



50
years of

POLO

CONTENT CREATOR DAYS



50 years of Polo

Small on the outside, big on the inside – and in many different aspects

For millions of people, it was and is their very first car: the Polo – compact, timeless and classless. One for all. When the Polo was launched on the market in 1975, it was the third Volkswagen of a new era after the Passat (1973) and the Golf (1974). Like them, it also became a world bestseller.

The Polo has been shaping the small car segment for 50 years now, with more than 20 million units sold. It stands for affordable entry-level mobility from Volkswagen with a coherent overall concept comprising a fair price-performance ratio, high utility value and pioneering technology for the small car class. Furthermore, it impresses with its appealing design, which is still popular today and made the model a bestseller. In every generation, the Polo has offered more space and comfort, more efficient engines and innovative safety features. Today also, the small car boasts assist and convenience systems that are otherwise available only in higher vehicle classes. The success story is ongoing – the Polo still enjoys great popularity to this day: with more than 500,000 units delivered, it was also one of the Volkswagen Group's most successful models worldwide in 2024.

This makes it a small Volkswagen with a big history. The 50 years of the Polo exhibition shows the many facets of the model – perfected over five decades and producing many derivatives: in six generations, a variety of body shapes, sporty, particularly efficient, colourful, with an off-road look or an even highly dynamic one. Extraordinary concept vehicles complete the selection. Some models can also be driven – such as the original Polo from 1975, the Polo II G40 (1992) or the Polo V R WRC Street all-wheel drive (2013).

Have fun at this special exhibition.

Yours
Volkswagen Classic Communications

50 years of Polo

Model overview

→ Six generations

- 01. Polo I L (1977)
- 02. Polo II CL Formula E (1983)
- 03. Polo III Open Air (1997)
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→ Can be experienced dynamically at the exhibition

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- 24. Polo II G40 (1992)
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CONTENT CREATOR DAYS – 50 YEARS OF POLO

Six generations

1st generation | Polo L

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation I

1977 / 1975 to 1981

Power / Engine / Maximum speed29 kW (40 PS) / 4-cylinder, 900 cm³ / 132 km/h

The Polo L

Like the 1975 Polo L from the Volkswagen Classic collection, its counterpart – this exhibited Polo from 1977 – is also a time capsule. But this is not the only reason why the classic car painted in Riad Yellow is very close to the heart of its owner – a member of Polo IG Deutschland e.V. The story behind it: a few years ago, the Polo collector bought the today still unrestored car from an older man. At some point, he met his now wife at a Polo fan meeting. When the topic of marriage came up, it was clear to both of them that only the cheerful yellow Polo I could be the wedding car. In other words: a driver was engaged, the front passenger seat removed so that the bride had space for the wedding dress when getting into the rear and off they went.

Flashback: The Polo Generation I – 1.1 million units

In March 1975, the first Polo generation was presented to the press. It shared its technology and design with the Audi 50, and like the latter had its engine at the front, a large boot lid and space for four adults in between. The new model was handy and uncomplicated, making it a perfect entry-level model. To keep the price low, the equipment level was deliberately kept simple. In the basic version, the Polo always came with an output of 29 kW (40 PS) and cost only 7,500 German marks. However, it was the better-equipped Polo L, which was available for 8,325 German marks with the same engine, that became a bestseller. Later, new engines delivering 37 kW (50 PS) and 44 kW (60 PS) followed. In addition, the standard equipment was gradually improved and increasingly individualised through the introduction of new equipment versions. From 1977, the Polo was also available with a notchback, which went under the name Derby. In 1979, the Polo GT followed as a top model with sporty equipment and design; at the same time, a facelift with robust plastic bumpers and a new radiator grille perfected the design and aerodynamics. At the beginning of 1981, the efficient Polo Formula E marked the finale of the first generation, which was replaced by the Polo II in the summer of that year.



2nd generation I Polo CL

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation II

1983 / 1981 to 1994

Power / Engine / Maximum speed37 kW (50 PS) / 4-cylinder, 1,085 cm³ / 146 km/h

The Polo CL Formula E

Although the E might suggest it, the Polo Formula E is not an electric model. Four decades ago, the world was simply not yet ready for that. But even back then, the lowest possible consumption and emission values were a high priority for Volkswagen. The Formula E was developed for this reason, where E stood for efficiency. In the press kit for the debut of the Polo Formula E, Volkswagen described it as follows in 1981: "A particularly economical solution in the Polo range is the fuel-saving Formula E offering with the 37 kW/50 PS engine designed for premium-grade fuel. Here, the ratios of the speed-reducing 3+E gearbox are matched to the engine's high low-end torque in the same way as in the normal version (0-100 km/h in 15.4 s)." In other words, the 2nd, 3rd and 4th gears (E-gear) and the axle itself have longer ratios. This saves fuel. However, in order not to turn the Polo Formula E into a lame duck, the engineers in Wolfsburg increased the maximum torque from 77 to 82 Nm and already made it available at 3,300 rpm instead of 3,500 rpm. This meant the highest power could be delivered 200 rpm earlier. Although the Polo achieved the same performance as its counterpart without the efficiency package, its fuel consumption was reduced by 2.4 litres in the city, 1.6 litres at 90 km/h and 1.4 litres at 120 km/h. The exhibited model is painted in Mars Red and features square-check upholstery fabric in Saiga/Black.

Flashback: The Polo Generation II – 2.7 million units

In August 1981, Volkswagen launched the second-generation Polo. Although the design of the front end with its round headlights followed the DNA of the Polo I, the rear showed the architecture of an estate car. The reason for this was the 1,000 litres of stowage space up to the front seats – estate car level. At the start there were three engines with up to 44 kW (60 PS) and three equipment variants (C, CL and GL). From August 1982, the Polo II was available with a fastback; this version had the additional designation Coupé and could be ordered as a CL and sporty GT version. Meanwhile, the maximum output of the Polo engines increased to 55 kW (75 PS). Launched in 1984, the second generation of the Polo Formula E was particularly economical. The new entry-level model, the Polo Fox, also became a bestseller from 1985. The first Polo with a diesel engine made its debut in 1986. However, the product line was crowned by the Polo Coupé GT G40 built in 1987 and 1988 (from 1987) and the successor Polo G40 offered from 1990. The product line also received a facelift in 1990 – recognisable by the new rectangular headlights.

3rd generation | Polo Open Air

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation III

1997 / 1994 to 2001

Power / Engine / Maximum speed33 kW (45 PS) / 4-cylinder, 1,043 cm³ / 145 km/h

The Polo Open Air

In 1995, an open-top version of the Polo III offered a completely new perspective with the Open Air special edition. The Polo Open Air has an extremely large folding fabric sunroof that opens electrically at the push of a button and folds up just in front of the C-pillar. Of course, the Beetle already had that, but this was not electric and not in this format. In the Polo Open Air, not only the driver and front passenger enjoy the summer sun or the view of the stars, but also the rear passengers. And this is what the original Volkswagen advertising text promised: "Fun and driving pleasure. Climb in, open the roof and enjoy driving under the open sky." But the folding fabric sunroof not only ensured a convertible feeling on board the Polo – it also looked really good. The reason for this was its availability in several colours. For example, in red, to match the red Polo paint finishes, or in blue, as here in the exhibition vehicle, where the fabric perfectly matches the Windsor Blue metallic paintwork.

Flashback: The Polo Generation III – 3.5 million units

In August 1994, the international media drive of the Polo took place in Paris. The new Polo was significantly upgraded in all technical details and represented a quantum leap, above all in the areas of quality and safety. Front airbags, belt tensioners and ABS were introduced to the product line. For the first time, the Polo was also alternatively available as a four-door model. The design with its still clear but – typical of the 90s – softer contours, the bumpers painted in the vehicle colour and the new Volkswagen 'Happy Face' made it look both likeable and confident. Another notable feature: with a length of 3.7 metres, the third Polo now reached the dimensions of the first Golf – Volkswagen thus met the wish of many customers for more space in all seats. In 1995, Volkswagen launched two models that now enjoy cult status: the Polo Open Air with folding fabric sunroof and the multi-coloured Polo Harlekin. In July 1997, a 'genuine' estate model with up to 1,250 litres of stowage space even followed. However, the Polo really created a stir in its class as the GTI – a special model limited to 3,000 units with an output of 88 kW (120 PS). In August 1999, the model series received a major facelift and new optional features such as ESC and a navigation system.

4th generation | CrossPolo

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation IV

2006 / 2001 to 2009

Power / Engine / Maximum speed47 kW (64 PS) / 3-cylinder, 1,198 cm³ / 157 km/h

The CrossPolo

In February 2006, Volkswagen launched the successor to the Polo FUN: the CrossPolo. Designed in striking all-terrain style with a large boot lid, the four-door model was a lifestyle-oriented all-rounder. It was a forerunner of the SUV trend in the small car segment. Thanks to the increase in ground clearance by 15 millimetres, the front-wheel-drive model mastered even poorer roads with confidence. Visually, the CrossPolo stood out from the sea of compact cars with its 17-inch alloy wheels as well as robust and colour-contrasting add-on parts, including bumpers in off-road style and roof rails. The robust, avant-garde style of the CrossPolo was also reflected in the details: the exterior mirrors were painted in metallic silver and matched the colour of the roof rails, which were also in silver. The modified front apron also picked up on the metal theme as a design element: the central, trapezoidal air inlet and the suggested underbody protection had a surround in a matt aluminium look. The low-lying front fog lights were also part of the standard equipment. Analogously to the exterior, the interior featured numerous modifications: colour-coordinated sports comfort seats and chrome trim in the cockpit characterised the style of the CrossPolo. Three petrol engines and two diesel engines each with up to 74 kW (100 PS) were available to provide drive power.

Flashback: The Polo Generation IV – 4.1 million units

The fourth generation of the Polo made its debut in mid-November 2001. The offered two- and four-door bestseller came with new technologies, a new design (including striking round headlights) and new dimensions. With an increase in length of 154 mm and a 53 mm longer wheelbase, the Polo now closed the gap to the next larger class. The objective proof: up to 1,030 litres of stowage capacity. At the market launch, the Polo was offered with a 47 kW (65 PS) three-cylinder or 55 kW (75 PS) four-cylinder petrol engine and with a 55 kW three-cylinder TDI. Five further engines followed by January 2002. In general, all Polos were equipped with safety technologies such as ABS, power steering and front and side airbags. Electronic Stability Control (ESC) was available as an option. New semi-automatic and fully automatic air conditioning systems ensured optimum comfort as optional equipment. In 2006, the new Polo GTI (110 kW/150 PS), the charismatic CrossPolo and the extremely economical and efficient Polo BlueMotion followed.



5th generation | Polo R WRC Street

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation V

2013 / 2009 to 2017 (Polo R WRC Street 2013 to 2014)

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

162 kW (220 PS) / 4-cylinder, 1,984 cm³ / 243 km/h

The Polo R WRC Street

In January 2013, Volkswagen Motorsport launched the 232 kW (315 PS) Polo R WRC at the Monte Carlo Rally. It marked the start of participation in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC). A few weeks earlier – in December 2012 – Volkswagen had also celebrated the world premiere of the road version of the racing car in Monaco: the Polo R WRC Street, limited to 2,500 units. Its 2.0-litre TSI engine delivered 162 kW (220 PS) to the front axle and thus 30 kW (40 PS) more power than the 1.4-litre TSI in the Polo GTI. A torque of 350 Nm (Polo GTI: 250 Nm) ensured correspondingly agile responsiveness from any engine speed range. Shifting took place over short distances with a manual six-speed gearbox. With a top speed of 243 km/h, the Polo R WRC sprinted from a standstill to the 100 km/h mark in just 6.4 seconds. With the white base paintwork, blue-grey striped decor and bumpers in WRC design, it created a visual bridge to the rally vehicle. A sports chassis guaranteed perfect handling, bi-xenon headlights illuminated the night sky and sports seats with WRC lettering provided lateral support. The rim of the steering wheel covered with microfleece fabric offered good grip. And by the way: Volkswagen Motorsport and driver Sébastien Ogier won the FIA World Rally Championship for the first time in autumn 2013 with the rally version of the Polo R WRC. The Polo R WRC would continue to dominate the World Championship in the following three years.

Flashback: The Polo Generation V – 6.3 million units

In March 2009, Volkswagen presented the fifth generation of the Polo at the Geneva Motor Show. Comfort, efficiency and safety once again took a significant leap forward. In the area of safety, for example, the new Polo already achieved the best result of five stars in the Euro NCAP crash test in 2009. The higher structural strength of the body was one of the factors here. In the footwell alone, the intrusion, in other words the amount of deformation in a frontal crash, was reduced by 50 per cent. In terms of comfort, even the entry-level Trendline version had details such as electrohydraulic power steering, electric windows at the front and a central locking system on board. As regards efficiency, despite significant improvements in all areas, Volkswagen managed to make the new Polo 7.5 per cent lighter. Efficiency was improved in parallel by new TDI and TSI engines as well as a 7-speed direct shift gearbox (DSG) – resulting in a reduction in consumption by up to 20 per cent. As one of the most economical cars in the world, the Polo BlueMotion was introduced in December 2009 and had an average diesel consumption of just 3.3 litres over 100 kilometres. The sporty Polo GTI now also became an integral part of the model range. A special treat was the Polo R WRC Street special model – with 162 kW (220 PS) the most powerful Polo of all time.



6th generation | Polo Style

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation VI

2024 / Since 2021

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

70 kW (95 PS) / 3-cylinder, 999 cm³ / 187 km/h

The Polo Style¹

This Polo is currently available as an entry-level model (Polo), in the medium equipment level Life, in the two top versions Style and R-Line and as the iconic GTI. This Polo is additionally available as a Goal special model. The Polo Style on display here is all about comfort and a stylish basic configuration. This includes exterior features such as a radiator grille with chrome-look crossbars, LED fog lights and 15-inch Ronda alloy wheels. Among other things, the extended exterior equipment features Park Distance Control (front and rear) and the progressive IQ.LIGHT LED matrix headlights. Inside, there are additional details such as the Digital Cockpit Pro (including picture of caller, Coverflow, map view and Slide Show), background lighting and the 8-inch Ready2Discover infotainment system, which includes App-Connect Wireless. With Ready2Discover, customers have the option of retrofitting the navigation system as a feature on demand. Stylish: the seat covers in the Style design and the high-gloss trim in Deep Iron. There is also the option to order the seats with exclusive ArtVelours covers. The Polo Style is powered as standard by an efficient and agile turbocharged petrol engine (TSI) with 70 kW (95 PS).

Flashback: The Polo Generation VI – currently 2.5 million units

Unveiled in June 2017, the sixth-generation Polo was based on the Modular Transverse Toolkit (MQB) for the first time. Since then, this high-tech modular toolkit has been the basis for equipping the Polo with technologies that were initially developed for higher classes. These include features such as Automatic Emergency Braking (Front Assist), Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC) and the Side Assist lane change system. In 2021, the Polo received a comprehensive visual and technical facelift and numerous new technologies. These include – as options – the innovative IQ.LIGHT LED matrix headlights and the Travel Assist system for partly automated driving. In addition, the cockpit was digitalised in 2021. The current Polo GTI² followed in 2021 with a 152 kW (207 PS) turbocharged petrol engine. On the 25th anniversary of the Polo GTI, Volkswagen launched the limited and exclusive Polo GTI Edition 25³ special model in 2023. To date, more than 2.5 million units of the Polo VI have been produced.

¹ Polo Style (70 kW/95 PS) – Combined energy consumption 5.7–5.1 l/100 km; combined CO₂ emissions; 130–116 g/km; CO₂ class D

² Polo GTI – Combined energy consumption 6.8–6.5 l/100 km; combined CO₂ emissions 155–148 g/km; CO₂ class E

³ Polo Edition 25 – This model is no longer on sale.





CONTENT CREATOR DAYS – 50 YEARS OF POLO

Small and fast

Polo Hill Climb Race Car

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation I

1977 / 1975 to 1981

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

81 kW (110 PS) / 4-cylinder, 1,300 cm³ / 150 km/h

The Polo Hill Climb Race Car

Even the first Polo already offered an optimal starting point for use in motorsport due to its low weight and a wealth of technical possibilities. An example of this is the exhibited Polo I from 1977. Exterior features include the pronounced wheel housing trims, which point to the significantly wider track widths of the Polo. Among other things, the car was used in hill climb races. After around two decades of racing, the Polo, now painted in Bali Green, was extensively restored over a period of two years. It competed in its first race after restoration in 2022 at the Osnabrück International ADAC Hill Climb – an official race of the FIA European Hill Climb Championship.

Technically, the Polo is characterised by racing-specific details such as a roll cage and a motorsport chassis. On the drive side, a 1.3-litre four-cylinder engine with an output of 81 kW (110 PS) and a shorter gear ratio ensure precisely the right level of agility to regain momentum as quickly as possible from the tightest hairpin bends. On the straights of the hill tracks, the Polo has a top speed of up to 150 km/h.

Polo Coupé G40 Cup

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation II

1986 / 1981 to 1994

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

83 kW (113 PS) with closed-loop catalytic converter / 4-cylinder, 1,272 cm³ / 196 km/h

The Polo Coupé G40 Cup

This Polo – a Coupé G40 Cup elaborately restored over a period of six years – has a great motorsport history behind it. It was used between 1986 and 1989 in the International Wintershall VW Polo Cup. During this time, it was driven by Berthold Bermel, who achieved 14 podium places in the Polo Coupé G40 and crossed the finish line as a winner six times. The car was designed, built and offered as a racing car for the Polo Cup by Volkswagen Motorsport. Price: 23,684 German marks. In the Cup vehicle, the engine with scroll-type supercharger largely corresponded to the standard four-cylinder engine with closed-loop catalytic converter. Power output: 83 kW (113 PS). The 5-speed racing gearbox with reinforced clutch was modified, however. The equipment also included a Fichtel & Sachs suspension with racing tuning with strut braces at the front and rear as well as an additional subframe (3 cm longer wheelbase). Also included in the Volkswagen Motorsport package: two tyre sets (slicks and rain tyres), an oil cooler, a sports exhaust system, a roll cage, five-point seat belts, a fire extinguisher and quick-release fasteners for the bonnet.

Polo Cup prototype

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation VI

2004 / 2001 to 2009

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

132 kW (180 PS) / 4-cylinder, 1,781 cm³ / Vmax not determined

The Polo Cup prototype

The ADAC Volkswagen Polo Cup was held as part of the accompanying program of the German Touring Car Championship (DTM) and paved the way for young talents to enter motorsport. The best example is three-time DTM champion Rene Rast, who took part in the 2005 Polo Cup and immediately won the championship. The car on display is a prototype of the racing version for the Polo Cup in Denmark. While the Polo used in the German Cup had a 110 kW (150 PS) 2.0-litre naturally aspirated engine on board, this prototype from 2004 is equipped with a 1.8-litre turbocharged engine that produces an output of 132 kW (180 PS).

As an interesting side note, it was precisely this 180 PS engine that later also powered the Polo GTI Cup Edition – the road version of the racing car.

Polo R WRC

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation V

2013 / 2009 to 2017

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

232 kW (315 PS) / 4-cylinder, 1,600 cm³ / approx. 200 km/h (depending on ratio)

The Polo R WRC

It is one of the most successful rally cars of all time: the all-wheel drive Polo R WRC. It is based on the fifth-generation Polo. The Polo celebrated its WRC debut at the Monte Carlo Rally in 2013. And the first victory already came in the second race in Sweden. The all-wheel-drive vehicle was a hit right from the outset and raised the bar for many years. In 2013, Volkswagen Motorsport managed to secure the driver, co-driver and manufacturers' titles in its very first season competing in the premier rally competition. In the following season, too, the team from Hanover was hard to beat with the Polo and won the coveted World Championship title. The next World Championship trophies followed in 2015 and 2016 with an enhanced version of the Polo R WRC. The Polo R WRC's journey at the World Rally Championship came to an end on 20 November 2016. And it marked its farewell in fitting style by securing a double victory in Australia. And thus, a success story like no other came to an end. In the 52 World Championship races that Volkswagen Motorsport had competed in over four years, the driver of a Polo R WRC stood at the top of the podium no fewer than 43 times – this corresponds to an astonishing win rate of 82.7 per cent and gives the team a unique record in the rally history books.

The Polo R WRC from the first series shown as part of the 50 years of the Polo exhibition was built in 2013. The all-wheel drive racing car is powered by a 232 kW (315 PS) 1.6-litre turbocharged engine. With a minimum weight of 1,200 kg and 315 PS specified by the regulations, the weight-to-power ratio is 3.8 kg/PS. The four-cylinder engine provides a maximum torque of 425 Nm. The power is transmitted to the all-wheel drive by a sequential six-speed gearbox. When full power is requested, the Polo R WRC accelerates to 100 km/h in 3.9 seconds.

Polo Cup

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation VI

2025 / Since 2021

Power / Engine / Maximum speed220 kW (300 PS) / 4-cylinder, 1,984 cm³ / Vmax not determined

The Polo Cup

The Polo Cup, held for the last time in 2009, was one of the most successful German one-make race series for young talents. The Polo Cup is now scheduled to make its comeback in Germany in 2026. This time it will be adapted from South Africa, where the racing series with the current Polo is already running successfully. The touring race car of the future German racing series was developed and produced by Volkswagen Motorsport South Africa. The technical basis for the 220 kW (300 PS) Cup vehicle is provided by the current Polo GTI¹. The touring race car weighs just 1,170 kg. Thanks to a weight-to-power ratio of only 3.0 kg/PS, the 2.0-litre turbocharged engine can effortlessly provide the propulsion needed by the race car. Power is transmitted to the front axle via a sequentially shifted 6-speed gearbox. A limited-slip differential ensures optimum traction. There is no ABS, Traction Control or ESC. Instead, there are motorsport features such as a front 6-piston Powerbrake system with 380-millimetre brake discs (rear axle with standard brakes), an H&R suspension with a racing spring system and roll cage, bucket seats with side head protection, 6-point seat belts and a fire extinguishing system. The initiator and organiser of the German counterpart is MARACO Management from Rehlingen-Siersburg near Saarbrücken. The Polo Cup, including technical support and spare parts supply, can be purchased directly through MARACO Management (www.polo-cup.de).

¹ Polo GTI – Combined energy consumption 6.8–6.5 l/100 km; combined CO₂ emissions 155–148 g/km; CO₂ class E





CONTENT CREATOR DAYS – 50 YEARS OF POLO

Small and sporty

Polo GT

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation I

1981 / 1975 to 1981

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

44 kW (60 PS) / 4-cylinder, 1,272 cm³ / 154 km/h

The Polo GT

It looks like a GTI, but is a GT. Volkswagen launched it on the market for the first time in 1979. Visually, it harks back to its big brother, the Golf GTI, and bears characteristic GTI insignia, such as the red stripes in the radiator grille. Another red stripe adorned the distinctive front spoiler. There were also two stripes in the silhouette: an upper narrow stripe at the level of the tornado line and a lower wide one between the wheel housings. In the case of the red-painted Polo GT, these stripes were black. Alternatively, the GT was also available in white, black and silver metallic. In this case, the trim strips were in red. The 13-inch steel wheels featured two-tone red and black paintwork. GT badges at the front and rear and in the lower side strip also documented the sporty status. In the interior, customised seat covers and instruments with a speedometer up to 200 km/h and a rev counter were part of the GT equipment.



Polo Coupé GT G40

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation II

1987 / 1981 to 1994 (1987 to 1988 Polo Coupé GT G40, 1990 to 1994 Polo G40)

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

85 kW (115 PS) / 4-cylinder, 1,272 cm³ / 195 km/h

The Polo Coupé GT G40

In September 1985, a Polo prototype set off on the Volkswagen Ehra-Lessien test grounds near Wolfsburg for a spectacular world record attempt: the aim was to drive at top speed for 24 hours, setting a new record for average speed in the 1.3-litre engine class. It was the perfect time to break the previous record of 168.63 km/h because the prototype had the new scroll-type supercharger from Volkswagen on board, which increased the output of the 1,272 cm³ four-cylinder engine from 55 kW (75 PS) to 95 kW (129 PS). And the attempt was successful: thanks to the additional supercharger power, the Polo raced round the circuit at an average speed of 208 km/h, thus easily beating the previous record holder. In the same month, Volkswagen presented the production version of the compact sports car at the IAA: the 85 kW (115 PS) Polo Coupé GT G40 with said scroll-type supercharger.

The Polo with a top speed of 196 km/h was initially launched in 1987 as a special version limited to 500 units – always painted in black. The Polo Coupé GT G40 shown here belongs to this series. Demand was so high that a further 1,500 units were produced in 1988 – these were then also available in other colours. Since the G40 boom did not slow down in any way, Volkswagen included the 830-kilogram sports car in the normal range of the product line in 1990 under the name Polo G40 – this came equipped with a closed-loop catalytic converter and therefore had an output of 83 kW/113 PS.

Polo Coupé GT

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation II

1987 / 1981 to 1994

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

55 kW (75 PS) / 4-cylinder, 1,272 cm³ / 170 km/h

The Polo Coupé GT

The second generation of the Polo GT was launched in 1987 with significantly greater agility than the first GT based on the original Polo. With an output of 55 kW (75 PS), the new Polo Coupé GT delivered exactly the 15 PS more that made the lightweight model an agile cornering specialist. The Polo Coupé GT took 12.0 seconds to sprint to 100 km/h – a very sporty figure in the small car segment 38 years ago. The same was true for the maximum speed of 170 km/h.

The sports chassis with a MacPherson front axle and a torsion beam rear axle was also fully up to the task in hand. In addition, the GT had outstanding braking characteristics thanks to the brake servo and brake force regulator. And what's more, with the Coupé's black wheel housing trims and the black-framed boot lid, the Polo GT already resembled a small Golf GTI anyway – especially when it was painted in Tornado Red, like the exhibition model. The Polo Coupé GT additionally formed the technical basis for the Polo Coupé GT G40 with newly developed scroll-type supercharger, which was also presented in 1987.

Polo GTI

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation IV

2001 / 2001 to 2009

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

110 kW (150 PS) / 4-cylinder, 1,781 cm³ / 216 km/h

The Polo GTI

In 2001, this concept car provided a glimpse into the future. It was a prototype of the fourth-generation GTI Polo, which was presented only five years later. The 110 kW (150 PS) 1.8-litre turbocharged five-valve engine of the prototype was already largely the same as the production version. However, the concept car had a front section with four round headlights. When the Polo GTI was launched in spring 2006, it was already based on the facelift model. The production version therefore started out with a completely different front-end design: the defining style element here was a V-shaped black radiator grille with a protective grille in a honeycomb structure. The twin headlights were now integrated in a housing and also had a black surround. A roof spoiler above the boot lid ensured optimum downforce at the rear axle. The brake calipers of the disc brakes were painted red. The Polo GTI adopted the design of the 16-inch alloy wheels from the Golf GTI of the time. A sports chassis lowered the body by 15 mm. As in the original GTI era, sports seats with a typical check pattern were used in the Polo. Fine details such as red cross-stitching on the leather steering wheel and red borders on the black seat belts completed the GTI insignia. Offering superior performance with a top speed of 216 km/h and 8.2 seconds for the classic 0-to-100 km/h sprint, the Polo finally entered the Hall of Fame of the GTI models.





CONTENT CREATOR DAYS – 50 YEARS OF POLO

Small and special

Öko-Polo

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation II

1987 / 1981 to 1994

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

29 kW (39 PS) / 2-cylinder, 860 cm³ / 138 km/h

The Öko-Polo

Aerodynamics and drive efficiency have been dominant topics in automotive development for decades. An example of this is the test car exhibited here from 1987: the Öko-Polo (a squareback version). Its aerodynamics and drive efficiency were outstanding. In terms of aerodynamics, the squareback of the Polo offered a decisive advantage in addition to additional stowage space: significantly less turbulence was generated in the rear area than with a fastback. And that improved the aerodynamics. The drag coefficient was only 0.39 and the overall air resistance ($c_d \times F$) just 0.67 – both values were the best in the segment at the time. The very good aerodynamics reduced fuel consumption and thus emissions. In the area of drive efficiency, the goal of achieving maximum fuel economy was pursued in the Öko-Polo by use of a test engine – a two-cylinder diesel direct injection engine with an electrically activatable scroll-type supercharger. A 5-speed semi-automatic gearbox was installed. The scroll-type supercharger temporarily increased the output from 20 kW (27 PS) to 29 kW (39 PS). The average consumption of the Öko-Polo, of which 50 units were built, was 3.6 l/100 km. The white vehicles in the test fleet all had rainbow stripes painted on the sides. In order to test the cars under real conditions, Volkswagen made the vehicles available to authorities and social institutions.

Polo BlueMotion

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation V

2010 / 2009 to 2017

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

55 kW (75 PS) / 3-cylinder, 1,199 cm³ / 173 km/h (depending on ratio)

The Polo BlueMotion

At the Geneva Motor Show in March 2009, Volkswagen not only presented the new and thus fifth Polo, but also a high-tech efficiency concept car based on this: the Polo BlueMotion. It was powered by a 55 kW (75 PS) 1.2-litre turbodiesel engine with three cylinders and common-rail direct injection. This 1.2 TDI was equipped with a start/stop system and a recuperation function to use the braking energy. But that was not all: Volkswagen implemented extensive efficiency measures in the concept vehicle with a weight of just 1,080 kilograms: an aerodynamics package with a modified front end, a new rear spoiler, a body lowered by 10 millimetres, an aerodynamically optimised underbody and low rolling resistance tyres on 15-inch alloy wheels. The production model of the Polo BlueMotion celebrated its world premiere in September 2009 at the International Motor Show (IAA) in Frankfurt. Thanks to the efficiency measures implemented in the production vehicle, the Polo BlueMotion had a fuel consumption of just 3.3 l/100 km; the corresponding CO₂ emissions were only 87 g/km. When the Polo BlueMotion was launched at the beginning of 2010, it was the most economical five-seater in the world.

Polo Coupé GT G40 wide body

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation II

1986 / 1981 to 1994

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

85 kW (115 PS) / 4-cylinder, 1,272 cm³ / 190 km/h

The Polo Coupé GT G40 from Volkswagen Motorsport

In the 80s, Volkswagen Motorsport developed tuning kits for road vehicles. In 1986, a conversion kit was created for the second-generation Polo, which was compatible with both the Coupé and the squareback version. However, the initial spark for development of the conversion kit was provided by the Polo Coupé GT G40, which was particularly dynamic in terms of drive technology thanks to the scroll-type supercharger. The conversion kit was also advertised with this model.

The vehicle on display is one of the first two models of this type converted by Volkswagen Motorsport: a pre-series model of the Polo Coupé GT G40. Customers could either buy the conversion kit and then assemble it themselves or have it assembled, or order the vehicle completely converted for a surcharge of 8,500 German marks. The widened wings gave the Polo a similar appearance to the Rallye Golf, which was only built 5,000 times (1989 to 1990), and which was also powered by a four-cylinder engine with a scroll-type supercharger.

Polo Sprint

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation II

1983 / 1981 to 1994

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

115 kW (156 PS) / 4-cylinder, 1,900 cm³ / 207 km/h

The Polo Sprint

The Polo Sprint was built in 1983 as a pure concept vehicle in order to investigate the handling characteristics of certain drive concepts at high output power levels and with extreme loads on the chassis. For the first time in the history of the Polo, the 115 kW (156 PS) four-cylinder flat engine with electronic petrol injection was integrated into the rear of the Polo – like in a Beetle or Porsche 911. The resulting increased rear axle load resulted in a significant improvement in the transferable torque. The power was transferred via a modified 5-speed gearbox taken from the Volkswagen Transporter of that time. For package reasons, the fuel tank and spare wheel were moved forward – this also called to mind the Beetle and Porsche 911. At the time, test drivers expressed themselves extremely positively about the handling characteristics of the Polo Sprint.



Polo Harlekin

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation III

1996 / 1994 to 2001

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

40 kW (55 PS) / 4-cylinder, 1,598 cm³ / 172 km/h

The Polo Harlekin

The colourful Harlekin is probably the most unusual of all Polo models ever built in series production. The story behind it: when the third generation of the Polo was introduced in 1995, there was something new, namely equipment packages that could be freely combined. The sales brochure illustrated the modular system with four colours: Pistachio Green stood for the paintwork, Chagall Blue represented the engine and chassis, Ginster Yellow symbolised the equipment and Flash Red indicated special equipment. In order to visualise the principle on the Polo as well, 20 vehicles were initially painted in these four colours and displayed in the showrooms of Volkswagen dealerships.

The colourful Polo models triggered an unprecedented boom in demand. In 1995, Volkswagen therefore launched a special series of this Polo painted as colourfully as a handful of Smarties and called it Harlekin. The four colours could also be found in the fabric covers of the seats. Exactly 3,806 four-colour Polo cars were sold until 1997.

Polo FUN

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation IV

2002 / 2001 to 2009

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

Range for Polo FUN: 40 kW (55 PS) to 74 kW (100 PS) / 3- and 4-cylinder

The Polo FUN Concept Car

Volkswagen broke new ground with the Polo FUN in 2004. The Polo FUN was launched at the beginning of 2004 with its crisp all-terrain look – not lowered, but raised by 15 mm. The concept was a success: within a very short period of time, three times as many units were sold across Europe compared with the original forecast. Especially popular was the colour Lime, which was specially designed for this model. The bumpers also had a unique design with protective all-terrain elements that were continued in the wheel arch extensions and side member trims. These details, together with the raised rough-road chassis, made the Polo FUN look like a small SUV. Other striking details included the distinctive 17-inch alloy wheels, the silver roof rails and the colour-coordinated exterior mirror housings. The individualised interior of the Polo FUN also had a fresh appearance: the front sports seats and the rear bench were optionally available in Space Lime or Space Grey, the 4-spoke steering wheel was covered in perforated leather with good grip, the instruments were finished with chrome rings and the pedals had an aluminium look. Also fitted as standard were radio, central locking and electric windows. On the drive side, seven petrol and diesel engines with an output spectrum from 40 kW (55 PS) to 74 kW (100 PS) were available. The Polo FUN on display in the exhibition is a unique concept car of the model from 2002.

Polo GTI Cabriolet

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation IV

2007 / 2001 to 2009

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

110 kW (150 PS) / 4-cylinder, 1,781 cm³ / Vmax not determined

The Polo GTI Cabriolet

This is what many fans of the small car dreamed of: the Polo as a convertible. At the IAA 2007, this dream finally seemed to come true. On display in Frankfurt am Main was an open-top Polo, and a GTI version at that. The Polo GTI Cabriolet concept vehicle was developed by Karmann in Osnabrück (now Volkswagen Osnabrück GmbH). The concept car attracted plenty of attention thanks to its numerous technical innovations. For example, the convertible top had a Z-fold, which was later used in a similar form for the Golf Cabriolet from Volkswagen. Another special feature was the glass sliding sunroof integrated into the soft top. Like the New Beetle Cabriolet at the time, the Polo GTI Cabriolet was also equipped with an 'Overhead Protection System' – rollover protection elements in the area of the rear head restraints designed to shoot up at lightning speed that replaced the classic protective bar. The concept vehicle was powered by the 110 kW (150 PS) turbocharged engine of the Polo GTI. However, the Polo GTI Cabriolet remained a concept vehicle and never went into production.



CONTENT CREATOR DAYS – 50 YEARS OF POLO

**Can be
experienced
dynamically at
the exhibition**

Polo L

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation I

1975 / 1975 to 1981

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

29 kW (40 PS) / 4-cylinder, 900 cm³ / 132 km/h

The Polo L

The oldest Polo in this exhibition: the Polo L hails from the debut year 1975. With its striking Oceanic Blue Lego-style exterior colour and the chocolate brown interior, it embodies the spirit of the 1970s like practically no other model. If its FM car radio had Spotify capability, it would play the world hit from 1975 Shining Star from Earth, Wind & Fire. When the Polo came onto the market in the spring of 1975, the new star in the small car firmament was available with the said L equipment as an alternative to the standard version. L stands for luxury, which was quite modest 50 years ago. The Polo L is visually recognisable by the chrome bumpers (instead of silver paint finish) and chrome trim strips in the window frames. From a functional point of view, the ascetic equipment was enhanced by details that today go without saying, such as a second door lock (passenger side), the luggage compartment cover, gas springs for the boot lid (instead of a holding rod), a folding rear bench seat, a fuel gauge (instead of an indicator lamp), a two-speed ventilation blower, a wash and wipe system and needle felt on the floor. 50 years after its production in Wolfsburg, the charm of this reduced-to-the-essentials functionality makes the Polo L a fascinating time capsule.



Polo G40

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation II

1992 / 1981 to 1994 (1987 to 1988 Polo Coupé GT G40, 1990 to 1994 Polo G40)

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

83 kW (113 PS) with closed-loop catalytic converter / 4-cylinder, 1,272 cm³ / 196 km/h

The Polo G40

In September 1985, a Polo prototype set off on the Volkswagen Ehra-Lessien test grounds near Wolfsburg for a spectacular world record attempt: the aim was to drive at top speed for 24 hours, setting a new record for average speed in the 1.3-litre engine class. It was the perfect time to break the previous record of 168.63 km/h because the prototype had the new scroll-type supercharger from Volkswagen on board, which increased the output of the 1,272 cm³ four-cylinder engine from 55 kW (75 PS) to 95 kW (129 PS). And the attempt was successful: thanks to the additional supercharger power, the Polo raced round the circuit at an average speed of 208 km/h, thus easily beating the previous record holder. In the same month, Volkswagen presented the production version of the compact sports car at the IAA: the 85 kW (115 PS) Polo Coupé GT G40 with said scroll-type supercharger.

The Polo with a top speed of 196 km/h was initially launched on the market in 1987 as a special version limited to 500 units. The demand was so great that a further 1,500 units were produced in 1988. But the success of the GT G40 continued. Volkswagen therefore included the lightweight 830-kilogram sports car in the standard range of the product line under the name Polo G40 from 1990. This model had a closed-loop catalytic converter on board and had an output of 83 kW (113 PS) as a result.

Polo Police Car

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation II

1992 / 1987 to 1994

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

37 kW (50 PS) / 4-cylinder, 1,272 cm³ / 153 km/h

The Polo CL police car

This second-generation Polo CL belonged to the fleet of the Central Property Protection and Driving Service at the police headquarters in Berlin. The police car was equipped with 'special warning and danger signal system' and two-way radio. Due to their compact dimensions, the police mainly used the economical police vehicles for operations in Berlin's inner city. In the summer of 2000, the exhibited Polo police car was given to the new 1st German Police Vintage Car Museum in Marburg as a guest gift from the Berlin Police Historical Collection.

Today, the collection comprises more than 90 classic police vehicles. They can be viewed in Marburg (www.polizeioldtimer.de). The classic cars in the collection are also often used for film and television productions.

Polo Harlekin

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation III

1995 / 1994 to 2001

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

33 kW (45 PS) / 4-cylinder, 1,043 cm³ / 145 km/h

The Polo Harlekin

The colourful Harlekin is probably the most unusual of all Polo models ever built in series production. The story behind it: when the third generation of the Polo was introduced in 1995, there was something new, namely equipment packages that could be freely combined. The sales brochure illustrated the modular system with four colours: Pistachio Green stood for the paintwork, Chagall Blue represented the engine and chassis, Ginster Yellow symbolised the equipment and Flash Red indicated special equipment. In order to visualise the principle on the Polo as well, 20 vehicles were initially painted in these four colours and displayed in the showrooms of Volkswagen dealerships.

The colourful Polo models triggered an unprecedented boom in demand. In 1995, Volkswagen therefore launched a special series of this Polo painted as colourfully as a handful of Smarties and called it Harlekin. The four colours could also be found in the fabric covers of the seats. Exactly 3,806 four-colour Polo cars were sold until 1997.

Polo R WRC Street

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation V

2013 / 2009 to 2017

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

184 kW (250 PS) / 4-cylinder, 1,984 cm³ / above 250 km/h

The Polo R WRC Street with all-wheel drive

In 2013 and 2014, Volkswagen Motorsport won the FIA World Rally Championship with the first generation of the all-wheel drive Polo R WRC. In the run-up to this triumph, Volkswagen presented the road version of the rally vehicle shortly before the start of the 2012 Monte Carlo Rally in Monaco: the Polo R WRC Street. The special series was limited to 2,500 units and had a 162 kW (220 PS) turbocharged engine and front-wheel drive. During almost the same period, Volkswagen built several prototypes of the Polo R WRC Street with all-wheel drive. They would never reach the dealerships. As the most powerful road-legal Polo ever from Volkswagen, one of these prototypes is a particular highlight at the 50 years of the Polo exhibition: the Polo R WRC Street all-wheel drive model with 184 kW (250 PS). Even more exclusive is the opportunity to drive this prototype during the exhibition.



Polo GTI R5

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation VI

2018 / since 2017, facelift since 2021

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

200 kW (272 PS) / 4-cylinder, 1,600 cm³ / approx. 200 km/h (depending on ratio)

The Polo GTI R5

From 2018, Volkswagen Motorsport's technical know-how and experience from its successful participation in the World Rally Championship were incorporated in the Polo GTI R5 – an all-wheel drive rally car for customer sports based on the sixth-generation Polo. At its heart was a 200 kW (272 PS) 1.6-litre turbocharged engine, which is installed as a 2.0-litre variant in the current Polo GTI¹, Golf GTI² and Golf R³, among others. The Polo GTI R5, of which around 100 units were assembled by hand for customers, still races successfully in national and international rally championships in accordance with the Rally2 regulations – more than 500 victories and more than 1,200 podium places underline the brilliance of the overall design of this fast rally specialist, which completes the sprint from 0 to 100 km/h in just 4.1 seconds. The car is available for rides at the exhibition.

¹ Polo GTI – Combined energy consumption 6.8–6.5 l/100 km; combined CO₂ emissions 155–148 g/km; CO₂ class E

² Golf GTI – Combined energy consumption 7.3–7.1 l/100 km; combined CO₂ emissions 166–161 g/km; CO₂ class F

³ Golf R – Combined energy consumption 8.5–8.1 l/100 km, combined CO₂ emissions 192–183 g/km | CO₂ class G



Polo GTI

Exhibition vehicle manufacture year / Construction period of Polo Generation VI

2024 / since 2021

Power / Engine / Maximum speed

152 kW (207 PS) / 4-cylinder, 1,984 cm³ / 242 km/h

The Polo GTI¹

It is the icon among the Polo models – the GTI. The current model has been available since summer 2021 and is more powerful than ever before. The 2.0-litre turbocharged direct injection engine (TSI) develops an output of 152 kW (207 PS). The maximum torque of 320 Nm is available in the wide engine speed range from a low 1,500 rpm to the comparatively high speed of 4,500 rpm. The four-cylinder engine accelerates the 1,378 kg Polo GTI to 100 km/h in just 6.5 seconds. The top speed is 242 km/h. Volkswagen adapted the sports chassis of the Polo GTI, which is lowered by 15 mm, to the high performance of the front-wheel drive model. It can be optionally ordered with the Sport Select chassis, where switchable shock absorbers allow the driver to vary the damping characteristics; here, the two modes Normal and Sport can be activated by means of the driving profile selection that is on board as standard. The exterior and interior are both timeless and charismatic: the insignia typical for the GTI include the red stripes on the radiator grille, the GTI gear knob and the legendary Clark checked seat cover.

¹ Polo GTI – Combined energy consumption 6.8–6.5 l/100 km; combined CO₂ emissions 155–148 g/km; CO₂ class E





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