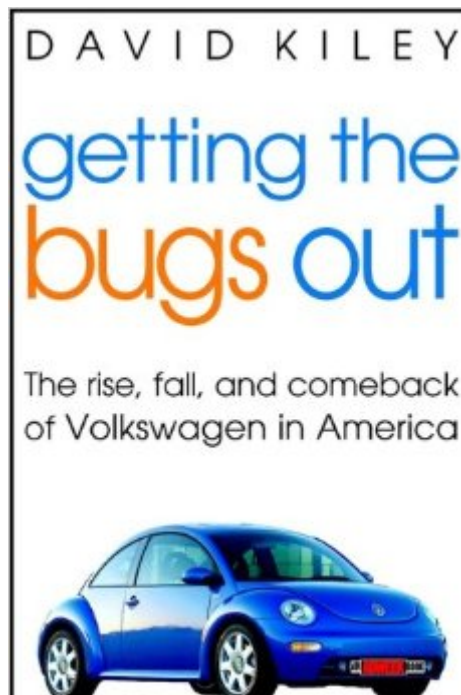


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# Getting The Bugs Out: The Rise, Fall, And Comeback Of Volkswagen In America



## Synopsis

The fascinating story of Volkswagen's raging success and near collapse in America. After a wild ride of ups and downs for almost three decades, Volkswagen has regained its stature as one of America's most beloved auto makers. In *Getting the Bugs Out*, journalist and auto industry expert David Kiley tells the complete story of the rise, fall, and comeback of Volkswagen. Kiley traces the company's rise from Ferdinand Porsche's original design for the Beetle, through the Nazi era, and up to the Beetle's ascendancy during the flower-power 1960s. He explores the reasons for VW's downward spiral through the 1970s and 1980s, including the devastating management blunders that led to such failed efforts as the Rabbit, Dasher, Thing, and Scirocco, and equally catastrophic marketing initiatives, culminating in the notorious "Fahrfeignugen" series of ads. Finally, drawing upon his unique access to company insiders, Kiley tells the story of how Volkswagen achieved its phenomenal comeback beginning in the late 1990s through a combination of visionary management, cutting-edge product development, and brilliant marketing and advertising strategies. David Kiley (Anne Arbor, MI), the Detroit Bureau Chief at USA Today, is a journalist with fifteen years of experience, ten of which have been devoted to covering the auto industry. He has written extensively for *Adweek* and *Brandweek* magazines.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

David Kiley's insightful tome is as charmingly idiosyncratic as his subject, the VW Beetle or "Bug." Beginning with the Bug's nasty political genesis as Hitler's "people's car," Kiley follows the methods

marketers used to shape its 1960s and 1990s commercial identities. Kiley covers the Bug's marketing history, from the obtuse (managers didn't understand that it was essential to VW's U.S. identity) to the brilliant (its sales renaissance). We [...] recommend this book for its fascinating history, but also for its examples of marketing strategy and internal corporate knife-fighting that just might teach you a trick or two.

This is an inside look at a company with a unique history, ably rendered by Kiley, a fine journalist who covers the auto beat for USA Today. By taking readers deep within Volkswagen, and sharing the foibles, triumphs and tribulations of the famed automaker, Kiley has written an entertaining book.

One fine Autumn day in the late '70's I got my driver's license, cashed every savings bond I'd received since my first birthday, and bought my first vehicle . . . a split-pea soup green/yellow Rabbit I named Kermit. I loved it! Similar to their warm furry namesake, this Rabbit was succeeded by multiple versions in pumpkin orange, powder-puff blue, then eventually I "upgraded" to a Scirocco. All terrific machines. I received David Kiley's book as a holiday gift and found it to be a wonderful read, as well as super insight into a brand that so many of us can count as part of our own "not-so-long-ago" personal histories. Kiley's writing style is familiar and flows along at a riveting pace. I highly recommend this book to anyone whose path has crossed that of a VW!

This is a top of the line book. It takes the reader through the history of Volkswagen in America. It speaks of the successes and failures and takes the reader behind the scenes to see how the company was/is run. Due to the history of Volkswagen, the book is entertaining and hard to put down. Kiley does a wonderful job of telling the facts in an interesting way. At times though, it does focus a lot on advertising which is both interesting and tedious. Although it can be hard to keep all the dates and people straight throughout the book, the experience of reading the book is fantastic. This is a great book for those who know a lot about cars and for those who are just merely curious.

I love the Volkswagen story. My family had nothing but Volkswagens growing up. It was my first car like so many others. I have a collection of Volkswagen books that are lovely pictorial salutes to the cars. And I loved reading another book, *Small Wonder*, about the Beetle from conception to about 1970. Kiley does a very good job of covering ground that has been gone over before in order to get you to the early 70s when the company really began to fall apart. Then, he is the first to really go into inner workings of the company from that point on to where the company almost went out of

business in the early 1990s. And then into the fabulous comeback more recently. I work in the marketing field, and have been a student of VW's marketing story. So, besides loving the subject, I learned a lot here too. Extremely worthwhile book for VW lovers as well as for anyone with something to sell to the public.

This book gives an excellent account of the successes and various failures of Volkswagen. Though I enjoyed reading the story behind their creative and revolutionary advertising in the 90's with the Golf, the Beetle, the Jetta, and the Passat, I loved getting the inside track on such disasters as FAHRVERGNUGEN (that's a mouthful), the Rabbit, and the Thing (I've actually SEEN one of these vile machines!). Strongly recommended for car lovers, history buffs, and gossip queens...

This was really an interesting read on the comeback of Volkswagen in America. What drew me to this book was the cover itself. Once I started to randomly read pages of the book, I found this to be a book about marketing, advertising and branding--hence the Adweek logo on the cover. I would recommend this to any "Bug" enthusiast as well as people within the advertising/marketing industry.

This author raises the question - How did the most successful imported car brand lose its dominance to Japanese competitors? Unfortunately he never answers the question. The implied answer is that Volkswagen's management was, in their own way, as arrogant and out of touch with American consumers as Detroit's Big 3 automakers. He undercuts this idea by ending the book with visions of a glorious future for VW in the US thanks to the new Beetle introduced in 1997. They are currently in tenth place with a 2.3% market share. Not too glorious. The author is comfortable writing about a few things; the rebirth of Volkswagen after World War II, the innovative advertising campaigns used to sell the original Beetle, politics within the company, and the introduction of the new Beetle in 1997. He doesn't do well writing about the technical aspects of cars or concepts like market size and market share. He also ignores most of the new models brought to the U.S. by VW as potential Beetle replacements, especially the type 3.

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