you must drain the old stuff when installing it. Because you're working under the car, you get a kick in the head from the antifreeze splashing out of the pesky device.

Parts Place wouldn't send another unit, O-ring or hardware as a warranty item. So, I purchased a new heater. This time the device came with a thicker O-ring; it sealed. The brass casting was different — the first one's tab meant to prevent the expanding anchor from spinning was missing. The instructions properly described where to install it and how to orient it. VW's freeze plugs face the firewall on the transverse-engine Scirocco. It's a tight workspace. I utilize a Dremel tool with a cutoff disc to cut into the plug and then pry it out.

After installing the heater, I plugged it into my workplace outlet, as a starting aid when the temps dropped below 20 degrees. The device's heating element burned open and in turn tripped a circuit breaker. Problematic item is the power cord. It's not carefully fabricated, leading to faulty electrical con-

nection at the heater.

This time Parts Place sent me another unit. I installed it; it's working. PP's rep said they'll refund me about \$40 but not the \$10 it cost to ship it back.

Newbies beware: these 400-watt heaters warm the engine block just enough to make the engine turn over more easily in cold weather — the difference between, grrr...grrr...grr (without) and vroom (with) is most noticeable.

You must install the heater in prop-

erly mixed coolant (50/50 mix of coolant and distilled water is best), get that solution wrong (too much coolant and not enough water) and you'll damage the heater. Likewise, don't operate the heater unless it's immersed in water: it will overheat and fail. Finally, follow torque specs — overtightening it will break its anchor screw. And coat the heater's seal with plumber's silicone. After installation, spray rust proofing on the block and heater to prevent corrosion.

Ain't this a kick in the head?

## Lift Kit

Previously, I showed you my '83's improved attitude and altitude — new OEM front springs from Volkswagen Classic Parts (Germany) courtesy of Heritage Parts Center (England), part number 161-411-105F. These restored my RO's front to its original ride height, which greatly improved its ride quality, as cratered roads no longer caused it to slam into its bump stops.

This time I'll discuss the car's rear springs. They've also sagged, but this isn't as problematic in the back; the relatively lightly loaded rear springs don't smash their snubbers to bits.

Most Mark II Sciroccos sent to the USA, says VW's parts database and confirmed by Steve Bush at VW Milwaukee North, had a white/white (two white stripes) color code. The 16-valve version wore violet — the same rear springs as the Cabriolet. This little tidbit should help those who've been burned by >>

## DRIVER'S SEAT

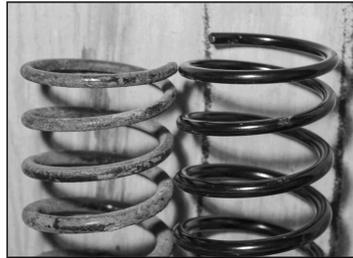
universal one-spring-fits-all VW parts vendors. VW tuned its vehicles by varying its springs rates, lengths, etc.

My car's right rear spring wears white blue stripes with none visible on the left. VW's parts database doesn't show white/blue as a Scirocco combo. Thus, I searched for the white/white ones. The part number is 171-511-105C. I ordered NOS Spidan (part number 48130) springs donning those white stripes. These springs feature the original design, which have tapered coils (Brits call this inconstant wire diameter) at the top and bottoms. Thus, the wire diameter is wider at the spring's middle and thinner at the ends.

I found my set on German eBay and ordered them for the princely sum of \$130 shipped. They arrived in their original boxes and netted me about one inch more spring height. After installation, my car gained somewhere between one-half to an inch higher ride height. Now, the car doesn't drag its tail, like a scared puppy.

One difficulty: American vendors (FCP Euro is one) don't sell the original lower rear spring mount bushing: 171-512-333. Most USA vendors sell a KYB kit (SM5070) as its replacement. This less-than-ideal kit's lower bushing doesn't fit the rear springs' upper seat. Plus, it's a smaller diameter — although its crown fits the rear-body hole correctly. Notice the difference between the original (left, above) and the KYB (right).

KYB's kit likewise alters the upper bushing adding two metal inserts (not an original design). I found you cannot slide these on and then mount the springs to the car. The OEM shock absorber's



Scirocco springs, old and new.



Rear springs mounts, at left an OEM; at right, a bad KYB design.



Hubcap clips, at left an OEM; at right, a bad reproduction.

threaded rod/piston isn't long enough. Thus, you cannot stack the KYB parts and then fasten them to the car's body. Ain't that a kick in the head?

“Original” Volkswagen Classic Parts in Germany sells the OEM part. It doesn't ship to the USA. Heritage Parts Center in England says it can get them and ship them here, but you must ask one of its representatives to order it; it's not on their website. Heritage also sells its own store brand version called Forst Classic Parts. Heritage obviously knows something FCP Euro doesn't.

Another kick in the head comes from AutohausAZ: VW hubcap clip part number 321-601-175B. While the part number is correct, the clip isn't. It doesn't fit because the tab meant to slip into and grip holes in a 13-inch steel VW wheel isn't properly shaped. It's curved where it should be straight and the gap between the part's tab, which you slide under the wheel, and its body which snaps into the outside of the wheel is too large.

### Good Deal

Sometimes you don't have to go to Germany for VW parts. I've found some Chinese-made items acceptable. One example, the hydraulic struts used for liftbacks and hoods. I discovered a set for my VW Scirocco on eBay: \$20 for two including shipping. The seller's name is autoparts\_premium. Search 533-827-550A. In contrast, the OEM Stabilus-branded types, when available, cost \$80-\$140 for two, plus shipping.

I discovered the Chinese-made struts were easy to install and work well. Their ball-socket attachments

differ from the OEM parts. Thus, a fussy collector who wants the factory-fresh look might look elsewhere. But if you need an inexpensive cure for what's knocking your noggin. I recommend this product. No more kick in the head!

## Killer VWs

Some people find a vintage VW of any type adorably cute, almost puppy-like compared with Detroit's driveway dinosaurs. And Disney's Love Bug only adds to the notion that a VW is an underdog with a charming disposition.

But Hollywood's auteurs — the brothers, Ethan and Joel Coen — and Quentin Tarantino cast vintage VWs against type. In the brothers' seminal Texas-noir "Blood Simple," the psycho killer, played by an unctuous Emmet Walsh, drives a 1966 Beetle (the hood's VW logo is missing in one scene) with a naughty novelty: a mirror dangling doll with boob lights.

QT's Jackie Brown turns a T-2 VW Kombi with an automatic transmission into a box of horror: Samuel Jackson's character shoots Robert DeNiro. Crafty QT stages this death sequence by placing the camera behind the Bus' front seats. Moreover, QT amplifies the VW's sputtering engine sound (more like we're hearing a Beetle than a '70s Bus) in the getaway sequence (in a VW Bus?) at a shopping mall. This precedes the doomsday moment, which follows a side trip to pick up Jackson at a stripper's bar.

QT film language or style doesn't cross cut or alter this rear-to-windshield perspective leading up to gun

fire, which likely adds to the suspense and our awareness of being a voyeur. QT stylizes the violence, he's always playful, Jackson shoots DeNiro — almost in silhouette and blood splatters on the VW's windshield. Jackson follows the first blast by moving over to the driver's seat and pumping bullets into DeNiro's body. Again, QT stages this so we don't actually see the gruesome parts — it's in our imagination. And later, there's a scene, sans the Bus, where we see splattered blood on Jackson's shirt.

Tarantino's intertextual richness (his ongoing dialogue about movies within his movies or his *mise en abyme* tricks (films or TV shows within his films) slay me. This one has Bridget Fonda's character watching her father, Peter Fonda, on a TV set. QT and the Brothers poach Alfred Hitchcock's camera angles and Hitch's long takes. QT uses lots of dialogue to propel his film's narrative. And isn't it a kick when his characters get into an argument about the color of a shopping bag? You might not like his language, but he sure knows how to string words together. His material is pulpy. Yet, that's just like Jean Luc Godard — a famous French New Wave filmmaker.

Want more? Squinty-eyed Uma Thurman drives an "avenging" Karmann Ghia in QT's "Kill Bill" series. VW's pussycat, pseudo sports car has a mean streak.

## What's your VW worth?

There was a time when TV-network hegemony over primetime seemed immovable, like concrete. Now, we hear NBC might jettison >>



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## DRIVER'S SEAT

an hour of that TV programming block. This strikes me as astonishing. During the 1970s, when the FCC passed the Prime Time Access Rule, which turned over an early part of prime time to local stations, networks cried foul. Moreover, the rule banned network owned-and-operated stations or its affiliates from airing content originally created by the networks during the resulting access time slot. Now, during an era where more people watch some form of streamed TV content than serial shows created for over-the-air broadcasts, those managing legacy media outlets are cost-cutting, and it shows in their shows. Ain't that a kick in the head?

The same goes for legacy VW car clubs. I've noticed car company PR departments pay more attention to influencers with lots of likes and mastery of social media than the obscure, unknown VW AUTOIST. Houston, we have a problem.

Another change is what people will pay for some vintage VWs. The owner of a 1966 Bug I serviced last spring put his on the market for \$15,000. It sold. I've seen an expanding universe of would-be VW collectors sparked on by "cute" cars they've found with their smartphones — they're not looking at our AUTOIST classifieds. They have never driven a car with a rear-mounted air-cooled engine or twitchy swing axles. They've never thought about motoring without power steering, power brakes or an automatic transmission. Nonetheless, they're hooked by instant access to an online showroom, which flattens meaningful differences in older cars.

I discussed collector car values with the folks at Hagerty Insurance. According to their numbers, collector-car values, overall, are up 15% to 20% during the past year or so. Some vehicles are ahead of that trend. For example, a 1964 Beetle Deluxe Sedan is up 48%. This likely raises the question: Will the formerly affordable VW Beetle become an expensive plaything? Well, it depends. The insured value for some water-cooled VW models, the Corrado SLC (VR6) is one, has a higher starting price than this Beetle. At auctions, some Corrados, egged on by bidders, sold for more than \$30,000. So, the Beetle



VW's Corrado, produced between 1988 and 1995, was never a big seller but is becoming a target of collectors. MSN Autos' "Cool Cars We Miss" feature listed the Corrado as among the top eight in "Gone but not forgotten: a short list of cars once loved, still missed." The G60, above, is considered less valuable than its SLC VR6 cousin.

Sedan, even at its new plateau, is slightly less expensive.

My off-the-record discussion with a Hagerty rep did not explore many other vehicle-value factors. For example, rarer VWs — an early 1950s Hebmüller in primo condition is a six-figure car (about \$100,000), an early 23-window Samba Bus could fetch \$150,000, whereas a split-window VW Sedan might command \$66,000. VW's air-cooled convertibles still prove the price goes up if the top drops down — a best condition 1964 Beetle sedan is \$30,000, the convertible is \$71,000. Ain't that a kick in the head?

### VW's project trinity delays

VW's Tesla-fighting Project Trinity is behind schedule — like a bad day at the airport and then some. Reported software delays mean it won't arrive until 2030. Earlier this year, VW announced a new Trinity plant and sedan with a 2026 debut.

VW Group CEO Oliver Blume says he's reviewing earlier plans for long-range, quick-charge BEVs with self-driving capacities. Meanwhile, sources say VW might use items from an updated MEB (ID.4) platform to power a 2026 e-Golf or Tiguan likely built at its existing Wolfsburg factory. **VWCA**



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**RATES:** Free to VWCA members (including photos). Non-member rate is \$5 for the first 35 words plus 15 cents per additional word. Photos are additional \$5 each. Includes posting on VWClub.org with color photos. Advertisers must provide VWCA ID number or pay in advance. Ads may be edited to meet space limitations. Photos to be returned must be accompanied by a S.A.S.E. of appropriate size. Send to VWCA Classified Ads, P.O. Box 154, North Aurora, IL 60542. Ads requiring no payment can be emailed to VWClub@aol.com.

**WANTED:** '67-70 VW Beetle. I am looking for a 12 volt (1967-70s) Beetle (not a Super Beetle) in good clean running condition. Complete. No rust. Not a project vehicle. Does not have to be original. Just a nice clean-running car. I would like to drive it to work sometimes, car shows etc. What do you have? Send me some pics and price. I am in Illinois, but will travel to inspect any Bug of interest. Jef, (847) 577 2624 or jjaster53@gmail.com

**FOR SALE:** '82 Rabbit 1.6 Diesel, engine No. JX910506, clean body, interior. Note: needs main rods and lower half bolts to tie down to crankshaft. I'll give instructions how to remove oil pan and get to both parts. Best offer. I'm in the San Francisco Bay area. Edgar Perry, (510) 234-1392 (CA).

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# New Members

**COLORADO:** Michael Coldoera, Littleton

**FLORIDA:** Nadyne Washington, Mims

**ILLINOIS:** Matthew Chemielewski, Aurora; Phil Slouka, Bolingbrook; John Kobey, Homer Glenn; Greg Truscott, Joliet; John Wiman, Lake Barrington; Alan Stoeck, Tinley Park; Katie Buffone, Villa Park

**MARYLAND:** Jorge Herrera, Brookeville

**NEW YORK:** Dennis Healy, Hughsonville

**OHIO:** Joseph Beike, Canfield; Ross Cipolla, Lakewood

**VIRGINIA:** Jadon Frieson, Chesterfield

**WISCONSIN:** Mafmudije Selimi, Sun Prairie

## TAOS

### ► FROM PAGE 7

with drive-off behavior and doesn't include loaner coverage — although the latter might apply with another service campaign.

Because VW hasn't recalled the Taos for bad drive-off behavior, its existing customers or future ones might not know about potential troubles and their proposed cures. It's complicated. Some of VW's service campaigns target 4Motion models, others all Jetta/Taos with the 1.5-liter turbocharged engine.

Because VW knew the Taos 4Motion had drivability problems in June 2021, issued a recall, and then service bulletins, VWoA should do the right thing: apologize and then launch a Taos vehicle-improvement campaign. This program should explain what went wrong and how VW will fix it.

Then, VW should compensate those affected by Taos problems, provide extended warranties and include loaner vehicles for those awaiting vehicle repairs. This isn't radical. VW hatched a \$5 million 1975 Rabbit/Scirocco/Dasher Quality Improvement Program in 1976 meant to solve a host of problems with its newly launched water-cooled vehicles magnified by parts shortages and labor shortages.

It's not unusual for a newly launched vehicle such as the Taos to suffer from teething troubles. It should be usual for a carmaker to voluntarily notify its customers of quality problems and modify their defective vehicles. **VWCA**

# Parting Shot

Snake-oil change

Firestone COMPLETE AUTO CARE TIRES AUTO REPAIR AUTO MAINTENANCE COUPONS FIND A STORE

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## 2022 VOLKSWAGEN ID.4 MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

### MAINTAIN YOUR VOLKSWAGEN ID.4

Don't let unexpected car trouble get the best of you. Stay ahead of potential problems and schedule a routine Volkswagen ID.4 maintenance appointment today.

SCHEDULE MAINTENANCE

#### 2022 VOLKSWAGEN ID.4 MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

What is the manufacturer recommended maintenance schedule for your vehicle?

**2** When does my Volkswagen ID.4 need high mileage oil? If your Volkswagen ID.4 has ticked past 75,000 miles, consider switching to high mileage oil at your next oil change to give your engine what it needs to go another 75,000 (or more!). High mileage oil: make it a high priority!

#### SCHEDULE MAINTENANCE FOR YOUR 2022 VOLKSWAGEN ID.4

What is the manufacturer recommended maintenance schedule for the 2022 Volkswagen ID.4?

- Batteries
- Steering & Suspension
- Vehicle Inspection
- Tune-Ups
- A/C Service

HERE'S WHY 2022 VOLKSWAGEN ID.4 SCHEDULED MAINTENANCE MATTERS

## Don't miss an issue

► Moving is hectic, but so is missing an issue of the *AUTOIST*. Bulk mailing of the publication doesn't allow for forwarding, so it's important to let us know your new address promptly. Send a snail mail to the VWCA, P.O. Box 154, North Aurora, IL 60506. Or an email to [VWClub@aol.com](mailto:VWClub@aol.com).



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# VW Toon-ups

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