

VintageVoice

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Palos Verdes Concourse
D'Elegance, P. 6

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Director's FORUM

by howard query

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It was 5:00 this morning when I awoke to the sound of a cold Northeast wind howling outside our windows. It's the middle of January and we've got 39 inches of snow on the ground with more snow to come. As I reached over to turn on our bedside radio, I couldn't help but wonder how I was going to entertain myself today. After a few minutes of really bad country western music, the announcer came on to say that most of the country was under blizzard conditions; with areas in Texas, Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma and elsewhere forecast to receive record snowfalls of 12 inches or more. Snow was not in our forecast for today; just subzero temperatures with gusting winds of 30-40 miles or more, producing wind chills in excess of -30 degrees below zero.

I had originally planned on taking my '58 Beetle out for a good run on the highway today. The roads were fairly clear of salt and snow and it's been a good 3 or 4 weeks since I've had the Beetle out for a drive. Nothing's really stopping me .. other than the fact that my wife thinks I've lost my mind for such a road frigid trip today.

Before I start out on my trek, please remember that I'm a proponent for driving my two air-cooled VWs throughout the entire year .. whenever I can. Taking the '58 out for a drive today shouldn't be any different than when I was in high school, driving 3 or 4 miles to school every morning under the same weather conditions. However, driving a '58 on a day like this

brings about a few additional comforts that were not available to me back in the late 60s. Such as thermal insulated coffee cups, insulated gloves, thicker overcoats and winter boots lined with layers thinsulate insulation. With that, comfort shouldn't be an issue for my 30 mile drive.

I hop in the car and with the turn of the key the engine starts with little effort. Adjusting the choke a bit was need due to the cold temperature as I slowly backed out of the garage. Within seconds I was headed down the road.

Our home is located just two blocks from state Highway 122, and we're also located on the far East edge of the city. Driving off into the countryside takes but just a few minutes.

Of course ... we refer to the farm land that surrounds us as "the country", others new to the North Iowa area have been heard to call it a "winter wasteland". Why? Well, Iowa is much like Kansas or the Dakotas .. we are layered with hundreds of miles of flatlands. There are no forests and no mountain ranges stop the path of the cold winter winds. Our highways are littered with road signs warning of to be cautious of "cross winds". Yes, this is Iowa.

The '58 was running great and would have run faster if it were not for a strong North East wind averaging 30 miles an hour. In the 60s, my Beetle with equipped

with bias-ply tires ... today I'm running with Michelin radials and I'm still fiercely fighting to stay to keep the car on the road. Plus, it's so cold outside ... the temperature inside can't be more than a degree or two warmer. I suppose it doesn't help that my '58 is a Ragtop sunroof allowing cold winter winds to enter into the cabin and I can't help but feel cold winter air being forced up through where the radio is mounted. Although cold and windy, I thought today's drive would be a "fun" excursion. Instead, I'm freezing my keister, fingers and toes off. As I would exhale, a huge cloud of fog form would form before my face.

Why don't I remember these conditions from when I was in high school? I only remember driving back and forth from school with little thought of the temperature or the wind. Nonetheless, back then ... I was smart enough to always have with me, two windshield scrappers ... one for the outside windshield and one for the inside. With this trip though, I was not equipped to scrap the frost off the inside windshield and side windows past enough.

Although my Beetle performed as it should .. this trip was horribly cold and agonizing. Yes, I have come to realize that I've become a product of the 21st century. I'm spoiled to comforts of my 2010 daily driver. How sad this has become for me, in that travelers long before me drove their air-cooled VWs as their only method of transportation in conditions as bad as or worse than this.

I learned something today about the continued joy this car brings me and my poor tolerance for our winter weather conditions.

As I returned home and parked the Beetle in the garage, my wife was quick to greet me at the door and with a smirk on her face ask me, "how was the ride". I smiled and simply replied, "Absolutely great, it a lot of fun!" While in the back of my mind I was thinking, "thank God, she didn't come for the ride with me as I'd never hear the end of it."

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Live Long and Prosper VolksWoman

by Lois Grace
vlkswmn@sbcglobal.net



Mileage on a car is like gray hairs on a human. At least, to me it is. Not that I enjoy gray hairs, but I figure if I do have any I have earned each and every one. Gray hair means you've lived long enough (usually) to experience enough of life to know yourself. Gray hair means longevity. Gray hair means wisdom and knowledge; of yourself and others. If you have no gray hair you either must not have been around very long, or want to cover up the fact that you have been, something that I find vaguely distressing. Why not share your smarts and your experiences and your stories? Why on earth would anyone be ashamed to be wise, smart, and vintage?? True, you don't have to look like you are, but why not admit it?? Babies are fun, yes, but they aren't that interesting (unless your thing is drool and babble). It's not a character flaw. It's because babies are new, and haven't been here long enough to be interesting yet. New cars are like babies. Fun to look at and play with, but let's not get one. There is lots of potential in a new car, as in a baby, but experiences and wisdom are still years down the road for both.

And, speaking of roads, here is how my theory applies to cars: I have never been a huge fan of vintage, low-mile-wonders. They are, to me, a sad example of what can happen if one has too much money, too much storage space, and not enough time to drive. What is a car for, anyway?? I like to think of my Volkswagens as mobile art. I like to drive, and I like to drive vintage VW's. I'm not much for collecting things just for the sake of having them. I like to enjoy the things I collect, and take them out and play with them once in a while. Low mileage vintage cars have never been played with.



They are 50-year-old babies, babies who get played with for a few minutes, then put away and forgotten for a long time. Or, if not forgotten, bragged about and doted on but never truly enjoyed. This is not to say that I am among those hardy and brave few who REALLY enjoy their vintage Volkswagens, by driving them in long-distance treks through snow, sleet, rain and every other sort of phenomenon Mother Nature can throw at them. No, I'm not such a hardy and brave soul. I'm also not 25 years old anymore and that could be part of the reason why my bravado is, frankly, worn out. I value my life and limbs the way I value my Volkswagens: healthy and in one piece. But I sure admire those who put foot to the floor (in their vintage VW) in December and drive up a mountain to camp for 3 days. The Volkswagens these folks drive are the ones with the gray hairs. These are the coveted Bugs and Buses (and, probably, other models as well) who have experienced life to the fullest and probably have more than 200,000 miles on the clock (even if it's not the original engine).

These are the VW's that are truly loved and cherished. And, there is the other side of this coin as well.

Way back in the early 80's Rob and I began going to every VW show we could find. Mostly because I wanted to (and he really liked the swap meets) but also because I was hoping to find some stuff for Vernon. I still cherished the hope that Vern would be restored someday and I wanted to see what kind of parts were still out there for an old beat up Single Cab. Then, as now, these shows drew all kinds of people. One group we consistently ran into at the shows out here on the West coast where what were rumored to be "foreign investors". These folks all seemed to be (from what I could tell) from Japan, and they were as easy to spot at a VW show as a tattoo on Martha Stewart. They were always in a large group, with the men walking in front and the women following behind them, looking bored. All of them were dressed impeccably, and by that I mean in 3-piece suits! It didn't matter what time of day it was, or when the show was held: these guys wore Armani to a car show, be it the middle of July or on a rainy Sunday in January. The women were usually decked out in their own designer clothes, with only the very best of everything. They seemed to speak little English, and had an interpreter with them, who would ask the questions. They would casually stroll the show car field, seeing what was there and if it were for sale. If an offer on a particular car was made and accepted (which seemed to happen frequently and out of the blue, oddly enough), they paid in vast wads of cash. These "investors" and their entourage would tour the entire show, stopping now and then to have their interpreter ask a vehicle owner something. Sometimes, they stayed for quite a while asking questions. And, more rarely, sometimes the car they inquired about stayed behind at the show once the event was over - the supposed sale being finalized. As the tale went, it was said these investors had been buying Volkswagens for export to Japan. Apparently, vintage VW's were so rare in Japan that entire groups of people would come here to buy up as many nice ones as they could, to take back. Once there, I heard they were sometimes set up in their own little rooms and displayed like fine art, never to be driven again. I have no idea if this story is true or not. There is likely some truth in all of this, somewhere. Probably more often, these cars were resold at a tidy profit to some Japanese buyer to enjoy. I do know that a friend of mine sold his award-winning '57



Oval to a Japanese firm that shipped it back to Japan. I don't know what became of the car once it got there, or how it was used or not used. Maybe it was set up in its own little life-size "display case", to be admired anonymously forever. Or, perhaps it got a new home with an owner who adored it, and drove it whenever he or she could. I'd prefer to think that was the case, rather than to think that these poor cars who had enjoyed such a busy and active life here in the States would simply be allowed to sit idle for many years, with its' odometer going nowhere.

It doesn't matter to me where it's driven, as long as it gets out now and then for some fresh air. Does a VW deserve any less?? I don't think so.

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PALOS VERDES CONCOURSE D'ELEGANCE

A Concourse D'Elegance is held every year on the beautiful Palos Verdes Peninsula at the west coast, just outside of Los Angeles, California. The famous Donald Trump makes his west coast golf resort available. As the name of the event implies only elegant cars are normally invited to and displayed on this occasion. Usually these are Mercedes, Jaguars, Rolls Royce, Bentleys and Porsches and sometimes antique domestic cars.

Volkswagen products may not ever have been considered part of that group. However in 2010 the situation was different because cars of only of one country, namely Germany, were featured. To make the presentation complete, Volkswagen had to be included. Between all the many fancy cars, 12 Volkswagen products were displayed. One Rometsch, a Type 3 convertible Karmann

Ghia. Two KG Type 3 coupes, three Type 2 Transporter/ Buses, one 1960 four door black Beetle limousine two regular Beetles and a Beetle four seater convertible. While the group of Volkswagen cars was relatively small the cars as presented were of high quality and displayed in a very nice location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean, which also happened to be on a very beautiful sunny day.

For those visitors to this event who may have considered the presentations of Volkswagens not enough to look at there were plenty of other highly interesting and unusual German cars and motorcycles on display. Mercedes brought a replica of the first car ever built and also a rear engine Mercedes sedan designed by Porsche during the late twenties. A plastic "Trabant", the East German three cylinder socialist Volkswagen for which these poor people had to wait seven years before they could get one, was on display as well as a Wartburg, which was the upscale East German car. It may have been the first time these two models were displayed anywhere in this country.

By Heinz Schneider s.heinzo@verizon.net





1951 delivery van



restored

unrestored

Meet Us on the Road to

By Janet and Ed Howle

Paris

Looking for an activity for your VW club this spring? Stewball is on the road to Paris once again and we'd like to invite vintage VW enthusiasts to meet us at any of our stops across the U.S. For those of you who don't know, in 2008 we had signed on as competitors in the New York to Paris World Race. (The Race of the Century, Again. Vintage Voice. 33 (2):

4-6. March/April 2008). That rally was cancelled just six weeks before our departure when China withdrew our travel permits. This may jog your memory of that particular time. It was the summer of the Olympic Games in China and the Tibetan protests in the western provinces. China was having a lot of internal problems and blocked all Westerners from part of the route we were to drive. This last minute disruption threw Great Race, Inc. into bankruptcy, cancelling plans for future rallies: a huge disappointment and financial loss for many.

The setback didn't dampen the interest and enthusiasm for such an event, and now Jerry Price (www.worldrace2011.com) has taken on the planning for a similar route and the rally is back on for this spring. Once again we are scheduled to compete in Stewball, our 1967 Beetle. Stewball is a bit older and so are we, but this is about antique car rallying and it never was clear if the car or the participants were



the antiques. Stewball hasn't been idle. In addition to completing the 2007 Great Race from North Carolina to California; we drove our car again across the U.S. (and back) in a 2008 centennial tour. That tour followed the waypoints described in the journal kept by George Schuster, the winner of the famous 1908 world race.

Schuster's fame began on February 12, 1908, as six cars, representing four nations, left New York in a blizzard. Only three completed the race to finish in Paris. The automobile was hardly a practical conveyance and the internal combustion engine had never been tested under such terrible weather and road conditions. No one had ever crossed the U.S. in the winter—much less around the world. George Schuster drove a 1907 Thomas Flyer from Times Square, west across the U.S., Russia, and Europe. He was declared the winner after a grueling 169 days. In recognition of his achievement and his impact on automotive history, he was inducted into the Automotive Hall of Fame on Oct. 12, 2010. In honor of what is still the longest race in history, Jeff Mahl, the great-grandson of George Schuster, will participate in the 2011 World Race.

Our 2011 race is really a rally since racing is not permitted on public roads. On April 14, vehicles, in two divisions, will leave Times Square on route to San Francisco. Stewball will be the only Beetle in the Schuster division, an appropriate name for the antique auto class. The rally includes an alternative fuel division to again focus on the importance of automotive innovations.

The cars will be shipped by ocean freight to China. Teams will fly to Beijing and prepare for the trip west across China, Kazakhstan and Russia. Then we will drive across Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, Czech Republic, Switzerland, and France. We will end at the Eiffel Tower.

Preparing a car for a rally of 14,000 miles is part guess work, (what will break) part experience (what did break) and lots of luck. Anticipating the world rally in 2008, we competed in the 2007 Great Race as a shake-down run. We needed to see if the driver, navigator and car had the necessary endurance needed for crossing mountains and deserts in the summer, and the stamina for the continual long days of driving. In the summer

This is our itinerary so that you can see if our route matches your location.

April 14, 2011: New York City to Buffalo, NY: The World Race 2011 will depart Manhattan at the Crowne Plaza hotel at 7:00 am before going to Times Square and then along the Hudson river and then west to Buffalo for a reception at the Buffalo Transportation Peirce-Arrow Museum.

April 15: Buffalo to the Port Clinton-Catawaba Island Holiday Inn near Sandusky, Ohio.

April 16: Sandusky to the Henry Hotel in Dearborn, Michigan with a celebration at the Automotive Hall of Fame.

April 17: Dearborn to Warsaw, Indiana. An evening at the Wagon Wheel Theatre while Jeff Mahl recounts the story of the 1908 New York to Paris race.

April 18: Warsaw to Indianapolis to include a tour of the Indianapolis 500 race track.

April 19: Indianapolis to St. Louis, including a visit to St. Louis Motorsports' collection of exotic cars.

April 20: St. Louis to Kansas City with a BBQ hosted by Alliance Energy.

April 21: Kansas City to Dodge City.

April 22: Dodge City to Denver and a visit to the Cussler Museum's Bentley collection.

April 23: Denver to Gateway Canyon at Whitewater, CO. and a visit to the Gateway Auto Museum.

April 24: Gateway Canyon to Salt Lake City including a social and BBQ at the Ardell Brown Classic Car Museum.

April 25: Salt Lake City to Reno and a visit to the National Auto Museum to see the 1908 winner, the 1907 Thomas Flyer.

April 26: Reno to San Francisco and a celebration to mark the completion of the U.S. leg. For additional details about this adventure in driving, log on to: www.worldrace2011.com



of 2007, we crossed the Mojave Desert and the San Bernardino mountains to Anaheim, California and just in case that didn't adequately test the air-cooled engine and us, in 2008 we crossed Death Valley and the Serra Nevada mountains to San Francisco. This summer it will be the Gobi desert in China and the Alps in Switzerland. Once Jan figured out air-cooled didn't mean air-conditioned, she learned the tricks of cold cloths on the back of the neck, water spritzed directly into our faces, cotton clothing, and the blessing of side-vent windows. To give Stewball some relief from the heat, Ed upgraded the cooling system, installing a Doghouse type oil cooler that does not blow on the #3 cylinder, and a larger cooling fan.

Ed also made some additional modifications based on conditions we might encounter, particularly on the Asian leg of this route. First, Chinese driving is best described as "creative" and a loud horn is mandatory so Ed added a new LOUD horn. Second, fuel in some locations may contain water and other contaminants so Ed is paying special attention to filtering these out with a funnel that separates gas from water and particles, and an internal marine filter in the fuel line that does the same thing. We also discovered our gas tank had rusted

and had been patched (before we bought the car) so Ed replaced the fuel tank. This will be a long trip and there is no need to start with the possibility of rust particles in the fuel as we dodge pot-holes and bump along rutted roads; common in rural parts of China, Russia, and Kazakhstan. Finally, Ed has removed the back seat so that we will have more space for all the spare parts we will need including a carburetor, fuel pump, distributor, plugs, fan belt, control cables, tool box, and two additional tires. Jan has noticed that Ed's we-just-might-need-list gets longer as the day of departure gets nearer, and she is hoping there will be room for more than one change of clothing, five boxes of books (more on that later) and the myriad of essentials that will keep us healthy, groomed and somewhat civilized crossing three continents. At least there will be no decision about what to wear.

We have two goals for this extraordinary rally. First, to complete all 14,000 miles with a minimal of repairs and our marriage intact, and second, to promote and sell our recently completed novel (hence the boxes of books) that fictionalizes the first around-the-world rally in a hundred years. Set in 2008, the novel features a 1967 Beetle that is outwardly the same as Stewball.

We say outwardly because, in our book, the Beetle was modified to compete in the alternative fuel division and contains experimental technology—technology so revolutionary that oil-exporting countries, including Russia, want every trace of it destroyed and China, lacking adequate energy resources, wants to steal it. The Long Road to Paris includes a lethal combination of international espionage, murder, betrayal and a dangerous liaison between the driver and his captivating, secretive navigator. Intrigued? You can read more on our website: www.thelongroadtoparis.com.

Back to reality, our 2011 rally will be divided into three legs; Leg 1; the U.S., Leg 2; Asia, and Leg 3; Europe. We invite local car clubs, or any Beetle lover to meet us as we cross the U.S. We will autograph a copy of our novel (should you decide to buy it), and take photos of you and your car along with Stewball for our next publication; a travel memoir that will recount this once in a lifetime driving adventure.

We'd love to have your support. If this is possible for

you to meet us at any of these stops, please contact Janet and Ed before their departure at authorscontact@aol.com or by phone, 919-768-8093. We don't want to miss you. If it is not possible to meet us; you can follow this unique journey on the blog on our website.

We close with a question. Does anyone know of a shop in the San Francisco area that works on air-cooled Beetles and can service our car before we ship to China?



Ed and Janet Howle ready for the race in the photo below.

Volkswagen Beetle in 1989

Still Slow in Mexico

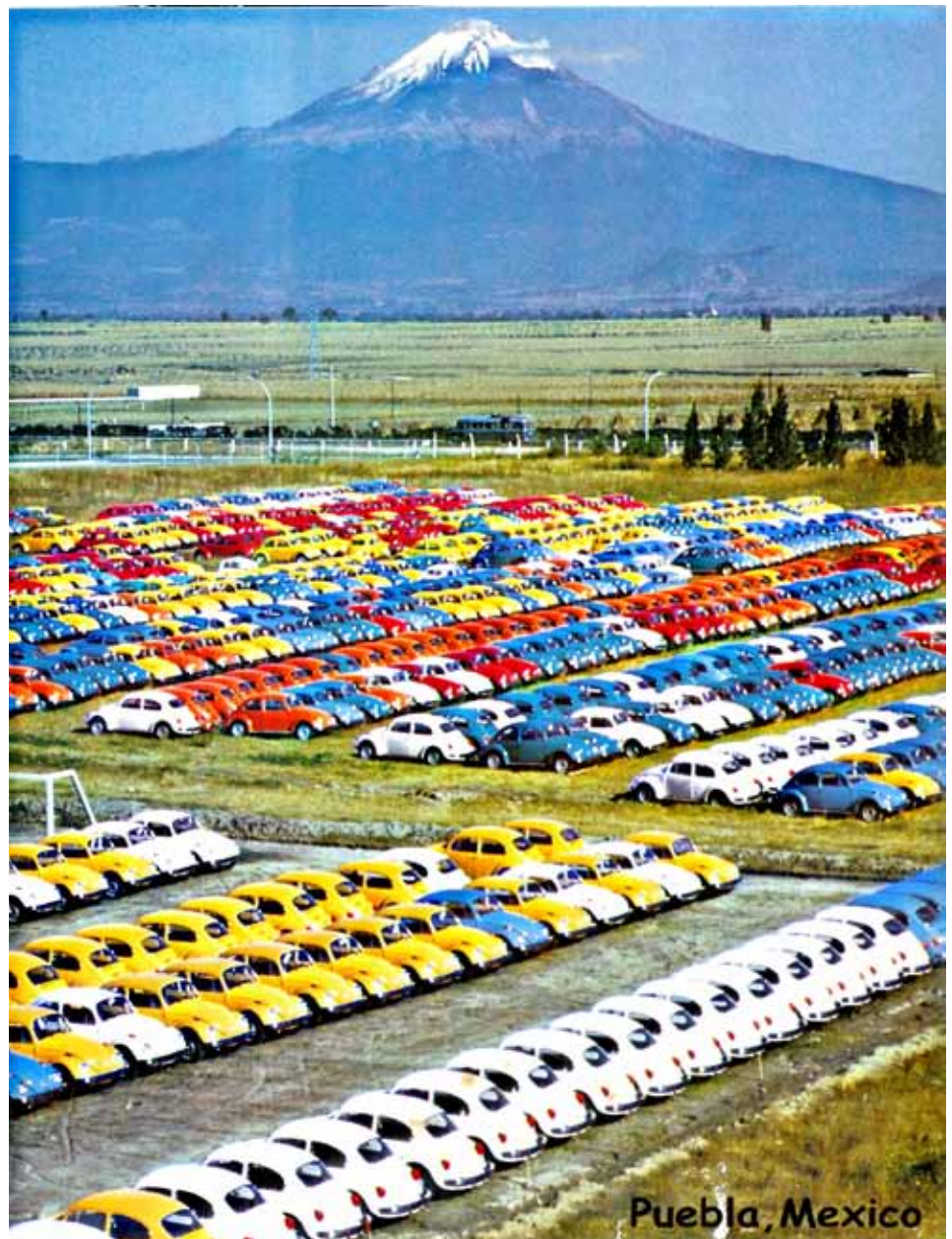
By Heinz Schneider
s.heinzo@verizon.net



Mexico was the only country where the Beetle was still produced and sold. General economic conditions in Mexico were still fluctuating but improved slightly towards year end and so did Beetle sales. Daily production went from 100 cars at the beginning of the year to 240 at the end, for a total of 32 421 Beetles produced in 1989. Chassis numbers for the 1989 model year started with 11K0 000 001. The letter K standing for the model year.

Changes to the car were only slight. The interior rear view mirror was now glued to the windshield as it had become common practice on all modern cars. An adjustable Passenger side sun visor on the right side was reintroduced. The passenger side foot rest was discontinued and the floor mat redesigned accordingly.

- Headliner and other interior trim was now of a gray color.
- For some reasons the steering wheels for Mexican Beetles over the years underwent more changes than any other part of the car and for 1989 the cheaper to produce and cheaper looking wheel from the German





“Polo” model was used. This wheel was again used for the last Beetles produced in 2003.

Other Volkswagen news: 1989 was an excellent year for the Volkswagen Corporation, with 2,947,569 cars built and delivered. – The Volkswagen chronicles published by Volkswagen did not even mention or list Beetle production in Mexico. – On July 4th the 25 millionth Volkswagen was built at the Volkswagen plant at Wolfsburg. No other single factory in the world, up to that time had ever produced that many cars in one place. – Volkswagen starts producing Toyota pickup trucks for Toyota at one of their German factories. – Some of these trucks received Volkswagen badges and were sold through the Volkswagen organization as the “Taro”. – Nov 11, the Berlin Wall falls and with that the German reunification process started. A great chance for Volkswagen and other Western car producers to move into this market were these poor people long living under socialism had to wait 7 years for an inferior plastic car with a small two cylinder two stroke engine.



Winter Camping *Pensacola Style*

by Wild Bill Tucker
wildbill1976vw@yahoo.com



The 1st Annual “Rare Air Emerald Coast FYAO Camping Trip” was held in January 2011. 4 members of the Rare Air VW Club in Pensacola, Florida. Campers Wild Bill, Linda, and Turbo the wonder dog Tucker, Jon Dawson and Leo the wonder dog, Jay, Trish, and Katie the wonder dog Dawson, Cecil Blum, and Kevin and Nathan Danforth braved the elements and had a fantastic weekend ruffing it at a local campground in neighboring Alabama. Jon and Jay Dawson came up with the idea of having seasonal camping trips and our Winter excursion was a success. Four VW Campers and a foreign car (Chevy pickup truck) chase and support vehicle found out that winter camping is very unique. It requires a completely different mindset as far as preparation and campsite activities.

The weather turned out to be unusually warm during the day light activities and very chilly at night. You never know what to expect from Florida weather and Open Pond Camp Grounds in Alabama was just as unpredictable. Plenty of electric heaters, electric blankets and a 22lb Black and Tan Dachshund named Turbo keep me and my wife warm as toast. Fire wood had to be imported into the camp ground so a community campfire kept all campers huddled as close as safety would permit.





All in all a winter camp out with fellow VW Campers is a total must for the overall VW Camping experience. We also enjoyed showing off our campers and campsites to all the other campers. People were amazed at how cool and versatile our mini RV's were. A lot of "I have not seen one of these in years," and "What year is that?" statements. The most famous quote of all "I wish I still had my old VW Camper."

if you live in a snowy area that road salt is murder but winter camping is awesome. We are looking forward to our spring trip and have decided to make it a primitive camping site. Now that will be really camping!!"

Enjoy your VWs year round if you can. Yeah I know

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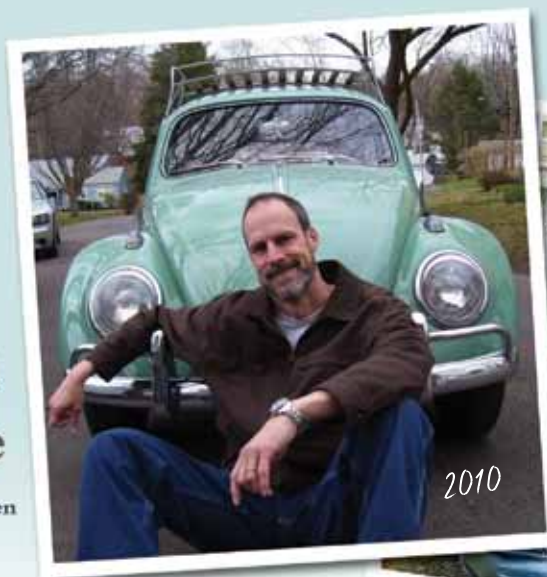
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20 Years with Rachel

Reflections on a Good Long Ride

By Greg Mattesen



On April 16, 1990, I purchased my 1963 VW Beetle. Twenty years later, as I celebrate two decades of owning the car, I can't help but reflect on the miles and years we've traveled together. When a car's been a part of your life for that long, it's hard not to start thinking of it as a member of the family.

Rachel was not my first Beetle. In fact, I owned two others before her, a 1965 and a 1973. When I bought my '65 at 15 years old, I vowed to keep the car forever, but excessive rust from the salty New England roads prevented that. In the late '80s as the rust got worse on the '65, I started to realize that if I wanted a VW to keep "forever", I'd have to find one that was more solid. Luckily for me, my friend Sigh Buchanan had purchased a rust-free but forlorn-looking '63 Bug that had originally come from the Carolinas. The car was fairly banged up, but its interior was clean and its drive train was original. It had an ugly light blue Earl Scheib-style paint job, although the interior still retained its original turquoise paint. Sigh had named the car Rachel, but after deciding she didn't like the original turquoise color, she offered the car to me.

At the time, I was a recently-graduated college student living back at home. I didn't have the money to buy the car, so I borrowed it from my dad. I planned to drive the car as a daily driver during the summer initially, with the idea of eventually retiring it to antique hobby car status once I got a job and a modern

car. The first summer I owned it, I commuted 50 miles round trip to the factory I was working at second shift, and the car performed well. I spent my weekends driving the car to VW shows or taking care of various mechanical issues that needed attention.

In 1991, I got a job as a VW salesman in Glastonbury, Connecticut, which was about 37 miles away from home. I drove the '63 daily, planning to find a more modern car as winter closed in. But mechanical failure in the form of a burned valve on the way to the Lawrence, Massachusetts Oktoberfest VW show sidelined the car that fall. As I worked on rebuilding the original engine, I purchased a high-miles used Rabbit to commute in. My life was in a state of change at the time: I had studied to be an English teacher, and although I liked working for VW, I really wanted to find a teaching job. A friend of mine had moved to Georgia and told me the climate was better for finding a job down there, so I began to plan to travel down there to look for work. Choosing between the Beetle and the Rabbit was easy—I would always opt for air cooled if given the choice, so once the engine was rebuilt, I sold the Rabbit and traveled to the Atlanta area.

The drive down to Georgia was fairly uneventful. The week before I had broken in the newly rebuilt engine, and it performed well on the trip. I was driving by myself, however, and it was a long trip to make without another person to share in the driving. When I got into

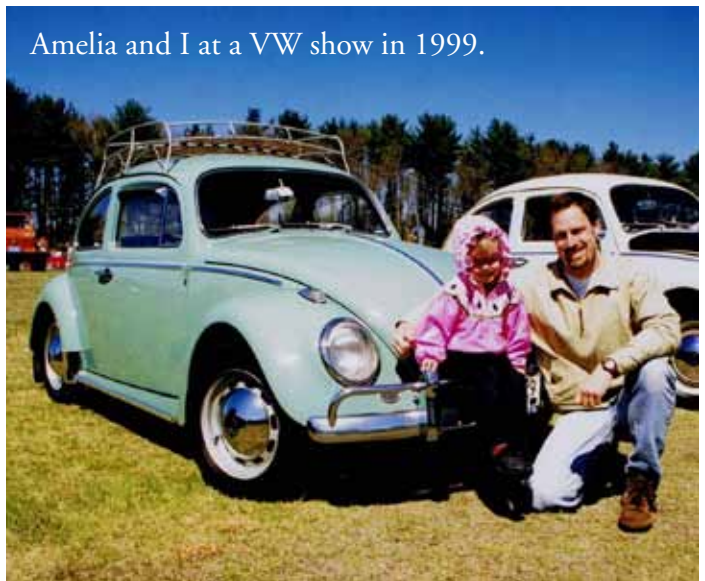
North Carolina, I started to get drowsy, but rather than stop at a motel, I decided to take a catnap in a highway rest area. Anyone familiar with an early '60s Beetle knows that the locks are kind of quirky: the passenger door locks from inside, but has no lock cylinder on the outside door. The driver's door won't lock from inside; the only way to lock it is from the outside handle via the lock cylinder. To lock the car against intruders, I rolled the driver's window down and locked the door with the key, then rolled the window back up. When my nap was done, I continued on my way without getting out of the car. A few hours later, when I started feeling drowsy again, I decided to pull off the highway in a desolate area and get out of the car to get my blood flowing; I figured I'd do some jumping jacks or something. You can probably guess what happened: I got out of the car (leaving it running on the shoulder of the road), did my exercises, and went to get back in the car only to find it locked—running, with the keys in it! There wasn't a pay phone in sight, and this was well before cell phones were popular. I figured I'd have to break a window to get in, but before doing that I decided to take a moment to think calmly about any other solutions. Finally it dawned on me that I had always kept a spare key for this car in my wallet, and I was able to unlock the car, get back in and get back underway.

In Georgia I didn't have any luck finding a teaching job, so I ended up back in Connecticut and back at Langan VW. In 1993, I met my wife, Kelly, and we were married in June of 1994. I had been saving money up to get the '63 painted, but when we got married we also bought our first house—my paintjob money went to the down payment. But Kelly promised me that we would save our money and get the car painted as soon as possible, and she was true to her word: in the late fall of '94 and early winter of '95, Rachel went to Prestige Motors in Enfield, Connecticut, where she was stripped to bare metal and repainted in her original turquoise color.

In her repainted glory, Rachel was everything I had ever wanted in a Beetle. She was a great driver, but she was also a real head-turner. When I would stop at gas stations, people would frequently ask if she was for sale. In 1996, our daughter Amelia was born, and Kelly and I had much to be happy for with our new family. I remember shortly after Amelia was born, Kelly and



April 16, 1990—I purchased the '63 from Sigh Buchanan



Amelia and I at a VW show in 1999.



Amelia learning how to drive on Rachel, Summer 2007.

Amelia were out visiting relatives, and I decided to take the '63 for a spin to see an old friend. On my way to visit him, I was traveling along route 44 in Coventry, Connecticut. I was cruising along at about 50 mph, and I was just passing a convenience store on my right. A large truck was approaching in the oncoming lane, and suddenly a full-size van made a left turn into my lane from behind the big truck, apparently meaning to turn into the convenience store. I had a moment to realize that I was probably going to be in a serious head-on collision; "I'm a new father" flashed through my mind, and I saw my cherished Beetle crashing into the van in my mind's eye. My reflexes took over: I slammed on the brakes, and as the truck passed on my left I swerved into the left lane, narrowly missing the oncoming van. I immediately pulled to the shoulder and looked behind me: there was a huge cloud of smoke from my Beetle's tires locking up, but we were okay otherwise. I'm convinced that the car helped to save me that day.

For the next 14 years, Rachel participated in my life in a variety of ways. On nice days, I drove her to work, enjoying the sensation of driving the same kind of car I'd been driving since high school. We participated in VW shows on a regular basis, and she even won a 2nd or 3rd place trophy occasionally. When my grandfather

(who had introduced me to VWs) passed away, Rachel took a place in the funeral procession and represented the spirit of all the VWs that my grandfather had owned and worked on during his life. She transported my young family to picnics and family get-togethers, taking her place amongst all the modern cars and showing that some things never die. When I taught Amelia how to drive in the yard at 10 years old, Rachel was one of the first cars she drove.

We've been together for 20 years now, and I enjoy the '63 as much now as I ever did. I bought Rachel when I was 23 years old, when I was a young, single man, waiting to see what life had in store for me. These days, I'm 43 years old and many of life's questions have been answered. I have a great family and a happy life. Through all the changes that have happened in the past 20 years, though, I'm thankful that there's been a little turquoise car to remind me of where I've been. And I look forward to seeing where life, and my old '63 Beetle, will take me next.



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By: Tim and Mary Collins Marytimbelle@aol.com

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Sincerely

Tim and Mary Collins

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DER KÜBELWAGEN

A Volkswagen for the Military

Porsche, in his proposal of January 17th 1934 to build a People's car, noted that it should be designed in such a way "that it could not only be used as a passenger car, but by changing the body also serve perhaps commercially as a delivery vehicle or even for certain military use". A protocol made after a meeting that took place April 11 1934 at the Ministry of Transport in Berlin, had a hand written foot note that stated: "The specifications (for a Volkswagen) also fulfill the requirements of the military because by removing the body there will be room for three soldiers and a machine gun with ammunition". This was obviously to please a major from the Reich's Defense Ministry who took part in these discussions about the Volkswagen.

These remarks caused some historians to conclude that the whole Volkswagen idea was just a ruse, an excuse to build a car and a factory for the war effort. Others however note that the military had significant influence in Hitler's new Government and in order get their support for the Volkswagen project it was considered necessary to appease them. As we will see, the facts do not support any of the claims that the car and factory were built for the war effort. By decree of the Reich's government work to finish the Volkswagen factory was stopped the day the war began. Hitler decided that the manpower and the materials to finish the VW factory could be used

better elsewhere. This is also confirmed by a report of the strategic bomber command of the United States Military made after the war about the military potential of the VW factory: "At the beginning of the war the management at VW and neither the government ministries made any attempts to make the factory useable for the war effort. Obviously the government counted on a short war and decided to leave the factory partially finished and restart it again after the conclusion of hostilities. Eventually only 25 to 50% of its capacity was ever used".

No attempts were made during the early development of the Volkswagen to build a military vehicle. Not many of the military honchos realized the potential of having a light military vehicle for penetrating enemy lines and for just simple transportation for the Wehrmacht. The military were thinking more of using motorcycles with sidecars for that particular purpose. A car for the military, like the Kübelwagen, just evolved as the Beetle's development progressed. This idea started to get some traction during the testing of the W30 Volkswagen prototypes series by SS soldiers in late 1937. They realized that the Volkswagens was more maneuverable and handled better off-road under adverse conditions as other such vehicles used by the army. As a result, in 1938 some leaders of the SS asked Porsche to build a version of a military Volkswagen for demonstration purposes.

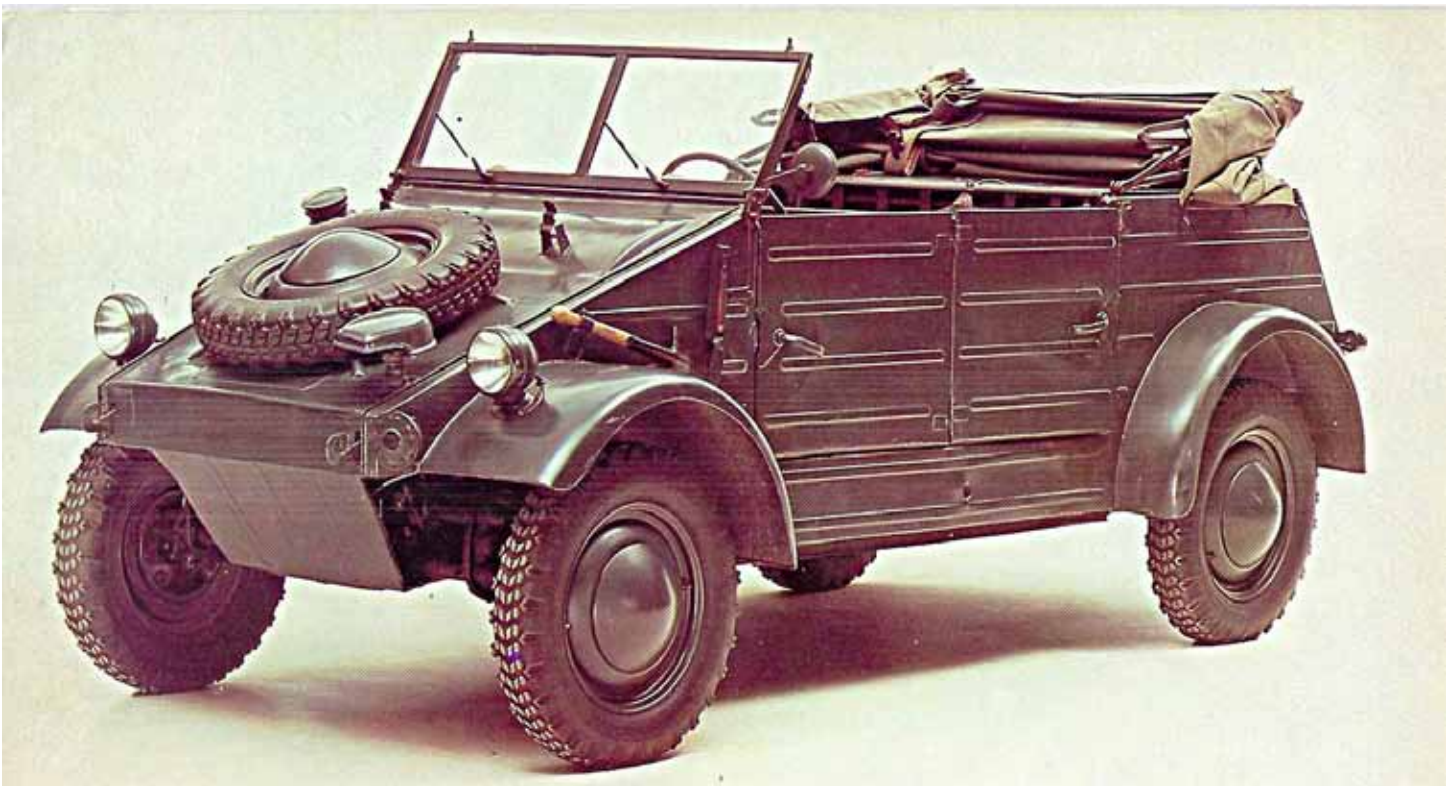
A recently hired specialist, Rudolf Ringel, who after the war became well known as the builder of a Volkswagen convertible for Ivan Hirst and one for Radclyffe known as the Radclyffe roadster, bent some sheet metal and attached it to a Volkswagen chassis. For seats he used what looked like diagonal cut metal buckets. Hence the car was nicknamed the bucket seat car, in German: Kübelsitzwagen later shortened to just Kübelwagen, ergo: Bucket car. The name stuck, some soldiers even went as far as just calling it the Kübel. Pictures show this first military prototype was based on a W30 series prototype chassis.

It looked very primitive but worked well enough and impressed the leaders of the SS. Others from the military however were not at all convinced. These were the men in charge of purchasing for the army. They had already committed to the use of other dedicated special purpose military vehicles. Besides, the lobbyists of the many German car manufacturers were eager to get contracts with the military and wanted their own vehicles used. Another factor was that the whole Volkswagen idea was still in its gestation period, little known and tested by 1937/38. There was not even a factory, a good reason for the military not to commit to it. Porsche however realized the possibility of additional business and on May 15 1938, Karl Rabe; his right hand man, made a first drawing of a military Volkswagen, known as the Type 62. We know the Type 60

was the actual Volkswagen, the Type 61 a contemplated smaller car with the engine in front, drawn up by Xavier Reimspiess, an idea never seriously pursued. Now we have the Type 62, the military car project.

Three Type 62s were built during 1938. The first one looked too civilian to the military and besides they asked for more traction and power. The second one had a limited slip differential to improve traction. The third one did already look a lot like the final Kübelwagen. It had 18 inch wheels to improve ground clearance. Still not good enough, Xavier Reimspiess, the all around genius at the Porsche-works, developed reduction gears, which increased ground clearance. These changes lowered the gear ratio and increased traction. This latest version went back to using the original 16 inch wheels and it in its final form became the Type 82. This was the designation the Kübelwagen carried from now on. It was compared and tested against other vehicles where it did very well. The Army and SS hierarchy accepted the design in general.

An order was given in late October 1938 to build eight Type 82s for final testing. In addition, two four wheel drive version of the Type 82 were built, these were the Type 86. After these new tests turned out satisfactory to all concerned, orders were given to produce 1,400 Kübelwagen in 1940. Since the factory was not set up for any production because construction had been partially stopped at the beginning of



the war, it took until August 1940, one year after WW2 had started, to begin production in larger numbers. 1,010 were completed by the end of that first year. German industry, since the beginning of WW2 in September of 1939, had to work under wartime conditions and all materials and manpower was rationed. Because of extreme shortages, Volkswagen never reached its full production goals during the war. The manpower situation was remedied by using forced labor but the material shortage could never be overcome. Even Hitler's decree that the Kübelwagen should be the only military car build, replacing all other such cars as well as motorcycles, could not overcome the many shortages.

As the war progressed Porsche developed about 37 variations of the Kübelwagen for the military. It sure kept the Porsche office busy and profitable. Some were quite interesting like the amphibious known as the Schwimmwagen and the four wheel drive versions but many turned out to be useless and a few ideas existed just as project numbers and were never actually build. Anyway, a total of 62,285 military vehicles based on Volkswagen were built from 1940 to 1945. Of these 14, 274 were Schwimmwagen, the amphibious version. 667 Kübelwagen had four wheel drive chassis the known as the Type 87. 546 two wheel drive Kübelwagen chassis had Beetle bodies. As an interesting comparison, the United States built about 640,000 of its Jeep during WW2.

The only other German vehicle for the military built in even larger numbers as the Kübelwagen was the 3 ton Opel Blitz truck built in a brand new GM plant in Berlin confiscated from General Motors. 130 000 of those trucks were built; some even had four wheel drive. This factory was wiped out by Allied bombing in late 1944. The man in charge of Opel's truck production was the well known to us, Heinrich (Heinz) Nordhoff. Interestingly enough, because of his having such a high position with the war effort, General Motors refused to hire him back after the war and that is why he ended up at Volkswagen.

Production of the Kübelwagen continued until advanced units of American Forces arrived at the factory April 11th, 1945. Only a few days after this event some employees at the factory started to finish some of the partially completed Kübelwagens sitting on the assembly line utilizing parts lying around in the rubble. Some of these finished cars were stolen right off the assembly line by disgruntled forced laborers still hanging around Wolfsburg. However 138 Kübelwagen were handed over to the US military motor pool during May. Later after the British arrived an additional 522 Kübelwagen were built before the end of 1945, now designated the Type 21. The

very last Kübelwagen was built in the month of February 1946. 805 Beetles with Kübelwagen chassis, now called the Type 51, were produced between August 1945 and February 1946.

During WW2, as early as 1943 and after, a number of captured military Kübelwagens were evaluated by the Allies. One American test resulted in a negative report. The lack of four wheel drive was considered a shortcoming while another US test was more favorable and praised the light weight of the car as being of great advantage. British tests were mostly negative. However Australians would have loved to have the Kübelwagen for their army and after the war showed great interest in building them down under.

During actual war time conditions, the German army had great difficulties keeping their vehicles on the road and usable. Parts supplies and service was poorly organized. In that respect it is interesting to note that the US Army published a guideline and repair manual for the Kübelwagen in July of 1944 in case Kübelwagens would be captured and used by the Allies, as some of them actually were.

In conclusion: Having the Volkswagen factory built military cars during the war was of great benefit to after-war production. Firstly, the factory was not ready in 1939 to build any cars. To get the contract to build military cars allowed Wolfsburg to finish setting up the production line and the tools, as well as to continue with the construction of the factory buildings. In addition, it allowed the management team to hold together and gain invaluable experience in mass production. Ferdinand Piech, the grandson of Ferdinand Porsche and at present head of the supervisory board of VW, believes, as he writes in his autobiography, that the great after war success of the Beetle was entirely based on the reputation and accolades the military vehicles had garnered during the war. He is not alone in that opinion, an opinion which I do not share.

Some changes introduced to the cars during the production of the military vehicles did also greatly help VW products after the war. The main one was the increase in displacement of the engine from 985cc to 1131 which gave only a slight increase in horse power but resulted in a substantial increase in torque. The especially developed rear reduction gears benefited the Transporter after 1949.

Researching the history of the Kübelwagen I came across another interesting fact. Nordhoff was criticized for charging about 4,000 marks for a Volkswagen after the war. Many still remembered Hitler promise to sell a Volkswagen for 1,000 marks to the public. As we know today, Volkswagen charged the German government about 3,000 marks for each Kübelwagen; this was and is considered by many a realistic price for such an austere vehicle. — *By Heinz Schneider s.heinzo@verizon.net*

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Since 1978, Volkswagen had been quietly turning out brand new air-cooled Beetles at their plant in Puebla, Mexico. This state-of-the-art plant, with 14,000 employees, produced 1.7 million Sedans. The “Sedan” (its official name in Mexico), was only produced for the local market and was not exported. They also produced the New Beetle and New Beetle convertible model, which were exported to Europe, the U.S., and other parts of the world.

When air-cooled Volkswagen sales were at their peak, 1.3 million Beetles were being produced worldwide, while the Puebla factory produced fewer than 30,000 classic Beetle Sedans that last year. Rumors surrounded the fate of the Sedan for years, and a few times it looked as though production was going to be halted. Fortunately, Volkswagen decided to keep producing the Sedan and continue the tradition right up until 2003.

“True stars and their fans know when it’s time to quit.”
--Dr. Jens Neumann, Volkswagen AG19

As the saying goes, “all good things must come to an end,” and in June of 2003 Volkswagen made it official by announcing that production of the rear-engine, air-cooled, classic VW Beetle will end. Dr. Jens Neumann, member of the Management Board of Volkswagen AG

and head of the North America Region stated, “True stars and their fans know when it’s time to quit.”

The Sedan had been Mexico’s unofficial taxicab for years with thousands of them filling the streets, looking to pickup passengers. The Vocho, as it is affectionately known in Mexico, had also been a delivery van, a police car and a family sedan. The government of Mexico decided that for passenger safety all future taxis were required to have four doors, and of course the Sedan had only two. Could this have helped contribute to the drop in sales, or were other automobile manufacturers producing faster, more efficient cars, nudging the Beetle out of the market?

To commemorate the end of an era, Volkswagen decided to produce a Sedan called the “Ultima Edicion” or “Last Edition.” Production of this special edition was limited to only 3000 units and sold only in Mexico. According to Oscar Octavio Osorio Cortes in New Media Marketing at VW de Mexico, to export the Sedan, the assembly line would have to be extensively modified. Additional planning and development would be needed to produce a car that would meet the vehicle standards of foreign countries. Due to high costs this would not be possible. The Ultima Edicion draws elements from past



and present models; this retro-styled Sedan really has a classic look. It was basically a standard Beetle, using the traditional torsion bar suspension, upright spare tire and flat windshield, with an updated engine and electronics. This vehicle lends itself well to the Wolfsburg emblems, chrome bumpers, mirrors and moldings that are all part of this classic--look Volkswagen, and with a price of \$84,000 Mexican pesos (approximately \$8000 U.S. dollars) this special edition sold out quickly.

Only two colors were chosen for the Ultima Edicion, Aquarius Blue and Harvest Moon Beige. Both colors have a vintage feel to them and come with black or gray interiors respectively. VW put a lot of time and effort into combining the best of old and new technologies by installing, in the traditional flat dashboard, an AM/FM/CD player. The sound system featured four speakers, with two installed in the front door panels and two in the rear shelf over the cargo area. According to the VWoM Web site, never before has such an elaborate audio system been installed in a Sedan. Extra sound dampening material has been added to improve the sound quality and lessen road and engine noise. The dashboard was painted to match the exterior of the car and the driver's door panel has the well-known VW map pocket.

Other high tech features include a 1600cc engine with electronic fuel injection, front disc brakes, halogen headlights and a factory installed security system with immobilizer. But it's the exterior where the retro-style of the Ultima Edicion is most evident. Mounted on 15-inch steel wheels painted to match the exterior body color are wide whitewall tires. These nostalgic items combined with

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classic VW chrome hubcaps take you back to the past. VW hopes that the retro-look of the Sedan will allow people to reminisce and relive fond memories of one of the most beloved cars in the world.

To coincide with the release of the Ultima Edicion, VwoM launched a micro-site on the Internet that followed the Beetle's history from 1934 to 1978. This world-class site had many unique features incorporated into it. You could follow a Sedan along the assembly line, could download a picture for your desktop or play with the interactive homepage. The website was translated into German and English and was Volkswagens' way of reaching out to all air-cooled enthusiasts around the



world.

The fateful day finally came on July 30, 2003, when the 21,529,464th Beetle rolled off the production line. This Harvest Moon Beige Sedan was shipped across the Atlantic Ocean to its new home at the Automuseum in Wolfsburg. The workforce of 300 workers from the assembly line that produced the Sedan were on hand to bid it a fond farewell by draping it in flowers while mariachi music played in the background. Along with the Volkswagen dignitaries on hand at the ceremony was 60-year-old Armando Pasillas. He is a factory worker who had been helping to assemble Beetle Sedans since 1967. The Ultima Edicion was the crowning achievement of his long career with Volkswagen.

In a short speech, Reinhardt Jung, Chairman of the Volkswagen de Mexico Board of Management, thanked the Mexican staff, "who had not only worked in the production of a car, but also in the creation of a legend. A legend that would endure in the hearts and minds of all people for whom the Beetle had been a companion on their journeys." When the curtain finally came down; the Beetle had been in production for close to 70 years, this record is not likely to be surpassed by any other vehicle in the near future. And even though the most recognizable car in the world has driven off into the Mexican sunset it will always have a place in the hearts of VW lovers everywhere.

View a video of the Volkswagen Beetle's final days on the assembly line in Puebla, Mexico. Courtesy of the VVWCA. Go to: www.vvwca.com.

—Wayne Dean, SuperBeetles.com/AllAirCooled.com



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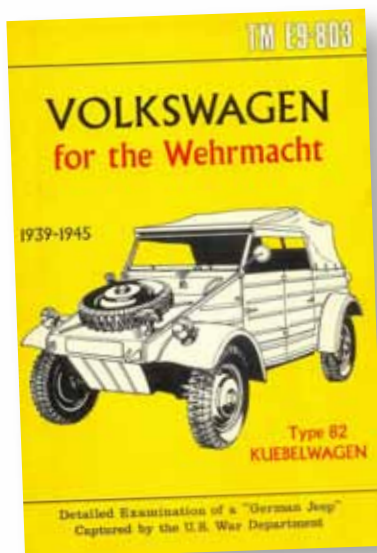
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Originally published by the US War Department on July 6th 1944 as a "War Department Technical Manual", it is subtitled "Detailed Examination of a "German Jeep Captured by U.S. War Department". For those having knowledge of details of World War II may recall July 6th was "D" Day. This was the day the allies invaded "Fortress Europe" as Hitler called it. While this book was published first in 1944, and its use was restricted to military personal, apparently a California company, Post Era Motor books, in Arcadia,

Ca 91006, secured the right to republish it in 1972. The same publisher also published the very informative book "Volkswagen, Nine Lives later" which has many very interesting pictures of early Volkswagen details. The same publisher also published a very good book about the US Jeep.

This manual was written to help US soldiers to use captured Kübelwagen. Any half-ways handy soldier should have had no trouble keeping this particular car maintained and even repaired using this manual provided parts were available. The manual must have kept many military personal from having to fighting at the front. The effort to write it must have been substantial because it has many detailed drawings and information of different parts of the Kübelwagen as well as the specifications for adjustments like for instance of the valves and torque requirements to tighten certain bolts. Maintenance intervals and trouble shooting is well explained. As well as driving instruction under different road and weather conditions are given. One however has to wonder whether any soldier at the front was really concerned about the maintenance of this car.

The Germans left many of their military cars behind because of lack of fuel and in many other cases for the lack of spare parts for the repair of broken down vehicles. Since fuel was no problems for the US or British forces, they were able to use some of these abandoned cars. There are in existence a number of pictures showing GIs driving captured Kübelwagen. More pictures exist showing British soldiers in Kübelwagen some even use German drivers driving British officers.

While it is not mentioned anywhere in this book, it appears that this book is based on the examination of Kübelwagen captured by the British in North Africa in 1943. After the capitulation of the Italian and German forces in North-Africa much German military equipment fell into the hands of these allies. These were the first Volkswagen to enter the United States. They were disassembled, tested and reassembled at the US Army testing grounds at Aberdeen, Maryland. I can only repeat this is very detailed book. No part of the Kübelwagen is left out. It must have taken quite a few people to provide this much detailed information. The main conclusion of the investigation and the tests by the US Army was that the Kübelwagen was far inferior to the Jeep only its light weight was a positive and it was considered to be more comfortable as the Jeep. —H. Schneider

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