Volkswagen

40 Years of Golf

Detroit, January 2014

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The Golf – an icon turns 40!

Built 30 million times worldwide in seven generations

The only really classless car in the compact class

Wolfsburg / Detroit, January 2014. The most successful European car of all time will be 40 years old in the new year: the Golf from Volkswagen is in the seventh generation now and has been built more than 30 million times since 1974. At the cradle of the Golf's career four decades ago stood a revolution both in design and drive systems. Its in-line engines were now placed crosswise under the front hood; and they were water-cooled, not air-cooled like the flat engine of the Beetle, which is installed in the rear. And as in the Scirocco sports coupé, the five-door hatchback Golf was equipped with the safe front-wheel drive.

Volkswagen will light its first birthday candle for “Das Auto” – much imitated, never matched – at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit (January 13–26, 2014). A bow to the Americans: because it was in North America where the first Golf generation under the “Rabbit” label set a sales record among the new imported cars, with over 100,000 vehicles sold within a single year as of February 1975. As of 1978, Volkswagen built the “Rabbit” in its newly opened Westmoreland plant in Pennsylvania, directly in the United States, instead of having it shipped from Europe. Thus the company in 1979 defied an overall market, which had shrunk by nearly 6 percent – sales of the Rabbit rose by 44 percent to 215,000 vehicles in comparison to the previous year.

Before the production was relocated to the Puebla plant in Mexico (1988), its sister model Jetta, a very popular sedan in America, assumed the role as sales engine in the United States. Still, the Golf, as a technical and optically related model, always remained part of

the American success story of the Jetta; in tandem with that, the “GTI” and “Golf R” soon was a “must” for fans of especially sporty compact cars. The fact is: while the Jetta became the most successful car of all German car makers in the United States, the Golf advanced to be the most successful car in Europe.

Golf I: with the Golf I, not only the C-pillars became a design theme

Compared to the spherical Beetle, the Golf's angular exterior defined by Italian designer Giorgio Giugiaro constituted a paradigm shift. This includes elements – the horizontal front with slim grill and downwardly protruding headlights – that continue to define a style to this very day. Until then, the only job for C-pillars in cars was to support a roof. Only with the Golf did they become a design theme.

“There are only a few cars in the world whose design has been so systematically advanced from generation to generation,” says Klaus Bischoff, Chief Designer at Volkswagen Brand, emphasizing the timelessness of the Golf. “What the Porsche 911 is for sports cars, the Golf is for high-volume models: a classless icon and member of the automotive Hall of Fame. A modern but not a *modish* car.”

With the first Golf GTI, Volkswagen launched a model version in 1976 that soon became a synonym for compact sportiness, getting 110 PS from its 1.6-liter engine displacement. The Golf D (1976) and GTD (1982) meant the breakthrough of diesel engines in the compact segment. In 1979 came the first Golf convertible, at times the best-selling open car in the world. Volkswagen was able to sell 6.99 million vehicles of the first generation of the Golf, including all derivatives – a worthy successor of the Beetle, which had been built 21.5 million times, was found.

Golf II – the darling of the "Golf generation"

The Golf II arrived in 1983. It was 170 millimeters longer and 55 millimeters wider than its predecessor, offering considerably more space, especially in the back. Concurrently, it was the Golf that introduced the regulated catalytic converter (1984), ABS (1986) and power-steering; it was available for the first time with four-wheel drive in the Golf "Syncro." And a decisive new direction was set in terms of design: instead of trying out something entirely new, Volkswagen opted to advance the design language of the Golf based on its predecessor's design DNA.

By the time the Golf II went into retirement in 1991, 6.3 million vehicles had found their way out onto the streets. The guideline: "conceptual continuity, design evolution as well as progress in details and the overall quality" had paid off.

Golf III: VR6 power, wedge shape and oval headlights

With the launch of the third generation of the Golf in August 1991, Volkswagen heralded a new era of safety. Because now here was the first Golf with front airbags (1992) – and it also ensured the democratization of passenger protection with regard to crash resistance.

This was enhanced by technological highlights such as the first six-cylinder (VR6), the Ecomatic transmission, the first oxidation catalytic converter for diesel engines (1991), the first direct injection diesel engines (TDI, 1993) and side airbags (1996). In addition, a new convertible and the first Golf station wagon were launched on the market in 1993. In 1997, the third generation was retired; after a total – including all derivatives – of 4.83 million vehicles.

The slight wedge shape with a c_d value of 0.30, the subtle shoulder, the fully integrated bumpers and the oval headlights constituted the most important design features of the Golf III. Wheels that were lined up precisely with the body gave it a more solid stance on the road, even the less powerful versions.

Golf IV: Confidence and the magic of the "swept C"

The Golf IV, developed under the aegis of former Volkswagen Group Chief Designer Hartmut Warkuß in 1997, is seen as a stylistic icon to this very day. The clear and precise design sent signals that pointed the way into the future – its influence on the VW design can actually still be seen today. One thing that certainly lasted is the elegant profile of the body joints, such as the striking parallel momentum that characterizes the rear roof pillar – the "swept" C. Moreover, the marked horizontal visual of all lines gave the Golf IV great confidence, indeed the confidence of a big car.

Yet the fourth Golf generation was groundbreaking in terms of technology as well. The great quality image prevailing in both the interior and exterior went way beyond all previous standards in the segment. At the same time, the first ESP (1998), the brake assist, a four-wheel Golf with Haldex clutch (Golf 4MOTION) and head airbags raised the safety level significantly.

The first model with fuel direct injection (FSI) and the fastest Golf of all time up to then, the R32 (top speed: 250 km/h), was launched in 2002. It was this top model that in 2003 was the first ever to be available with the extremely fast and fuel-efficient dual-clutch gearbox (DSG). All in all, Volkswagen produced 4.99 million vehicles of the fourth Golf generation.

Golf V: Mature concept with sporty front

The Golf V reflected yet another maturing process of the model range. The static torsional rigidity was improved by 80 percent, the highest figure in the "Golf class," as the segment was long defined by then. Anew four-link rear suspension gave it increased dynamism as did the first turbocharged direct injection gasoline engine in the Golf GTI (2004) and the world's first twincharger (TSI, 2006) combining turbo and superchargers.

The design of the Golf V, again with the characteristic C-pillar, the powerful rear and the muscular silhouette rising toward the rear, hints at greater dynamism than its predecessor. Particularly striking: the sporty front. That the hood followed the contour of the three-dimensionally shaped headlights, which were pulled into the fender, was a novel feature. Incidentally, the Golf GTI makes the very most of these new features.

All in all, including all derivatives such as Golf Plus and CrossGolf, 3.4 million vehicles rolled off the assembly line in five years – the success story was carried forward without interruption.

Golf VI: Razor-sharp precision and horizontal elements

The body of the Golf VI, designed in 2008 under the aegis of the new Group Chief Designer Walter de Silva, was precise, as though carved with a knife. It was more accentuated, more three-dimensional than its predecessor, with precisely defined lines and edges, and with finely proportioned flared surfaces and recesses. What caught the eye immediately was the body design that was once more flatter than its high predecessor. Fitting: the new Volkswagen design DNA going for the consistent horizontal alignment of the front and rear elements.

The premium quality of the Golf VI, of which another 2.85 million vehicles had been built by the end of July 2012, matches the design. Alongside the five stars in the "Euro NCAP" crash test, the premium interior, including a knee airbag for the first time, speaks volumes.

In the BlueMotion version, the Golf for the first time undercut the 100 g/km CO_2 mark with a combined fuel consumption of only 3.8 l/100 km. New assistance systems, Stop-Start system, battery regeneration mode, dynamic cornering lights and LED rear lights deliver the proof that the technological advancement of the Golf never once stood still.

Golf VII: New proportions and up to 100 kilos less weight

The newest Golf, the Golf VII that was presented in Berlin on September 4, 2012, delivers the most up-to-date interpretation of the Volkswagen design DNA that is to be described by features such as functionality, ruggedness, honesty, and reliability.

But it also expands it by new proportions based on luxury class vehicles. The reason: the new modular transverse matrix (MQB) of the Volkswagen Group had the front wheels moved to the front by 43 millimeters. Thus the front overhang was shortened; the hood in return is longer, creating a so-called “cab backward” effect, with the passenger compartment moved a long way toward the back.

The typical C-pillar graphics, which we also find with the Golf VII, looks like a drawn bowstring. It accelerates even a stationary Golf forward visually and is also a tribute to the first and fourth Golf – the two design icons of the series. When you are the best, you have every reason to be confident and composed. The Golf VII expresses this sentiment. It rests in itself.

Weighing up to 100 kilograms less, Volkswagen succeeded with the new Golf VII in reversing the upward weight spiral for the first time; and the consumption is reduced by up to 23 percent, depending on the engine. The consumption, which has been further reduced to 3.2 l/100 km (equaling 85 g/km CO_2) for the Golf TDI BlueMotion as well as the version with natural gas drive (TGI), mark new fuel-efficiency records. At the same time, the Golf will likewise enter the age of electric mobility in the new year: either as a pure “plug-in” (e-Golf) with a driving range of up 190 kilometers or as a future plug-in hybrid version with a standard fuel consumption of 1.5 liters/100km (= 35 g/km CO_2) and an electric driving range of up to 50 kilometers.

Regardless of the drive system, the Golf is equipped today with a whole armada of innovative assistance systems on board, some as options and others as standard, that continue to democratize the safety and comfort – a true Volkswagen.

Golf follows Beetle – a revolution

Wolfsburg / Detroit, January 2014. The first full-production Golf rolled off the production line in Wolfsburg in March 1974 and was in Volkswagen dealerships that May. In those showrooms, where for decades the Beetle and thus rear-mounted engines and rear-wheel drive had dominated the scene, a new era had now dawned: that of the transversely mounted front engine and front-wheel drive. This trend had been heralded a short time earlier by the Scirocco and – as the first Volkswagen front-wheel drive car, based on the K70 taken over from NSU – the Passat, launched in 1973. With the launch of the Golf, the highest volume vehicle category had now also been switched to the new technology.

As the successor to the legendary Beetle, of which over 21.5 million units were made, the Golf I designed by Giorgio Giugiaro had to live up to the great expectations that it would carry on the success story of what until then was the world's most successful car. In the spring of 1974, nobody could really be sure that this would indeed be achieved. However, the modern and reliable drive system, the spacious internal layout with a tailgate and fold-down rear seat, and ultimately the design as well, won over the market to such an extent that production of the one-millionth Golf was already being celebrated in October 1976.

At the time, Volkswagen wrote on the new number 1 in the program: "The Golf offers a maximum in usable space and safety. It is uncompromisingly geared toward practical use. The low waistline makes for a clear appearance, the sloping front hood provides a view of the road right up to the car. Thanks to the drawn-down rear window, reverse driving is no problem." And those comments still ring true today.

In the United States, where the first Golf generation under the "Rabbit" label was launched in February 1975, the compact sedan set a sales record among the new imported cars in 1976, with over 100,000 vehicles sold within a single year. Upon its successful debut on the American market, the Rabbit gained another 30 percent plus in 1977. The bestseller was built not only in Germany but also in the United States, namely at the new Westmoreland plant in Pennsylvania as of April 1978.

Like every Golf that would appear after it, the first generation too reflected the progress and automotive trends of its era. For example, in launching the first Golf GTI (in 1976) Volkswagen heralded the introduction of greater dynamism in this class, while the Golf D (naturally aspirated diesel engine, 1976) and the later Golf GTD (turbodiesel, 1982) marked the breakthrough for diesel cars in the compact segment. In 1979, with the Golf convertible – at times the world's best-selling open-top car – Volkswagen brought a breath of fresh air into a vehicle category that by that time had long been simply called the "Golf class." The range of products was widening in the United States as well: the diesel version, convertible and the pickup, marketed in Europe as Caddy, completed the range of products manufactured in Westmoreland in 1979. The global sales figures added up: 6.99 million vehicles of the first generation Golf, including all derivatives such as the convertible and the Jetta (at that time based on the same body), were sold across every continent of the globe – 0.87 million Golf cars per year. The Golf had proved itself a worthy successor to the Beetle.

The Golf I design

"It all began with a revolution in 1974," says Klaus Bischoff, Chief Designer for the Volkswagen brand since 2007: "The step from Beetle to Golf was truly revolutionary. The change from air-cooled rear engine to water-cooled front engine, and from rear to front wheel drive respectively, was a completely new vehicle layout at the time. Creatively, the Volkswagen designers changed from a round to

an angular form in those days, thanks to the legendary design by Giorgio Giugiaro. The main design elements of the Golf I, such as the silhouette of the upright, massive C-pillar, the prominent wheel arches and the typical horizontal front with slim grill and downwardly protruding headlights are in every Golf to the present day."

To really understand why the first Golf – this cubic, clear, compact Volkswagen – constituted a revolution on its debut 38 years ago, we have to go back to this period:

in the early 70s, suddenly everything changed. The engine is no longer in the rear, as was the case with the Beetle, but in the front. Cooling is not implemented with air but with water. And the cylinder assembly is not boxer a flat engine type, but in n series. The first model, K70, which was still developed by NSU and sold under the VW label, demonstrated that a Volkswagen with front engine and front wheel drive is also feasible. But the K70 is no more than a stepping stone on the way to the future. Volkswagen AG made use of synergies, transplanted Audi technology into Volkswagen models, and pumped around 2.5 billion marks into the basis for technical production of a completely new model range. This proved effective. First, in the summer of 1973, the Passat appeared. In spring 1974, the Scirocco followed. No one would have suspected that this two-door coupe was to be the technical harbinger of the most successful German car of all time. It was still spring, still 1974, when the first of more than 30 million Golf cars made to date rolled off the assembly line.

"On the outside" people were still blissfully unaware of the car, which was set to repeat a German economic miracle. It was the time of Sunday driving bans and excessively flowered wallpaper on the walls. It was the year when the Swedes Agnetha, Benny, Björn and Anni-Frid delivered their show at the Grand Prix d'Eurovision - the first spark of an international career. It was the year Germany was to win the World Cup, the year Willy Brandt went and Helmut Schmidt came in ten days later. It was May, and Volkswagen presented the

new Golf to the international press in Munich.

The new Volkswagen was an instant success. The journalists were thrilled. And the former Beetle drivers were too. The original design by the grand master, that is, Giorgio Giugiaro and his body design bureau Italdesign, hit the taste of the time to the point. The Italian superstar had unveiled his Golf Design as early as 1971. It was perfected in the newly established Design Center in Wolfsburg under the direction of then-Chief Designer Herbert Schäfer. Round instead of square eyes are added, and perhaps the most well-known C-pillar in the world. A C-pillar that literally looks like a C! In 1974, Volkswagen described the design of the new car as: “The Golf offers a maximum in usable space and safety. It is uncompromisingly geared toward practical use. The low waistline makes for a clear appearance, the sloping front hood provides a view of the road right up to the car. Thanks to the drawn-down rear window, reverse driving is no problem.”

In 2012, 38 years later, Marc Lichte, Head of Exterior Design comments about this car: “When we made the Golf VII, we also had a Golf I in the design department and I we were admiring the characteristics of the surfaces. Alone the way the C pillar accelerates the look. That was our yardstick. Up until then, C pillars were previously just there to carry the roof, and they were not a design element in 1974. They only turned into that with the Golf.” And although designers live in the future, and develop the shapes of the future, Marc Lichte says about the new Golf: “You must be aware of that history to perpetuate the success.” Maybe that's the key to the success of this series!

How the Golf DNA was created

Wolfsburg / Detroit, January 2014. The second generation Golf was the Volkswagen in which the baby-boomer generation, people who are now in their fifties and sixties, learned to drive. While its predecessor had already become a favorite of all driving instructors and learner drivers, the second Golf had now become firmly established in their minds as their permanent number one choice. As of August 1983, they no longer sat quite so close to each other, as that year's press kit pointed out: "The wheelbase is now 75 mm longer, while the track width at the front has been increased by 23 mm and at the back by 50 mm. Total length has increased by 170 mm (now 3.99 m) and the width by 55 mm (now 1.42 m)… The level of comfort, measured by the space between accelerator pedal and rear seatback, has increased by 37 mm to 1,837 mm, while elbow room in the front is now 92 mm wider and in the back is up by 112 mm. On the four-door model the increase is even 120 mm."

Another fact is: it was the Golf that introduced the regulated catalytic converter (1984), anti-lock braking system (ABS, 1986) and power-steering to the Golf class and which offered an all-wheel drive system for the first time (Syncro, 1986). And as far back as 1989 – some 23 years ago! Volkswagen was already unveiling a prototype of this Golf with an electric engine and another with a hybrid drive system. The United States in the meantime developed into a sort of parallel universe – one for vehicles with notchback. Volkswagen responded by sending the Jetta, a sister model of the Golf designed as a sedan, to the United States as of 1985. With success: in the years to come, this Volkswagen was to be the most successful car of a German producer on the American market.

In June 1988, 14 years after its debut, the Golf had also surpassed the magical production milestone of 10 million vehicles. In addition,

Volkswagen in America relocated the production of the Golf from the Westmoreland plant to the new location in Puebla in Mexico, where the Jetta was also produced later. The fact is: including all derivatives, a total of 6.3 million first generation units was produced by the summer of 1991 – that is, 0.79 million Golf cars annually.

The Golf II design

“The most important moment in the history of the Golf in the late 70s was actually a decision taken by the board members,” as Marc Lichte, Senior Head of Volkswagen Exterior Design, explains, “to take the Golf I design further, and to design the Golf II on the basis of its optical DNA. That's where it all began, and that's how Volkswagen created a basis for the continuous development of the series.” “They could easily have said: 'We'll do something entirely different,' as many of the competitors have done. But then someone said, 'No, let's continue to build on this theme.' That was the most important step, and the cornerstone for the success of the future series!”

The age of the second Golf began in 1983. Germany was thrilled when Ulf Merbold was catapulted into space on the “Columbia” that year. Meanwhile, Michel Jackson's album “Thriller” reached previously unimagined sales regions, and became the best-selling LP/CD of all time. Apple invented the “mouse” for computers. The CDU and Helmut Kohl were elected into government by the Germans, and the Greens became the fourth party in Parliament. In China, the first Volkswagen rolls off the line – a Santana, the notchback version of the Passat. And in autumn, the second-generation Golf was launched. Even though the new Golf was significantly larger, with more volume and full family compatibility, the drag coefficient was reduced from 0.42 to 0.34.

The designers managed to get this second Golf into such good shape that it stayed fresh into the 90ies. The Golf II had evolved. In terms of silhouette, it had stayed true to the Golf I, but the deep shoulder

had turned into a distinctive bead. The stern rear end underwent the most radical changes: “The tail lights,” says Marc Lichte, “were located just above the bumper in the Golf I, which was standard at the time. And that was still the case when the Golf II was launched. And what did the Volkswagen designers do? They put the tail lights from the very bottom to the very top! No other car had this at the time.” Result: the Golf II had an unmistakable look from behind too. Once again, the long roof that flowed into the very steeply inclined tailgate stood out: due to the drawn-back roof and steep C-pillar, the Golf II offered much more interior volume in the back than its competitors. Form follows function.

Another visual bridge between the first and second generation, however, was the front end: the radiator grill still carried round headlights that protruded downward from the grill. Insignificant? Not at all. Just as is the case with a human face, it is exactly such deviations from the norm that make a car truly unique. But it also means: evolution not revolution! The official Volkswagen statement from 1983 says in this regard: “After careful consideration, decision was taken in Wolfsburg – the Golf must remain a Golf.” Volkswagen continued: “That is, no new design deviating from the Golf concept – but nonetheless, a new car from bumper to bumper, according to the motto: continuity in concept, progress in detail and quality.” The rest is history – see above!

So damn grow-up, this Golf

Wolfsburg / Detroit, January 2014. With the launch of the third generation of the Golf in August 1991, Volkswagen heralded a new era of safety. The Golf III was the first of the series to have front airbags, starting in 1992, while major advances in the area of car body construction also resulted in significantly improved crash safety. Looking back, it can be said that with this Golf Volkswagen truly democratized passive safety, as the improved protection benefited millions of car drivers all over the globe.

However, there are also numerous other Golf milestones associated with the Golf III. Many new features made their debuts in this new Golf: the first six cylinder engine (VR6), the legendary Ecomatic transmission, cruise control, the first oxidation catalytic converter for diesel engines (1991), the first direct injection diesel engines (TDI in 1993 and SDI in 1995) and the first side airbags (1996). Also, ABS became a standard feature on all Golf models in September 1996. In 1993, Volkswagen had also introduced a new convertible based on the Golf III, a new all-wheel drive model (Syncro II) and the first Golf Variant (a station wagon). A year later, in May 1994, Volkswagen celebrated production of the 15-millionth Golf. The third generation ended in 1997; including all derivatives, a total of 4.83 million third generation units was produced, or 0.81 million per year.

Design Golf III

The roots of the third Golf go back to 1985. While Mikhail Gorbachev takes on the leadership of the Kremlin in Moscow, and a 17-year-old named Boris Becker sweeps his opponent off the lawn in the finals at Wimbledon, the official launch of the “A3” takes place

in Wolfsburg – the “A” representing the segment designation A-Class (the Mercedes of the same name did not exist then) and “3” for the third generation Golf (the Audi A3 had not been invented at that time either). In February 1987, Chief Designer Herbert Schäfer submits nine different models of the next Golf to the Board. In the ensuing months, the results were discussed and optimized further, until the very best design emerged in December under the direction of Chairman Carl Horst Hahn, and it was time for implementation. Four years later, the Golf III is ready for series production. As Herbert Schäfer said at the time: “In the first step from Golf I to II we made the car bigger, installed more powerful engines, and improved its handling. Now, in the third generation, the design takes precedence. We have found a look that is typical of the Golf: it radiates quality and safety.”

When the new generation was launched onto the market in 1991, its distinguishing feature was a slight wedge shape (the body line rises toward the rear), making it stand out from its predecessor, and a continuous chamfer underneath the window sill. As Marc Lichte, 2012 Head of Volkswagen Exterior Design, explains: “The car now had a subtle shoulder, which linked the front and rear lights visually; the small chamfer made this look fashionable. It's the '90s take on the Golf. And it was in fact the first wedge-shaped Golf. Further distinguishing features were the newly integral, massive bumpers, and the even more striking C-pillar.”

Thanks to the significantly wider track, the car had a powerful stance on the road, and, as opposed to the previous generation, the wheels were flush with the aerodynamically optimized body (drag coefficient 0.30) – even in the versions with less powerful engines. Although no single detail, shape and or radius was taken from the previous model, anyone would immediately recognize the car: this is clearly a Golf. Even though larger, oval headlights, instead of the classic round headlights now illuminated the night. Oval? Not a mere coincidence. Again, Marc Lichte explains: “In the Golf III, the twin headlights of the Golf GTI were simply connected internally to form

oval headlights under the direction of Herbert Schäfer. A brilliant trick. Incidentally, since the grill became narrower, the third generation headlights once again protruded downward.”

Masterpiece Golf

Wolfsburg / Detroit, January 2014. Under the direction of Hartmut Warkuß, then Head of Design at Volkswagen (Group), the Golf IV crystallized the clear, precise design that lived up to the history of the Volkswagen brand more than ever before while setting its course to the future. It is in this era that the Volkswagen design DNA has its origins. Today, design experts regard the Golf IV as a style icon and a pioneering step for the model – not least because despite all its clarity and characteristic C-pillar design it still forged a link back to the Golf I of 1974.

However, the Golf IV was not only pioneering in terms of its looks, it was groundbreaking in its engineering as well. With this car Volkswagen achieved a totally new standard of quality in this market segment and thus became the first manufacturer to overcome vehicle class boundaries. With the debut of ESC (in 1998) and the brake assistant system, the car continued to democratize safety. Also in 1998, Volkswagen unveiled the first all-wheel drive Golf with a Haldex clutch – the Golf 4MOTION. One year later, ESC became a standard feature, initially in Germany. In the same year, the first Golf with six-speed transmission made its debut. There then followed in 2001 the Golf GTI 132kW (launched to mark the GTI's 25th anniversary and now already sought-after as a classic) and in 2002 the first Golf with gasoline direct injection (FSI) and the debut of window airbags fitted as standard. Also in 2002, Volkswagen launched what at the time was the sportiest Golf ever: the R32, with a top speed of 250 km/h. It was this top model that in 2003 was the first ever to be available with the revolutionarily fast and fuel-efficient dual-clutch gearbox (DSG) - the automatic transmission for a new era. In the same year, after production of 4.92 million units, the Golf IV – the first fully galvanized Golf and the first available

with a navigation system and xenon headlights – made way on the production lines for the Golf V. Including all derivatives, a total of 4.99 million fourth generation units was produced – that is, 0.83 million Golf cars annually.

The Golf IV design

A brief recap of 1997: the slogan “Let me entertain you” turned Robbie Williams from a teen idol into a worldwide star; Princess Diana died in Paris, Michael Schumacher became world champion for a fifth time, and Volkswagen presented the fourth generation of the Golf – in terms of design, the purest and clearest yet. This Golf is created under the direction of Hartmut Warkuß (Head of Design at Volkswagen until 2003); and it's generally accepted that this design has already made history. Warkuß says: “The Golf is a monument. A car that smoothly entered into the footsteps of the globally successful Beetle. It made good sense to complement the company strategy in an evolutionary rather than revolutionary fashion. It is important to demonstrate continuity at a very high level.” And that's exactly what Warkuß did with the fourth Golf!

However, nothing is copied from the Golf III. On the contrary, not a single body panel is taken on from the predecessor for the entirely redesigned, new generation Golf. The front window is flatter, the rear window is steeper, the roof extends even further back. Even Giorgio Giugiaro, creator of the first Golf design of 1974, expressed his admiration for the new car: “The original DNA of the Golf remains evident in its fourth generation.” Giugiaro's compliment referred to the purism of the lines, the conscious reduction to the essential shape, which made the fourth generation Golf stand out. The logical and elegant profile of the body joints, such as the parallel momentum that characterizes the side view around the rear roof pillar are striking – the “swept” C. Equally succinct: the clear styling of the front and rear designs, as well as the level of detail of the wheel arches. Another novelty: for the first time, the rear

registration plate on the Golf is no longer between the taillights, but deeply integrated inside the bumper.

As Marc Lichte, now Head of Exterior Design at Volkswagen, remarks about the 1997 Golf: “The Golf IV did away with the wedge shape and shoulder. Rather, a completely smooth surface now characterized the silhouette, and the powerful wheel arches perfected this clarity: the car needed these uniquely designed wheel arches to get away with the clean side surfaces. Another unique feature, were the aforementioned parallel lines of the C-pillar as a stylistic element that has now reappeared in the Gulf VII. This development began with the Golf IV – in the reduction to essentials, this is a true masterpiece.”

As Lichte continues: “In my opinion, this was the first truly classless Golf.” And he explains why: “Compact cars are commonly designed as a wedge shape, so they don't look like a box. You couldn't possibly give larger cars, such as a luxury cars, a wedge shape – the line would have nowhere to run to. That's why big cars are always laid out horizontally, thus giving them an air of superiority. This horizontal, confident visual was transferred to the Golf for a first time by the Hartmut Warkuß design – the fourth generation therefore has the confidence of a large car.”

The Golf is gaining momentum

Wolfsburg / Detroit, January 2014. This was the Golf that boasted levels of comfort and dynamic performance that left many a competitor in its class way behind. The same went for the car's quality. One factor that underlines the stability of the laser-welded bodywork was the 35 per cent increase in torsion rigidity demonstrated when the Golf V made its debut in 2003. On request, the Golf was now also available for the first time with side airbags – together with the six standard airbags (front, side front and window) there were thus eight protective air buffers on board.

In terms of comfort as well as dynamic performance and handling, the Golf V scored in numerous areas, including: its new four-link rear suspension and new seven-speed DSG, bi-xenon headlights, rain sensor and panoramic sliding sunroof, plus the debut of the first turbocharged direct injection gasoline engine in the Golf GTI (in 2004) and the world's first twincharger (in the 2006 TSI), combining turbo and superchargers. At the same time, new vehicle body versions also made the Golf attractive to a wider range of drivers. The Golf Plus was launched in 2006, and the year 2007 saw the launches of the CrossGolf, a new station wagon, and the Golf BlueMotion, which set a new benchmark with its combined fuel consumption of just 4.5 l/100 km. Including all derivatives, a total of 3.4 million sixth generation units was produced - that is, 0.68 million Golf cars annually.

The Golf V design

In 2003, Europe experienced the hottest summer in centuries. Johnny Depp and Keira Knightley feature in "Pirates of the Caribbean." Arwen aka Liv Tyler and Viggo Mortensen as Aragon round off a

piece of cinematic history in the third part of “Lord of the Rings.” But the greatest heroes in 2003 are the sorcerer's apprentice Harry Potter and the now six-times Formula 1 World Champion Michael Schumacher. For countless motorists, however, the highlight of the year was the launch of the new Golf in October! Its body was larger, safer and even higher quality. An essential aspect of this development is a significant improvement in stiffness - the static torsional rigidity was improved by 80 percent, the highest figure in the Golf class. This drastic increase in quality was to be reflected in the design of the Golf V. That's no mean feat, since the expectations on the car are on the increase with each new generation.

By 2003, the Golf had been the best selling car from Germany for almost three uninterrupted decades. Purely in statistical terms, 2,055 customers around the world had decided to purchase a Golf, every day and since 1974. It has generally come to be regarded as “Das Auto,” “The Car” par excellence, as the only compact class model that is truly classless. What about the fifth Golf? As it always was, and yet entirely different. Compared to its direct competitors, this Golf looked as classless and confident as any other Golf. This applied both to the technically related Audi A3 and the BMW 1 Series, a relatively new competitor in the segment. However, the competitors remain worlds behind Wolfsburg in terms of sheer unit sales.

The fact is: the design of the Golf V with the characteristic C-pillar, the powerful rear, the sporty front end and the muscular, rising toward the rear silhouette shows more dynamic than its predecessor. Marc Lichte, now Head of Exterior Design, remembers the development stage: “The 1:4 model already looked like the actual car on the road. It's rare for a car design to remain so consistent.” Lichte continued: “In fact, the car was higher, so as to get more interior space. But it also became more dynamic. It has even more of a wedge shape than the Golf III. The Golf V once again came with a shoulder that runs toward the rear; the front is flat as was the case with the Golf IV. The front end with the integral lighting was a big

step.” And that's true: for the first time, the hood followed the contour of the headlamps headlights like in a race car. This had not been the case with the Golf IV. Moreover, the three-dimensionally shaped headlamps headlights were pulled laterally into the fender. Another first were the two-part taillights in this Golf that extended into the tailgate. And there are also some secrets: the design of the Golf V headlights had a surprising similarity to the taillights of the first Porsche Boxster, while the radius of the rear window in the Golf V, however, strikingly followed the lines of the EA 266 – an unrealized prototype of the Golf I. Incidentally, many experts regard this generation's Golf GTI as one of the most powerful cars ever sold under the Golf label.

Razor-sharp lines

Wolfsburg / Detroit, January 2014. In just four years, a further 2.85 million Golf cars had been produced by the end of July 2012, based on the sixth generation of the car launched in 2008. And once again safety made great advances too: the car body, again laser-welded, was so rugged that it passed the EuroNCAP crash test with flying colors, gaining the maximum five stars. There was now also a further airbag fitted as standard:

in terms of its quality, the Golf VI's interior in particular ranked as ahead of its time. Meanwhile, more TSI engines and a transition among the turbodiesel engines (TDI) from unit injection to the common rail system produced greater dynamic performance and lower fuel consumption. A top performer was the second Golf BlueMotion with a combined fuel consumption of just 3.8 l/100 km, equivalent to 99 g/km CO_2. New assistance systems - such as Light Assist automatic main beam management, Park Assist, hill start assistant and technologies such as DCC dynamic chassis control - made the 'World Car of the Year 2009' the most advanced Golf to date. Also available were features such as the Stop/Start system and battery regeneration mode, dynamic cornering lights and LED rear light clusters. Even if the Golf VI has now been topped by the Golf VII, its outstanding product features and superb design will ensure that the sixth generation Golf – as a used car too – will continue to be regarded as one of the most successful cars on the market for many a year to come. Including all derivatives, a total of 2.85 million sixth generation units was produced – that is, 0.71 million Golf cars annually.

The Golf VI design

“The Golf does radiate into the other Volkswagen products, but always just when it comes to the details, for example, its precision, its high valence. And the same applies for the sixth Golf that came out in 2008. It set the bar for precision and attention to detail even higher,” says Marc Lichte, Head of Volkswagen Exterior Design. As Walter de Silva, Chief Designer of Volkswagen Group, described the Golf VI during its 2008 international presentation: “It's more accentuated, more three-dimensional than its predecessor, with precisely defined lines and edges, and with finely proportioned flared surfaces and recesses.” Klaus Bischoff, Chief Designer Volkswagen Brand, remarked at the time: “Every detail is uncompromisingly aimed at higher valence.”

The side-by-side comparison of generations 5 and 6 clearly demonstrates, how much the Golf had changed in 2008. Visually, the Golf VI had become flatter than its predecessor. Generally, this Golf constituted a further refinement of the Volkswagen design DNA with its consistent horizontal alignment of the front and rear elements. The team led by de Silva, Bischoff and Lichte selectively emphasized the original stylistic traits of the series, dispatching them on a journey into the future. The roof section was now resting on a prominently contoured shoulder section. This was due to a prominent, curving line that runs from the headlights to the taillights, much like a muscle, well-trained down to the last fibre. This line is referred to as the “character line” by Volkswagen design, and it gave the Golf VI a heavier, lower stance on the road in the side view. If you run your hand along the character line, you will get a feel of the high quality design elements integrated into the galvanized sheet metal of the car body.

All surfaces were tenser and more athletic. In the front, the Golf VI adopted the horizontally aligned band of the radiator grill between the headlights as was the case in the first Golf generation; the grill itself was finished in a high-gloss black. The line styling of the bumper corresponded to that of the radiator grill. Another air intake,

all in black, opened up in the area below. The chrome light housings of the dynamically styled headlamps were now also mounted against a black background. The rear was equally characterized by a predominance of horizontal lines. Among other features, the very wide taillights made for an unmistakably unique night design; split tail lights of this style and size are a design element normally used in higher vehicle segments.

The new one rests in itself

Wolfsburg / Detroit, January 2014 On September 4, 2012, Volkswagen celebrated the world premiere of the new Golf in Berlin. Just one day later, advance sales of the car, a bestseller with over 30 million units sold, began in initial launch countries. Just three weeks later, Volkswagen presented the Golf for the first time to a large audience at the Paris Motor Show. The weight of the new Golf was reduced by up to 100 kg, thereby reversing the often cited upward weight spiral. Fuel economy was improved by a maximum of 23 percent, depending on engine selection. The new Golf TDI BlueMotion consumes only 3.2 l/100 km (85 g of CO_2/km) under standard NEDC conditions. In addition, Volkswagen has equipped the Golf with an entire armada of new assistance systems on the market – some as options and others as standard. So much innovation was promptly rewarded in May 2013: the Golf came in first in the renowned international award “Car of the Year.”

The base gasoline engine model (TSI) consumes 4.9 l/100 km and the entry-level diesel (TDI) 3.8 l/100 km. The TSI models thus beat the CO_2 mark of 115 g/km, while at 99 g/km, the TDIs come in under the 100 g/km threshold. As mentioned above, the best figures are delivered by the Golf TDI BlueMotion: 3.2 liters per 100 km and 85 g/km of CO_2. Another new engine is the 1.4 TSI with 103 kW / 140 PS and automatic cylinder shut-off (ACT: active cylinder management). The combined fuel consumption of this gasoline-powered car that is as sporty as it is sustainable: 4.7 l/100 km (equating to 109 g/km CO_2). The Golf is presently offered in the United States with a 2.5 liter five-cylinder engine (125 kW / 170 PS) and as an extremely fuel-efficient TDI (103 kW / 140 PS, 30 mpg City, 42 mpg Highway). The independent GTI and the new Golf R are also fuel efficient as well as awesomely sporty.

By the way, Volkswagen estimates that by virtue of the new Golf fleet – with CO_2 emissions reduced by 13.9 per cent on average across the entire engine range – 119,000 tons less CO_2 will be produced annually in Europe alone!

The hunt for every last gram, meanwhile, must not be allowed to lead to advances being achieved at the expense of steps backward in other areas. Here too, Volkswagen demonstrates that the Golf stands more than ever for a democratization of progress and for perfection in every detail:

- with added space (extra legroom in the back and 30 liters more trunk capacity);
- new pioneering safety systems such as the multicollision brake system and a proactive passenger protection system, as well as adaptive cruise control (ACC) with Front Assist including the city emergency braking function;
- a new progressive steering system and wheel suspension;
- a driving profile selector, a touchscreen as standard in all models and a completely redesigned world of information and entertainment systems with a display in the top versions that reacts to hand movements via a proximity sensor.

The Golf VII design

The individual DNA of the Golf includes elements such as the reduced design grill crossbar and side window graphics, as well as the roof line of the Golf I, or the highly familiar C-pillar and wheel arches of the Golf IV. This DNA characterizes its very own, unique product and design language with features such as functionality, ruggedness, honesty, and reliability. The new Golf is the most modern interpretation of this design language: “It is logical, sound, product-oriented, pure and precise, and reflects the design DNA of the brand as a pure expression of the design,” says Klaus Bischoff, Chief Designer of Volkswagen Brand. Bischoff continues: “That's

why the basic architecture of the new Golf is unmistakable: It has a simple, strong, coherent, reliable and secure feel. The fact the proportions of the Golf have changed entirely with the seventh generation is extremely significant, giving the car a more confident look on the road than ever!

As Marc Lichte, Head of Exterior Design, explains: “The proportions have changed, since we've benefited from the modular transverse matrix. For instance, the front wheels moved 43 mm further toward the front end. That shortens the front overhang, while the hood appears longer.” Klaus Bischoff confirms this: “The vehicle cab is shifted backward in visual terms, resulting in the so-called 'cab backward impression.' That's what the proportions of upper-class vehicles are called, where the hood is long and the cab is located far toward the rear. The new Golf therefore has the type of proportions usually only seen in higher segments.”

Two typical Golf elements are characteristic of the Golf silhouette: C-pillar and roof line. The C-pillar runs from the roof down to the rear wheel arch in a single, homogeneous surface. Above the wheel arch, however, it assumes the full width of the car to a greater extent; that's why the new Golf looks more massive and powerful from the back view or rather angled back view, without having a classic shoulder section. The absence of a shoulder is typical for the Golf. In the front side view, the precision of the C-pillar design becomes apparent; it looks like the taut string of a bow, accelerating even a stationary Golf forward purely on a visual basis, and is also a tribute to the first and fourth Golf - the two design icons of the series.

Again, Klaus Bischoff comments: “The contouring of the typical long roofline was also redesigned from scratch. Again, the Golf comes with a new line above the side windows, which runs from the roof spoiler right up to the A-pillars. That's one of the character traits that give the Golf a high-quality look from the side, a line that might remain unnoticed at a first glance, but which nonetheless is another detail on the road to optical precision.”

The design DNA is also expressed in a sympathetic friendly “face”; additionally, it is defined by horizontally balanced elements, which give it width, just as with the first Golf. Taken together, the resulting a front section can be recognized as a Golf in any rear-view mirror. With a drag coefficient of 0.27 (TDI and TGI BlueMotion), the extremely aerodynamic Golf VII has a highly confident appearance. And so it should be. Marc Lichte: “The car has been the number 1 for almost four decades. If you are the best, you feel confident and composed. When you are the best, you have every reason to be confident and composed. The Golf VII expresses this sentiment. It rests in itself.

40 Years of Golf – time bar of innovations

1974
Golf I – debut

- Front-wheel drive
- Trunk lid
- Crosswise engine
- Variable interior

1976

- First Golf GTI
- First Golf D (diesel)
- 1 million Golf

1978

- 2 million Golf

1979

- First Golf convertible
- 3 million Golf

1980

- 4 million Golf

1982

- First Golf GTD (turbodiesel)
- 5 million Golf

1983

- 6.99 million Golf I

Golf II – debut

- Power steering
- Three-point belt
- Anti-perforation guarantee

1984

- Second Golf GTI
- Regulated catalytic converter

1985

- 7 million Golf

1986

- First Golf Syncro (all-wheel drive)
- First Golf GTI with 16V engine
- ABS anti-lock braking system for Golf Syncro

1987

- ABS anti-lock braking system for all Golf GT and GTI vehicles

1988

- Rally Golf G60
- Golf Limited G60
- 10 million Golf

1989

- First Golf City plug-in (electric)
- First Golf hybrid concept car
- 11 million Golf

1990

- First Golf Country
- First Golf GTI with G60 engine
- Catalytic converter standard for all models
- 1 million Golf GTI
- 12 million Golf

1991

- Third Golf GTI
- 6.3 million Golf II

Golf III – debut

- First Golf with six-cylinder gasoline engine (VR6)
- First Golf Diesel with oxidation catalytic converter
- Immobilizer system
- Cruise control system

1992

- Driver and front passenger airbags
- 13 million Golf

1993

- First Golf TDI (turbodiesel direct injection engine)
- First Golf station wagon
- First Golf convertible
- Second Golf Syncro

1994

- 15 million Golf

1995

- First Golf SDI (naturally aspirated diesel/direct injection engine)

1996

- First Golf TDI (turbodiesel direct injection engine)
- First Golf GTI with turbo engine
- ABS standard for all Golf
- Side airbags
- 17 million Golf

1997

- 4.83 million Golf III

Golf IV – debut

- First Golf V5 (five-cylinder engine)
- Fully galvanized body

1998

- First Golf 4MOTION (with Haldex clutch)
- Third Golf convertible
- Fourth Golf GTI
- ESC
- Xenon headlights

1999

- First Golf GTI with unit injection
- First Golf 4MOTION with 6-speed gearbox
- Second Golf station wagon
- Brake assist
- ESC standard in Germany
- 19 million Golf

2000

- 20 million Golf

2002

- First Golf FSI (direct injection gasoline engine)
- First Golf R32
- First Golf with natural gas drive (BiFuel in the station wagon)
- After front and side airbag, the head airbag becomes standard
- 21,517,415 vehicles have been produced – the Golf overtakes the Beetle

2003

- First Golf with 6-speed dual clutch gearbox (DSG in the R32)
- 4.97 million Golf IV

Golf V – debut

- Automatically dimming rearview mirror
- Bi-Xenon headlights
- Laser-welded bodywork
- Park Distance Control
- Rain sensor
- Four-link rear suspension

2004

- Fifth Golf GTI (with TSI / turbo direct injection gasoline engine)
- 23 million Golf

2005

- First Golf TSI as twincharger (combining turbo and superchargers)
- Second Golf R32

2006

- First Golf Plus

2007

- First Golf BlueMotion
- First CrossGolf
- Third Golf station wagon
- 25 million Golf

2008

- First Golf with 7-speed dual clutch gearbox
- 3.4 million Golf V

Golf VI – debut

- First Golf with common rail TDI engine
- Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC).
- Hill hold assist
- Dynamic cornering light
- DCC adaptive damper control
- Keyless access (locking and starting the car without door locks and ignition locks)
- Knee airbag standard
- LED reversing lights
- Navigation system with touchscreen
- Park Assist
- Battery regeneration mode
- Reversing camera
- Stop/Start system

2009

- Second Golf Plus
- Fourth Golf station wagon
- Sixth Golf GTI
- Comeback of the Golf GTD

2010

- Third Golf R

2011

- Fourth Golf convertible

2012

- 2.85 million Golf VI

Golf VII – debut

- Adaptive Cruise Control
- Ambience lighting
- City Emergency Braking
- Dynamic Light Assist
- Electric parking brake
- Ergonomic seats
- Driving profile selector
- Deluxe climate windshield.
- Lane Assist
- LED fog lights
- Driver Alert system
- Automatic Post-Collision Braking System
- Panorama sliding sunroof
- Park Assist 2
- Park Pilot
- PreCrash
- Progressive steering
- Runflat tires
- Touchscreen switches on as hand approaches
- Road sign recognition
- Front axle differential lock
- Cylinder shut-off (ACT / active cylinder management)

2013

- New Golf station wagon
- New Golf TDI BlueMotion
- First Golf TGI BlueMotion
- New Golf GTI
- New Golf GTD
- New Golf 4MOTION
- New Golf R
- New Golf Sportsvan

2014

- First e-Golf
- First Golf with plug-in hybrid