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40-page journey back in time through the history of research at Volkswagen

- ***Ahead of the time*** booklet covers six decades of research and development at Volkswagen
- From early prototypes in the 1950s and study vehicles in the 1970s to autonomous driving
- Experts from back then and today's developers in dialogue

Wolfsburg – In its new publication *Ahead of the time*, Volkswagen goes on a fascinating journey back in time through the history of research and development: as early as in 1955, the brand developed its first prototype with a unitary body and front-wheel drive. The first crash tests were conducted in 1965 and the ESVW I research vehicle from 1972 represented a milestone in the improvement of safety. The 40-page brochure covers developments in the area of alternative drives and also takes a look at the shape of things to come.

Press contact

Volkswagen Communications

Sascha Oliver Neumann

Spokesperson Volkswagen Classic

Tel: +49 (0) 5361 9-86952

sascha.oliver.neumann@volkswagen.de

Enrico Beltz

Head of Communication Innovation,
Technology and Design

Tel: +49 5361 9-48590

enrico.beltz@volkswagen.de



Highlights from more than six decades of research and development at Volkswagen

Brochure "Ahead of the Time"

Research and development milestones

Volkswagen has a long tradition of developing the future itself. Back in 1955, the EA 48 study vehicle impressed with its front-wheel drive and unitary body. Volkswagen also led the way in the field of safety research, with the first crash tests in 1965 giving insights into vehicle safety. The ESVW I research vehicle from 1972 was a milestone which helped significantly improve the safety of subsequent production models. Research has been conducted into alternative drive technologies since the 1970s. Whether electricity, natural gas, alcohol, hydrogen or biofuel, the developers were ever so creative – resulting in an impressive number of concept vehicles developed in the course of more than 40 years.



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Automatically heading to the future

Driving without actually driving yourself is a vision that Volkswagen has been pursuing since the 1970s. It all began with the creation of a Future Research department in 1970, which laid the foundations for the ongoing development of automated driving with a research project focusing on 'automatic steering with computer vision'. And Volkswagen continued to focus on this development. For example, the Futura study vehicle unveiled in 1989 could already park and leave its parking space autonomously and kept its distance from the vehicle in front using radar – and this was almost 30 years ago. Many of the sensational developments from back then have long since been incorporated into Volkswagen's series production, such as Park Assist, which has been available since 2006, Adaptive Cruise Control and the camera-assisted ambient traffic monitoring system Front Assist.

From the DigiFiz to the Innovision Cockpit

Development of the digital cockpit was likewise continuously advanced, from the first digital speedometer DigiFiz in 1986, to trip computers, multifunction displays and Active Info Display, which has no analogue displays at all and the functions of which are almost all freely configurable. This system is currently available in many Volkswagen models, such as the Passat, Tiguan, Golf, T-Roc and Polo. And the next stage is already in the starting blocks: the Innovision Cockpit, which is premiering in the new Touareg.¹ With this operating concept, the 12-inch Active Info Display and the 15-inch touchscreen for controlling the vehicle's infotainment features are brought together. It is controlled by touch, voice commands or hand movements. Things therefore look good – for the future too.

Editorial note:

The full brochure and images can be found at www.volkswagen-media-services.com.

¹) Touareg 3.0 TDI (210 kW/286 PS) – fuel consumption, l/100 km: 8.1 urban, 6.2 extra urban, 6.9 combined; CO₂ emissions, g/km: 182 (combined); efficiency class: C.

About the Volkswagen brand: "We make the future real."

The Volkswagen Passenger Cars brand is present in more than 150 markets throughout the world and produces vehicles at over 50 locations in 14 countries. In 2017, Volkswagen produced around 6.23 million vehicles, including bestselling models such as the Golf, Tiguan, Jetta and Passat. Currently, 198,000 people work for Volkswagen across the globe. The brand also has more than 7,700 dealerships with 74,000 employees. Volkswagen is forging ahead consistently with the further development of automobile production. Key strategic themes for the future are electric mobility, smart mobility and the digital transformation of the brand.
