

50 YEARS OF THE VOLKSWAGEN MK1 GOLF

The Golf

During 1974 Volkswagen released a new model to their car range. The car was designed to build on the solid reputation which the Beetle had created for the company and with outstanding sales.

Construction of the cars began on 29th March 1974 at the Wolfsburg plant, Germany and the initial announcement was given to the Press on the 26th April 1974, with additional 'News Releases' which were embargoed until 16th May 1974 when the public unveiling was made. The new car was called the '**Golf**' and labelled as 'the new family compact'. Although the Golf was the new model the Beetle continued in production alongside it for a number of years.

The car was officially launched in the UK at the Earls Court London Motor Show held between 16-26th October 1974. Press releases stated that the cars would be on sale from November 1974 but only available in small numbers with additional stock arriving in 1975.



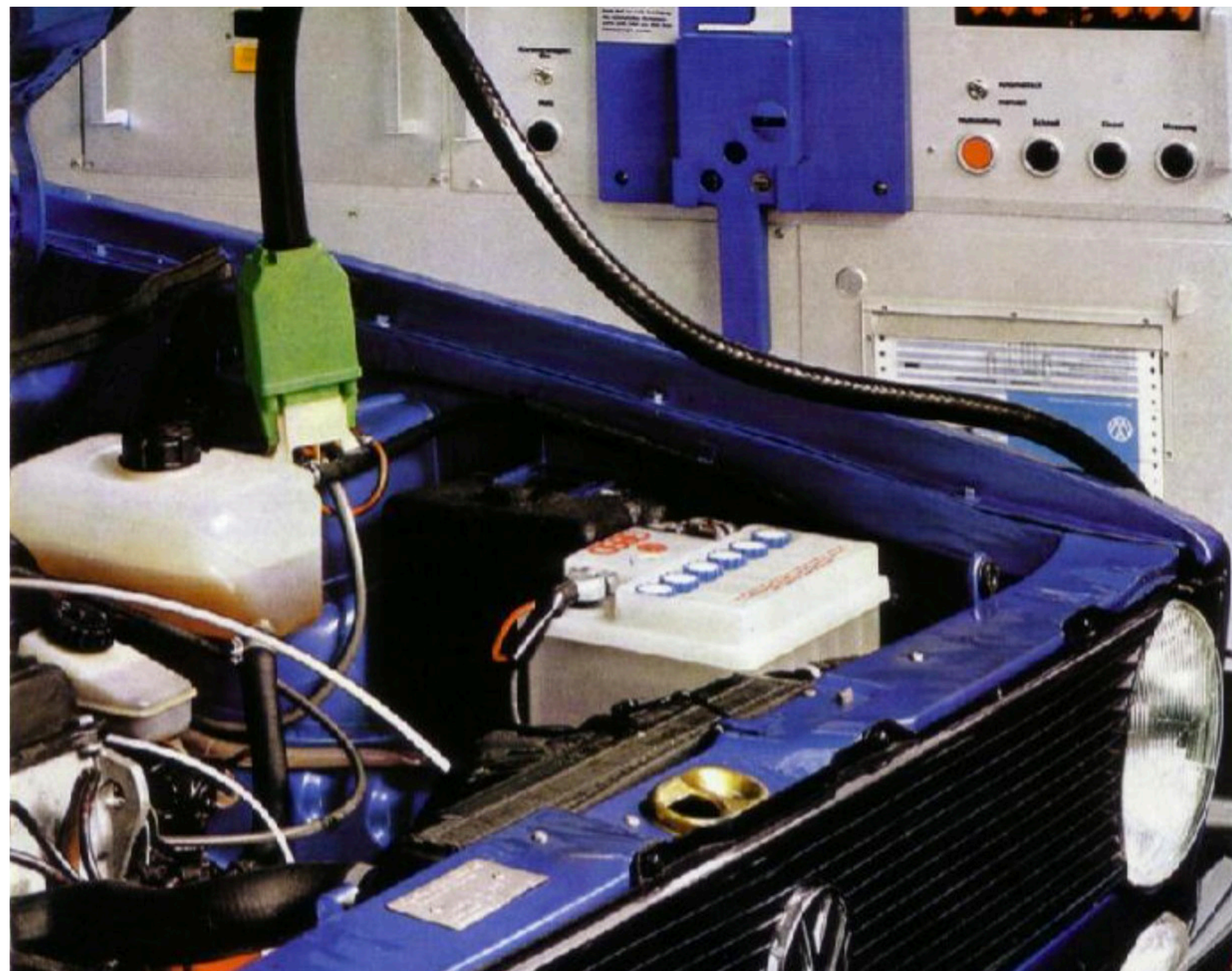
The launch model of the 1100cc Golf LS

The first vehicles to arrive in the UK were the 2-door versions and cost £1294.00 including VAT and car tax. The 4-door version became available later and cost £1654.00.

The model specifications remained unchanged from 1974 to 1975.

Designed by Georgio Giugiaro, the car had a low waist line and large windows which gave the driver good vision both forward and rear.

Measuring 12ft 2inches long (3.71m), the Golf was initially offered in 2 engine sizes 1100cc (50bhp, 87mph, 35mpg) and 1600cc (75bhp, 99mph, 33mpg) and a 4-speed gearbox. The 1100cc engine was a brand-new development but the 1600cc came from the Audi 80 and VW Passat. Crumple zones were incorporated front and rear for enhanced safety along with anti skid steering system and a diagonal braking system. The car could be connected to VW's service computer for diagnosis when it was due for its major 10,000-mile service with a minor lubrication and oil change every 5000 miles.



Volkswagen's "fault-finding" Computer Diagnosis

The Golf was initially described as a 2 or 4 door car with an additional tailgate. The 1100cc was a 2-door variant whereas the 1500cc was a 4-door. There were 4 trim levels, the base 'Golf' version plus 'L' for the 1100cc and the 'S' and 'LS' for the 1600cc (with an additional rev counter and brake servo), each level provided enhanced additions to the vehicles' appearance.

All the Golf versions featured a folding rear seat and when lowered it provided a decent amount of luggage space.



Volkswagen Mk1 'Golf' Series 1 Dashboard (base model)

Standard equipment for the base model 1100cc Golf came with a 2-speed windscreen wiper system with a spray/wipe operation. Self-cancelling indicators & emergency 4-way lights. Headlamp flash with 'lights off' when the engine was started. A blower (2 speed on 'L' and 'LS' models) with exit vents over the rear tailgate. Windscreen defroster duct along the width of the dashboard with additional side window defroster vents plus 2 in the footwell. The whole system was operated via a 3-lever system and in addition to the heated/ cooled vents there were 2 fresh air vents in the instrument panel with louvre control.

Front seats could be adjusted to 13 different positions (12 in the 4-door model) & backrests to 4 positions. There was a hinged rear seat, rubber floor matting & carpet coverings. Instrumentation consisted of a speedometer with a mileage recorder, fuel gauge, indicator lamps for turn signals, high beam, battery, oil pressure & water temperature lamps. Safety steering wheel, inside door handles & mirror, 2 padded sun visors & ashtray. Glove compartment, 2 coat hooks. The driver's door operated interior lights.

In addition to the 'Golf' equipment, the 1100cc '**Golf L**' was available with additional external equipment - polished radiator grille surround, windscreen, rear and side windows, polished door handles: rubber centre trim along the length of the car & tailgate.

Internally the equipment extended to fully reclining front seats, swivel drivers sun visor & a passenger mirror: flexible grab handles on the passenger side & rear provided addition comfort to occupants: arm rests on all doors: luggage compartment cover: pneumatic tailgate support: lockable glovebox: polished instrument support: clock: temperature gauge, trip mileage recorder, rheostat for instrument lights, cigarette lighter, 2 stage heater, ventilator blower, illumination for ashtrays, cigarette lighter, heating & ventilation levers, plus luminous warning light switches

The model was denoted with the rear 'L' inscription on the tailgate.

The 1600cc 'Golf S' was provided with the same specification as the 'Golf' but with the rear 'S' inscription on the tailgate.

The 1600cc 'Golf LS' was provided with the same specification as the 'Golf' but with the rear 'LS' inscription on the tailgate.

At launch the Mk1 Golf was sold with a distinctive rear body panel and the model has become known as the "**Swallowtail**" version of the Mk1 Golf. The panel displayed a pressing line which curved under the registration plate position and gave rise to the name. The styling of the panel was only available between the launch models for 1975 and early 1976 cars and those versions are considered very rare.



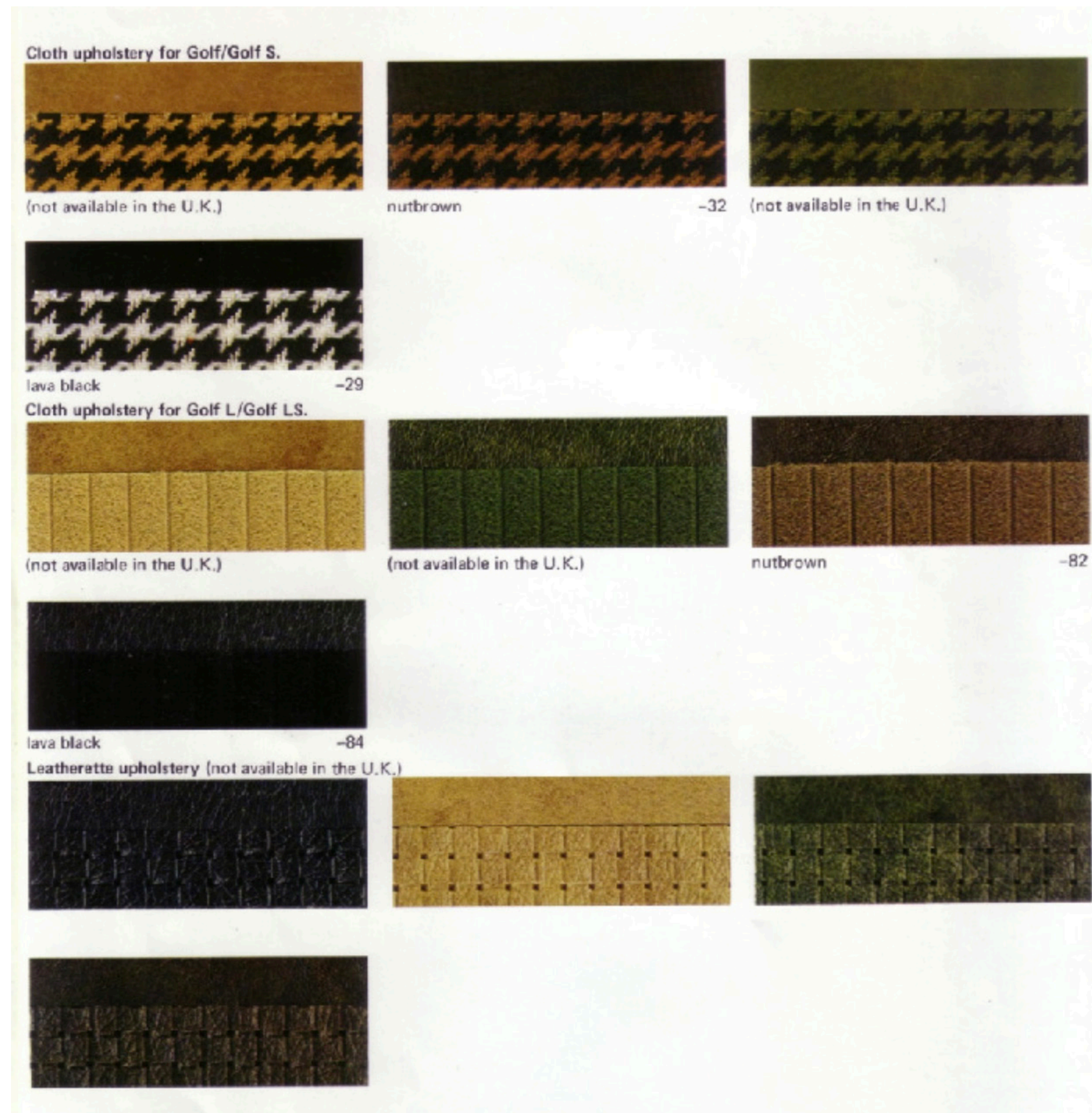
Mk1 Golf 'Swallowtail' denoted by the curved rear panel under the number plate

There were 12 available colours – *Diamond Yellow, Marino Yellow, Pheonix Red, Senegal Red, Miami Blue, Lynx Green, Cliff Green, Atlas White, Hellas Metallic, Marathon Metallic, Ancona Metallic, Viper Green Metallic*. The 3 interior upholstery options for the or the 'Golf' and 'Golf S' were *Yellowstone, Nutbrown, Pine Green* and *Lava Black*. The 'Golf L' and 'Golf LS' were the same colours but the banding on the panels were a little wider and the models could be order with *Leatherette* as an option also.

By 1975 the "Swallowtail" had been revised, along with a host of other changes, by December that year the 'swallowtail' panel had been changed for a horizontal body-line and the bonnet received a reworking too. There were 10 different paint colours to choose from – *Rally Yellow, Marino Yellow, Pheonix Red, Senegal Red, Ocean Blue, Lofoten Green, Cliff Green, Atlas White, Viper Green* and *Silver Diamond Metallic*.

Customers could choose from 2 seat coverings – cognac (brown) and black-white for the base Golf and cognac and lava black for the 'L' and 'LS'.

The model range and options remained the same for the 1976 model year with the exception of the availability of the *Cliff Green* paint option in the UK.



Seat fabric options available (or maybe not if you were a UK customer!)

Some members may have seen the list of 'M package' ('M' standing for 'more') optional extras available on the forum in the Bodywork, Fittings & Interior section. On the new Golf a customer could tick the option boxes for things such as an electric pump for the windscreen washers, heated rear window, a special hinge-down system for the rear seat, rubber side bumpers, day/night rear view mirror and twin reversing lamps.

A Bad Weather package was also available for owners in areas of high fog which included 55A alternator, and 2 halogen fog lamps.

Also available at extra cost via the VW dealership was an automatic gearbox, front disc brakes & brake servo, brake pressure regulator (not on 50bhp engine), steel sunroof with deflector plate, fog & spot lamps, rear fog lamps, reversing lights, complete radio installation, mudflaps, tow bar, roof rack, door storage trays, rear window wash/wipe system.

Internally, integral front seat head restraints & a luggage compartment cover (standard on the 'L' model), Leatherette seat covers, passenger rear view mirror, inertial seat belts.

A full radio system could be ordered – the head unit being a dealership fitment of what was available on the market at the time.



In late 1974 a small team of 5 made of VW mechanics & engineers plus a journalist embarked on what has got to be the longest road trip in a Mk1 Golf (unless you know otherwise!!). They started in Fairbanks, Alaska and ended in Tierra del Fuego, South America. The 19,000-mile trip showcased how robust the small car was as it negotiated unsurfaced roads, swamps and border police. Unbelievably the car made it to the finish post and is displayed in the Wolfsburg Museum.

In 1976 a 1500cc 50hp diesel option was available but didn't feature in the sales brochures until 1979 when the 1600cc was introduced.

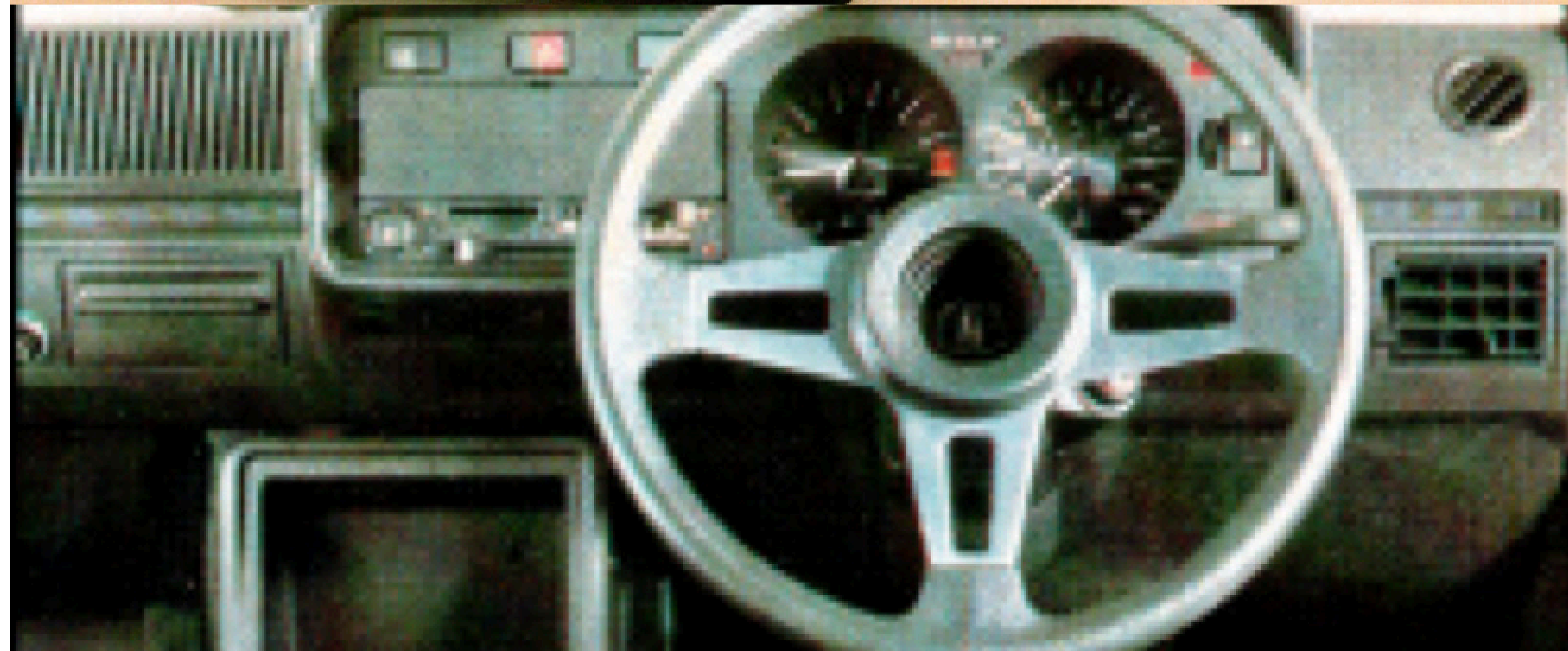
By 1977 Volkswagen were boasting how they had sold over 1,000,000 Golf models in 120 different countries.



Mk1 Golf Driver

A new model was introduced in 1979 which looked like a Series 1 GTI but received steel wheels, a 1300cc engine and a couple of different paint colours – *Mars Red*, *Mandarin Orange* or *Santos Green*. Small rear lights remained but the wraparound bumpers, a red grille surround and side stripes completed

the 'GTI look'. Inside the seats were trimmed in black & white houndstooth cloth and the dashboard was the same as the GL. The centre console housed a quartz clock and a voltmeter.



The Golf GTI

"Series 1 GTI"



VW Golf GTI Series 1 Left Hand Drive

The development of the **Golf GTI** was carried by a small team away from the management's gaze at Wolfsburg and it was presented as a finished car in early 1975. The project was approved on 28th May 1975 and production began. The car was unveiled to the general public in September 1975 at the Frankfurt Motor Show but wasn't available to buy until June 1976. Initially 5000 units needed to be built to comply with the Group One Touring Car class – but things changed rapidly when the buying public got to see the car fully. The car was set apart from the rest of the range by its revvy 1600cc K-Jetronic engine mated to a 4-speed gearbox, black plastic wheel arch extensions, a larger front spoiler, red grille surround and contributions from Gunhild Lijequist –such as the bright tartan upholstery and the golf ball style gear knob.

The dashboard remained the same as the previous range models but an oil temperature gauge filled the other previously vacant centre console position. Paint colours were initially Mars Red (red/black large check cloth) and Diamond Silver Metallic. Schwartz Black (both with silver/ black large check cloth) was added in 1978.

Initially VW stated that there would be no RHD version of the GTI but certain companies in the UK, such as GTI Engineering and Tim Stiles, were converting the cars before early 1979 when VW gave in and offered a RHD GTI. Perhaps the fact that sale figures of 22 1978 LHD GTI's vs over 1500 1979 RHD GTI's may have had something to do with it!!

The black wraparound bumpers were a feature throughout the whole Golf range and the GTI inherited those in 1979 but retained the small rear lights and round binnacle dashboard setup.



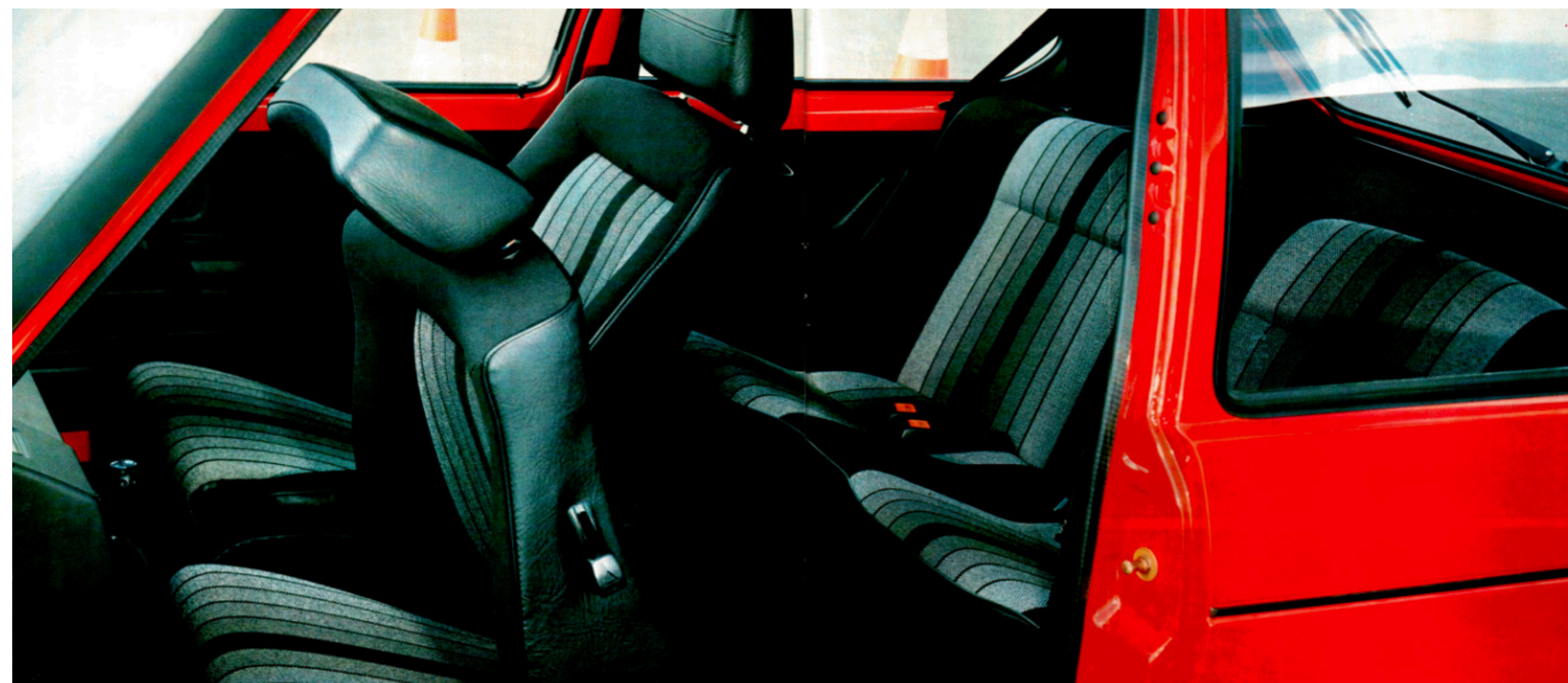
Volkswagen Golf GTI 1980

"Series 2 Golf GTI"

In 1982 the first **1800 Golf GTI**'s began arriving in the UK. Mated with a 5-speed gearbox the 0-60 time rose slightly from 8.8 to 9.3 seconds but the overall top speed improved slightly from 112 to 113.1 mph (VW brochure figures). VAG UK imported around 10 such cars painted in Mars Red to promote the new model and they were consecutively registered between KNV176Y AND KNV186Y.



GOLF GTI
The new 1800cc version of Volkswagen's Golf GTI high performance hatchback. Top speed is now 114mph with 0-60mph acceleration in 8.2 seconds.
Issued by the Public Relations Dept, V.A.G (United Kingdom) Ltd, Yeomans Drive, Blakelands, Milton Keynes. Tel. 0908 679121.



New additions came via a fresh seat cloth (which would also remain for the Mk2 Golf launch), a new dashboard which was more rectangular and housed a speedometer and rev counter along with a new computer called an 'MFA'. The MFA provided information such as the current time, driving time, miles covered, average MPH, average MPG, engine oil temperature, ambient outside temperature all of which was pretty advanced for 1982!

Volkswagen were ready to progress to the next Golf model and the Mk2 was waiting in the wings. To ensure that the Mk1 versions weren't left 'on the shelf' VW launched run out models with the '**LX**' (based on the L but unavailable in the UK), '**GX**' (based on the GL) and '**Campaign**' (based on the GTI). Each model had enhanced features over the standard model.



Volkswagen Golf GX 1983



The Mk1 Golf ‘Campaign’

On the 8th June 1983 Volkswagen provided dealerships and buyers with news of an exciting **special edition of the Mk1 Golf GTI**. Built in very limited numbers, only 1000 of the run-out models were sold in the UK and all the models had the coveted ‘EW’ in the chassis number and the codes S707 (Special Sales Campaign Golf GTI) & S750.

The cars were noted on VW’s ETKA computer system as ‘special sales campaign’ Golf GTI and thus the last 1000 earned the name ‘**Campaign**’ models.

ETKA MSP-Pages					
Primary option		Extended options		Optional equipment	
S 704	servo steering, hydraulic				"D..":GOLF
S 705	special sales campaign 'scirocco gts'		53-D-002820>>	SCIR.	
S 707	special sales campaign 'golf gti'		17-D-448319>>	GOLF GTI	
S 708	special sales campaign 'rabbit 82' (see information of 23.03.82 - austrian importer)				"A..":GOLF
S 712	special sales campaign 'golf gti - 4 doors'				GOLF GTI export markets "D.."
			17-C-250557>>		
			>>17-C-999999		
			17-C-470001>>*		
			>>17-C-999999		
	special sales campaign 'golf gti' with bumpers, wheel arch trim and rear view mirror in color of car		17-D-448319>>	GOLF GTI	
S 720	injection pump		'CAV'	DIESEL	
S 725	special sales campaign 'golf gtd'		17-C-550001>>*	T-DIESEL	
S 726	special sales campaign 'golf lx'		17-D-450001>>*	GOLF	
	special sales campaign 'jetta lx'		16-E-010001>>	JETTA	
S 727	special sales campaign 'golf gx'		17-D-450001>>*	GOLF	
S 730	special sales campaign 'jetta tx'		16-E-010001>>	JETTA	
S 733	transmission for vehicles with oettinger engine				FP
S 734	special sales campaign 'scirocco gtx'		53-D-021698>>	SCIR.	
	special sales campaign 'jetta cl' with black metallic paintwork and padded dashboard		16-D-448319>>	JETTA CL	
	special sales campaign 'golf convertible' with white		15-D-012001>>*	GOLF CARRIO.	
Input <input type="text"/>					
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The ‘Campaign’ model had the advantages of the fully developed Mk1 Golf, with the benefit of virtually all optional extras installed as standard. On the exterior those were a twin headlamp grille (with fog lights rather than spot lights), green tinted glass, a metal factory sliding sunroof, and Pirelli P 6Jx14 alloy wheels with 185/60 HR 14 Pirelli tyres. The interior featured a leather-bound steering wheel, internal mirror adjusters (as did the GTI) and the MFA trip computer. With an on the road price of £6949.25 the cars were available in Alpine White, Mars Red, Black, Helios Blue (added in July 1983) Metallic, Diamond Silver Metallic and Lhasa Green Metallic (added in May 1983) with either a black/red or black/sliver cloth and with Lhasa paintwork black/petrol cloth.

In addition to the S707 & S750 additions, the car retained all the previous years’ equipment such as a laminated windscreen, rear wash-wipe, large front spoiler and the distinctive red grille surround. Inside the Golf ball style gear knob remained, as did the rev counter, digital clock and centre console.

The front sports seats hugged the occupants and a lockable glovebox provided security for personal possessions.

Many discussions have been held amongst club members and VW enthusiasts as to whether the Mk1 Golf ‘Campaign’ is actually a specific version of only 1000 cars.

In 2001 a letter emerged from a service history of such a Mk1 Golf ‘Campaign’. The letter was addressed to a prospective buyer and signed by Douglas J Clare, a Volkswagen Marketing Manager at the time. In the letter it clearly states that only 1000 cars built between August and September 1983 would be available.



Despite the evidence from the letter, which clearly indicates one thousand ‘campaigns’ were made in August and September of 1983, there appear to have been more than this number in the UK, although many no longer survive.

Back in 1983, the currency exchange rate between the UK and Germany was heavily tilted in favour of Germany imports. This meant that a UK spec car could be bought in Germany for less than the UK version, even considering import duties. In fact, if you drove the car abroad for six months, this duty was not payable.

The Germans already had their campaign equivalent, **'The Pirelli Special Edition'** and the French had **'The Plus'**. Those versions went on sale in May 1983 at the same time that the colour **'Helios Blue'** being added in July 1983. The cars were almost identical to the later UK **'Campaign'** Model and featured the same additions, including the foglamps, the leather-bound steering wheel and the alloys wheels. A number of the cars have been found in the UK, usually converted to right hand drive but being prior to August 1983, the converted cars had a DW chassis number.

It was also possible to order a UK spec car from the German dealers, so a large number of 'cheaper' imports, from May 1983 onwards, which exactly matched the later **'Campaign'** specification appeared in the UK before the official **'Campaign'** was launched. Again, those cars had the **'DW'** chassis numbers, unlike the later **'official'** **'EW'** codes usually associated with the **'Campaign'**.



A 1983 Mk1 Golf GTI 'Campaign' In Diamond Silver Metallic Paint With Tinted Green Glass & Fog Lamps.
Photographs Kindley Supplied BY Owner Hugh Coffey



A Mk1 Golf GTI 'Campaign' Interior With Black/Silver Upholstery And A Leather Bound Steering Wheel



A Mk1 Golf GTI 1800 K-Jet Engine



A Mk1 Golf GTI 'P-Slot' Alloy Wheel, 6J x 14 With A Pirelli Tyre, Option Code S750

The Mk1 Golf was a true icon of its time and a benchmark which other manufacturers strived to beat. The Ford Escort RS2000 or XR3, the Vauxhall GTE and the Renault 5 Turbo all come to mind when comparing cars of the era. All were great cars and have a solid following amongst the divided enthusiasts but how many manufactures have kept the same name for 50 years?

ONE and it was **VOLKSWAGEN!**

Why spoil a good idea? After all, "it shuts just like a Golf" – the watch word for QUALITY!

**MK1
GOLF**
OWNERS CLUB

vwgolfmk1.org.uk