

Volkswagen 1300 Beetle

Designed by Porsche under orders from Adolf Hitler for a “Peoples Car”, the VW Beetle was initially designed to provide cheap transport for the hard working German masses. Built in very small numbers before and during World War II, Beetle production mushroomed under guidance from the British Army after the war at the rebuilt Wolfsburg factory with total output eventually passing the 15,000,000 mark when the car became the bestselling car of all time. A total of 2,726,154 1300cc versions were produced between 1966 and 1975. Production in Germany ceased in the late 1970s but the Beetle continued to be manufactured in Mexico until 2003. A new version, based on the popular Golf Mk4 platform, was reintroduced by VW in 2003.



The basic Beetle rear-engine/rear wheel drive layout was used in all of the Beetle derivatives, the engine itself being an air-cooled, horizontally opposed unit. Strangely enough, speculation suggests that its peculiar styling, underpowered motor, rough ride, and high noise levels compared to modern vehicles should have made it a market failure. However, in its day, it was more comfortable and powerful than most European small cars, and ultimately the longest-running and most-produced automobile of a single design.

The Volkswagen 1300 Beetle in the BK Museum was acquired in its current condition in 2004.