

VOLKSWAGEN 1600

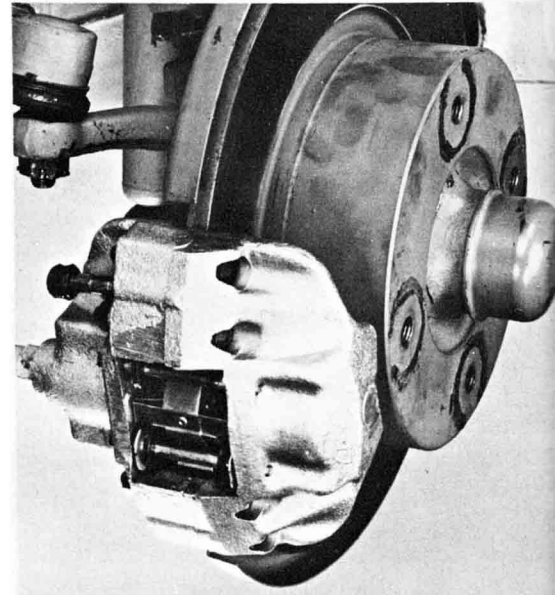
Volkswagen doesn't expect its fastback to stamp out the Beetle, rather, hopes it will attract a new cult into the camp

Vermont is as nice a place as any to motor about in Volkswagen's new 1600 fastback, for without meaning to be uncomplimentary to Ethan Allen's old stamping grounds, not much has been done to some of the roads except to pave-over his footprints. □ Most of the handling improvement, we suspect, is due to the 53-inch rear track. This is 1.8 inches more than that of the Beetle, and also the fastback is one inch lower. The car leans less while cornering, and is less likely to wobble in the wind. In addition, 300 pounds of added weight on the same wheelbase softens the ride. □ A power-to-weight ratio of approximately 1 to 31, compared to 1 to 34 for the 1300, undoubtedly aids acceleration, but the minute differences inevitable in hand shifting cloud the

issue. We would rather rest content by saying that the average driver can expect the same performance through the gears in the 1600 as he would obtain in the 1300. Theoretically, the 1600 should be one second faster than the 14-second 0-50 time that most 1300s can post. However, the claimed top speed of 84 mph is there if road conditions will permit you to wind-up long enough. □ The esthetics of this new fastback, which is replacing the short-lived bustleback, is a matter less tangible than performance. We thought it looked fine, once we were inside. Some University of Vermont students, when asked for their opinion of the design, concluded that it would never replace the Beetle in their affections. One brightly noted that the 1600 reminded her of pop art misfired — sort of like a wine bottle with a Pepsi-Cola label affixed. □ VW manager in North Amer-



No wonder these things float! Everything's welded shut.



Standard front discs are self-adjusting, provide sure-footed stops rain or shine.



Once you get it open, deck has commodious, flat luggage space above the engine.



(Above) Heavier fastback is more stable, has slight edge on 1300 through the gears.

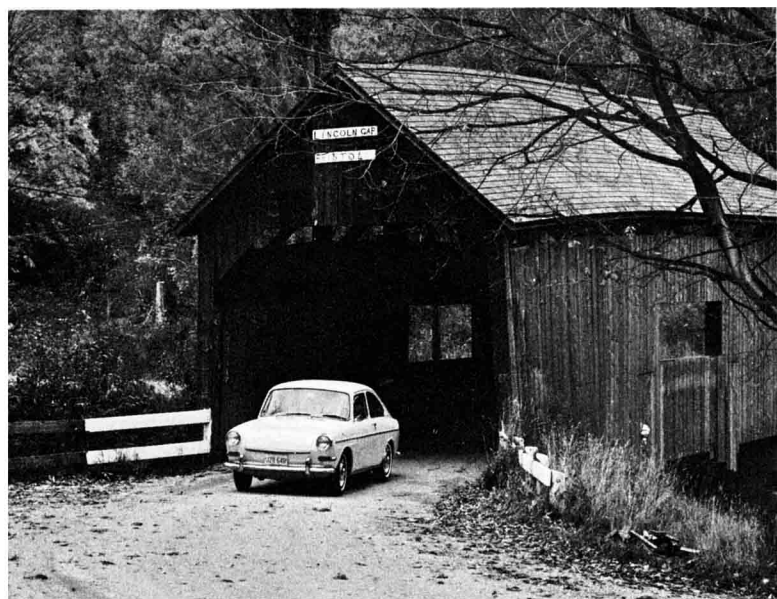
(Left) Ingenious use of pressure on "bent" glass eliminates need for costly hinges.

ica, J. Stuart Perkins, seems to agree. He very definitely still depends upon the Beetle for his future employment prospects, expecting the 1600, both fastback and the much prettier (we think) wagon which they call square-back, to account for not much more than 10% of VW sales in the U.S. □ But as we said, once inside, one can readily see that the shape of the 1600 was formed by the needs of its occupants. You don't have to keep your left foot tucked under the seat, because the heater input lines have been moved up under the dash. There is plenty of room for the dimmer switch on the floorboard, and the cut-out for it still exists, but in the interests of interchangeability, it has been moved up to the turn-signal lever as in the 1300. The padded dash contains a clock along with speedo, gas gauge, and assorted unmarked warning lights. □ You can

literally surround yourself with luggage, 6.5 cubic feet in front and 10.2 in back, and due to the flat floors and square corners, most of this space is usable. As to the matter of getting into the rear locker and the engine underneath it, you can play the game of "find the handle" with your corner service-station attendant. Probably sometime after the first 6000-mile oil change is due, you'll locate it in the left-door latch. Logical, isn't it? Yes, except in the rain, or for those who don't feel like getting out and talking to gas merchants. □ Just beyond the wooden bridge in the picture, an always soggy clay trail climbs up the hillside. Tires deep in muck and with two aboard, the 1600 scrambled and slithered up the 25% grade with ease. Coming down the other side, we appreciated the new discs in front. There was no trace of fade or problems from dampness, even

though at times we could almost see our front bumper through the windshield. □ As is usual with Wolfsburg products, the 1600 is loaded with interesting details. We like the little guard on the ashtray that pops up when you open it to protect the dash padding, and the 7-position reclining passenger seat. Door handles are recessed integrally with a neat tab that when pushed in, locks the door. Most fascinating of all are the rear windows. There is no hinge. The glass actually bends to open. □ The fastback, with a bare-bones retail price of \$2140, may be just the ticket for the fellow who has owned a few Beetles over the years and is willing to pay \$600 extra for a change of pace. If, on the other hand, the pace has changed for him in the form of a growing family, the 1600 is a natural step up 'til Kombi time arrives.

Don Mac Donald



Our test car was thoroughly at home while treading footpaths of Ethan Allen country.



1600 dash is padded, has clock as well as gas gauge. There's also room for feet.

PHOTOS BY BOB D'OLIVO

VOLKSWAGEN 1600
2-door, 5-passenger sedan

ACCESSORY PRICE LIST

Radio AM/FM	\$120.00
Radio AM	69.95
Rear speaker	8.67
Cigar lighter	2.95
Outside mirror	3.95
Parcel shelf	12.25
Luggage rack	24.95
Vent shades	6.50
Arm rests	4.95
Cocoa mats	16.95
Wheel rings (set)	5.95
Rubber bumper guards (set)	8.95
Fender protectors	4.50
Whitewall tires	35.00
Sunroof	90.00

MANUFACTURER'S SUGGESTED LIST PRICE: \$2140 (incl. taxes and safety equip't) East Coast p.o.e.

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

SPECIFICATIONS FROM MANUFACTURER

ENGINE IN TEST CAR

Opposed 4, air-cooled
Bore and stroke: 3.337 ins. x 2.72 ins.
Displacement: 96.66 cu. ins.
Advertised horsepower: 65 @ 4600 rpm
Max. torque: 87 lbs.-ft. @ 3000 rpm
Compression ratio: 7.7:1
Carburetion: 2 1-bbl.

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

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

STEERING: worm and roller

TURNING DIAMETER: 36 ft.

TURNS LOCK TO LOCK: 2.6

WHEELS: steel, disc, drop center

TIRES: 5.60 x 15 low-profile, tubeless

BRAKES: hydraulic; discs in front, drums rear

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: welded steel body, platform frame

USABLE TRUNK CAPACITY: 6.5 cu. ft.

WHEELBASE: 94.5 ins.

TRACK: front, 51.6 ins.; rear, 53.0 ins.

OVERALL: length, 166.3 ins.; width, 63.2 ins.; height, 58.1 ins.

MINIMUM GROUND CLEARANCE: 6 ins.

CURB WEIGHT: 1962 lbs.