

VOLKSWAGEN 1600 TL

Once a Volkswagen, always a Volkswagen. The new 1600 TL has a strong generic relationship with every beetle ever built in Wolfsburg

No, the VW 1600 TL is not a poor man's Porsche. Probably more surprising, it is not a rich man's Volkswagen. To be sure, it is larger and slightly more powerful than the famed beetle, but the package is little more luxurious than its smaller stablemate. It sparkles with the same exquisite simplicity that has been a Volkswagen trademark almost since its inception thirty years ago and there isn't ten pounds of tinsel on the entire automobile.

On paper, the Volkswagen 1600 TL (Touring Luxus) looks sensational; better brakes, fastback styling, more power, etc. In fact, a particularly impressionable VW enthusiast might be led to believe that here was a genuine low-priced, 4-place Grand Touring car. Unfortunately, the 1600 falls somewhat short of that mark, and it is to Volkswagen's credit that they are not trying to market the automobile on such a basis. In fact, the exact position of the 1600 TL in the American market is rather difficult to pinpoint. Had the car been faster and more luxurious, the "poor man's Porsche" appellation would have been accurate and a marketing niche would have been automatically created. As it is, the Volkswagen 1600 is a bigger Volkswagen 1300 and that's about all.

This means the car will attract essentially the same kind of buyer who would be interested in the smaller VW. He will make his purchase on the basis of fuel economy, low operating cost, good resale value, and the other factors that have made Volkswagens so attractive to the American public for over 10 years. For the approximately \$400 difference in price between the 1300 and the 1600 TL he will receive a

rather lumpy fastback with disc brakes on the front, a 65-horsepower engine at the rear, and more luggage space at both ends. Is this enough to justify the price difference? Apparently Volkswagen thinks so, and that's good enough for us, because questioning that organization's ability to manufacture and sell cars is like betting against Old Faithful. However, it should be noted that Volkswagen is taking great pains in its advertising to assure the public that the 1600 is not intended to replace the 1300, now or in the future.

Though it is six inches longer overall, the 1600 has an identical 94.5-inch wheelbase with the 1300. This might lead one to the conclusion that the car is built on the same platform chassis as the beetle, but in fact the big car is a completely original design and the interchangeability of parts between the two is negligible. However, the kinship in terms of design concept is amazingly close and the same brands of independent, torsion bar suspension, air-cooled horizontally-opposed engine placed behind the rear (swing) axles, etc., have been retained. This leaves the 1600 with an unmistakable VW flavor, from the whistling engine noise to the rather skittish handling. You climb behind the wheel and everything, from the stark metal and vinyl interior, to the legible VDO instruments, says "Volkswagen" in enthusiastic, if slightly guttural, Germanic tones.

We were surprised to find that the seats were hardly more com-



fortable than those in the Volkswagen 1300. As we said in our test of that car in last month's issue, they are somewhat this side of perfection. A major flaw in the 1600's version is the inordinate height of the seat, thanks to a platform mounting that doesn't make any sense at all. Drivers of six feet and over don't have enough head room, and all drivers, regardless of size, will find themselves perched rather precariously on a seat that provides neither great comfort nor lateral support. Both the seat back and the

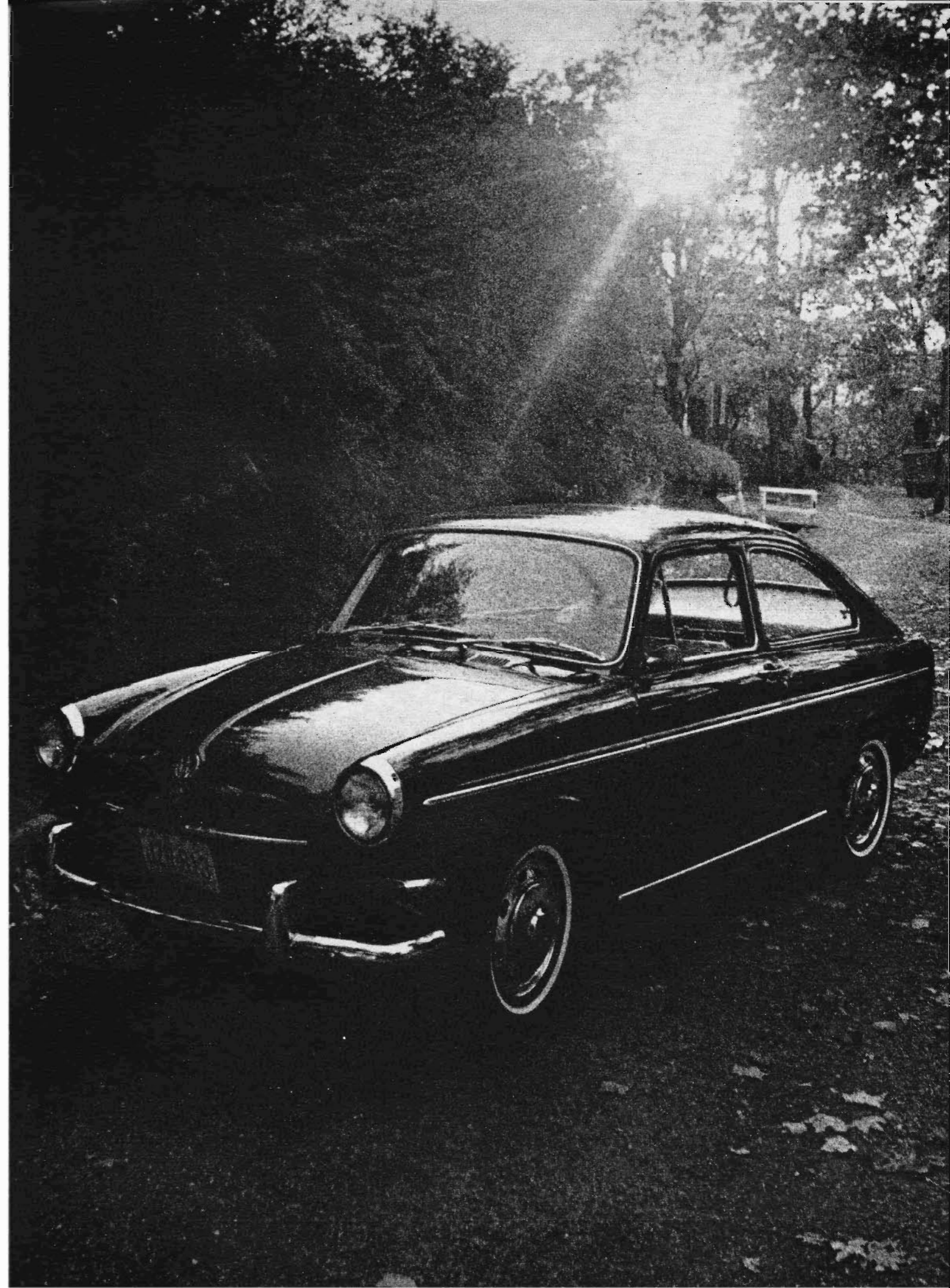
bench itself are nearly flat and any change of direction tends to send the driver and front-seat passenger sliding across the slippery vinyl surface. This all could be easily corrected, it appears, by providing a bit more bucket effect and lowering the entire seat so that the driver would be on a more equal plane with the steering wheel.

The wells for the front wheels protrude more prominently into the front seat area on the 1600 than they do on the 1300, and this makes finding a comfortable location for the driver's left foot a bit of a problem. The situation is not alleviated by the fact that the steering column and the control pedals are both slightly offset in relation to the seat. In all, the driving position of the 1600 is not as pleasant as its cheaper cousin's.

Though the 1600 engine is one of the most compact powerplants on the market—so small, in fact, that a 10.2-cubic foot luggage space can be found above it (supplemented by the 6.5-cubic foot area between the front wheels)—it still develops only 65 horsepower. Now, to the average beetle-lover, who has struggled through life on something between 36 and 50 horsepower, this quantity may seem to make the 1600 a contender on the Grand Prix circuit, but it is still a rather paltry sum by most standards. It feels like plenty in first and second gear, but the power takes a holiday in third and fourth. Make no mistake, the 1600 is an adequate highway performer and it is capable of maintaining efficient 70-mph cruising speeds without massive effort. Getting to that speed will take you about 25 seconds (and even that means rushing the shifts through the excellent linkage) but it is nevertheless entirely within the capability of the automobile. We found the little machine entirely willing to ramble along the turnpikes at a steady 85 mph, though engine and wind noise become a factor at these velocities.

Unfortunately the swing axle, torsion bar setup on the 1600 is almost identical to that of the 1300 and that means the old twin bugaboos, oversteer and vulnerability to crosswinds, are still with us. The experienced VW-phile can learn to control the oversteer, but the tendency for the machine to alter course whenever the wind beckons is not only irritating, it is downright dangerous. Volkswagens do go out of control on great, open turnpikes occasionally, and nine times out of

(Text Continued on Page 84,
Specifications Overleaf)



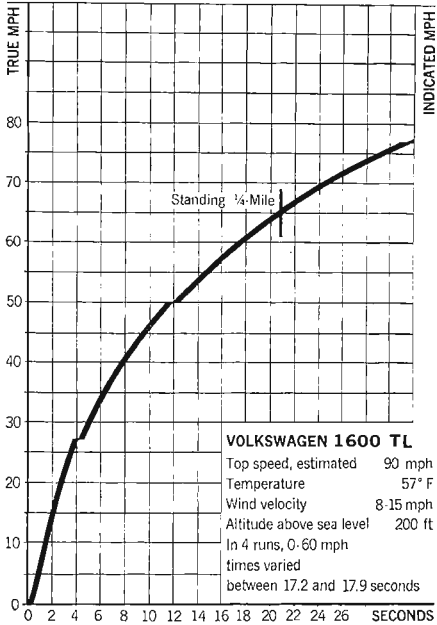
VOLKSWAGEN 1600TL

Importer: Volkswagen of America, Inc.
476 Hudson Terrace
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

Price as Tested: \$2265.00

ACCELERATION

Zero to	Seconds
30 mph	5.2
40 mph	7.9
50 mph	11.8
60 mph	17.6
70 mph	24.4
80 mph	39.9
Standing 1/4 mile	65 mph in 20.8



ENGINE

Air-cooled horizontally-opposed 4-cylinder magnesium block, 4 main bearings
Bore x stroke... 3.37 x 2.72 in, 85.5 x 69 mm
Displacement... 96.7 cu. in, 1584 cc
Compression ratio... 7.7 to one
Carburetion... Two single-throat downdraft
Valve gear, Pushrod-operated overhead valves, mechanical lifters
Power (SAE)... 65 bhp @ 4600 rpm
Torque... 87 lbs-ft @ 2800 rpm
Specific power output... 0.67 bhp per cu in, 43.3 bhp per liter
Usable range of engine speeds, 1200-5600 rpm
Electrical system... 6-volt, 77 amp-hr battery, 200W generator
Fuel recommended... Regular
Mileage... 26-32 mpg
Range on 10.6-gallon tank... 175-340 miles

DRIVE TRAIN

Clutch	7.1-inch single dry plate		
Transmission	4-speed, all synchro		
		mph/1000	Max
Gear	Ratio	rpm	mph
1st	3.88	4.7	26
2nd	3.06	4.8	27
3rd	2.06	8.9	50
4th	1.32	13.9	77
	.89	10.6	90
Final drive ratio	4.125 to one		

CHASSIS

Wheelbase... 94.5 in
Track... F 51.6, R 53.0 in
Length... 166.3 in
Width... 63.2 in
Height... 58.1 in
Ground clearance... 5.9 in
Curb weight... 2028 lbs
Test weight... 2264 lbs
Weight distribution front/rear... 42/58%
Pounds per bhp (test weight)... 34.8

Suspension F: Ind., trailing arms, torsion bars, anti-sway bar
R: Inds., swing axles, trailing arms, torsion bars
Brakes... 10.9-in discs F, 9-in drums R
Steering... Worm and roller, steering damper
Turns, lock to lock... 2.8
Turning circle... 36.4 ft
Tires and wheels... 6.00 x 15 on 4.5-in rim

CHECK LIST

ENGINE

Starting... Good
Response... Fair
Noise... Fair
Vibration... Fair

DRIVE TRAIN

Clutch action... Good
Transmission linkage... Good
Synchromesh action... Very Good
Power-to-ground transmission... Excellent

BRAKES

Response... Very Good
Pedal pressure... Good
Fade resistance... Very Good
Smoothness... Very Good
Directional stability... Good

STEERING

Response... Very Good
Accuracy... Very Good
Feedback... Fair
Road feel... Good

SUSPENSION

Harshness control... Fair
Roll stiffness... Good
Tracking... Fair
Pitch control... Fair
Shock damping... Fair

CONTROLS

Location... Fair
Relationship... Fair
Small controls... Good

INTERIOR

Visibility... Good
Instrumentation... Fair
Lighting... Good
Entry/exit... Fair
Front seating comfort... Fair
Front seating room... Poor
Rear seating comfort... Fair
Rear seating room... Poor
Storage space... Fair
Wind noise... Fair
Road noise... Good

WEATHER PROTECTION

Heater... Fair
Defroster... Fair
Ventilation... Fair
Weather sealing... Excellent
Windshield wiper action... Fair

QUALITY CONTROL

Materials, exterior... Excellent
Materials, interior... Very Good
Exterior finish... Excellent
Interior finish... Excellent
Hardware and trim... Excellent

GENERAL

Service accessibility... Poor
Luggage space... Good
Bumper protection... Fair
Exterior lighting... Fair
Resistance to crosswinds... Poor



JANUARY 1966

CAR and DRIVER

ADVERTISERS INDEX

Advertiser	Page
American Carry-Products, Inc.	3rd Cover
Art Center School, The	82
Astro Fiberglass	77
Autogear	14
Bakers World-Wide, Inc.	6
Bentley, Inc., Robert	11
British Motors Corp., Ltd., The	56
Classic Products, Ltd.	15
Columbia Motor Corporation	80
Fiberfab	85
Fill-Mark Company	74
Fisher Products	17, 74
Fitch & Company, Inc., John	77
Ford Motor Company (Mustang)	2nd Cover
Fuji Photo Optical Products, Inc.	70
Gray, Vivian	80
Haan, Inc., Vilem B.	55
Head Ski Co., Inc.	12
International Automotive Imports	74
Iskenderian, Ed	76
Jay of Chicago	80
Judson Research & Mfg. Co.	7
Lafayette Radio Electronics	71
Lotus Cars Limited	16
Lucas Electrical Services, Inc.	72
M G Mitten	13
Minolta Corporation	81
Nupercainal	83
Oldsmobile Division	5
Opert Racing Enterprises, Fred	74
Plymouth Division	4th Cover
RAC Prints	75
Ronco Corporation	75
Rover Motor Company of North America, Ltd.	18
Shelby American, Inc.	8, 9
Sportlite "500" Films	82
Stantec Company	75
Sturtevant Co., P. A.	83
Tech Del Ltd.	72
Transcontinental Motors	82
Volkswagen of America, Inc.	3
Weber's Speed Equipment	74
Wilco	10
Zeiss, Inc., Carl	2

VW 1600 TL (Continued from page 52)

ten, the driver has been blown off the tracks by a treacherous wind. The 1600, with its excellent tractive qualities and its efficient heater, would make a great car for winter driving were it not for this short-coming. Anyone who has ever tried to stay on course over icy roads with a noselight VW knows exactly what we mean.

If you do happen to lose control of your 1600 TL, you have more than fervent prayer to get you slowed down. Unlike the 1300, the new car has 10.9-inch disc brakes at the front and we found the car would click off successive high-speed stops without difficulty. In a sense, the Volkswagen is an engineering paradox, combining such components as the magnificent brakes, great gearbox, efficient engine, outstanding quality, etc., with its nasty-tempered suspension and rather hostile accommodations.

No one can fault the Volkswagen on quality of construction, no matter what standards they employ. No more solid amalgam of metals ever

oughbred in its own right. The tough, practical Germans who created it don't go for show very much, but when it comes to creating loyal, plucky automobiles that seem to have real hearts pumping away down inside all that machinery, they can't be beat. Probably more tears are shed over the sale of ancient Volkswagens than any other car on earth, and that's the kind of loyalty no automaker can buy.

Should you be convinced that you want a Volkswagen with a bit more room and performance than the 1300, the 1600 is by all means the car for you. It has the same endearing ugly duckling brand of looks as its junior partner, and that won't hurt it in the marketplace either. After all, the Volkswagen Karmann Ghia is a lovely automobile and *who* buys it?

You can purchase the 1600 in two basic models; labelled the "fast-back" and the "squareback." When you first sight the squareback in the showroom, you will exclaim, "but that's a station wagon!" Of course it's a station wagon, but watch yourself if you expect a decent price for your trade-in. After all, the dealer is also selling Volkswagen buses, and as you'll remember, they already call *them* station wagons. So take a friendly tip from us and play along with this "squareback" business. Don't forget—they don't sell VWs to just anybody.

This marks the second month in a row that we have tested a Volkswagen model and that means we have once again left ourselves open to the legions of VW lovers who will take offense because we didn't say *all* nice things about their beloved car. That's true, we didn't say all nice things, but we think they far overbalanced the nasty things. After all, we don't say *all* nice things about any car. In fact, the Volkswagen is one of our favorite machines and practically every male member on the staff has owned one at some time or other. We've taken long, slow journeys in them, we've spun out in them and we've frozen up solid in them (before the improved new heaters). Some of us have owned sheep dogs too, and we're the ones who *really* understand.

If you've never owned a Volkswagen you can't really consider yourself initiated into the inner sanctums of the nutty world of the automobile. If that sort of thing is important to you, take a crack at owning a 1600. But be prepared to cry a little when you sell it. **cjo**

HEY YOU!

The ballot for the Car and Driver "Reader's Choice" automotive opinion poll is on page 53.

Fill it out, tear it out, send it out. Immediately! (Please?)

rode on four wheels and none likely ever will. Volkswagen has a hard-earned reputation for toughness and the 1600 doesn't stand a chance of marrying the family name. The 1600 upholds VW's reputation for quality control: you simply can't buy a better-built low-priced sedan.

There is something comforting about the ownership of a Volkswagen—kind of like having a good sheep dog. You know the thing isn't going to cost you a second mortgage to keep, and it'll always be there, with its tail wagging, ready to do an honest day's work. Like a sheep dog, the 1600 isn't going to win you any blue ribbons, but it's a thor-