

# OWNERS REPORT on the VW

## Owning a VW Is Like Being in Love!

"This is the first major love affair of my life."

FLORIDA BUSINESS WOMAN

"Haven't talked to a VW owner yet who wasn't crazy about the little car. Some are madly in love with it. Me too!"

IOWA TOOL AND DIEMAHER

"The VW is to my wife and me what watermelon is to a farm boy -- the only thing that would make it better is more of the same. There's something magnetic about this wonderful little car."

KENTUCKY TEACHER

"Have never been so happy or so completely satisfied with a car. My only real complaint is that I have to fight with my wife to get to drive it."

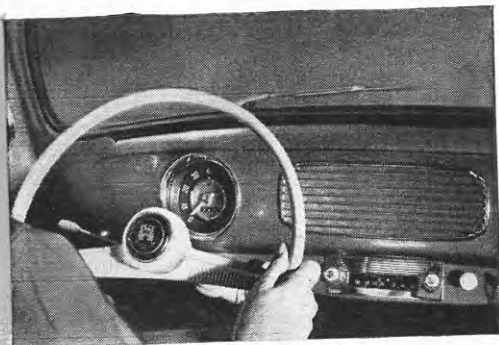
CALIFORNIA AIRCRAFT INSPECTOR

"Words can hardly describe my elation over having come in contact with the VW. It's the most wonderful thing that has happened to me since I've been driving automobiles."

OKLAHOMA AIR FORCE TECHNICIAN

## CLYMER DRIVES the VOLKSWAGEN

By Floyd Clymer



**T**HE VOLKSWAGEN test was from Los Angeles to San Diego, across the border to Mexicali, Mexico, and return through the back mountain and desert country for a total of 629 miles, which included some testing in the desert and over winding mountain trails.

Because the car is small and short, with a wheelbase of only 94½ inches, the handling characteristics, stability and roadability may astound the average American driver. This German car has amazing performance and roadability. For over 100 miles I encountered head and quartering side winds and the car was remarkably

stable, although when a large truck or bus passed there was noticeable, but not alarming, side sway for an instant. Roadability is helped by the fact that the floorboard is about three inches below the top of the frame and two inches below the running board.

The horizontally opposed, four-cylinder, air-cooled engine has a displacement of only 72.74 cubic inches (about the size of some of our high-powered motorcycles).

It cruises easily at 70 miles per hour. Even at this speed the roadability was so good that I removed both hands from the

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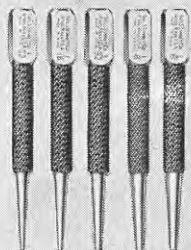
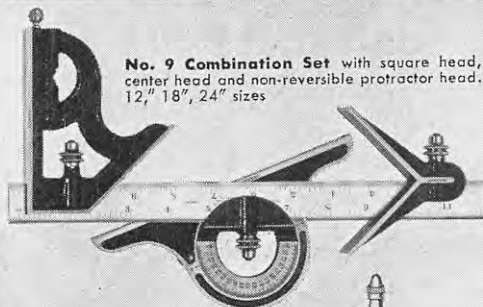
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## Clymer Drives the Volkswagen

(Continued from page 154)

wheel for as long as 10 seconds before directional control was necessary.

Compression ratio is 6.6 to 1, low by our standards, and regular gas is satisfactory. Repair work on the engine can be done easily and, if necessary, the entire engine and transmission can be removed in about 30 minutes. The engine is precisely built and the instruction manual states "no break-in period is necessary and your car may be operated right from the beginning at the full speeds recommended for the gears."

The four-speed transmission shifts easily and silently. Top gear (fourth) should be used for speeds above 35 and for cruising. For moderate inclines and heavy traffic, third is most desirable. My top speed in third gear was 60, although not higher than 45 is recommended. Reverse is engaged by pressing down on the lever and moving it to the left and back.

Because of the suspension system, which uses torsion bars front and rear and independently sprung rear axles, the driver can corner very fast with practically no roll or sway.

The steering ratio is very fast, requiring only 2.4 turns of the wheel from lock to lock. It feels as though you aim the car rather than steer it. The car is especially easy to park or turn around. Despite the lowness of the car, road clearance is 6.8 inches, almost as much as the average American car.

Gasoline mileage was extremely high, even while driving at quite high speeds. Oil consumption was nil. Crankcase oil capacity is only 5.3 pints. One delightful thing about driving a Volkswagen is that the gas tank, while holding only 10.6 gallons, still enables the operator to drive a long distance without refueling. A reserve gas supply of 1.3 gallons (opened by a lever at the base of the fire wall) is an excellent feature, and is good for 40 additional miles after the main-tank supply is exhausted.

The air-cooling system for the engine works perfectly. I drove the car in 106-degree heat on the Mojave Desert for 10 miles in low gear without overheating. Of course having no water to boil was a real joy.

Brakes are excellent and there was no evidence of fading even while braking at high speed or descending steep grades. The clutch and brake pedals are located too close together—at least, for a man with big feet. Travel between the throttle and the brake pedal should be a little less. Either

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the throttle lever should be higher or the brake pedal lower. The hand-brake lever is located between the two front seats and operates by an upward pull of the right hand—it is very efficient, easily applied and released.

There is surprising leg and head room in the car. Unlike foreign-built sports cars, entry and exit are easy. The doors are wide, light and easy to open and close. Despite lowness of the car, the doors have more curb clearance than some American cars. The driving position is comfortable. Each front seat can be independently adjusted to suit the driver and passenger. A thumb lever allows selection of three different angles of incline for the seat back.

The interior is beautifully finished and the instrument panel is very plain but functional. High-grade imitation-leather upholstery is used. Gasoline tank and spare tire are under the front hood. This hood is locked from inside and released by a pull knob on the dash. There is also luggage space under the hood in addition to the luggage space behind the rear seat. A small pocket in the left door is for maps, gloves or other small articles. All in all, there is quite a lot of luggage space for the size of the car. There are a small glove compartment and an ash tray in front of the passenger.

There is no fuel gauge. The reserve gas supply provides ample warning time when fuel is needed. There is a direction indicator, a green warning light for oil pressure, and a red warning light for generator and cooling system.

The clutch and brake pedals require moderate operating pressure. There is a roller on top of the accelerator pedal. A good feature is the fact that the throttle lever has long movement, which eliminates any sensitive quick-action operation.

The heating arrangement is satisfactory. Hot air from the engine flows into the body through ducts controlled by a knob at the base of the shift lever. The defroster is also satisfactory.

The body has a solid feel, undoubtedly due to the fact that the frame and body are built as a single welded unit. No squeaks or rattles developed. Three turns of the rather small cranks are required to open the windows. This action should be faster.


Front vision is excellent due to stubby, sloping hood. Side vision is satisfactory. Rear vision would be improved by a larger rear window.

Volkswagen has no automatic transmission available.


In mud, snow or sand the engine weight

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**A PIPE SMOKER,  
TOO? mmmm!  
YOU'RE FOR  
ME**



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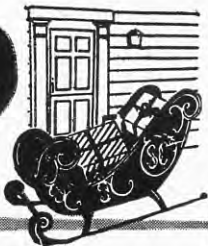


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in rear helps make for good traction. While descending my favorite 32-percent test hill I could stop the VW at the steepest point and then back it up to the top—something that 75 percent of the American cars will not do. The car also topped the 600-yard hill at 15 miles per hour in low gear, which is faster than about half our American cars will do. Noise and fumes are at the rear, although the engine, like most air-cooled engines, is rather noisy.

There is a tendency to over-steer until one becomes accustomed to the car because of the light front end. One disadvantage is that on icy roads or on loose gravel, when cornering at high speeds, there is a tendency for the rear end to break loose and skid. But this need not concern the average conservative driver.

The excellent mechanical jack fits into a socket in the underside of either running board, thus the entire side of the car is quickly raised for tire changes.

I abused the Volkswagen in every way I could think of and punishment seems to have little effect upon the operation or handling of the car. If you drive a VW 100 miles or more, you lose the feeling that you are in a small car. There is no feeling of danger in the car. I do feel, however, that the Volkswagen driver must be more careful when signaling and when turning in traffic than the driver of a larger car.

In my judgment, the Volkswagen is a thoroughly practical, dependable, economical and worthwhile car for anyone interested in low-cost transportation. Nearly every Volkswagen owner is an unpaid salesman. He likes to talk about his car and most owners sing its praises from morning until night. The man who knocks the VW and says he wouldn't have one as a gift is usually the one who has never driven or ridden in one.

Service facilities are usually good, especially in the larger cities. Spare parts are readily available and, fortunately, few models and infrequent changes make it easier than usual for even a small dealer to carry a complete parts stock. ★ ★ ★

## Mesquite Becomes Cattle Feed

Mesquite, long a plague of the West, may soon aid drought-stricken cattlemen as a livestock feed. The Southwest Foundation for Research and Education has been using mesquite in livestock feed successfully for three years. Only the woody, stem part of the bush is used. It is chipped, then ground into fibers. The fibers are combined with molasses and cottonseed meal. One half or more of the total feed is mesquite fibers.