



Autoist

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ONETOW OVER THE LINE

How an ID.4 navigated 1,500-mile trek



Autoist

Since 1955

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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

Charting the changes for VW

VW's changes in management, what they're saying about its products, the new products themselves and sales data suggest it's going through an awkward transition.

Let's start with battery electric vehicles. *Automotive News* reports the EV share of the new-vehicle market has flattened at 7.1% across the first half of the year. One reason, the supply of popular gas-engine vehicles has improved (and they're selling). Thus, EV sales no longer outpace the overall car business trends at this moment.

Both Ford and VW have excess EV inventories. Ford projects its EV unit will lose \$4.5 billion this year. Ford cites the pricing environment. Tesla's reduced-price Model Y is our nation's fourth best-selling motor vehicle — ahead of Toyota's familiar RAV4 and behind three pickups. Meanwhile, Volkswagen's ID.4 sales haven't kept up with supply (16,619 sold through June 2023). Sources say VW has more than a 130-day supply of

unsold ID.4s. One reason, dealers say, is VW built too many rear-drive IDs. Buyers want the two-motor all-wheel-drive version. VW's now airing TV spots promoting ID.4 lease incentives. That suggests VW is trying to move sticky merchandise.

Some think the early EV-adopter demand has been met. The EV market will now have to target the

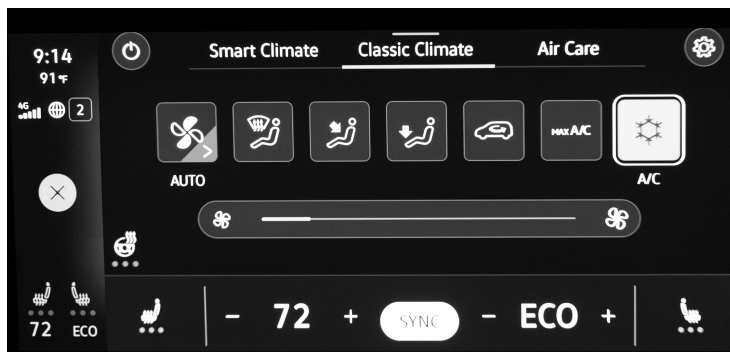
mainstream consumer. So, at least for now, growing inventories of EVs and sales incentives to move them suggest there aren't enough buyers ready to clear the growing EV backlog at dealerships. Expect EV sales growth to soften. Volkswagen's registrations, which placed it at an EV market share of 4.6% in January, dropped to 3% for the first half of the year. The sales pace of the ID.4 slowed. Meanwhile, VW's overall sales in the U.S. haven't kept up with market trends. Its market share, for the first half of the year, has dropped slightly.

Touchscreen madness reviewed

VWAG CEO Thomas Schaefer says the introduction of its widely panned touch-sensitive controls “definitely did a lot of damage.” He says VW will use simpler, more

functional interiors in future cars.

He used those words during an interview at the pre-production launch of the next-gen Euro Tiguan. Schaefer says the SUV's new cabin is a departure from that of the ID.4 and VW Golf. The



Though drivers can orally request adjustments to the ID.4's climate settings, the screen menu offers only touch-sensitive controls.

unlit climate control sliders and the haptic steering wheel buttons are gone. A new rotary controller is on the center console for quick access to drive modes and volume settings.

Schaefer admits VW frustrated “customers who shouldn't be frustrated.” VW, he confides, shouldn't

►TURN TO PAGE 29

Small Talk

VW + AUDI AT A GLANCE

NEW & IMPROVED

CAMP IN STYLE: VW is previewing its first plug-in hybrid camper van, a pop-top California based on the T7 Multivan. The vehicle offers a first-ever dual-door layout with a new kitchen concept that supports indoor and outdoor cooking. That



toilet you wished you had in previous models has been added. Two beds can accommodate four, and the two-door layout promises sleepers a dedicated exit on each side of the van. Meanwhile, a fully electric version of the ID. Buzz has been delayed in Europe due to weight concerns, potentially surpassing the maximum vehicle weight of 7,716 pounds.

EV NEWS



GLAMPER VAN: Festivalgoers missing out on such perks as a full Instagram-ready photo booth, including props like decorative plants and flowers, colorful signs, seating and lighting may look forward to VW's ID. Buzz-based Glamper Van. Of course, its camera has a makeover filter to help you "capture the festival atmosphere."

ID. BUZZ GTX: In 2021 VW introduced the ID.4 GTX as part of its new electric performance lineup (Europe-centric, of course). But didn't you really want a hot electric bus? Bring on the ID. Buzz GTX, British publication *Car* reports. As with the ID.4 model, spy shots show a more aggressive bumper at the front, larger alloy wheels and most likely sporty seats inside. Look for a 335 hp dual-motor setup and the usual sporty styling tweaks. From afar, of course.

ID.7: When VW halted U.S. sales of its Passat, was it because sedans aren't popular here or because the flagship EV ID.7 model would take

its place? In August, VW opened pre-orders for European customers, at a starting price of around \$62,000, with up to 385 miles of range. The ID.7 is expected here later in 2024, likely as a 2025 model.

OUTSOURCED: After encountering bumps in the road en route to electrifying its vehicle lineup, VW will rely on a Hyundai unit to provide battery systems assemblies for its next-generation EV platform. VW has made several agreements recently to outsource technology for its future EVs.

COMPANY NEWS

JETTA GLI: VWoA is rolling out limited 40th Anniversary Edition of the 2024 Jetta GLI, which will be available exclusively in North America. A limited run of 1,984 units will be produced for the U.S. (See a photo of the 1984 model on Page 13.)

RECALLS

BEETLE: The notorious Takata airbags that may rupture during deployment and spray metal fragments that could injure or kill vehicle occupants have led to another VW recall, this time 105,652 Beetle coupes and convertibles from the 2012 through 2014 model years.

Retro Autoist

FROM THE VWCA ARCHIVES

10 YEARS AGO

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2013: A TDI-powered Passat covered a distance of 8,122 miles through the 48 contiguous U.S. states with a world-record low fuel consumption during the 16-day journey in June. The car achieved a fuel consumption of 78 mpg, beating the previous record of 67.9.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2013: VW announced that its newest, most fuel-efficient TDI diesel engine, designated EA288, will power the 2015 Golf, Beetle, Passat and Jetta, which are set to hit showrooms in the second half of 2014.

20 YEARS AGO

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2003: Letter to the editor: We were very surprised that Cliff Leppke gave the New Beetle Convertible such a bad rap. Is he NUTS? The Beetle is one of the best cars on the road today for the money. My husband and I should know because we have four of them and think they drive better than a Cadillac and the Sebring. We found the car to be extremely quiet. It did not at any time shake and rattle and roll or dance like Elvis, as he said.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2003: Adhering to the philosophy that one good thing deserves another, two icons of American popular culture — Volkswagen and Apple Computers — are joining forces to provide 2003 New Beetle sedan owners with a complimentary Apple iPod, the world's top-selling digital music player.

30 YEARS AGO

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1993: It's official: VW plans to

offer a V-6-powered Golf in the United States. The 1994 GTI model will make its debut in the spring, officials say. The 2.8-liter narrow-angle VR-6 engine produces 172 hp, and the European version can reach a top speed of 145 to 150 mph.

40 YEARS AGO

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1983: The July issue of *Popular Mechanics* describes a neat-looking way to turn your Beetle into a Woody Wagon at a cost of about \$600 (about \$1,800 in today's dollars) for the do-it-yourselfer. Plans for the Woody — which resembles a 1940 Ford — are available for \$14.95 and include all instructions, materials list and full-size pattern for side panels.

50 YEARS AGO

SEPTEMBER 1973: China is reported to be interested in opening an assembly plant to build a basic VW Transporter (Beetle engine in front with front-wheel drive) and would also like to assemble Type 2 and Type 4 VWs as well as the Jeep-like model 181, called Safari in numerous countries and Thing in the U.S. *Postscript: A Transporter with all that front-end gear? That, and the plant, never came to fruition.*

60 YEARS AGO

OCTOBER 1963: A new product called Flappers, costing \$2 (\$20 in today's currency) and made of clear, unbreakable plastic, are adjustable vanes that permit all of the heated air from the Beetle's defroster vents to be directed either onto the occupants or onto the windshield. The horizontal (heating) position warms the occupants — not the air around their heads. It also permits dry snow to blow from the windshield instead of melting. The vertical (defrosting) position increases defrosting action by confining the heated air to the windshield. The entire windshield is cleared, not just the ends.





VW EV 1, SKEPTICS 0

ID.4 hauls a load halfway across the country

My youngest child started college shortly before this issue was published, so this summer I had the dilemma many parents face: how to get their child and several cubic yards of their child's crap to a dorm or apartment, hundreds, or even thousands, of miles from home.

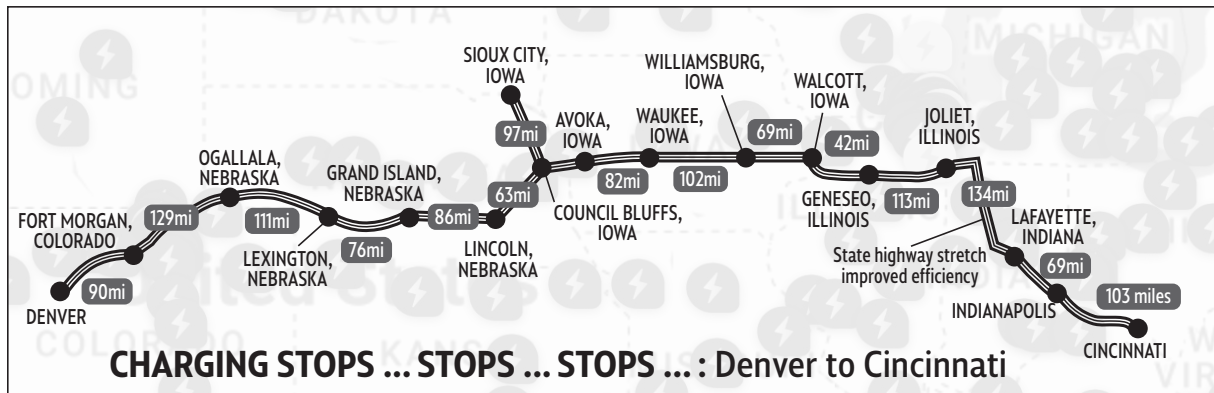
Despite being an EV enthusiast, and no longer owning any gas-powered cars, I'm not immune to the arguments of EV skeptics. Sure, I know long distance travel is possible in an EV, having done several 1,000-plus-mile trips myself in multiple EVs, but it's "common knowledge" that EV range is destroyed by roof storage boxes or by towing trailers. This thought is so pervasive that I didn't hesitate for a second, reserving a rental gas-powered van and buying a rooftop cargo bag to prepare for a 1,500-mile drive from Denver to

Cincinnati.

As the travel date approached, I kept asking myself how much range would a trailer actually take from my AWD ID.4? Surely, someone has done it and reported their findings on the interwebs, right? A one-way trailer rental would be less than \$400 vs. the \$1,000 a van was going to cost and hold three times the cargo. Plus, with my ID.4, "fuel" is free thanks to the three years of Electrify America's promo included with all new ID.4s. That sounded much better than the few hundred bucks it would cost to gas a van for 1,500 miles.

The very few ID.4 towing anecdotes I could find in blogs and online videos were discouraging and had used teardrop campers rather than utility trailers. An RV blogger who pulled his teardrop trailer, and a

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Youtuber who pulled a similar trailer up a mountain in Colorado both got an efficiency of about 1.7 miles/kWh on flat terrain at 65 mph, or about a 45% range loss, so I used that number as an estimate and plugged it into the A Better Route Planner app. (“ABRP” is an excellent EV-specific route planning website and app, taking speed, temperature and elevation into account, and it calculates everywhere you’ll need to stop and charge along the route.)

If I could match that 1.7 miles/kWh efficiency others claimed to get, the trip would be possible. Anything less than 1.5, I’d be up the proverbial creek, as a few stretches in Indiana or Illinois would be impossible without the need to stop at slow overnight chargers, greatly extending the length of the trip, and more importantly, proving the skeptics right!

So, as the day approached, I hedged my bets and

► **PREVIOUS PAGE:** The ID.4 and its tag-along are parked at a jaunty angle at the self-proclaimed “World’s Largest Truck Stop” in Walcott, Iowa, allowing access to a left-side charger without detaching the trailer.

kept the reservation for the rental van. Then I picked up U-Haul’s smallest cargo trailer, a 4-by-8-footer, a day early to do some quick range



The Electrify America array at the Casey’s store in Williamsburg, Iowa, provided easy-in access.

testing on the highway before loading it up and starting the trip in case I needed to abort the mission and rent the van. I chose the 4-by-8 because it was barely taller than the ID.4, and I hoped to minimize wind resistance for better efficiency.

Trailer attached, I headed for the nearest highway on-ramp, reset the car’s trip computer and drove a 20-mile round trip at 65 mph to get an idea of what I was in for. To my delight, the car managed 2.8 miles/kWh with the empty trailer bouncing behind me. I left my route planning app set to a worse-case-scenario 1.7 miles/kWh, but I was now so confi- >>

ID.4

dent the trip was doable, I canceled the van reservation and returned the unused roof bag.

We packed the U-Haul to the brim with all of my child's "essential items" (translation: 10 times as much stuff than needed!) and headed out the next day at 9 a.m. toward our overnight stop, Sioux City, Iowa, to visit my brother-in-law at his farm. (Not exactly on the way between Denver and Cincinnati, but a worthy diversion to see family!)

While we didn't get the 2.8 miles/kWh I achieved with the empty trailer, we beat the 1.7 estimate handily, averaging 2.3 miles/kWh driving 65 mph, for roughly a 30% range loss from the usual 3.3 to 3.4 we'd get without the trailer at that speed. We did have the advantage of an elevation drop — losing nearly 5,000 feet, which helped with efficiency. (We averaged slightly lower on the flat roads for rest of the trip between Sioux



A 240V welder outlet at the family farm near Sioux City, Iowa, proved handy for Day 2 of the trip.

City and Cincinnati, getting 2.2 miles/kWh, or a one-third range loss.)

Of course, just because a trip is possible, doesn't automatically mean it will be pleasant. As discussed in the May/June *AUTOIST*, a road trip in the ID.4 takes me about 25-30% longer than the same trip in a gas car to allow for charging. The range loss from the trailer made it much worse because we needed to charge to a higher level than usual to make it to the next charger, and EV charging speeds slow the closer to full the battery gets. It generally takes 30 minutes or less to charge the ID.4, to 80% at a DC fast charger, but charging to the 90%, 95% or even the 100% that was sometimes necessary to get to the next charger with the

trailer made many stops 45 to 55 minutes rather than 30 or less.

In addition, the trailer made charging far more

complicated. Most chargers are designed to be pulled up to or backed into. With the trailer, power cords wouldn't reach if we backed in, or the trailer stuck out too far if we pulled in. We were able to get creative a few times, pulling along side the last charger on the end of a bank of chargers, or twisting in at a tight angle with the trailer hanging out into the next (non-charging) spot. One time we even pulled in perpendicularly behind a bank of chargers and pulled the cord behind the



The trailer is off by its lonesome during a charge at the Kum & Go in Waukee, Iowa.

charger to our car. But more often than not, we had to drop the trailer, charge and reconnect, adding another 10 minutes or so to many of our stops. (Though I eventually got much faster doing that after so much practice!)

The entire trip took about 26 hours of driving plus 10 hours of charging over three days. Comparatively, on the way back to Denver without the trailer, it took us a little over 24 hours of driving (without the trailer, we were able to drive at 75 to 80 mph instead of 65!) and spend 5½ hours of charging. Google Maps predicts it would take more than 21 hours in a gas car, but I find those predictions are very optimistic, not accounting for fill-ups or restroom breaks, so I suspect it'd be more like 22-23 hours, especially with the slower speeds involved pulling a trailer. Assuming 23 hours, that means the 36 hours I drove and charged with the trailer took 57% longer than if I used a gas car, and the 29½ total hours back without



A week later on the way home, conventional charging in Grand Island.

the trailer took 28% longer. As expected, we incurred a huge time penalty using an EV to pull a trailer, but with the free Electrify America charging, the entire trip cost us about \$20 in fuel, (we needed to use three non-Electrify America chargers on the trip.) All in all, the journey went a little worse than I hoped, but much better than I feared. I'd probably do it again rather than rent a gas car for environmental reasons, but I can understand why other ID.4 owners might avoid this due to the extra time required. But for anyone wondering, towing a utility trailer with an ID.4 is certainly possible, and the range penalty, while significant, is manageable. **VWCA**



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NOSTALGIA

Why we yearn for VWs that made us feel so good



Cars, like food, lean toward nostalgic reverie. We call it Beetlemania. The Bug maneuvers itself into all kinds of settings. It elicits existential contrasts. Many claim yesterday's VW is a salve.

Perhaps the buzz over the ID. Buzz causes people to think VWs must look like the seminal Volkswagen. On the surface, this backward look sounds quixotic. Imagine Ford introducing an anniversary Model T. Yet some say VW, decades after its reign as America's favorite small car, is amorphous — a purveyor of me-too vehicles.

This piece explores automotive nostalgia. I argue it's faulty to say the Beetle's qualities "cause" the nostalgia we feel today. That's because almost anything from our past can become an object of nostalgia. Our emotions, not our artifacts, create nostalgia. I will ex-

plain this by defining nostalgia, charting its currents and noting its distinctive traits. In sum, anyone can have VW nostalgia.

Mind's eye

What do you see when you think of a VW? This question evokes the familiar silhouette of the vase that suddenly is seen as two faces in profile. The nostalgic reaction often inverts which image we see. For some, it's an air-cooled VW Beetle, for others it could be a Golf GTI.

Thinking about our ideal VW, furthermore, involves a complex series of looks: the Droste effect — as seen on a Dutch cocoa box. This infinite regress in graphics bewilders.

Regardless of where you've seen this effect, VW

By Cliff Leppke ✉ leppke.cliff@gmail.com

nostalgia is experienced as a cycle of images. Sometimes it reflects on itself.

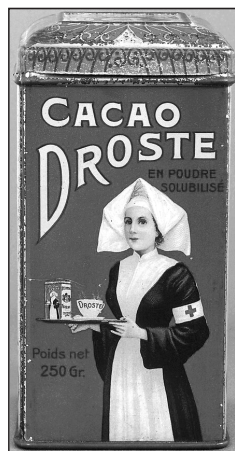
In sociologist Fred Davis' book *Yearning for Yesterday*, he says nostalgia is a way of being in the world. It is both personal, communal and profitable. "American Graffiti" (Where were you in 1962?) packed theaters in 1973.

The word nostalgia is derived from Greek: *nostros* (return home) and *algia* (a painful condition). Swiss physician Johannes Hofer coined it in the late 17th century. The term designated extreme homesickness among Swiss mercenaries fighting far from their native soil. The symptoms were despondency, weeping and anorexia.

Numerous physicians studied this disease. In 1731, physician J.J. Scheuchzer suggested the disease — no question about it as such — was due to a sharp differential in atmospheric pressure, causing an affliction of sentiment. Because physicians thought the disease was primarily experienced by Alpine soldiers, some thought neurological damage caused by exposure to the clanging of cowbells at high altitudes led to the illness.

By the 20th century, however, the word was detached from its pathological base. Now, the notion of nostalgia as a disease is a laughable concept. Instead, it's classed as a familiar emotion, not a fearful condition.

Nostalgia has extraordinary evocativeness. In our



The picture-in-a-picture effect in this 1904 cocoa tin.

modern world, our socio-geographical spaces are variable — we move, we change jobs and we switch channels. Our sense of home is not where the hearth is. We imagine nostalgia as something different from homesickness or an antiquarian feeling.

Nostalgic material derives from a personally experienced past. The motivational source for it isn't the past itself, but, rather, our present experience occasions us to feel nostalgia. Ingmar Bergman's "Wild Strawberries" (1957) illustrates this flashback sentiment. In his film, an aging professor encounters various triggers. One is a crash involving a Beetle driven poorly due to its unhappily coupled occupants. This highway incident evokes memories of the professor's problematic marriage.

Just how old something must be to become the material for nostalgia varies. Many of us live in relatively familiar shared Game of Life-like cycles: You go to college, get a job, get married, have children and buy a car. These events are largely shared by others of the same age — it's generational. Surprisingly, nostalgia can jump generations, especially when younger people see movies or TV shows set in the past.

The past we recall as nostalgia is special. It's often the more positive aspects of being. It's bittersweet sometimes, but nonetheless a fuzzy, redeeming mood. Automotive historian Matt Joseph says car collectors are often affectionate toward vehicles they owned or experienced as early motorists.



The Karmann Ghia that Uma Thurman drove in the movie "Kill Bill."

Car brands often gain their generational pulls through the popular arts. Notice how Quentin Tarantino, say, evokes 1969 in "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood." In it, Brad Pitt's character drives a Karmann Ghia.

The Ghia's role in Hollywood reflects Tarantino's >>

NOSTALGIA

own nostalgia: Uma Thurman drives a Ghia in “Kill Bill.”

Nostalgia, according to Davis, has “three orders.” The first one is “simple” nostalgia. It’s a subjective state, a belief that things were better then than now. The Bug, say some, was cuter than today’s cars. VW’s past era was more meaningful.

The second order is “reflexive” nostalgia. Here a person does more than sentimentalize the past while censoring the present. The nostalgic feeling is accompanied by questions. We want a history detective to check whether our recollections are true. Is the present trigger of our nostalgia that problematic? The Beetle’s many known deficiencies are part of this story, its sensitivity to sidewinds, say, remind us that the charmer had warts.

The third order is “interpreted” nostalgia. It is analytically oriented. It’s more than a proclamation of past beauties and lost virtues. It’s a lot like a *New Yorker* cartoon where some woman, after eyeing VW’s New Beetle remarks: “What do you suppose it means when everything that’s going on consists of stuff that’s coming back?”

You might wonder whether nostalgia is conservative or liberal. It’s either.



Chrysler’s PT Cruiser evoked a 1930s vibe. Its 2000 introduction lasted a decade.



The 11th generation Ford Thunderbird was built from 2002 to 2005.

Some espousing first-order nostalgia claim the past was better. They say we should turn back the clock. It’s easy to fathom the opposite. Todd Haynes’ “Far from Heaven” (2002), for example, reinterpreted Douglas Sirk’s “All That Heaven Allows,” a melodramatic “weeper” from 1955. Meanwhile, “The Deep End” (2001) reclaimed “The Reckless Moment” (1949), turning it into a contemporary thriller.

Each updated melodrama presents the genre’s tropes in an artistic milieu shaped by recent cultural de-

bates. Each film reads what’s between those postwar melodramatic lines.

Probably no other carmaker, especially in the USA, has mined nostalgia for profit as Volkswagen. Sure, Ford’s Mustang II stylistically evoked the 1965 “Stang,” Jeeps often look like Jeeps and Volvos resemble Swedish shoeboxes.

But VW is the one that saliently reinterpreted its history. Through a global set of relations, it revived the iconic shape of its export sensation: the Beetle.

Shortly after VW’s New Beetle moment, its designers landed positions at American carmakers, leading to an onslaught of retro cars: Chrysler PT Cruiser, Ford Thunderbird and the Chevrolet HHR. Nearly all

of these retro vehicles had their moments and then expired. Simple nostalgia might not last.

The New Beetle, conceived in California and developed in Germany, was built on the Golf's architecture (completely divorcing it from any of its predecessor's mechanical features), manufactured in Mexico exported it to the USA. Arnold Worldwide's New Beetle ad campaign toyed with a hippie sensibility shorn of bad drug trips and questionable attire.

The Beetle, with its long commodity life, is a charged icon, a flashback within today's Western societies. VW collecting is a large church. Fondness for things Beetle is powerful. Many consider it superior to Volkswagen's current crop. They prescribe a rebirth of it. This is a first order of nostalgia reaction.

Tricky Rabbits

The Beetle's mystique is so potent in the U.S. that VW launched the retro New Beetle with initial success. Crowds at its 1998 auto show introduction gave it an enthusiastic reception. It seemed to cross demographic boundaries. Older folks were drawn to it; others saw it as proof that VW was "cool."

Before the New Beetle, VW's fortunes in the States, however, didn't follow the same trend as the Golf in Europe. There, the Beetle's successor, the Golf, became the brand's core model. Named Rabbit in the States, it struggled due to a variety of reasons, such as subpar reliability. Rabbit sales peaked at 214,835 (1979) in the USA — a healthy figure VWoA hasn't repeated with any of its later cars.

As historian Bernhard Rieger



The AMC Pacer turned heads (and sometimes, stomachs) from 1975 to 1979.

notes, VW's German executives weren't interested in a New Beetle. They didn't need a revival car.

He says the Golf was "just as, if not more, iconic." VW decided to launch the New Beetle in the USA, not Germany. It was an American phenomenon.

Months later, when VW introduced it in Germany, Rieger says "it didn't create the stir that propelled it to instant fame across the Atlantic." One Berlin journalist called it inconsequential. "Nobody," he said, "needs it." Thus, people had different experiences with the Janus-faced New Beetle. In Germany, it lacked the same kind of back-to-the-future nostalgic reaction.

Customer satisfaction with these newer Beetles varied from average to better than average. The last of these Beetle models scored a high 75 in *Consumer Reports'* satisfaction survey — the same number as the sporty GTI. Think about that. Both VW models are well liked.

Both have spotty reliability records. Chances are the person who prefers the Beetle isn't the same kind of person who pilots a GTI.

Because we know nostalgia is a personal, it's >>



VW's Jetta GLI pictured in a 1984 brochure.

NOSTALGIA

entirely possible for people who never grew up with the Bug to have nostalgic triggers for, say, different kinds of VWs. Mark Bilek, who represents the Chicago Automobile Trade Association, has a thing for his college days and a 1984 Jetta GLI. He pines for a “three-box” VW, the sedan style now in retreat among automakers.

Bilek represents the “Generation Golf.” According to a recent Hagerty valuation report, the VW model with the highest rate of appreciation (83.5%) is the 1983-84 VW Rabbit GTI. Prices for excellent ones range from \$20,000 to \$38,000. The Corrado made Hagerty’s 2020 Bull Market list. Hagerty said “nostalgia” for VW’s coupes drove their transaction prices upward: \$53,550 on auction site Bringatrailer.com.

Bring a Trailer shows yet further evidence of Golf-like collector interest. A VWCA member shared a recent July 2023 auction with me: a 1987 VW Scirocco fetched \$46,500. The auction’s comment section is rife with nostalgia. One post said, “I’ll never forget my memories ... of these amazing machines.” Another said, “I love the way this car handles. A friend ... had one when I was in college.” Strikingly, the *Detroit News* reported of a fan club for the “adorable, affordable VW Rabbit!”

Yet, you argue, shapes matter. The curved Bug is cuddly but the angular Golf is something only German-American architect, academic and interior designer Mies van der Rohe could love. May I remind

How to Judge a Dentist and Estimate Fees

CONSUMER REPORTS

JULY 1975
A PUBLICATION OF
CONSUMERS UNION
NO ADVERTISING
ONE DOLLAR
IND. #1980

One Of These New Cars Rates Better Than Any Subcompact CU Has Tested

VW RABBIT

AMC PACER

ROOM
AIR-CONDITIONERS
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SMALL OUTBOARD MOTORS
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In Praise of Dried Beans, the Protein-Rich Cheapstuff



A 1980s VW Corrado.

you of the 1975 AMC Pacer? *Motor Trend* said “no more visibly distinctive family car since the VW Beetle has taken to American highways.” The Pacer’s strong initial retail sales didn’t last.

Shockingly, the 2018 Beetle and the Pacer shared similar wheelbases, lengths and weights. While the Pacer’s body was about five inches wider, the Beetle had a wider track.

Motor Trend crowed: “Suddenly It’s 1980.” But AMC discontinued the tortoise-shaped “revolutionary” Pacer in December 1979. In the end, the rotund AMC product was a flop. In contrast, the other “most talked about small car,” said *Consumer Reports*, was the “new ... from the ground up” 1975 Volkswagen Rabbit. This hatchback received *CR*’s highest overall small-car score. But *CR* cautioned. The Rabbit it tested suffered from “careless manufacture — unusual for a VW.”

We know which car ultimately endured. Many Rabbit drivers, though, had mixed emotions; they appreciated its advanced design but didn’t like its “maddening” defects. Those who came of age when the GTI version was the seminal hot hatch see it with the soft focus of nostalgia.

When I exit my workplace, I head toward my VW Scirocco. I notice newer staffers own VWs. One drives a Golf R while another has a tricked-out GTI. I see a red Golf TSI, a white Jetta, black Tiguan and a black Atlas. Their drivers are too young to remember VW’s liftback sports coupe. **VWCA**

“As far as is known, there are no magicians at the Volkswagen plant in Germany, just management and production people consisting of engineers, assemblers, salesmen, etc. So when VW decided to build its newest model, the Rabbit, the company had to do something more than pull it out of a hat.”

That opening paragraph of a story in the Jan. 12, 1975, issue of *The Indianapolis Star* was my introduction to VW's

new-generation Rabbit. I was duly impressed, not only by that review but also the other raves the Rabbit got from the motoring press. Nearly three months later, on April 9, I drove a gleaming Rallye Red four-speed with sunroof and custom package out of the lot at Becker Volkswagen in Champaign, Illinois. The price: \$3,820, not including tax and registration. [That's the equivalent of about \$21,600 in today's currency.]

Eight years and about three months later, on July 12, 1983, the Rabbit had traveled its 100,000th mile, a milestone that frankly is a tribute to the owner's patience. That it didn't end up waiting for some sucker at Fast Frank's Used Car Emporium is, indeed, a miracle. During the first two years of the car's operation, I had serious doubts that neither I nor anyone else would ever coax the thing to such a lofty plateau as 100,000 miles.

The Rabbit started life shiny but flawed, a victim of new-fangled anti-pollution equipment that may have made the air cleaner but brutalized the engine and frustrated the owner. I should have known something was up when I accelerated briskly out of the dealer's lot the first time. The catalytic converter immediately sent a protest, blinking its red warning light on the dash. The common theme running through the VW repair orders for the first couple of years and 25,000

miles was “starts hard, runs poorly.”

People were buying Rabbits about as fast as they could multiply. And when the cars developed what seemed to be a terminal case of “won't run, can't fix,” an alarming number of people dropped them faster than a new lover with herpes.

I have to give Volkswagen credit. In an effort to get the car to run right, the company covered about \$400 [nearly \$2,000 today] in out-of-warranty repair costs.

At least they tried.

Many car enthusiasts give their cars nicknames.

Mine was called a lot of names that we can't print in a family car publication, but none of those ever stuck. I guess “R&R Carburetor” would have been apt. That's what the VW service writer kept putting on the repair order.

Since the major modifications were done on the car in June 1977, the last 75,000 miles haven't been all that bad. It wasn't until I swapped out the »



'WON'T RUN, CAN'T FIX'

*Author's persistence 30
years ago pushed a 1975
Rabbit past 100,000 miles*

REPRINTED FROM SEPT/OCT 1984 AUTOIST

By Fred Ortlip ✉ VWAUTOIST@icloud.com

RABBIT

Zenith carburetor with an aftermarket model by Weber that I discovered this Rabbit actually could be pretty smooth.

Here's a rundown of what broke or wore out and when:

The left front suspension spring snapped at 33,000 miles, but both the replacement and the right-side original have been coiled for action ever since. The original muffler gasped its last at 37,000 miles; the second muffler was replaced at 77,600. The exhaust pipe out of the manifold was replaced at 88,000 miles.

The original disc brake pads were replaced at 48,000 miles. The original battery lasted 4½ years and nearly 50,000 miles. The original Continental radials were replaced at 51,000 miles with a set of Michelin XZX; they were replaced at 99,000 miles with a set of wider-than-stock (175-70R-13) Goodyear Arrivas.

The wiper motor quit working at 68,000 miles — during a storm, of course. Fortunately, I was able to find a used motor at a junkyard for half the price of a new one. Both the struts and shocks were replaced at 56,000 miles. One of the rear shocks broke at 87,000 and was replaced under warranty.

All the early Rabbits were delivered at no extra charge with a latent oil-guzzling problem that saw many 1975-79 owners invest heavily in Pennsylvania crude. The oil consumption problem in my car came on rather suddenly, around 60,000 miles. At just under 70,000, the valve stem seals were replaced, and the engine still burns virtually no oil between 3,000-mile changes.

The original Zenith carb was replaced at 77,700

The cruising speed of a Rabbit.
93 mph.
The EPA's highway test average.
38 mpg.
\$2,999.*

Happy days are here again.

93 miles per hour? We obviously don't recommend it, but it is reassuring to know that as you get onto a hectic expressway, a new Volkswagen Rabbit Hatchback has the power for incredible acceleration. From 0 to 50 in only 8.2 seconds. Quicker than a Monza 2-2-2. 38 miles per gallon? That's what the Rabbit averaged on the highway in the 1975 model Federal Environmental Protection Agency fuel economy tests. The Rabbit in the city averaged a nifty 24. Not bad for a sub-compact with all the head and leg room of some mid-size cars. \$2,999? That's what you pay for the car backed by the most complete and advanced car coverage plan in the business: The Volkswagen Owner's Security Blanket with Computer Analysts. Happy days are here again? We think you'll think so after you've driven a Rabbit.

rabbit

*Suggested retail price Rabbit 2-door Hatchback, P.O.E. Transportation, local taxes and other dealer delivery charges additional. See your dealer for more details. ©Volkswagen of America, Inc.

miles with the Weber. At 81,700, several episodes of abrupt engine cut-offs persuaded me to replace the original ignition switch. The master brake cylinder cashed in its chips at 97,000 miles. But an inspection of the original rear drums yielded this comment from the mechanic: "They've got another 40,000 miles left in them." I do a lot of down-shifting.

One problem I've encountered in the last year or so is breaker point wear. That was remedied with the installation of an \$85 electronic ignition kit from Allison [about \$270 today].

As a result, the Rabbit at 100,000 miles is running like a 3-year-old. Compression

in all four cylinders is at normal ranges and the engine still has plenty of spunk. I've never been overly demanding of the engine, and I think that's one key to long life. Another is oil. It's been changed an average of 3,500 miles. Frequent oil changes have been called the best and cheapest insurance for an engine. To that I say the proof is in the puddling.

The car starts on the first crank about 97% of the time — even during winter. That's been the case ever since the catalyst was eliminated (during one recall campaign) and regular gasoline could be used again. During the catalyst/unleaded fuel era, at least three cranks were always needed during cold weather before the engine would start.

If you've gotten the impression I like the car, you're on the money. Even in the early years when it was so curmudgeonly, it was still a blast to drive [this after a four-year stint with a 1971 standard Beetle]. Yet it was economical and had the space of a station

wagon. My late father-in-law, who was a Cadillac dealer, was flabbergasted when we were able to get a full-size clothes dryer, luggage and a slew of Christmas presents into the back of the Rabbit.

Another proud moment came during our 20-inch snowstorm two winters past, during which the Rabbit ran like a snowplow. [Front-wheel-drive cars were a rarity in those days, and they had a distinct advantage over rear-drive models navigating heavy snow.] Its body is in excellent condition for an 8-year-old residing in the Corrosion Belt — the dozens of parking-lot dings notwithstanding. The paint has held its gleam remarkably well and rust is at a minimum.

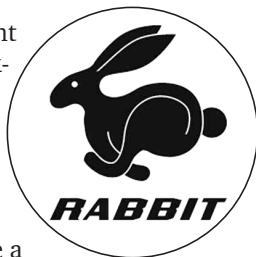
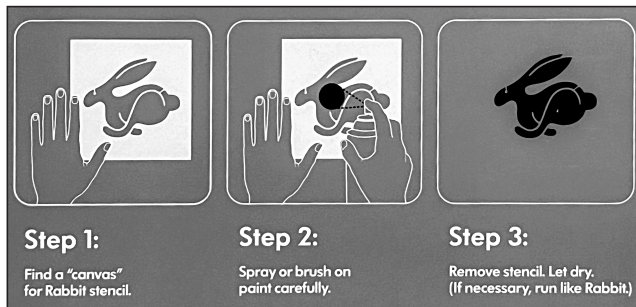
The car has won my respect the hard way — as an early candidate for the junk heap that has become a reliable and inexpensive friend with each passing year.

Postscript from the May/June 1985 AUTOIST: Some readers will be pleased to learn that the following essay on our 1975 Rabbit will be the last. We sold it (not “he” or “she”; this was an “it”) last September, after discovering a ’77 Rabbit [with 88,000 miles] that was just too nice to pass up.

Actually, we had no intention of parting with our loyal old friend and part-time pain in the pocket-



Volkswagen of America publicity photo of the Rabbit with a Michigan license plate.



Pranksters later defiled the clever Rabbit logo (left), illustrating a copulatory second Rabbit adjacent to a “Rabbit Injection” badge. In an ill-advised marketing ploy (above), owners of the 2006 model were invited to be graffiti artists — sent a logo template and encouraged to spray paint the Rabbit’s image “for the whole city to see.”

book. It was running quite well at 113,000 miles, and the body fairly sparked on the outside. I wasn’t sure about the inside. One day last summer, while jacking up the rear end, the badly rusted jack port collapsed under the weight of the car. Rust was starting to come through the rear fenders and who knows where else.

Postscript No. 2: The ’75 was sold to a soon-to-be college freshman whose father was impressed by the car’s long and detailed service history, which never mentioned any clutch issues. By then, unfortunately, it was showing its age. The ’77 served us well over the following six years, its odometer topping more than 140,000 miles before the car was sold. A year-old 1989 GTI took its place.

Postscript No. 3: In January 1984, VW of America had announced it was abandoning the 10-year-old Rabbit for a new and bigger model — adopting the Golf name used in most of the world.

Oddly, despite Rabbit’s checkered early history and the reviled “Americanization” of its U.S.-built models, VW rebadged the Mk5 Golf as Rabbit in America from 2006-2009.

I had one of those, too. Great car. **VWCA**

2023

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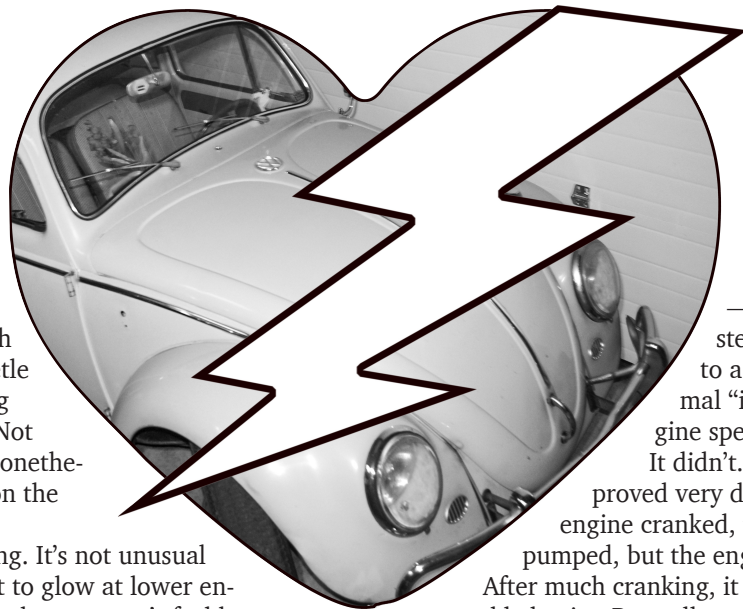
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My first trip, this year, with my 1964 Beetle began with a glowing red generator light. Not super bright but lit nonetheless. This beacon is on the lower left side of the speedometer's housing. It's not unusual for this warning light to glow at lower engine speeds; the six-volt generator's feeble output at low rpm is largely to blame. As the owners manual states, "the light will show when the ignition is turned on and when the engine is running at a low speed. The light should go out when speed is increased."

If this light comes on while you're driving the car, stop immediately; the car's fan belt/generator belt might be broken. Or it could be shining because something is wrong with your electrical system — such as worn generator brushes. Sometimes it's a sign your car is having an electrical coronary — energy isn't flowing from the back of your Bug, at the generator, through the nest of wiring behind the trunk's black cardboard-like instrument panel cover.

You'd think this VW driver, who has a degree in electronics, would take that warning light seriously

— as in *don't drive*. Instead, I chalked this up to a bad case of the normal "it dims when the engine speed increases." It didn't. Moreover, this Bug proved very difficult to start. The engine cranked, the fuel pump pumped, but the engine would not fire. After much cranking, it started — not its usual behavior. Regardless, I drove to a nearby

highway, where I headed north near Elkhart Lake, used up nearly all of the car's fuel from last season and then refilled with fresh gas.

This outing didn't go very well. It had several electrical heart attacks: one struck the engine's ignition and the other the headlights. Yet, I performed bypass surgery to rectify its electrical supply.

'64 BEETLE'S ELECTRICAL HEART ATTACK

First outing during the overnight hours requires minor surgery

One of the symptoms was disconcerting: engine misfire under load — that sudden sputtering, bucking sensation. Now, I suspected my excursion was a bad idea. It was about 1 a.m. when I pulled into a Fleet Farm gas station. I didn't shut off the engine because I feared it wouldn't restart. I turned off the headlights, thinking this would help the generator charge the battery. Then, I added some no-ethanol fuel, closed the front lid, hopped inside and pulled the »

By Cliff Leppke ✉ leppke.cliff@gmail.com

headlight switch. No lights. All dead. Not a glimmer of hope.

The headlight switch failed. Not exactly a happy moment when you're about 20 miles north of the car's home and it's dark. So, I popped the front lid, spun the panel cover nuts off and examined VW's electrical aorta.

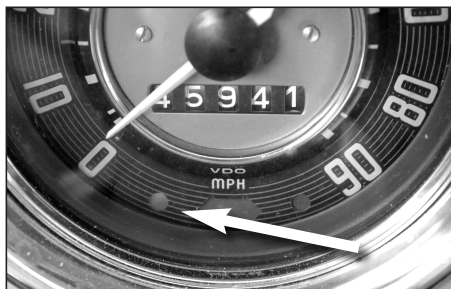
What I found was the automotive version of what pulmonary specialists call the widow maker: discovered it sort of by luck. My father told me, when we got our 1966 Beetle, that its dashboard's electrical system is a godsend. It might look like spaghetti to you, but the wizards at Wolfsburg put nearly everything a savvy technician needs within easy reach. It's a conveniently laid out setup from the fusebox to the color-coded wiring. A solid red wire, say, attaches directly to the car's generator.

In fact, the main red electrical line routes over the speedometer and then attaches to the headlight switch No. 30 post. That spot has two lugs, one for the wire from the generator and the other routes to the fuse box/ignition switch. This next step takes some imagination. While the VW's wiring is handy, you feel like you're working inside an alligator's mouth. The Beetle's curved hood, although propped up by clever springs on this car, gets in the way, forcing you to drop your body atop the car's gas tank as if you were a human sacrifice.

Because I knew the red wire at the headlight switch comes from the generator (voltage regulator is more accurate), I shut down the engine and I disconnected the vehicle battery's ground cable — VW's original tool kit rocks! Then, I pulled the red wire off the switch. I didn't have to pull. The wire was loose.



ABOVE: A bad electrical connection, inset, shows the red wires joined at the headlight switch had caused the problem. **BELOW:** The tiny illuminated generator light signified trouble.



got half of the wire's end to the ignition/fuse box wire.

I reconnected the battery; headlights on! Next, I turned the ignition switch; the engine immediately sprang to life. And the generator light turned off — success; I'm a VW heart surgeon. I drove toward home, laughing about the beauty of what many people dubbed an ugly car, one without a computer module controlling its fate. A bonus was brighter headlights and no more engine misfires — about as potent as a 1200cc Bug gets. And lucky for me, the sheriff watching me travel south on Highway 57 with only my headlights on, no rear lamps, didn't pull me over — it was 2 a.m., bar closing time.

I ordered a new headlight switch from Wolfsburg West. Its switch looks like the OEM part. Its brass collar, however, doesn't have the OEM's slot. That slot should fit over the dashboard's dimple. This prevents the switch from rotating. Thus, the new switch rests cockeyed. I crimped the existing wire ends for a better grip. The car's EKG is great. **VWCA**

Nearly 60 years of flexing, thermal cycling and whatever else caused a wobbly connection. Plus, the wire's quick connector female end was sort of silvery and not copper colored. Its feeble connection at the headlight switch overheated. This could explain why the headlight switch failed; it overheated too.

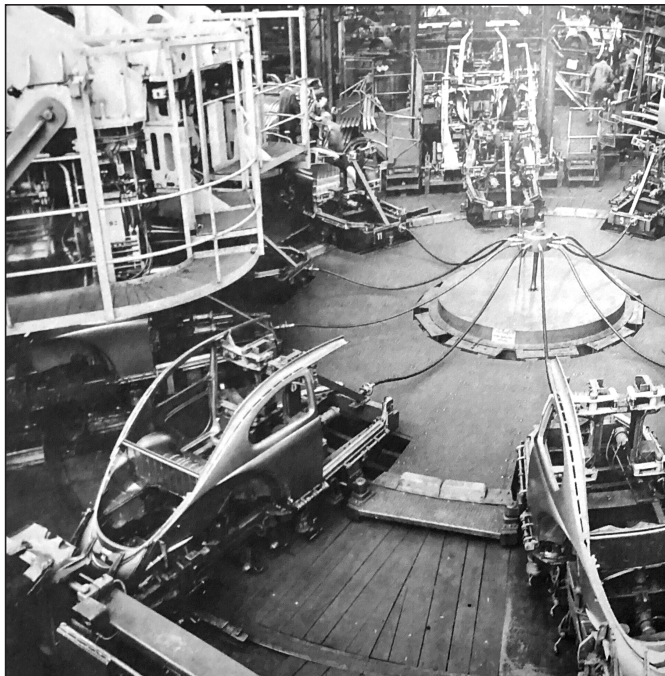
My smart idea: fasten that red wire to the

white one from the headlight switch, plus the red wire to the ignition/fuse box. So, I yanked the other red wire from the headlight switch, plus the white one. Then, I pushed half of the white wire's end onto one side of the "main" red wires. The other side of that main red wire

COMPUTER CURES FOR AMERICA'S **FAVORITE UNCOMMON CAR**

*How Bosch led the
electronically controlled
car revolution*

LAST OF THREE PARTS



An early 1960s view of the circular assembly of rear Beetle sections.

Last time, I explored VW's big leap in vehicle engineering: electronic fuel injection, which arrived in the fall of 1967 on American-bound Type 3s. Business historian Michael Porter claims this was the biggest automotive innovation since the arrival of the automatic transmission. EFI set the stage for a host of now commonplace automotive computer systems.

My account hinted at Bosch's part of this story. That's because I focused on Porter's business case study of Bendix and Bosch's EFI development, with an emphasis on the former's patent structure. Here's an update on the latter. Dr. Heinrich Knapp was a key member of Bosch's pioneering development of EFI. He drew up plans for it in 1959. Bosch bought a Mercedes-Benz 300 for his test vehicle. Bosch says it used Bendix's experience and its own technology to refine EFI, making it suitable for mass production and mass adoption.

By 1964, Bosch had a contract with VW and was

able to demonstrate its first test vehicles: a Mercedes 220 SE and a VW 1500 (Type 3). Hermann Scholl played a key role in EFI development from 1962 on. He recalled, "Our customer, Volkswagen, was initially skeptical. ... Automakers had to take a certain risk." But he said VW was willing because U.S. emissions regulations were problematic.

In the end, after VW's introduction of Bosch's D-Jetronic, other carmakers adopted it from 1969 on, including BMW, Mercedes and Volvo. The next generation of Bosch's EFI, (1975 Beetle, say) was L-Jetronic, while a cheaper K-Jetronic continuous fuel injection system fed VW's water-cooled vehicles.

VW's innovation in tooling, computing

Many say clever marketing, cuteness or an enduring design turned the VW Beetle into an American success story. Certainly, VW's plucky reputation didn't hurt. Still, VW's success as a consumer product was a revolution, a revolution built on something you >>

By Cliff Leppke ✉ leppke.cliff@gmail.com

COMPUTERS

don't see examining a lustrous new or vintage Volks: innovations in mass production and business machines. VW developed new ways to make all those millions of VWs that exited its German plants and entered our driveways. Look underneath VW's sales success and you'll discover a story of VW's early adoption of computer-aided or automated manufacturing. VW, furthermore, computerized its parts and sales systems.

In 1990, automobile historian James Flink wrote, "Until the very recent development of the microprocessor, which permits machine tools to be programmed for a large number of tasks, automation wasn't compatible with individualized products with annual model changes."

The heavy investment in specialized automation machinery, therefore, was first and most fully applied to the production of large runs of standardized mechanical components.

Fink claims an MIT report revealed significant use of semi-skilled labor in American body plants on final assembly lines to accommodate the year-to-year product changes. Volkswagen's Wolfsburg plant, in contrast, produced one of the most standardized cars of all time. This, combined with Germany's postwar labor shortage, led VW to introduce plant automation in stages between 1953 and 1966, including body welding and final assembly.

Bernhard Rieger says the birthplace for VW's production miracle began in the USA. There, the wizards from Wolfsburg, directed by Heinrich Nordhoff, vis-

ited a 1954 Chicago machine-tool show to report back to Germany the future look of VW's main plant. VW's experts studied American automated machine tools. These required neither manual loading nor removal of individual parts. When combined with transfer lines shuttling components between several manufacturing stations, these electronically controlled machine tools could increase VW's output while permitting a reduced workforce or perhaps fewer further hirings.

Wolfsburg, therefore, introduced partial or full automation in stamping, paint and the body shop. The result was a remarkable increase in throughput. VW's productivity levels in the mid-'60s were on par with those in Detroit, making it among the most efficient of car-makers.

According to VW's official history, by April 1963 the Wolfsburg plant automated body shell assembly with newly introduced special transfer lines, which produced 3,300 units a



Beetle assembly line in 1955.

day in two shifts.

This new machinery took one year to install. It handled 16 different operations. For example, the front and rear sections of a vehicle were welded to the roof by 300 spot welds. The 440 workers, who formerly needed to carry out these tasks, were reasigned. To supply the transfer line, VW installed 57 new large presses.

Foreign Car Guide's Robert Marx (September 1968) provided these details on the Beetle's robotic burrow. His picture tour of VW's Wolfsburg plant claimed the Beetle's sameness, although hardly any 1968 Beetle

part could be interchanged with the original car and permitted a degree of automation unmatched by any other automaker.

VW's automatic body jig, measuring 200 feet long and 50 feet high, gobbled the roof and front and rear body sections and welded them together in 303 places to create 240 bodies every hour. Only a few technicians monitored its gauges and warning lights. *Foreign Car Guide* estimated this robotic equipment cut the manufacturing space required to about one-tenth of the 100,000 square feet required for traditional assembly methods.

A few human welders riding on trolleys finished "inaccessible joints" with hand guns.

Almost all body stamping and assembly operations, including paint, were completely mechanized. Marx said few people were seen about, which contrasted with VW's final assembly halls, where men and women swarmed over Bugs. Enameling was performed in automated ovens where spray guns with electronic sensors followed body contours much like a person reading Braille.

Thus, Herbie or Franz or whatever you call your vintage VW, might have been assembled, painted and welded by automated elves from the USA in der Black Forest.

VWoA's striking American HQ

The builder of the evergreen walnut-shaped small car pioneered its American sales success inside boxy architecture. Its Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, office

building (1961) contained enough improvements in design and construction to excite interest among U.S. architects and engineers. VW's new headquarters was designed from the start to make room for business computers.



Beetle assembly line circa 1953 (top) and circa 1959 (above).

made it appear to "float" airily on the gently rolling, wooded landscape.

The other first, according to *Information Magazine*, was a completely automated business machine department to keep track of sales, parts, inventories and other details. Tom McDonald, a former VW PR guru, says the computerized office was massive. You could locate any VW part, any vehicle (including demand for specific color, equipment or style). You simply inserted punched cards into computers. In addition, the business machine installation could work in many other ways to speed service to VW's 16 distributors, their more than 600 dealers, company >>

You might expect VW to employ round forms and Streamlined Moderne aesthetics in its signature U.S. building. It didn't. Instead, it used rectilinear prefabricated concrete forms, cantilevers and, with a nod to the International Style or Sheer Look, right angles. This building was originally conceived as three interconnected buildings: two office wings at the rear and the front executive wing. VW's HQ had about 200 employees.

The building's location and its overall design

made it appear to "float" airily on the gently rolling, wooded landscape.

The other first, according to *Information Magazine*, was a completely automated business machine department to keep track of sales, parts, inventories and other details. Tom McDonald, a former VW PR guru, says the computerized office was massive. You could locate any VW part, any vehicle (including demand for specific color, equipment or style). You simply inserted punched cards into computers. In addition, the business machine installation could work in many other ways to speed service to VW's 16 distributors, their more than 600 dealers, company >>

COMPUTERS

personnel and customers.

VW's "mighty building" itself was an exciting contribution to the art and theory of construction, general design and space utilization — the Microbus of HQs. The entire structure, above the first floor, was suspended from black concrete columns which are hung on the outside of the main floor slabs. Thus, interior floor areas were completely clear of fixed obstructions. You could arrange the interior space to suit any office operation desired. Brilliant-white quartz-faced concrete panels formed the exterior walls. These were fabricated off site and brought in by trucks and assembled.

Other touches included a reflecting pool with fountain (outside the rear wall of the front building's large reception lobby) meeting rooms, outdoor dining and lounges. VW utilized modular interior spaces, each module measuring 5.5 feet square. Movable partitions keyed to the modules defined areas. The ceiling panels provided soft-white lighting with a special "Leaf-Lite" ceiling in the reception wing.

Anodized aluminum sunshades over the building's front windows were angled to keep out hot summer sun yet admit it during the winter. Architects were Fellgraff, Ballou, Daly of Ridgefield Park, New Jersey. Leon Safrata of Toronto was in charge of interior and landscape design. Engineering structural details were the work of engineering firm Severud-Elstad-Kreuger Associates, for whom John Zoldos was project engineer.

The innovatively designed VW HQ would play out at America's midsection: the Gateway Arch's engi-



Gardens and patios were added attractions at the Maryland site of VW's Capitol Car Distributors.

neering consultant was the same one who worked on VW's HQ.

Capitol Car's Maryland HQ

We find more evidence of VW's use of business computers at Capitol Car Distributors' \$4 million headquarters near Lanham, Maryland. Safrata, VWoA's architectural consultant, was one of its designers. Maryland's Historical Trust's historic properties description says Capitol's headquarters used a computer housed in a special air-conditioned room. The computer tracked parts, orders, shipping labels, bills and accounts. Capitol Cars registered nearly 30,000 new Volkswagens in 1965.

The Trust's photo documents don't show the computer room(s) but documents the building's wire suspension systems and cantilevered construction. The main office building appeared to hover over exotic gardens — very inviting because covered patios suggested relaxation and recuperation in what was a beehive of VW's sales success.

Completed in late 1965, the two-story building —

an example of International and New Formalism styles — won plaudits for its graceful lines and landscaped grounds, creating the appearance of a modern university. It now has historic designation. This facility was the nerve center for 58 VW dealers in Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and eastern Tennessee. The entire administrative and warehouse facility covered more than three acres of a 33-acre site. The parts warehouse, bigger than two football fields, with piped music, maintained an inventory of more than 11,000 parts, meeting dealers' needs for five months. Capitol trained VW dealerships in mechanics, parts and sales. Its service department, with three fully equipped classrooms and a large auditorium was important.

Apparently, those who visited this VW outpost expected first-class treatment. A Japanese inspired garden (Ethelbert Furlong architect), blue-tiled sauna, a Finnish heat bath, a diving pool with diving board and dining rooms with a cafeteria-size kitchen were awesome. The original furnishings were Mid-Century

Modern by Knoll and Herman Miller.

McDonald says VWoA initially relied on independent distributors to break bulk. VWoA sold cars and parts to its distributors. In turn, these middlemen recruited dealers and sold VW's wares to them. Sometimes the distributor began as a VW retail store. As such, VW moved cars to its end consumers in a multiple-part sales distribution scheme similar to those in appliances and consumer electronics.

Bit by bit, though, McDonald says, VWoA acquired many of its distributors, who had made fortunes selling VW's cars and parts. These became the firm's zone offices. He argues Safrata's modernist architecture was a key symbol of VW's American success story. Inside his clean-lined buildings, the latest in business computing helped VW's employees move parts and cars. Meanwhile, computers tracked sales trends while ensuring efficient billing. McDonald claims VW's efficient business practices aided by computers helped VW expand its U.S. sales. [VWCA](#)

The Ultimate Air-Cooled VW Book

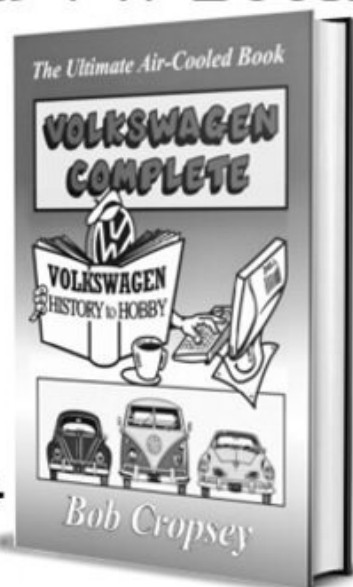
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VWHistoryToHobby.com



Local Volks

Activities of VWCA affiliates

Bugfest hits the heights

A big part of enjoying our VWs revolves around the activities that local clubs provide. If there is no local club in your area, email VWClub@aol.com for recruiting brochures, and contact our vice president (Volkstom@sbc-global.net) for assistance in starting one.

Among the activities of some of our locals:

NORTHEAST ILLINOIS VW ASSN., LISLE:

Bugfest, one of the club's biggest annual events (with 16 categories to enter) was held June 25 and hosted by Fox Valley VW. In August, cruises to the Sycamore Steam Show, Kooler By The Lake in Kenosha, Wisconsin, and a cruise nite at Superdawg in Schaumburg, Illinois, were planned. NIVAFEST No. 24 was coming up in September in Crystal Lake.

nivaclub.org

CENTRAL FLORIDA VW CLUB, ORLANDO:

Members travelled to Oshkosh, Wisconsin, to attend EAA AirVenture, a gathering of 10,000 (!) aircraft, including vintage and homebuilt. What does this have to do with VW, you ask? Donated old VWs, including custom convertibles, are used to support

ground operations. centralfloridavwclub.org

STATELINE VOLKS FOLKS, ROCKFORD, ILL.: The club's annual Vintage Picnic in Rockford's Alpine Park, an event drawing attendees from three states, featured

contests for 11 car classes. August plans included a cruise to the Transportation Extravaganza at the Illinois Railway Museum and Bi-State's 25th annual Picnic in the Park VW show.

September events included Busses Nowhere Near the Arch in Hannibal, Missouri, and joining NIVAFEST at Crystal Lake.

statelinevolksfolks.com

BADGER AUTOFUN CLUB, MILWAUKEE:

The club's newsletter warns of a new way for a thief to steal your car. Driver enters, presumably puts key in ignition or starts the car but notes that cash has been placed under a windshield wiper. Driver jumps out to investigate just as the nearby thief jumps in and takes off.



A NIVA Facebook post from a show in July.

You can always check VWClub.org or facebook.com/vwclubofamerica for listing of the latest events. **VWCA**

Compiled by Fred Frank | fwfrank56@gmail.com



DRIVER'S SEAT

► FROM PAGE 3

“confuse our customers every time a new model comes out and something is completely different. ... Don’t change buttons from here to there, to there and here.” Whether VW will place dashboard venting higher, another sore spot, wasn’t discussed. But you can see a different VW control suite in the ID.2 and the new Tiguan.

VW, according to Schaefer, is committed to establishing consistency across its lineup. He says a massive team took quite a bit of time going granular, determining what goes on a screen, what menu level and what should be an intuitive switch. One wonders how VW studied and developed the now besmirched and obsolete nearly all-touch interface.

Meanwhile, the 2024 VW Atlas, which debuted in Chicago with those blasted haptic/touch steering wheel controls, doesn’t get them. They’re not on the production vehicle. VW says it ditched them and returned to conventional switchgear—at the steering wheel. It was too far along in this vehicle’s development to integrate the new rotary controller seen in Europe. So, the Atlas gets those confounding center-panel touch sensors.

Andreas Mindt, the new head of design at VW passenger cars, says the ID.2all (VW’s affordable, small BEV) previews Volkswagen’s new aes-



C-pillar shapes from the Mk7 Golf to Mk1.

thetic language. It’s based on three pillars: stability, likability and excitement. One element is the renewed emphasis on the first-gen Golf’s C-pillar shape. Expect future VW cars to repeat this signature design element, which looks like a bow string pulled back tautly. Another design trend is the return to “golden ratio” proportions found on the original Golf or the seminal Beetle. On the ID.2, you see this ratio in the relationship of the body to hood and the line from the front of the car to its C pillar.

Mindt, furthermore, says VW will return to a higher-quality interior appearance, self-explanatory infotainment system with “classic” volume control and separate, illuminated buttons for the HVAC block.

Mindt replaced former brand design chief Jozef Kaban last January. Mindt must explain why VW rethought its ID.2, which doesn’t have the retro look of the ID.Life unveiled in 2021. Mindt’s words suggest VW’s future-look ID.4, which doesn’t resemble VW’s internal combustion vehicles, is not VW’s BEV design direction. Expect the confident smile and iconic DNA of the Golf’s distinctive C pillar to become an aesthetic backbone. The bow-and-arrow theme makes sense; you’ll know which way is forward. Don’t worry, the ID. Buzz’s profile is set. **VWCA**



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

The Frontdriver

BY RICHARD G. VANTREUREN ✉rvant1951@gmail.com

Wisconsin greets high flyers

The Experimental Aircraft Association AirVenture was one for the record books this year, with an unprecedented attendance of approximately 677,000. More than 10,000 aircraft arrived at Wittman Regional Airport in Oshkosh, and other airports in east-central Wisconsin. Wittman alone saw 21,883 aircraft operations in the 11-day period from July 20-30, which is an average of approximately 148 takeoffs/landings per hour when the airport is open.

Remembering that the very existence of the homebuilt aircraft industry was based on the affordable and available VW air-cooled engine, more than just a few of those flew in under VW power. The average homebuilder and pilot (among the more than 1,000 who arrived) might not want to remove his cowlings to show his VW-heritage engine, for most it would be a lot more complex than opening the hood of a car.

However, at least four different manufacturers had offered aero-conversion kits for the old pancake powerplant. The engines have powered a variety of flying machines, from tiny ultralights – some using but two



One of the Army green flight line runabouts.

cylinders – to small blimps, like the Lightships now again advertising for Dick's Sporting Goods.

The campus sported the usual number of donated and converted VWs running about on errands of urgency. The warbird area featured the “follow me” cars we'd seen and mentioned before, including one of two Army green flight line runabouts.

New to us this year was this “Herbie” tribute, spotted near the media center.



A “Herbie” tribute, spotted near the media center.



The cars sport special “hobby-ist” license plate, meaning they cannot normally be driven on Wisconsin roads, but they nonetheless perform yeoman service at the “world’s largest aviation celebration.”

Debbie was there all week, teaching attendees how to make composite structures in the workshops. She was one of about 5,500 volunteers who contributed in excess of 250,000 hours. Yours truly gave his airship talk in Forum One on the Friday, one of more than 1,400 sessions hosted throughout the week. The EAA Aviation Foundation’s annual event to support its aviation education programs attracted more than 1,000 people and raised more than \$2 million that will be focused on EAA’s mission of growing participation in aviation. The economic impact was calculated at some \$170 million for the five counties in the Oshkosh region (Winnebago, Outagamie, Fond du Lac, Calumet and Brown).

So where was our airplane, the Silence Twister we trailed there in 2017 to join another that had been flown across the Atlantic from England? Still in her hangar in Florida, awaiting an opportunity for a return to flight. In the meantime, we regularly taxi her to keep her VW-heritage UL Power engine in good shape. If you’d like to learn more about our Twister, visit zrsthemovie.com/?page_id=669.

Maybe one day you too will visit this colossal air-



The VanTreurens' Silence Twister, a German ultralight designed for amateur construction from a kit.



This pristine early '70s Beetle is ready for service and prepped (note fire extinguisher in the rear bin) for safety.

... show, if for no other reason than to see the classic
... VWs that have been so kindly donated and main-
... tained for the EAA. See you there! **VWCA**



VWClub.org

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

ID. Insight

BY TODD ALLCOCK ✉ tallcock@aol.com

ID.4 à la mode: Will it be 'D' or 'B'?

Something that often confuses new EV owners coming from a gasoline-powered car is a second forward drive mode called “B,” present on most EVs, including VW’s ID.4, alongside the “P,” “R,” “N” and “D” modes we’re all used to. “B” or “Braking” mode is a version of “Drive” that applies an increased amount of regenerative braking when you take your foot off the accelerator.

To understand this, first we need to understand what regenerative braking, or “regen” is, and why EVs use it. Regen is one of the huge fuel efficiency benefits of EVs and hybrid cars, allowing the car to use the electric drive motor as a generator to recharge the vehicle battery as the car slows, rather than wasting that momentum slowing the car with friction brakes. This all happens automatically, as VW employs “blended braking.” When you slow the car, the car will use regen braking first, then blend in the friction brakes seamlessly if and when more braking is needed. You can watch the power indicator on the ID.4 steering wheel-mounted display to see how much regen the car is using; the green bar on the left side extends to show the amount of regen.

Regeneration also greatly extends the life of brake pads and calipers. Because the EV motor handles most of the car’s braking, it is not uncommon to see the brake pads on EVs last over 100,000 miles. The

mechanical brakes on EVs, particularly the rear brakes, have so little work to do, VW decided to use rear drum brakes on the ID.4 with “lifetime linings” expected to outlive the car.

So what does any of this have to with the “B” mode on the shifter? “B” mode increases the level of regenerative braking to the maximum when no pedals are being pressed. Essentially, it’s like “riding the brakes” when your foot is pushing neither pedal.

This is primarily meant to be used for driving long downhill stretches, like mountain passes or the

streets of San Francisco, but it also allows you drive in traffic primarily using one pedal, accelerating and braking with just the accelerator, much like driving a golf cart. “B” mode can slow the car almost to a stop by itself, but you’ll still need the brake pedal to come to a full stop.

As someone who enjoys driving manual transmission cars, I like “B” mode because it lets

me simulate the feeling of engine braking from downshifting and letting in the clutch.

Of course, when anything new comes to cars, there are misunderstandings about what it does and how it works. One of the bigger misconceptions is that “B” mode is better for the life of your brakes, because it uses regen instead of friction braking. That’s not true. Remember the ID.4’s blended braking always uses regen to the maximum extent possible before blending in the friction brakes, whether you’re in “B”

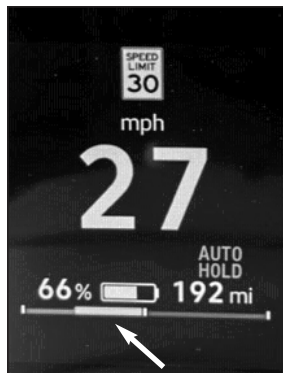


The ID.4's driving mode shifter is situated behind the steering wheel.

or “D” mode. When you press the brake pedal in “D,” you can watch the green “regen” indicator on the dashboard light up just like when taking your foot off the accelerator in “B” mode. VW didn’t want to leave any “free” electricity on the table — it made sure you get the benefit and efficiency of regen whenever possible.

Another misconception is that “B” mode is less efficient than “D” mode, because “D” allows the car to coast on highways when your foot isn’t on either pedal. This one is almost true. Yes, it’s true that coasting is the most efficient way to travel, but coasting is also possible in “B” mode — it just takes a little practice and work.

Like with the one-pedal driving of a golf cart, you really aren’t supposed to take your foot entirely off the pedal in “B” mode — that gives maximum regen braking, and your passengers will feel like they’re on a carnival ride as you jerk the car around between acceleration and 0.25g of braking. In “B” mode, you feather the pedal, much like using a volume knob on a radio. You turn the volume to the level you want and leave it there. Similarly, in “B” mode, you hold the accelerator pedal with your foot at the speed you want to travel just like in a gas car. To slow down, you lightly lift your foot until the car is at the desired



The ID.4’s power indicator bar. In left image, the sliding blue bar measures the level of acceleration. In the right image, the green bar measures the amount of battery regeneration.

slower speed, and to accelerate you push the pedal down to get to the desired faster speed.

Coasting in “B” just means holding the pedal at the point where neither the green regen indicator nor the blue power indicators light up on the dash. There’s really nothing you can or can’t do in “B” that you can or can’t do in “D” — it just requires different footwork

on the pedals.

In my experience, you need to be careful with “B” mode on snow or ice. It’s fine if you feather the pedal to accelerate or decelerate in small increments, but panicking and yanking your foot off the pedal may cause a skid, just as if you slammed the brake in “D” mode.

So it’s not that “B” mode is “worse,” generally, just that most people aren’t as used to driving in “B” as they are driving a traditional car.

So, the use of “D” and “B” are more about user preference than knowing when and where you’re “supposed” to use it. You can use either mode or both, switching on the fly, depending on the situation and whichever mode you prefer. Neither is “better” or “worse” for efficiency, range, or the longevity of the brakes or the car; they’re just different tools for your driving pleasure. Get behind the wheel, try them both and have some fun! **VWCA**

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FOR SALE: 1982 Rabbit 1.6 diesel; whole car. Rebuilt head by S.F. Bay expert not long ago. No dents, good body, brakes, nothing broken. Needs ignition rod; does anybody want to sell me one? (510) 234-1392 (CA).

FOR SALE: This 1968 VW Fastback needs a good home. Survivor is an overused word, but this fits. Originally a Texas car, stored in garages or sheds since then. No rust, even under battery. Has been repainted (to original color). Fuel injection replaced by single carb, I kept the original parts (you'll probably want to move the fuel filter in the engine bay). Comes with a variety of spare Bug and Fastback parts if you want (see picture of front trunk). Interior needs work — seats, headliner mostly. Speedometer/odometer do not work. I replaced master cylinder. It runs, stops, shifts, has all the glass. Current IL vanity plates. I appreciate what NIVA does, so I'm offering it a discount of \$4,600 to readers of this ad. If somebody local doesn't come through, I'll put it on thesamba.com for 10% or so more. Email: rob@neff.net.

FOR SALE: Vehicles, parts, accessories, literature, toys. Over 50 years. John's Car Corner, Westminster, VT 05158. (802) 722-3180. Email: johnsccorner@gmail.com

WANTED: Complete engine wiring harness/loom for 1990 Golf GTI 8v, with Digifant. Manual transmission, if that matters. I don't care where it is, will pay shipping. Please, no junk, I have that in the car now. If you don't have one maybe you have a source I can try? Send email to VLKSWMN@sbcglobal.net

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Parting Shot

Historic Type 2 restored



Lind Bjornsen's rare 1955 Volkswagen Type 2 Schulwagen ("school wagon") was a eye-catcher at the first International VW Bus Day and the launch of the three-row ID. Buzz in Huntington Beach, California, on June 2. The Schulwagens were built as traveling training vehicles for VW dealerships, and Bjornsen's is believed to be the sole survivor. This particular Schulwagen had been in a barn in Ohio for 43 years, until it emerged and was eventually purchased by Bus collector and enthusiast Bjornsen, who figured out what was hiding under 10 layers of paint. The Volkswagen factory confirmed it was built and delivered

to Volkswagen of America in January 1955. During the restoration process, the layers of paint were stripped down to the original layer that showed the original VWoA livery. The mechanical aspects were all refreshed and the tools and equipment inside were sourced and built. The paint was repaired and the logos were repainted. The restoration process took almost five months, considered to be an incredibly short timeline for such a project, especially considering the age of the vehicle and the special equipment.

Don't miss an issue

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VW Toon-ups

By TOM JANISZEWSKI ✉ volkstom@sbcglobal.net

