

Product Design Icons



Developed initially in the early 30s, the VW Beetle was in production for 65 years, and with over 21.5 million made worldwide, it is the world's best-selling single car design and one of the world's most popular and recognizable cars ever. Perhaps most remarkable about the VW Beetle, however, is how few exterior changes were made to the VW Beetle in its seven decades on the road. The VW Beetle began when Adolf Hitler submitted sketches to Ferdinand Porsche for a proposed *Volks-Wagen*, or *People's Car*. The *Volks-Wagen* would be a basic vehicle to transport two adults and three children at 60 mph. The economy car was designed to be as simple as possible mechanically, so less could go wrong.

While conceived in 1933, only a handful of VW Beetles had been produced when World War II started in 1939 and consequently, the first volume-produced versions of the car's chassis were military vehicles. After World War II, production of the consumer VW Beetle began again and continued to increase. During this Post-war period, the Beetle had superior performance in its category and was even competitive with more modern small cars like the Mini of the 1960s and later, and was the top-selling foreign car in the US market.

The VW Beetle was the benchmark for both generations of American compact cars such as the Chevrolet Corvair and subcompact cars such as the Ford Pinto and Chevrolet Vega. On February 17, 1972, VW Beetle No. 15,007,034 was produced, breaking the previous record held by the Ford Model T for number of single design automobiles produced. In 2003, the final VW Beetle, No. 21,529,464 was produced, 65 years after its original launch. A recent VW Beetle resurgence has occurred with Volkswagen's release of the New Beetle in 2000. Styled similarly to its predecessor, the New Beetle is a modern version of the classic with a front wheel drive design built on the VW Golf platform.

Morphing from the car to kick-start the post war German economy, to the vehicle of choice for fashion-conscious people throughout the western world, the VW Beetle legacy continues on today, remaining a benchmark by which all other automobile design campaigns will be judged for years to come.