

VW Sports Bug, Audi Fox, Peugeot Diesel Tests

ROAD & TRACK

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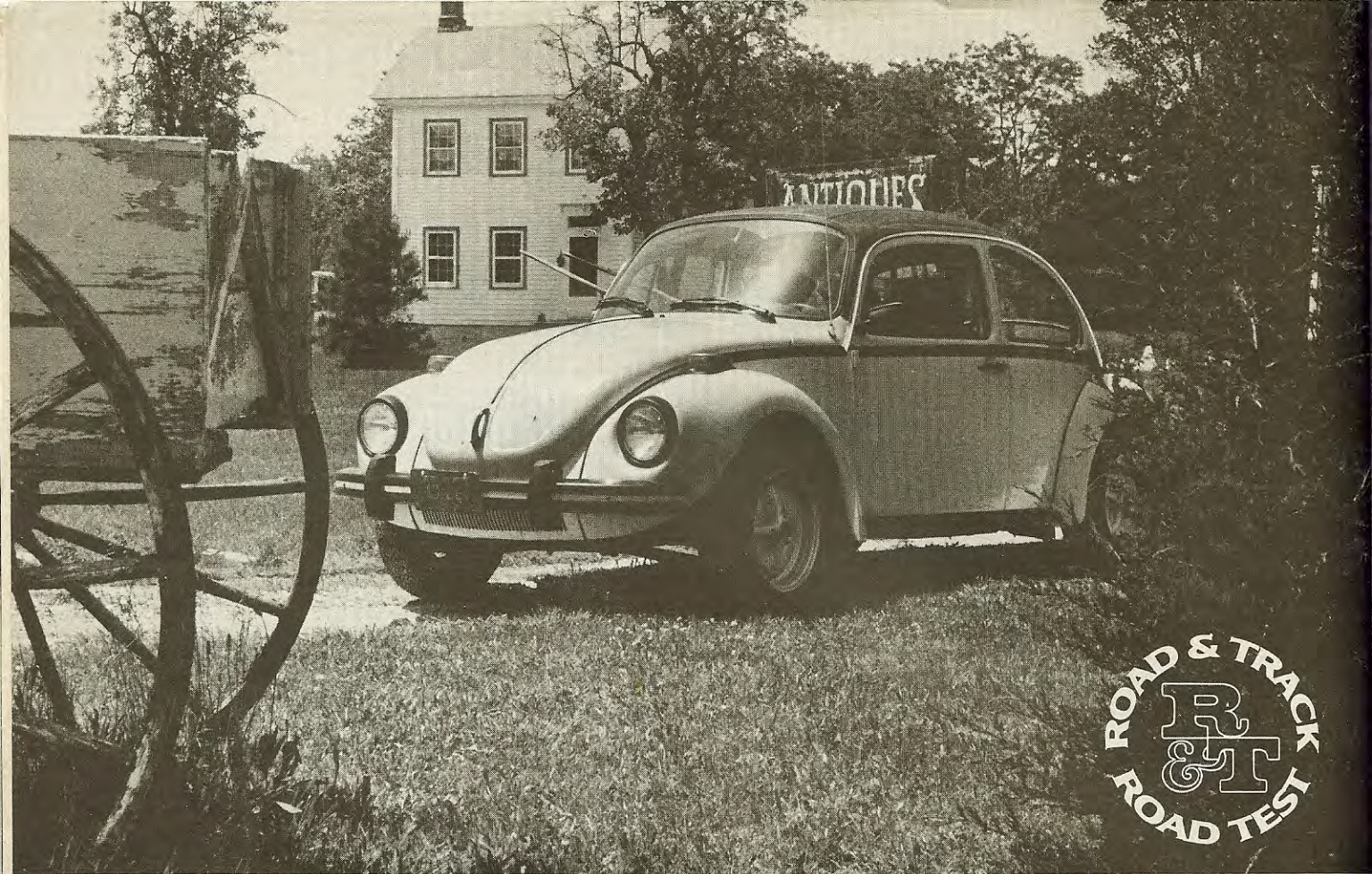
SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

Gasoline Shortage - Are Diesel Cars the Answer?



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VOLKSWAGEN SPORTS BUG

Auntie hadn't been stared at in ages by young folks

BY HENRY N. MANNEY



IT ISN'T EVERY day that one comes upon an Aunt heretofore unmet, unvisited and unseen at least by Me. Said Aunt was one of the daughters of my Grandfather (the late Admiral) by a second marriage and it was just one of those family mysteries until we were reunited by the good graces of the Social Security Admin's Mr Hanna, of all things. I have been fresh out of Aunts for some years now; they are not so important to Girls but dad rat it, a fellow really needs an Aunt. My friend Hose Nose in prep school had a really spectacular Aunt, all boobs and peroxidized hair, and I was hoping against hope, voyaging eastward crammed into one of American's elderly 707s, that this aunt would not be the schoolboy's scatological dream but the standard variety with apron, hair in a bun, and even a Lap. That, perhaps, is what old age does to you.

The ostensible purpose of the trip was to skin one of the new Sports Bugs off Herb Williamson at VW in New Jersey. As it turned out, our schedules of availability didn't quite match up and I was booted out of the nest temporarily with an Audi 100LS, the Sports Bugs temporarily disappearing off the dealers' shelves faster than VW could keep up. To make a long story short (it had better be: Ron) I flogged the Audi down to Virginia for some business and also to attend a meeting of the Jamestown Society (my mother's folks were pretty big in early Tidewater Va.), then down to Georgia and Alabama to look up some of my grandmother's kin. They are alive and well in Anniston even though 70 and up; let me reassure you that in spite of the creeping rot visible in the newspapers, America is still alive

and well in the South. My Cousin Margaret and I also located the grave of Mother's Brother William (Pvt James W. McGuire, 1st Maryland Volunteers) in the Confederate cemetery at Marietta, Ga., and passed on your respects. Returning to Virginia again (we don't say "North" in Georgia) we passed through a lot of awfully pretty country, rejoiced in light green pecan trees, saw Mr Brabham's hardware store in Columbia, S.C., and enjoyed the flat sandy plains of my youth. Once back, we attended the yearly bust-out at Old St Luke's in Smithfield, heard a speech by the Hon. Harry Flood Byrd (kin, naturally), ate fried chicken and Smithfield ham and tried some of the 21 kinds of homemade cake no cake mixes by order of the old biddy (kin) in charge. Very high grade of old biddies, mostly kin. The Audi ran faultlessly and gave excellent gas mileage, and my cousin Margaret got so attached to it (especially the sunshine roof) that she is even contemplating trading in the Great White Whale.

A tellyphone call to Herb in NJ ("Where on earth *are* you?") elicited the information that the Bug was ready so the swop was made in a pouring rainstorm, not exactly the best time for somebody as goosey about rear engines as I am. The data panel herewith attached gives the bare bones of the specifications; i.e. the Sports Bug is a customised Super Beetle on the surface, leaving the 1800-cc barrels etc to be crammed in later if the customer so desires. This particular example featured a decor evidently cribbed from a Hooded Oriole, viz violent yellow with black trim, and in addition (as it was a dealer's demo) a trick vinyl roof and air conditioning. Air conditioning



PHOTOS BY HENRY MANNEY & DORIS NIEH

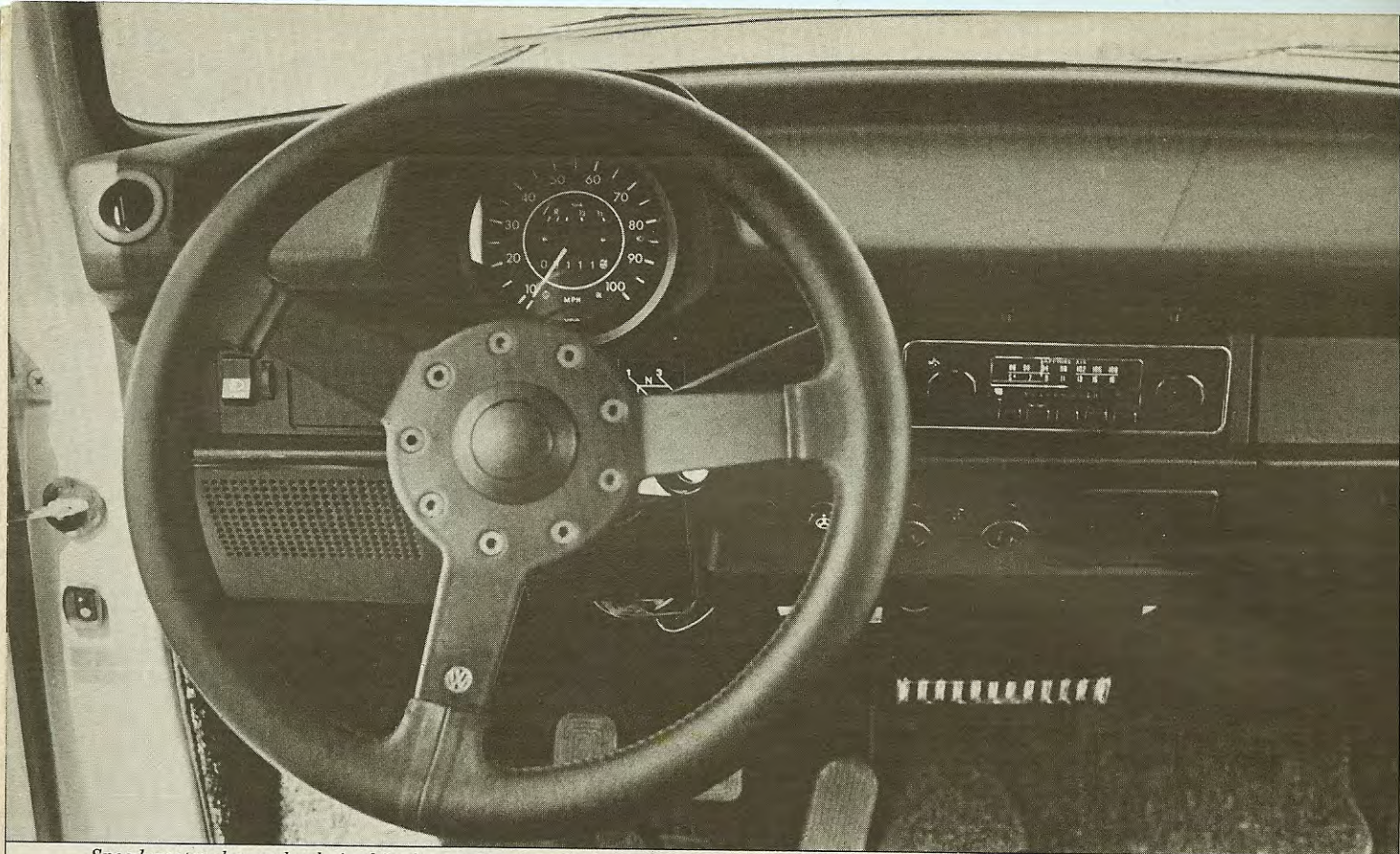
on a VW??? what would they have said on the first, grey, austerity assembly line? Inside was all cushy matte-black and long-distance with rake-adjustable bucket seats, tiny padded Lotus wheel, and enough shock cushioning to suit a space capsule. In short, it was cosy.

Fortunately we sped through all the formalities before rush hour and leaving the towering buildings of NYC to port, splashed down the NJ Turnpike en route to Atlantic City. No heroics were called for in those conditions, especially since the VW had something like 145 miles on the clock, and come to think of it VW's John Fisher had muttered something about "Don't expect us to come get you In Case." Furthermore the ratty taxis, jalopy derby refugees, and big trailer rigs bearing Sicilian names characteristic of that area were all pitching up bow-waves of spray. Next to the Como-Milano autostrada on Sunday evening, this was my unfavourite place. No, check that. The Howard Johnson's rest stop was worse. Anyway, it took me a while to find the demister, heater and so forth which seemed to work quite well but are not terribly sensitive. There appears to be about .05 cm of adjustment between cold feet and Col. Manney's fried feet, the heater grille down low actually getting hot enough to burn tootsies on. In fact, I stopped once to check the oil, wondering if there was any in the engine, but perhaps VWs run hotter heaters when new. The wipers as well were nothing to write home about as the fast speed *macht nichts* over slow and slow speed scrubbed if the volume of Wet fell off.

Did I get on my head? No. Last time I drove a Super Beetle

the suspension was pretty good anyway and the fat Pirelli Cinturatos, even with what seemed a bit too much air, did the job. The Sports Bug was quite stable even in the worst conditions with none of this zigging about you see on California freeways; the steering was very accurate and while at the beginning I was wishing for a bigger wheel instead of a padded 75¢ pizza plate, what buffeting cropped up in the wake of Frangipani Bros' big Kenworth was corrected by twiddles instead of swoops. In spite of the familiar Chinese Pagoda feeling, the visibility was really quite good (there is a rear window heater). Peculiarly enough the VW didn't get very dirty nor churn up a lot of spray. Perhaps the big tyres and fender flaps have something to do with it. At any rate, by the time I got down to Atlantic City on the Quarterway I was feeling quite confident; not enough to do a 360-deg doughnut in the fast lane but confident.

My Aunt Altje took one look at me and said "I didn't expect you with a Beard" and then "I didn't expect a VW to look like that." She just looked like a normal Aunt, not mod, not Maudie Frickert, which is as it should be. We went out to dinner in it and the parking lads liked it, we went down to Cape May the next day and George the antique dealer liked it, we stopped so Aunt Altje could have her photo taken pointing at Cape May lighthouse and the lighthouse liked it . . . at least it didn't blink. After a night's rest, the engine seemed to have gotten over a minor stumble of the day before (perhaps rain had got in at the agency) and was pulling very well. Auntie and I are both over 21, although she is a bit farther away than



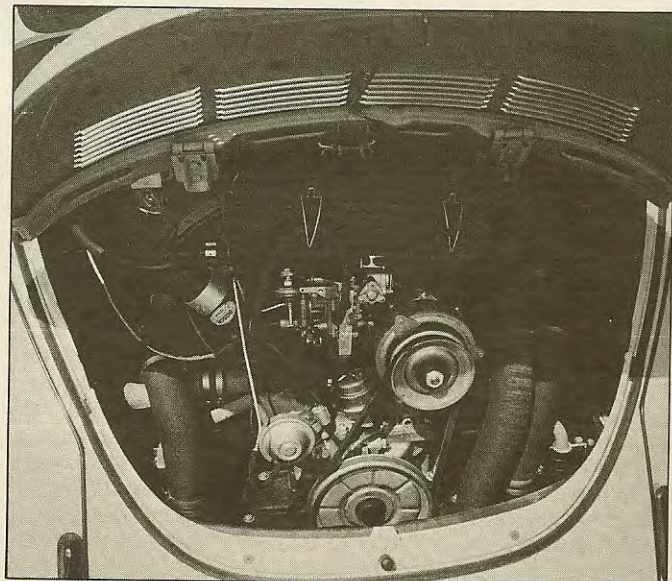
Speedometer shows clearly in this photo taken from low position, but from the driver's eye level the top third of it is obscured by the steering wheel.

I, and she never complained about the seats or getting out. She even got so she liked riding around in a bright yellow VW, explaining that she hadn't been stared at in ages by young folks.

Next day I was off again and crammed my big suitcase in the front, a bit fuller with a lot of old papers etc she had given me. Goodbye, Auntie, see you in the summer. Naturally, it was raining again but I got a bit braver, especially with a few miles on. Not enough to rev the dickens out of it and take performance figures as nobody told me (besides how to free erked VWs) whether or not the speedo had been corrected for those big tyres. Anyway, we thundered along in fine style, mostly around 70 which came up quite quickly as there seems to be a mumbly point around 65. I have a feeling that Sports Bug's exhaust system is non-standard, even though the engine is (what about the final drive, Ron?) as the noise level is pretty

high inside around 65 mph. A poor point, though, was that the upper portion of the steering wheel obscured the 40 to 70 half of the speedo, not all that clever on cop-ridden freeways. Maybe that's why there is a noisy spot at 65! I had a Renault like that; at 55 all the screws in the doors would fall out.

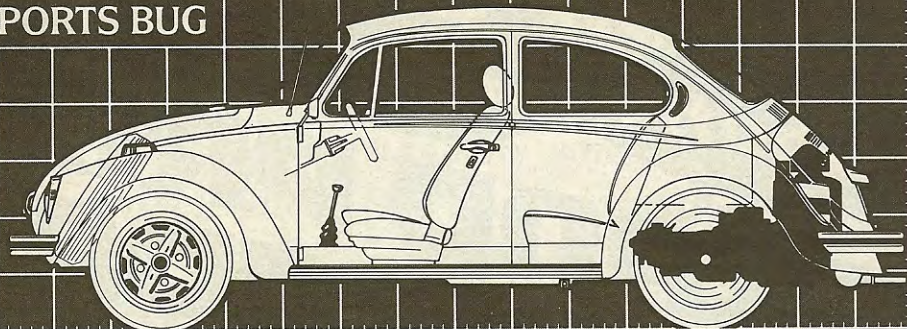
Eventually I got off the freeway and onto some back roads, going through the Front Porch Gothic of Hightstown into scholarly Princeton and then to old Blawenburg. As the tyres scrubbed in and miles piled on, I reflected that if the kids were sent away to school, you couldn't do better these days than to get them a VW, preferably with big tyres, as the handling characteristics now were good enough for anything but parlour tricks, the design was stabilised, it was cheap to run, and pas d'histoires with the service. The Sports Bug package is up to you, of course, and nicely plush. And they do come in blue if you don't like Orioles.





ROAD TEST

VOLKSWAGEN SPORTS BUG



SCALE: 10" DIVISIONS

PRICE

List price, all POE \$2699
 Price as tested \$2858
 Price as tested includes standard equipment (padded steering wheel, rear defogger) AM/FM radio (\$124), dealer prep (\$35)

IMPORTER

VW of America
 600 Sylvan Ave
 Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632

GENERAL

Curb weight, lb 1960
 Test weight 2340
 Weight distribution (with driver), front/rear, % 43/57
 Wheelbase, in. 95.3
 Track, front/rear 54.3/53.6
 Length 163.0
 Width 62.4
 Height 59.1
 Ground clearance 5.9
 Overhang, front/rear 29.9/37.8
 Usable trunk space, cu ft 10.2
 Fuel capacity, U.S. gal. 11.1

ENGINE

Type ohv flat 4
 Bore x stroke, mm 85.5 x 69.0
 Equivalent in. 3.37 x 2.72
 Displacement, cc/cu in. 1584/96.7
 Compression ratio 7.3:1
 Bhp @ rpm, net 46 @ 4000
 Equivalent mph 80
 Torque @ rpm, lb-ft 72 @ 2800
 Equivalent mph 57
 Carburetion 1 Solex 34 PICT 3
 Fuel requirement... regular, 91-oct
 Emissions, gram/mile:
 Hydrocarbons 3.1
 Carbon Monoxide 39.0
 Nitrogen Oxides 3.0

DRIVE TRAIN

Transmission 4-sp manual
 Gear ratios: 4th (0.93) 3.61:1
 3rd (1.26) 4.89:1
 2nd (2.06) 7.99:1
 1st (3.78) 14.67:1
 Final drive ratio 3.88:1

CHASSIS & BODY

Layout rear engine/rear drive
 Body/frame unit steel
 Brake system... 9.6 x 1.7-in. drum front, 9.09 x 1.7-in. drum rear
 Swept area, sq. in. 125
 Wheels styled steel, 15 x 5 1/2
 Tires...Pirelli CN35, 175/70 HR-15
 Steering type worm & roller
 Overall ratio 15.0:1
 Turns, lock-to-lock 2.7
 Turning circle, ft 31.5
 Front suspension: MacPherson struts, lower lateral arms, coil springs, tube shocks, anti-roll bar
 Rear suspension: semi-trailing arms, coil springs, tube shocks

ACCOMMODATION

Seating capacity, persons 4
 Seat width, f/r 2 x 20.5/51.0
 Head room, f/r 38.5/34.0
 Seat back adjustment, degrees 40

MAINTENANCE

Service intervals, mi:
 Oil change 3000
 Filter change none
 Chassis lube none
 Tuneup 6000
 Warranty, mo/mi 24/24,000

CALCULATED DATA

Lb/bhp (test weight) 51
 Mph/1000 rpm (4th gear) 20.2
 Engine revs/mi (60 mph) 2975
 Piston travel, ft/mi 1350
 R&T steering index 0.85
 Brake swept area, sq in./ton 107

ROAD TEST RESULTS

ACCELERATION

Time to distance, sec:
 0-100 ft 4.3
 0-500 ft 11.1
 0-1320 ft (1/4 mi) 21.2
 Speed at end of 1/4 mi, mph 64.0
 Time to speed, sec:
 0-30 mph 5.2
 0-40 mph 8.2
 0-50 mph 12.6
 0-60 mph 18.2
 0-70 mph 28.1
 0-75 mph 37.7

SPEEDS IN GEARS

4th gear (4100) 81
 3rd (4700) 70
 2nd (4700) 43
 1st (4700) 23

FUEL ECONOMY

Normal driving, mpg 23.0
 Cruising range, mi (1-gal. res.) 232

HANDLING

Speed on 100-ft radius, mph 32.5
 Lateral acceleration, g 0.704

BRAKES

Minimum stopping distances, ft:
 From 60 mph 158
 From 80 mph 238
 Control in panic stop very good
 Pedal effort for 0.5g stop, lb 40
 Fade: percent increase in pedal effort to maintain 0.5g deceleration in 6 stops from 60 mph 20
 Parking: hold 30% grade? yes
 Overall brake rating very good

INTERIOR NOISE

All noise readings in dBA:
 Idle in neutral 60
 Maximum, 1st gear 83
 Constant 30 mph 68
 50 mph 77
 70 mph 81

SPEEDOMETER ERROR

30 mph indicated is actually 29.0
 50 mph 48.5
 60 mph 59.0
 70 mph 69.0
 80 mph 74.0
 Odometer, 10.0 mi 10.0

ACCELERATION

