

VolksWagens I Have Known

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Evidently it all started with my parent's first VW...a 1958 Beetle they bought brand new for \$1800...

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Here I am (age 5) next to the 1958 Beetle:

We then owned a series of Fastbacks... the back luggage area was perfect for the kids to sleep in during long trips.

After a brief diversion with a Ford Custom the family purchased a 1969 VW pop-top camper van. The 1/2 shift fork broke

very soon after we bought it (ocassioned us to drive home in 1st for a couple hundred clicks) and so I quickly learned how to pull the engine and tranny.

The van met an untimely end when someone in a 4x4 with a brush bar ambushed it at a 4 way stop late one night (this was how this guy got his kicks... several victums that year from the same truck) and it rolled a few times.

<picture >

We then picked a 78... more leaks than I care to remember, but we got many great trips out of it. By now I was spending lots of weekends backpacking in the mountains and it was fantastic for picking up the gang.

When I left home I had to have my own VW.. a 1969 Beetle that someone had hit a deer with. The dude's girlfriend had had her brush with death and refused to ride in it so he sold it to me dirt cheap. Within a month I had found a reasonably good body shell in a farmers field so we loaded the new shell into the back of my friends half-ton and did a body sway.. 8 bolts and we were done.

I eventually parted it out and bought another one... again a 1969 Beetle with about half of a Baja conversion done. The guy worked for the City painting lampposts and so the car was in fact official City of Edmonton Lamppost Grey.

I lost oil pressure one day as a piece of piston came flying out of the side... drove the thing on three cylinders for a while waiting to find another engine. We pulled the donor engine in the parking lot of the apartment I was living at and hoisted the engine up three flights of stairs where we stored it on the apartment balcony... it was -30C that week and I hadn't found a garage. Eventually I did and another engine transplant transpired.

It served me well until some guy did a left hand turn in front of me test-driving his summer T-Bird...

...pushed him onto the sidewalk and wrote off my Beetle. I bought it back from the insurance company and parted it out..
earning about double what I had paid for the whole car.

By now I was in my 20s and getting tired of scraping the windows from the inside... time for a water-cooled. Found a 1979 rabbit in my favorite colour... took me hiking, camping, and canoeing many many times

Ended up selling the car for a buck to my brother and my wife and I fell in love with a brand new 1992 Jetta on the showroom floor:

<pictures>

I added a 1981 diesel rabbit pickup to the fleet... what a fantastic form-factor. Front wheel drive is ideal in the Canadian north, and the thing got insane gas mileage.

Eventually it met the fate of many A1s (shock towers rusted thru) and I replaced it with a 1986 turbo diesel jetta.

It's actually really handy to own two cars that are the same model.... parts swaping is easy, only have to stock one set of spares, can move tires and roof racks around, and one Bentley fits all.

Having said that, the TD jetta now had over 560K km on it and the floor pans are rusting away... I was on the hunt for my next diesel and it will probably be an A3.... A2s without a lot of rust are getting hard to find... and as the summers warm up air conditioning is becoming a bit of a requirement, given how many car trips we take.

As luck would have it a kind soul was getting rid of an old project AAZ-equipped 1994 A3 Jetta... we towed it home from about an hour south:

Other VWs I know:

My parents have a 1992 Eurovan camper:

My brother has a 1993 TD Passat:

and a 1997 5-cylinder diesel Transporter as seen in the picture above, towing my MK3 home.

