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INTELLIGENT BUG

The Type 2 personifies all that is right about Volkswagen' practical German ingenuity, when it comes to developing the ultimate people's van



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APOLLO TYRES




The Volkswagen Type 2 (AKA Transporter) was the second automotive line introduced by German automaker Volkswagen. It was a van introduced in 1950, initially based on Volkswagen's first model, the Type 1, also known as the 'Beetle' or 'Bug'. The Type 2 is the forerunner of modern cargo and passenger vans. The Type 2 spawned a number of imitators both in the United States and Europe including the Ford Econoline, Dodge A100, and the Chevrolet Corvair, the last even adopting the Type 2's rear-engine configuration. Updated versions of this line are still being produced in international markets, both as a passenger and cargo van and as a pickup truck.

The idea for the Type 2 is credited to Dutch Volkswagen importer Ben Pon, who drew the first sketches of the van in 1947. Although the aerodynamics of the first prototypes were poor, heavy optimisation took place at the wind tunnel of the Technical University of Braunschweig. The wind tunnel work paid off, as the Type 2 was aerodynamically superior to the Beetle despite its slab-sided shape. Three years later, the first production model left the factory at Wolfsburg.

Unlike other rear-engine Volkswagens, which evolved constantly over time but never saw the introduction of all-new models, the Transporter not only evolved, but was completely revised periodically with variations referred to as versions 'T1' to 'T5', although only generations T1 to T3 (or T2.5 as it is called in Ireland and Great Britain) can be seen as directly related to the Beetle (see below for details).

The Type 2 was among the first commercial vehicles in which the driver was placed above the front wheels. As such, it started a trend in Europe, where the Ford Transit among others quickly copied the concept. In the United States, the Corvair-based Chevrolet Corvair cargo van and Greenbrier passenger van went so far as to copy the Type 2's rear-engine layout, using the Corvair's horizontally-opposed,



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**Never wary of progress, never skeptical about success,
Never scared of challenges, never tired of trying,
Every step of the way we travel with our customers,
On the "unstoppable" journey to success.**

air-cooled engine for power. Except for the Greenbrier and various 1950s-70s Fiat minivans, the Type 2 remained unique in being rear-engined. This was a disadvantage for the early "barndoor" Panel Vans, which couldn't easily be loaded from the rear due to the engine cover intruding on interior space, but generally advantageous in terms of traction and interior noise.

Another trend that the Type 2 may not have started, but that it certainly gave momentum to, is the use of nicely-trimmed commercial vans as people carriers. This first took hold in the United States in the 1960s.

During the hippie era in the United States, the Bus became a major counterculture symbol. There were several reasons: The van could carry a number of people plus camping gear and cooking supplies, extra clothing, do-it-yourself carpenter's tools, etc. As a "statement", its boxy, utilitarian shape made the Type 2 everything the American

cars of the day were not. Used models were incredibly cheap to buy — many were hand-painted (a predecessor of the modern-day art car). Some Bus enthusiasts (especially for antiwar activists) would replace the VW logo with a painted peace symbol up front.

VARIANTS

The Type 2 was available as a:

- Delivery van without side windows or rear seats (Panel Van).
- Delivery van with raised roof (High Roof Panel Van) or Hochdach.
- Van with side windows and removable rear seats (Kombi, from German Kombinationskraftwagen (combination vehicle), i.e. both a passenger and a cargo vehicle combined).
- Van with more comfortable interior reminiscent of passenger cars (Bus; also called Caravelle since the third generation).
- Van with skylight windows and cloth sunroof (Samba Bus, first generation only; also called Deluxe Microbus).
- Flatbed truck (Pick-up), or Single Cab, also available with wider load bed.
- Flatbed truck, Double Cab, with two rows of seats (Crew Cab Pick-up).
- Camping van
- Semi-camping van that can also still be used as a passenger car and transporter, sacrificing some camping comforts (Multivan, or Weekender, available from the third generation on).

Apart from these factory variants, there were a multitude of third-party conversions available, some of which were offered through Volkswagen dealers. They included, but were not limited to; refrigerated vans, hearses, ambulances, police vans, fire engines and ladder trucks, and camping van conversions by companies other than Westfalia.