

50 YEARS OF GOLF



Golf GTE – Near-production vehicle

Timeless

50 years of Golf design

Innovative

All 8 generations at a glance

Successful

More than 37 million units built

50 years of Golf



6



8



10



14



18

1
2



22

26



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¹ Golf GTI – Near-production vehicle

² Golf GTE – Near-production vehicle



'The Golf has been a constant for 50 years – while being incredibly versatile at the same time.'

Thomas Schäfer

CEO Volkswagen Brand, Member of the Board of Management of Volkswagen AG, Brand Group Core

Dear Friends,

With more than 37 million vehicles delivered in over 70 countries, the Golf is one of the most successful cars ever produced. This year we are celebrating its 50th birthday.

Personally, I am fascinated by three things in particular about this exceptional talent.

Firstly, the Golf is a classless car. In a Golf, everyone is 'well-dressed', and thanks to its well-balanced properties it is a true all-rounder. Anyone who opts for a Golf is always making the right decision.

At the same time, the Golf is anything but boring, which brings us to secondly. It is adored by an international community of fans – as a loyal companion in everyday life, as a lovingly restored classic or as a sporty GTI. By the way, I am particularly pleased that the legendary GTI Meeting event will take place in Wolfsburg this year – right at the heart of Volkswagen.

Thirdly, the Golf has been a constant at Volkswagen for 50 years, while at the same time being incredibly versatile and a driver of innovation. This is precisely what we are now building on with the next evolutionary stage – with even higher efficiency, comfort and quality and a new operating concept.

Above all, the Golf stands for countless exciting stories. Its 50th birthday is just the right moment to tell them.

So, happy birthday to the Golf. I hope you enjoy reading all about it.

Yours,
Thomas Schäfer

THE PIONEERS

At the end of the 1960s, a successor was sought for the most successful Volkswagen to date, the Beetle. The expectations were high: the new vehicle had to be dynamic, but also comfortable and safe – and spacious yet compact. Engineers and designers from Volkswagen, Porsche and Audi got to work.



1969–1971

VOLKSWAGEN EA 266

In 1969, the development order (EA) 266 went to Porsche KG. A prototype with a self-supporting body, large boot lid and mid-engine concept was created. The water-cooled in-line engine was integrated under the rear bench seat. However, the unfavourable location made access difficult for repair and maintenance work. Nevertheless, the EA 266 offered a very sporty performance with a top speed of 187 km/h. The project was stopped in October 1971. More than 50 vehicles had been built by then, of which only a handful have survived.

Sporty centre

Good overall concept, but room for improvement in the detail.



Two worlds combined

Pioneering design, tried-and-tested engine.

1969

VOLKSWAGEN EA 276

The EA 276 was developed in Wolfsburg. The concept incorporated many features of the successful model from later on: front engine with front-wheel drive, fastback with large boot lid, torsion beam axle, fuel tank located under the rear bench seat. But under the bonnet was the well-known Beetle boxer engine with air cooling – the focus was on reliability and low development costs. The striking styling of the two-door compact car was not based on any other Volkswagen known to date. Only a single, not fully functional vehicle was built.

1969–1971

VOLKSWAGEN EA 337

The decisive course for the future Golf is set in Ingolstadt. There, Rudolf Leiding is responsible for the Audi models 100 and 80, both of which are powered at the front wheels by a water-cooled in-line four-cylinder engine. A drive concept that, under his leadership in Wolfsburg from 1971 onwards, finally put the Golf on track. At this time, Giorgetto Giugiaro, who also creates the Passat and the Scirocco, is already in charge of the design. Under the direction of chief designer Herbert Schäfer, the Golf is further developed for series production.

Step-by-step Golf

Initially with rectangular headlights and a flatter windscreen, then further refined.





ENTERING A NEW AGE

Clear lines, pure design – the new Volkswagen was a revolutionary development in 1974. Giorgetto Giugiaro designed the Golf and created an icon, no less.

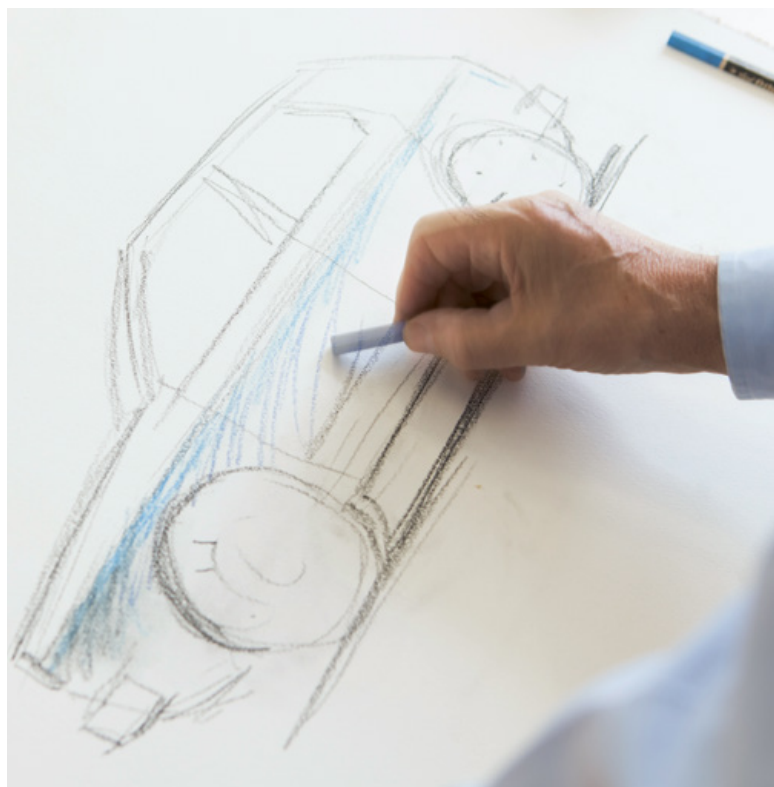
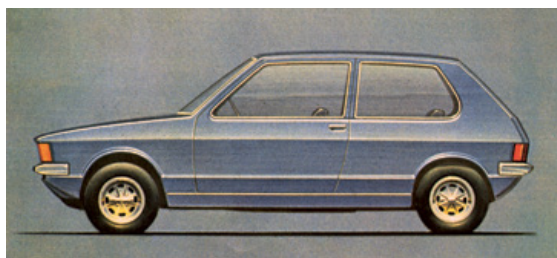
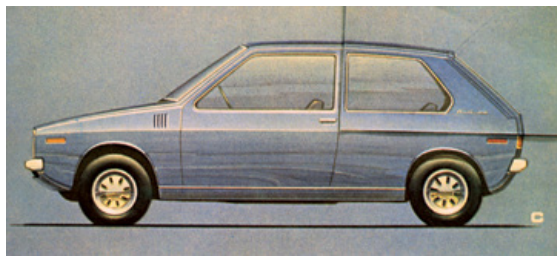
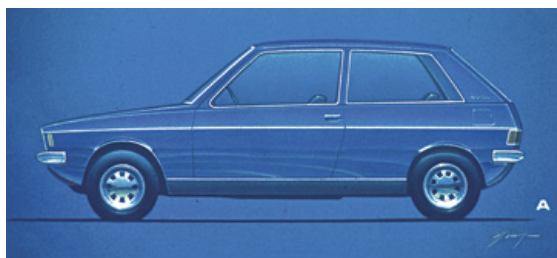
opportunity! The ideas about the new model type were just as specific. 'The new mass-produced car should be a modern compact car with a boot lid – in other words, a variable vehicle in line with the new trend. Volkswagen already recognised that correctly back then.'

Designing a completely new model as a successor to a bestseller is a big challenge for a designer. 'Creating a beautiful vehicle is easy if you only make a few of them. But if you want to build thousands of them, you have to design the car in such a way that it's easy to assemble,' Giugiaro emphasised. 'A designer, as I see myself, must always be more than just a stylist.' And so practicality also influenced his designs for the Golf. 'Originally, I had planned the rectangular headlights to be a mirror image of the tail light clusters in terms of their dimensions and arrangement. But that cost too much, so I had to take the round headlights.'

Giorgetto Giugiaro, one of the most important automotive designers of our time, stands for simplicity and innovative design – and he also played an important role for Volkswagen. With the creation of a new model family, Giugiaro also designed Volkswagen's new style from 1970. Maestro Giugiaro still likes to remember the creation of the Golf even after decades, and spoke about it with the Volkswagen Classic editorial team at Italdesign in Turin a few years ago.

At the first meeting in Wolfsburg in January 1970, the then Volkswagen CEO Kurt Lotz quickly got to the point: 'We want you to design a successor to the Beetle for us. And we will be satisfied if the space in the interior is about the same as that of the Beetle,' recalled Giugiaro. There were also already specifications from Volkswagen: 'They showed me sketches and diagrams, and then talked about the project of an entire model family and asked if I would be prepared to take on the task – and I was extremely happy about this

What makes the Golf so special? Giugiaro took a pencil and paper, quickly scratched the charcoal over the paper sheet, and after a few seconds the worldwide success story from Wolfsburg was sketched out: a Golf – unmistakably. Clean lines, reduced to the essentials. Particularly striking is the C-pillar, which lives on in every new Golf. Good design proves itself. Giugiaro knew that. 'The reason why the Golf was such a success was because everything was just right!'



Clean aesthetics

The master of straight lines defined the proportions at an early stage. The bottom sketch shows a version that is close to the production version with round headlights.

Giugiaro's favourite colour

'Blue! I've always seen the Golf I in light blue.'

THE ESSENCE OF THE BRAND

Andreas Mindt has been in charge of design at the Volkswagen brand since 2023. This represents a return to his old workplace as he was already involved in the design of the Golf V and VI, and the Golf VII bears his full signature. In the interview, Andreas Mindt looks back on eight generations – and into the future.

Every Golf has its own character. How do you as the design expert see each of the eight generations?

The Golf I is the iconic original, an extremely important Volkswagen. The Golf II is the modernisation of the original and the invention of continuity. The Golf III carries the DNA into modern times. The cleanly designed Golf IV reflects the courage to focus on the essentials. And the Golf V is once again the modernisation of its predecessor where the team has succeeded in creating a very dynamic Golf design. With the Golf VI, maximum precision and sharp edges were incorporated. The Golf VII is the pure essence – the best elements of all generations in one vehicle. And with its flat front end, the eighth Golf is once again a dynamic further development of the Golf VII.

What makes the design of the first Golf so unique?

Firstly, the golden ratio can be found everywhere on the Golf I – just like on the Volkswagen Beetle. In terms of the ratio between the glass and door surfaces in particular, everything was very well

balanced. This natural-looking design immediately made it very popular. Secondly, it also had something extremely progressive from the outset. For example, if you place a DeLorean DMC-12 (*Note: the basis for the time machine from 'Back to the Future'*) next to a Golf I, then you can see that the Golf is equally progressive. We have always tried to distil this essence and pass it on to every generation. In this way, the Golf has become the essence of the Volkswagen brand.

Is there a single inspired moment in the history of the Golf?

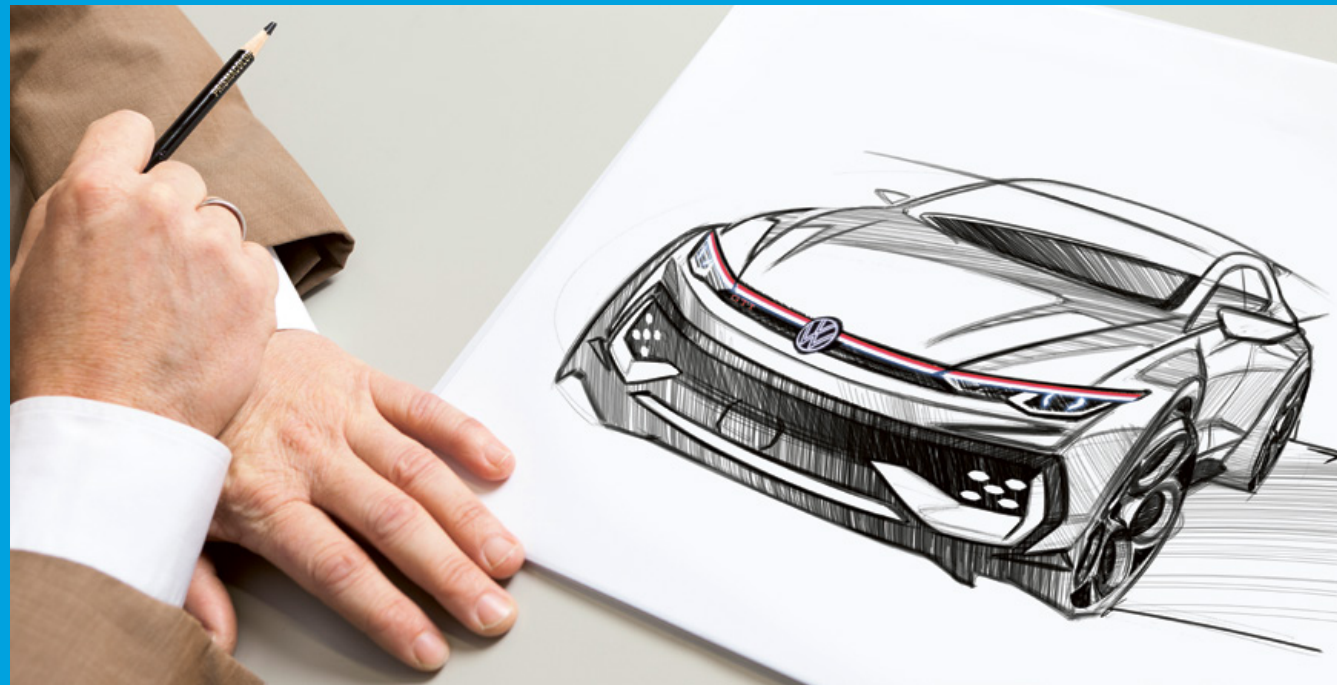
Yes, it's the switch from Golf I to Golf II. Volkswagen's then chief designer Herbert Schäfer did everything right there. He modernised the second Golf, but kept the DNA of the first generation. This bridge is extremely important for the Golf history. The Golf has always remained a further development of this original model. That is the special thing about the Golf, and the credit for this is due to Herbert Schäfer.

A passion for design

For Andreas Mindt, automotive design is a passion. His own vehicles include a beige Volkswagen Beetle, which he has owned for many years.



'The Golf has always smiled. And this also applies to today's Golf.'



What distinguished the design of the second Golf generation in particular?

The Golf II had this beautiful chamfer that ran right around the car. A kind of divider. And the upper part of the body stood on this chamfer. It was extremely modern, really fantastic. And it was also the first car with tail lights that were located higher up. All other vehicles had their tail lights low down. The Golf II clearly set a design trend here.

Among the generations that are no longer built, many fans and experts consider the design of the Golf I, IV and VII to be particularly successful. Do you think they are right?

Generations I, IV and VII are the strongest. But the generations in between are just as important for the development. The Golf II is gaining in significance because it carried on the DNA of the Golf I. Or the Golf III: The headlights were a special feature here as they were designed as free-form headlights for the first time.

The headlights of the Golf III were based on the twin headlights of the GTI II and put in a common housing, right?

Exactly. And the Golf IV had those in their purest form because the headlights featured a stylised belt drive. The designer Michael Werner was the one who contributed that idea. He said: 'Let's make a kind of belt drive design.' So two round headlights, connected by an imaginary belt.

How has it been possible to transport the iconic design of the Golf so successfully through time?

First of all, we must remember that Volkswagen is a high-volume manufacturer. It is therefore important that there are no weak generations in a world bestseller like the Golf – because otherwise the assembly line in Wolfsburg would only run at

half speed. So with a Golf, experiments are always associated with a high risk. A Golf must therefore not polarise. On the other hand, however, we still want to include interesting details and set standards. And that is exactly what has happened. For example, with the Golf IV it was the great achievement of the then Head of Design Harmut Warkuß to make the Golf IV so clean by leaving out details. Such omission requires courage and strength. Warkuß had both. He reduced the design to the silhouette, the iconic C-pillar and the joints. Another example is the Golf VII: in 2012, all cars in the segment had shoulders. The Golf VII was the only one that didn't – against the trend. This design made it exceptional. People liked that. And that's the trick: a Golf must please, but not polarise.

Its design strategy is based on the three pillars of stability, likeability and a surprising 'secret sauce'. Which features of the current Golf represent these pillars?

The stability of the current Golf is due, among other things, to the silhouette, in other words, the ratio of the window graphics to the exterior contour. And it has strong roof pillars that look stable. In addition, the surfaces of the body exude tension in all directions so that there is also a lot of strength in the shape. The secret sauce includes the short rear overhang and the longer overhang at the front. As a result, the Golf moves forward visually. This impression is enhanced by the steep C-pillar and the flat, fast A-pillar. And likeability is naturally important. The Golf has always smiled. And this also applies to today's Golf. In general, the design strategy should also distil what Volkswagen stands for and has stood for since the first Beetle. It was also stable, likeable and had something special. That's what a Volkswagen has always had. And that's why it's so easy and also right to move into the future with this strategy now.

ALWAYS INNOVATIVE

The Golf has been synonymous with the democratisation of technical progress right from the start. A small selection of technical milestones.

FUEL-SAVING TECHNOLOGY

E FOR ECONOMY

From 1980 onwards, the fuel-saving concept known as 'Formula E' was introduced in series production. This offered a savings potential of one to just under two litres of fuel per 100 kilometres in everyday use. The Golf I was available as a Formula E version from 1981 to 1983 – featuring aerodynamically smoothed sections with A-pillar trims and additional spoilers, tyres optimised for rolling resistance, a longer-ratio 3+E gearbox and a gear-change indicator. Formula E was a precursor to later start/stop systems and the coasting function. The Golf II eco-diesel was used in fleet tests in 1989 and had a consumption of only 5.5 litres/100 km. As of 1993, this technology was standard in the Golf III Ecomatic, which anticipated aspects of BlueMotion technology. From 2007, the Golf V was launched as a BlueMotion version – with an average consumption of just 4.5 l/100 km.

Formula for economy

All Formula E models had a particularly long-ratio highest gear.

FOUR-VALVE TECHNOLOGY

MORE DRIVING PLEASURE

Four valves per cylinder, driven by two overhead camshafts – with the Golf II GTI 16V, a new engine with great potential was used. More valves ensured better mixture formation and supported cleaner combustion. While the first derivatives of the legendary 827 engine were still basically two-valve engines, responsive four-valve engines featured in the Golf series for the first time in 1986. Previously, four-valve engines had already been put through their paces in motorsport, for example, in the Golf I GTI Rheila.



Golf II GTI 16V (1986)

The fastest Golf to date with 102 kW (139 PS).

Four by four

With syncro, the Golf became a compact traction specialist.



ALL-WHEEL DRIVE

CONNECT FOUR

In 1986, the first Volkswagen model in the compact class with all-wheel drive made its debut in the form of the Golf II syncro. As in the T3 and the Passat, the syncro drive concept developed by Volkswagen was used with a viscous coupling. With the Golf syncro, all-wheel drive was finally made available to the masses. The Golf Country, an off-road vehicle based on a raised Golf syncro, available from 1990 to 1991, played a special role. In the 1998 Golf IV, this was followed by the electronically controlled all-wheel drive coupling on the rear axle that was originally used in motorsport. Since then, all the all-wheel-drive models have gone under the name 4MOTION.

SUPERCHARGING

EXTRA BOOST PRESSURE

The first supercharged petrol engines powered the Golf G60 from the end of the eighties. The proven 1.8-litre four-cylinder engine was supplied with more fresh air for combustion via a scroll-type supercharger, which worked similarly to a compressor. A major advantage of the system: no turbo lag as the power was already available at low engine speeds. A twincharged engine, the 1.4-litre TSI, was then used for the first time in the 2005 Golf V GT. The Golf's engine range was dominated by supercharged engines – they provided more power and more torque with less consumption than more powerful engines.



Golf II G60

A real racer with scroll-type supercharger and today a coveted collector's item.



Digital Golf

With the 'DigiFiz' Digital Driver Information Centre, digital technology was introduced into the cockpit for the first time.

DIGITAL COCKPIT

LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

In 1986, the Golf surprised with futuristic-looking digital displays: the 'DigiFiz' – the short form of the German for 'Digital Driver Information Centre' – celebrated its première in the Golf II. This comprised

a digital speedometer with liquid-crystal display with previously unprecedented precision and was available as an option. It was suddenly possible to display the exact speed, distance, fuel level or coolant temperature. As of the Golf IV, rectangular digital displays were integrated as standard for the first time. The 'DigiFiz' as the start of the digital cockpit was an early pioneer of the Active Info Displays.

LIGHTING DEVELOPMENT

NEW VISIBILITY

With its clear-glass headlights, the Golf IV presented itself as an innovation pioneer from 1997 onwards. The era of the lens had come to an end, the new technology of the free-form reflector significantly increased the usable light intensity, and the interior headlight design set new standards. From now on, the new headlights shaped the brand face and gave the front of the vehicle its own expression. In addition to newly designed LED systems, the illuminated Volkswagen logo will be used for the first time on the front of a European Volkswagen in 2024 – and will help define a new, unmistakable Volkswagen light design.



Quantum leap

In 1997, clear-glass headlights made it possible for the first time to combine lighting technology and design.

In 2024, the Golf will be presented with a new light design, with revised LED headlights and illuminated badge.

ELECTRIC CARS AND HYBRIDS

FUTURE ZERO EMISSION

Electric versions of the Golf have existed since the first generation. In 1976, the prototype of the electric Golf I was the first test vehicle. The CitySTROMer pilot project was tested from 1981 in cooperation with development partner RWE. Around 25 Golf I CitySTROMer models were produced in a very small series – the first electric Golf suitable for everyday use. The heavy lead-acid batteries were located in the luggage compartment floor, as also in the second-generation Golf CitySTROMer. Between 1985 and 1991, 70 Golf II CitySTROMer vehicles were produced and used in fleet trials. The Golf III CitySTROMer was the first electric Golf to be offered on the open market in 1993. In cooperation with Siemens, the new edition of the electric car had been created, with battery modules located in the engine

compartment and luggage compartment floor, and 120 units were produced up to 1996. In the meantime, Volkswagen had also addressed the topic of hybrid vehicles and had realised test vehicles based on the Golf – from Generation II through to the Golf VI TwinDrive from 2011. In 2010, the Golf VI Blue-e-motion was developed as a near-production electric vehicle with state-of-the-art lithium-ion technology, representing a quantum leap in terms of range and performance. The around 140 vehicles were tested in large-scale fleet trials at home and abroad. From 2014, two production vehicles were the logical next step on the journey towards sustainability: the e-Golf, the first mass-produced Volkswagen model with all-electric drive and state-of-the-art assist systems. And with the Golf GTE, Volkswagen presented a plug-in hybrid for the first time. Since 2020, the eighth model generation has been available with dual drive systems with two output levels – the Golf eHybrid and the sporty Golf GTE.

THREE CAPITAL LETTERS

The GTI – innovative technology, rich sound and, above all, pure driving pleasure since 1976. From the very beginning, it has inspired people. Since 2014, also as the efficient plug-in hybrid GTE.



GOLF I GTI 1976

When Volkswagen presented the Golf GTI at the 1975 International Motor Show, it was astonishing to see 110 horsepower in such a discreet package. The sporty saloon with injection technology and a kerb weight of just 810 kilograms offered incredible performance at the time with a top speed of 182 km/h and acceleration from 0 to 100 km/h in 9.0 seconds. Production did not stop

with the planned special series of 5,000 units; in fact, almost 22,000 vehicles were registered in Germany alone by 1977. The GTI became a cult car from the outset and established the 'GTI class' named after it as the first – and most successful – model of a sporty compact car. To this day, the three letters are still considered magical in its fan community.

GOLF GTI¹ 2024



In the eighth generation, the iconic sports model of the product line promises absolute driving pleasure in true GTI style. Fans can look forward to even more performance: The Golf GTI from 2024 is even sportier, and the output of the 2.0-litre turbocharged petrol engine has been increased again compared to its predecessor. The model impresses with sporty, high-quality equipment, the GTI-specific Digital Cockpit Pro and a powerful GTI design, including a large honeycomb radiator grille in the bumper, traditional red trim strips in the radiator grille and the new headlights – as well as premium sports seats in the legendary check pattern.



GOLF GTE² 2024

The 2024 Golf GTE is still closely related to the GTI. However, the GT-specific design uses the colour blue for typical trim elements and details in the GTE. And at the rear, the Golf GTE, which can usually be driven electrically in every-day life, is distinguished by an elegant chrome strip above the diffuser instead of the tailpipes

of the GTI. The new Golf GTE transfers the power from the combustion engine and electric drive to the front wheels via a 6-speed DSG specially designed for plug-in hybrid drives. Extremely efficient, the new plug-in hybrid drive enables an electric range of around 100 km.

¹ Golf GTI – Near-production vehicle

² Golf GTE – Near-production vehicle

200 metres Golf I




2,000 metres Golf VIII

Compared to the current Golf, only a moderate amount of cable material is needed for the electrical system in the Golf I.

The roll bar on the Golf I Convertible gives rise to the nickname **strawberry basket**. Only until 1975 did the cross panel on the Golf I have two oblique beads under the rear number plate, known by connoisseurs as the **swallowtail**. The sports steering wheel on the first GTI has a remarkably low hub, called the **spittoon** by fans.

 **21,517,415** Golf:
On 26 June 2002, the Golf overtakes production of the Beetle

Golf 1974 **2** Golf 2024 **9**

 drive variants



3,705 millimetres length Golf 1974

4,284 millimetres length Golf VIII

35 years

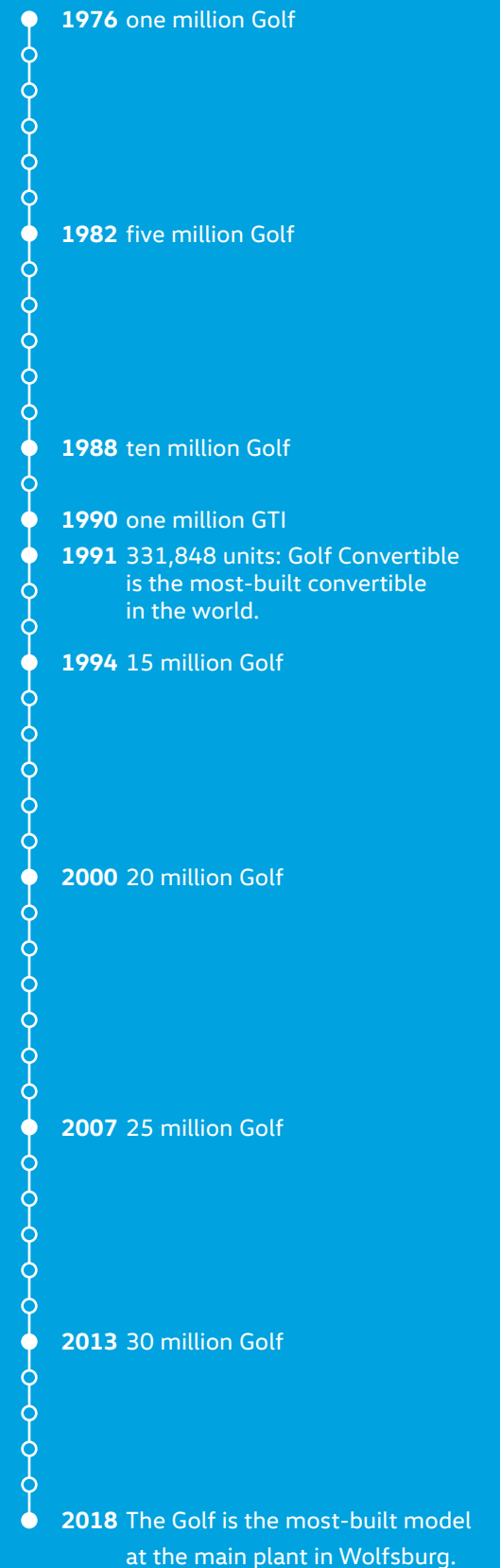
The Golf I is being built from 1974 to 2009, lastly as the Citi Golf in South Africa.



1st place



The Golf is the most successful model in Volkswagen's history.



GENUINE GOLF SPORT

Volkswagen had long held back with official motorsport activities, but this changed from 1976: with the Golf GTI, a contemporary sports car was finally available.

Just a year later, Volkswagen took part in the German Rally Championship for the first time. The Golf GTI was homologated in Group 1, and behind the wheel in 1977 was Jochi Kleint, a rally driver and also the first Volkswagen factory driver. Parallel to the GTI, the first Volkswagen naturally-aspirated diesel engine also made its debut in the Golf I. The vehicles were upgraded for use in international rallying, and in 1978 the time had come: Jochi Kleint and Andreas Hänsch took part in the Monte Carlo Rally with a turbocharged diesel Golf. The Golf fought through the winter conditions and occupied a sensational 13th place. This was the beginning of a success story. Right up to the early 1990s, Volkswagen achieved numerous victories in rally sport with the Golf. The 1986 world championship title in Group A and two German championship titles speak for themselves.

A few years later, participation in motorsport would continue on the race track – both in grassroots competitions with brand trophies and with factory programmes. Here, too, the GTI set standards with two title wins, and also shone with its reliability and marathon qualities in the famous 24-hour race at the Nürburgring.



1 Golf I GTI 'Zebra'

Volkswagen took part in the German Rally Championship for the first time in 1977. The Golf I GTI in a black-and-white zebra look was driven by Jochi Kleint.





2 Golf I GTI 'Rheila'

In 1981, Alfons Stock and co-driver Paul Schmuck won the German Rally Championship title. The bright green Golf GTI in Group 2 assumed legendary status as the 'Rheila Frog'.

3 Golf I GTI 'Pierburg'

Per Eklund and Hans Sylvan achieved outstanding results with the GTI 1980 in numerous rally events – for example, fifth place in the Monte Carlo Rally.

4 Golf II GTI 16V Group A

In 1986, the Volkswagen works team led by the Swede Kenneth Eriksson and his German co-driver Peter Diekmann secured the title in the Group A Rally World Championship, which took place for the first time.

5 Golf II Rallye G60

The Golf Rallye G60 has all-wheel drive and a scroll-type supercharger and delivers 207 kW (282 PS) to the road. In 1991, Erwin Weber and Manfred Hiemer won the German Rally Championship with it. A year earlier, the Golf G60 was already used in the World Rally Championship and achieved a podium finish in the New Zealand Rally, among other things.

6 Golf II Pikes Peak

In the 1987 edition of the legendary Pikes Peak International Hill Climb in the US state of Colorado, Jochi Kleint drove a Golf with two independent engines, each equipped with a turbocharger, which together produced 479 kW (652 PS). Kleint was on course for the best time in the twin-engine Golf before he had to give up shortly before the finish due to a defect in the suspension.

7 Golf VII GTI TCR

The TCR series born in 2015 combines top-class racing with near-series technology. 4- and 5-door vehicles with 2.0-litre turbocharged engines are approved for this series – perfect for the Golf GTI TCR. Up to 2019, Volkswagen Motorsport delivered more than 100 units of this racing car to customer teams around the world, who drove to countless victories and championships with the 250 kW (340 PS) racer. In 2019, Benny Leuchter triumphed in the World Touring Car Cup on the Nürburgring's Nordschleife.

A NEW ERA

Golf I 1974–1983

In the early 1970s, Volkswagen was looking for a successor to the Beetle – and it was no mean feat to develop a new global bestseller. Many years were spent designing, drawing, building and testing. In 1974, the time had finally come – and the step towards the Golf was nothing less than a revolution: front-wheel drive instead of rear-wheel drive, water cooling instead of air cooling, in-line engine instead of boxer engine, angular design instead of characteristic curves. The modern concept impressed across the board. Two and a half years after market launch, the first million had already been sold – and the new Volkswagen defined a new vehicle class, the Golf class. From 1976 onwards, the compact Golf impressed as a sporty GTI. In addition to the hatchback saloon, the Golf I was available as a convertible as well as a notchback saloon (Jetta) and later as a pickup (Caddy).

Total production worldwide: 6.9 million vehicles



Generation open air

From 1979, the Golf I Cabriolet epitomised joie de vivre – and was one of the most successful convertibles in the world.





Golf II 1983–1991

With detailed aerodynamic enhancements, a significantly larger interior and more economical engines, the Golf entered its second lap in 1983. The modified chassis impressed with more suspension comfort, while the lower noise level and vehicle finish set new standards. Over the course of the model cycle, the lambda-probe-controlled catalytic converter, ABS, power steering and all-wheel drive were introduced. The Volkswagen, which was completely designed in Wolfsburg, remained recognisable as a Golf at first glance despite all the changes – a key success factor for the new model. The second Golf generation was also available as a modified convertible as well as a notchback saloon (Jetta).

Total production: 6.3 million vehicles



Made for rallying

With all-wheel drive plus scroll-type supercharger and designed for motorsport: the Golf II Rallye G60 caused a stir from March 1989.

FIRST EVOLUTION

SAFELY MATURED



Golf III 1991–1997

Visibly changed compared to its predecessor, yet once again clearly recognisable as a Golf, the million-seller reached a level of development maturity that seemed reserved for the luxury class just a few years earlier. With significantly increased safety aspects, the third generation of driver and front passenger airbags, and later also side airbags, were installed in the vehicle. The crash characteristics were significantly improved. The Golf III offered numerous engine variants, including an ultra-compact six-cylinder (VR6), the first in the Golf class, and the first turbodiesel direct injection engine. The Golf III was also built as an estate car for the first time, and there was a new convertible as well as the Vento notchback saloon.

Total production: 4.8 million vehicles

Plenty of space guaranteed

The Variant first appeared in 1993 as a derivative of the Golf III and since then has combined all the advantages of the bestseller with its impressive spaciousness.



CLEAR STYLE ICON



R for Racing

In 2002, the Golf IV R32 was launched, the sportiest Golf of its time: 3.2-litre VR6 engine, 177 kW (241 PS), 247 km/h top speed and 4MOTION all-wheel drive as standard – today a cult car.

Golf IV 1997–2003

When the fourth generation was presented, it was clear that the Golf had matured into a premium vehicle. With its outstanding finish quality, it set itself apart from all competitors right from the start. The interior impressed with its high quality and set new standards in its class. Its unfussy, precise design, which also bridged the gap to the first Golf with its brilliant clarity and characteristic C-pillar design, was ground-breaking for the product line. To this day, the Golf IV is still regarded as a style icon by experts. The fourth generation was also offered as an estate and modified convertible and additionally as a Bora (notchback saloon and estate).

Total production: 4.9 million vehicles

A GREAT LEAP



More Golf

From December 2004, Volkswagen offered the Golf Plus five-door compact van for those who needed a little more space.

Golf V 2003–2008

With its high level of comfort, dynamics and, above all, quality, the fifth Golf generation left many of its competitors in the upper mid-sized class behind. The chassis underwent extensive modifications, and a new four-link axle was used at the rear. The laser-welded body also set new standards: the torsional rigidity was increased by 35 per cent compared to the predecessor. A seven-speed dual clutch gearbox, bi-xenon headlights and TSI technology were on board for the first time, and the Golf GT was equipped with the world's first twincharger with turbocharging and supercharging. The Golf Plus also made its debut in the fifth generation. The new Golf Variant and the Jetta notchback version were also very popular.

Total production: 3.4 million vehicles



Open air comeback

After a ten-year break, a new Golf Cabriolet went into production in March 2011. The open-top four-seater had a modern look and dispensed with the distinctive roll bar.

Golf VI 2008–2012

'A new quality experience' was the slogan for the market launch of the sixth generation. It was still compact but had been comprehensively modernised in terms of both technology and visual appearance, creating a clearer and higher-quality impression at first glance. A further leap in quality also took place in the interior. The finish, look and feel all seemed to come from a higher class. The same applied to the areas of safety and assistance systems, where the Golf VI followed the motto 'safety first' and made a great leap forward. In 2009, the Golf won the 'World Car of the Year' award. The Cabriolet model returned in the summer of 2011, followed a year later by the first open-top GTI version. The Golf Plus and Golf Variant complemented the model range.

Total production: 3.6 million vehicles

HIGH-QUALITY BESTSELLER

STEP FORWARD



Emission-free driving pleasure

In 2014, the e-Golf was the first mass-produced Volkswagen model with an all-electric drive.



Golf VII 2012–2019

The seventh generation looked more confident and sportier than ever. The extended wheelbase, shorter overhangs, precise lines and focus on lightweight construction gave it a new dynamic appearance. The Golf VII featured a completely new engine generation. Common to all versions was the start/stop system equipped as standard and the energy recovery mode. In addition, the Golf arrived on the market with a host of new assistance systems, some of which were on board as standard. In 2014, the Golf electrified the compact class: the all-electric e-Golf and the plug-in hybrid GTE made their debut. New editions of the Golf Variant and the Golf SV were also launched with the seventh generation.

Total production: 6.3 million vehicles

PROGRESSIVE GENERATION

Golf VIII since 2019

The eighth generation is now writing a new chapter – digitalised, connected and progressive. All drive variants are highly efficient. The digital interior opens up a new dimension for vehicle operation. The wide range of standard assistance systems goes from Autonomous Emergency Braking Front Assist and Lane Assist through to the traffic hazard alert function using V2X technology that has received an award from Euro NCAP. At the top end of the engine range, the 4MOTION all-wheel drive system and the Dynamic Chassis Control DCC increase comfort and make driving even sportier. More than one million units will have been sold by the time the new edition is launched in 2024.



Flagship Golf model

In 2020, the Golf R¹ set new standards in terms of performance with 235 kW (320 PS) and R-Performance Torque Vectoring. The fifth edition of the compact sports car accelerates to 100 km/h in just 4.7 seconds.



¹ Golf R (325 kW/320 PS) – fuel consumption in l/100 km: combined 8.2–7.8; CO₂ emissions combined in g/km: 185–178. No consumption and emission values are available according to NEDC for this vehicle, only according to WLTP. Information on consumption and CO₂ emissions, shown in ranges, depends on the selected vehicle equipment.

FUTURE DRIVE

Golf 2024

More than 37 million units in 50 years have made the Golf the most successful Volkswagen of all time. A new evolutionary stage of the bestseller follows to mark the major anniversary. In the interior, the enhanced Golf is characterised by a new infotainment system with a free-standing display. Also new is the intelligent IDA voice assistant with ChatGPT integration. The new Park Assist Pro for remote parking using a smartphone fits into this smart picture. The new plug-in hybrid drives offer extra power and an electric range of around 100 kilometres. The GTI¹ has also become even more powerful. The Golf generation of 2024 is recognisable by its newly designed front with new LED headlights. An illuminated Volkswagen badge in the front grille is also optionally available for the first time.



Anniversary update

The new Golf will be launched in 2024 with six equipment lines, such as the Golf eHybrid² in the elegant 'Style' line.

¹ Golf GTI – Near-production vehicle

² Golf eHybrid Style – Near-production vehicle

50 years of Golf



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Golf GTE – Near-production vehicle