

## The New Volkswagen Beetle Sport

by Ian Lynas

SEVENTY three years ago in Berlin the birth of a motoring icon, the Volkswagen Beetle and to date close on 22 million have been sold around the world.

In its original form a car which was designed for cheap and reliable transport, now it is a sophisticated well appointed means of transport, yet it has lost none of its original charm.

Two of the top designers in the motor industry, Walter de Silva, Group Design Chief and Klaus Bischoff worked together with their teams to ensure that the newcomer remained very much a Beetle.

Last year I had the opportunity to try the latest version on the international press launch in Berlin, of course then the cars available were in LHD form. More recently I had the opportunity to take the wheel of a Sport version in RHD.

The latest model comes to our market some 12 years after the launch of the so named New Beetle and the good news for many is that it takes many of its styling cues from the original car.

Providing the power for the newcomer is a portfolio of new engines, cleaner and more efficient than ever, good news when now we are all so conscious when it comes to fuel economy.

The previous model was very much seen as a car for the ladies and with the latest model the design team have worked hard to give it more universal appeal; it is more masculine than ever and depending on which engine you choose then it can be described as sporty.

Sorry ladies but the bud vase has been dropped; apparently an add on favoured by buyers in the US. This will no doubt be welcomed by the men.

On the road I found the ride firm but not harsh, a new suspension arrangement is employed; a very lightweight strut type set up at the front is completed by semi-independent rear suspension. The two litre TSI has four-link rear suspension and along with the 1.4 litre TSI 160PS, the XDS electronic diff lock as featured on the Golf GTI.

Style wise the latest model has a longer bonnet and the steeper windscreen is moved back; it is in fact longer, wider and sits lower to the ground. Yes this car has good on road presence.

Four versions are offered in our market, three petrol engines and one diesel. The make up will be, a 1.2 litre TSI 105PS with a seven speed DSG gearbox, followed by a 1.4 litre TSI 160PS, a two litre TSI 200PS and a 1.6 litre TDI with 105PS and BlueMotion, which will offer 65.7mpg and a CO2 figure of 114g/km and trim levels will be Beetle, Design and Sport

All versions arriving in our market will feature a high specification with such items as air con, DAB radio, alloy wheels, a multi-function steering wheel, MDI, Bluetooth and



colour co-ordinated dash and door panels, on the Design version, the latter gives a retro taste to the New Beetle.

The Sport as tested features Piano Black dash panels, parking sensors and black wing mirrors.

The interior is tastefully executed with an air of quality and the instrumentation is very well styled and easy to read.

Keeping everyone safe has always been a priority with Volkswagen and all who travel in this new car can do knowing that there are twin front and side airbags, ABS and ESP all as standard.

The version tested featured an eager 160PS 1.4 litre engine capable of going from rest to 62mph in 8.3 seconds and onto a top speed of 129pm.

On the economy front, 42.8mpg on the combined fuel cycle and the emission rating is 153g/km. The insurance rating is 18E and the price of the version on test - £21,220.

