

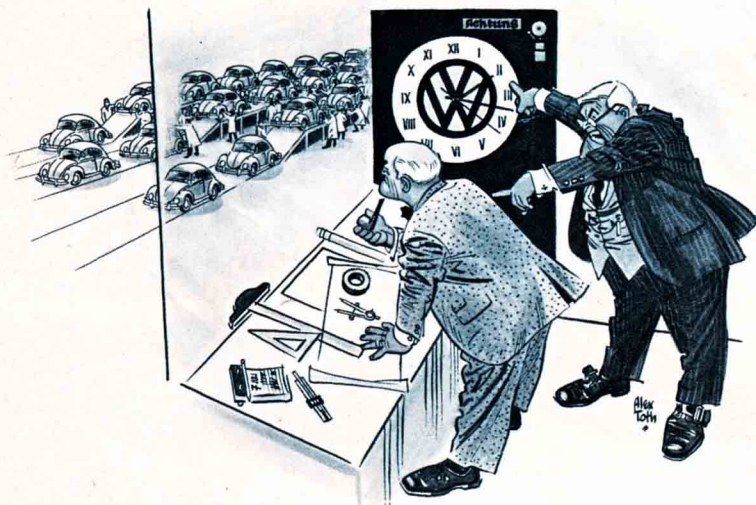
VOLKSWAGEN 1300

Simple addition of a number to the Beetle attracted more attention than many "all-new" U.S. models we have tested

One day late last summer upon Wolfsburg silence fell. Startled East German guards manning the nearby Iron Curtain into alert sprang. Hausfrau and geschäftinhaber out of their doors looked. Herr Direktor Doktor Ing. Nordhoff of the Beetleverke at his watch glanced. □ "Gott im Himmel," he exclaimed. "Why must we have those annual model changes for the Amerikanischer? It's a half-hour's production we lose!" □ During this time, the good Herr Nordhoff's floor fuhrers arranged to incorporate a 50-hp engine; set up machinery to drill holes for a "1300" sign on the back, cunningly devised a lock to keep the front-seat back from flopping forward, whether wanted to or not; made up a purchase requisition for one additional defroster blower per car; and fiendishly moved the headlight dimmer from the floor to the turn signal. Language difficulties with Italian workers were solved by decreeing that

with red seats, you get red carpeting and panels to match, and the same rule applies to green, blue or white. Outside changes? Yes. The hubcaps are flatter to save steel and prevent damage from curbs. □ Nonetheless, VW-types (there are 1,860,000 by current count) gathered around MT's test 1300 wherever we took it including such diverse locations as Vermont and California. They'd peer inside, duly noting the red 4-way flasher knob that distinguishes the export model this year. On freeways, older Volks would pop out of formation for a closer look. All they saw was our number, though, because we could go 3 mph faster than the 1200s. Even then we were legal on most freeways, as a floorboarded 1300 causes the needle to hover at 75 mph. This leaves only 15 mph more for improvement, barring the unlikely event of the speedometer being redesigned to read higher than 90. □ Punching a Beetle along on a windy day continues to be a test of skill. It needs every inch of the stand-

CARTOONS BY ALEX TOTH



Gott im Himmel! A half-hour fur die Amerikanischer model change.



Nose view shows flat hubcaps, which are the major styling change in this year's VW.



1300 holds title of Top Gas Eliminator within its family and will place on any freeway.



Seems unbelievable, but 1300 fits in here.

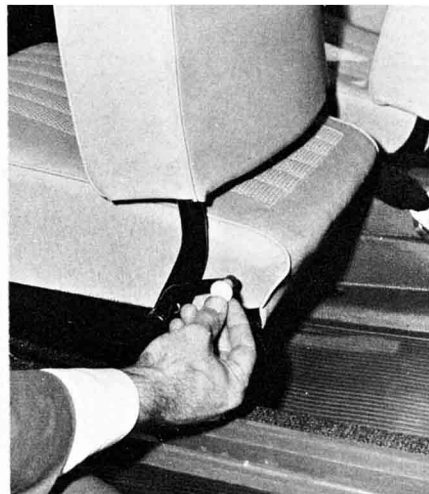
ard 13-foot freeway lane, which is perhaps the reason why VWs tend to stick together in traffic. They then can hop about as precisely in unison as the June Taylor dancers. □ Another mild complaint involves that peculiar, almost oppressive drumming noise from somewhere in the headliner at speeds of 50 mph or over with both windows down. Yet, it is an adequate substitute for most of the music to be found on the radio today. You can stop it by experimenting with your elbow out the window, but this becomes uncomfortable due to the sharp rubber rain guard. This latter, to us at least, makes the optional arm rests at \$4.95 each the best buy since the Jeep motorized its windshield wipers. □ Although they've had nearly 20 years to work on it, Volks-makers are still to be commended for the fine transition possible from one forward gear to another. The gate is smooth and positive, an attribute not found too often when the lever is 60 or so inches away from the gearbox.

Low is synchromesh for greater driving flexibility, and three of the four speeds are marked on the speedometer to give an indirect warning against over-revving. We seldom dropped out of third in moving city traffic, not because high was too high but because third was so quiet, you forgot about it. There is no danger of accidentally going into reverse — with its push down, over and then towards you motion, it is difficult enough to engage intentionally. □ We remain fascinated by Wolfsburg's simple solution to the 4-way flasher, soon to be made mandatory in several states. Instead of a plain switch hooked by extra wire to the turn-signal lights, the 1300 has a lighted, handy red knob logically labeled "Emergency." It's almost like having a hot line to the police department, and we bet there'll be a run on VW parts departments by owners of other makes. □ Part of the penalty of consistency is that VW cannot cater to the presumably increasing girth of owners as they, not the car,

age. But the seats get more comfortable, and except for the driver's left foot, there's a surprising amount of room for two adults, three kids and a picnic lunch for each. This year, something is impregnated in the vinyl to make it exude the pleasing odor of leather. □ The 1300 retains agility on rough mountain roads that can only be compared to a Grand Canyon tourist donkey. Steering is quick, and the suspension absorbs lots of motion in any axis except the longitudinal. "Choppy" is a polite description, but what car this size isn't? And because it has a stiff backbone, the 1300 refuses to dip when braking. □ Fortunately, we had no occasion to do these things, but you can change an engine in 90 minutes and disproportionately replace a fuel pump in 30. A new fender bolts on in even less time. Service intervals have been upped to 6000 miles. These are real economies, as are VW's remarkable trade-in value and a fuel economy that for us averaged 30.8 mpg.



New ball joints replace trailing arm and double grease intervals to 6000 miles.



Novel latches prevent front seatbacks from flying forward. Vinyl seats are pusher.



New, lighted 4-way flasher knob is above ignition. Dimmer is on the turn signal.

VOLKSWAGEN 1300
2-door, 4-passenger sedan

ACCESSORY PRICE LIST

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| Radio AM/FM | \$120.00 |
| *Radio AM | 69.95 |
| Cigar lighter | 4.50 |
| *Outside mirror | 5.95 |
| Parcel shelf | 14.15 |
| Luggage rack (roof) | 29.95 |
| Vent shades | 6.50 |
| Front arm rests | 4.95 |
| *Whitewall tires | 35.00 |
| Cocoa mats | 16.95 |
| Rubber bumper guards (set) | 9.95 |
| Sunroof | 90.00 |

*On test car
MANUFACTURER'S SUGGESTED LIST PRICE: \$1585 (incl. taxes and safety equip't) East Coast p.o.e.

PRICE OF CAR TESTED: \$1695.90 (incl. del. and get-ready charge, excepting tax and license)

MANUFACTURER'S WARRANTY: 6000 mi. and/or 6 months

SPECIFICATIONS FROM MANUFACTURER

ENGINE ON TEST CAR

Opposed 4, rear-mounted, air-cooled
Bore and stroke: 3.03 ins. x 2.72 ins.
Displacement: 78.42 cu. ins.
Advertised horsepower: 50 @ 4600 rpm
Max. torque: 64 lbs.-ft. @ 3400 rpm
Compression ratio: 7.3:1
Carburetion: Solex 1-bbl. downdraft

TRANSMISSION TYPE AND FINAL DRIVE GEAR: 4-speed, all synchromesh, floor-mtd. lever; 4.375:1

SUSPENSION: independent, front and rear; torsion bars; double-acting hydraulic shocks at each wheel

STEERING: worm and roller

TURNING DIAMETER: 36 ft.

TURNS LOCK TO LOCK: 2.6

WHEELS: disc, drop center, steel

TIRES: 5.60 x 15 tubeless

BRAKES: hydraulic, drum type

TYPE OF FUEL RECOMMENDED: regular

FUEL CAPACITY: 10 gals.

OIL CAPACITY: 3½ qts.

SHORTEST LUBRICATION INTERVAL: 3000 miles

OIL CHANGE INTERVALS: 3000 miles

BODY AND FRAME: tubular center section forked at rear and welded platform

USABLE TRUNK CAPACITY: 4.95 cu. ft.

WHEELBASE: 94.5 ins.

TRACK: front, 51.4 ins.; rear, 51.2 ins.

OVERALL: length, 160.6 ins.; width, 57.5 ins.; height, 59.1 ins.

MINIMUM GROUND CLEARANCE: 6 ins.

CURB WEIGHT: 1720 lbs.

PHOTOS BY DARRYL NORENBURG