



## A tour of Volkswagen's Wolfsburg museums

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1960s Type 3

### AutoMuseum Volkswagen

Before the turn of the millennium, fans and visitors to Volkswagen's vast Wolfsburg factory had only one option to look at past the company's automotive wonders. With an eye on its complicated past, in 1985 the German firm opened a small museum in the town which was created especially for it.



1977 Passat GTI

The warehouse-type AutoMuseum Volkswagen building in Dieselstrasse was a nondescript box, almost apologetic in appearance. If you didn't know it was there, you would be none the wiser unless you looked specifically for it. But, if you did step in through the glass doors and paid your ridiculously small entry fee, a treasure trove of production, prototype and special vehicles awaited you.



1960s Beetle

During the late 1980s the site was awash with rows of Beetle and Beetle-based prototypes (as would be expected - at that time a proportion of VW's success was still attributed to its iconic baby). A revamp in 2001 finally brought about a visual refresh which gave the 5,000-square meter site the status it was long-deserving of. Now, contemporary Volkswagens feature among the exhibits.





1983 See Golf

Whole families of production cars are displayed in chronological order: Golfs sit alongside Beetles and Polos, but it's the rare stuff which always gets people excited. How about a Passat GTI prototype from 1977, no doubt buoyed on by the success of VW's popular go-faster Golf. Or, the **See Golf** from 1983, a Golf Cabriolet with boat-like pontoons, which did actually float. Various motorsport vehicles also document VW's competition history from rally Beetles and Golfs from the 1960s and '70s to the Polo Cup cars of the '80s.



Brazilian VWs

### Autostadt Zeithaus

In 2000, Volkswagen opened its vast Autostadt complex next to the famous Wolfsburg factory power station with its four iconic chimneys. Featuring pavilions showcasing each individual VW Group marque, landscaped parks and gardens, restaurants, as well as a customer collection centre, Autostadt became the new destination for disciples of the Volkswagen brand.



VW's 1955 Millionth Beetle

A new museum, the Zeithaus ('Time house') still welcomes both worshippers of Volkswagen and its associated brands and those who simply adore all cars. Themed displays featuring other marques are sited within the same space as selected legendary VW milestone vehicles. The gold coachwork 1 millionth Beetle is displayed on a plinth for all to see, complete with its diamond-encrusted bumpers. Long-forgotten Volkswagens such as the 1970s K70 are also heralded, while celebratory production vehicles such as the last-ever Type 2 also wow visitors.





1970 VW K70

Rotating displays in both sites often mean that a visitor rarely sees the same cars twice. Autostadt claims the Zeithaus is the most frequently visited car museum in the world. However, with limited space, the Dieselstrasse 'old' museum still outnumbers its newer compatriot, but even there, a shortage of room means that a third site, not open to the public, houses even more Volkswagen treasures. Pleasingly, neither museum has been packed with people whenever this author has taken a trip.



## Other Marques

Whether you're a new or old Volkswagen fan, and you find yourself in the Wolfsburg area, go and discover the famous and not-so-famous treasures this marque has to offer.

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