

REVEALED

2010 Volkswagen New Beetle 2

Once or twice every six months since the reveal of the Volkswagen Ragster concept at the January 2005 North American International Auto Show, an accomplished sketch artist has been commissioned by an accomplished car magazine to create the New Beetle 2 that VW will bring us as a 2010 model, and perhaps will show us in near-final form as early as the November 2008 Los Angeles Auto Show. Rumors abound, too,

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VW design offices in Wolfsburg or Santa Monica.

The image you see here is based on a conversation had recently with the guy who would know, VW Group design boss Walter de'Silva. The upshot is that, first: yes, the New Beetle 2 is happening, some thirteen years after the launch of the New Beetle we have today. Second: it may seem from these illustrations that it will change little, but actually, every single bit on the car is either tweaked or completely rethought. Just

of a design prototype being shown early next year. There have been a few interesting takes on this sacred mission to date, some based reportedly on the infamous river of "leaked sketches" from

as the New Beetle has always been built in Puebla, Mexico, using the VW global PQ34 architecture seen also under the Golf IV and the original Audi TT, the second-generation New Beetle will stay in Mexico and use the latest PQ35 riding beneath the Golf/Rabbit V, the new TT, and the upcoming Tiguan small SUV, along with the upcoming Scirocco and 2009 Golf VI.

Combining the dimensional growth of the Golf/Rabbit V and the re-proportioning of the new TT profile to render it less cutesy and more grown up (mainstream, if you like), the next New Beetle moves the cabin back a bit and uses the slightly flattened roof look seen on the Ragster. Add to that a wheelbase stretched from the current 98.8 inches to a more Rabbit-like 101 inches, and rear seat passengers will finally be able to sit upright and not scuff the roof liner or bruise their

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kneecaps. In addition, the rearward portion of the side panels over the back wheel wells is pushed out a bit, again giving the Beetle a more businesslike stance and not so much of that aging Candyland look. This change, in turn, gives rear passengers hip and shoulder room they have always needed.

Besides helping rear passengers, these changes at last give the next New Beetle some blankety-blank cargo room. Whereas the current car boasts a cargo hold of just twelve cubic feet—and just five cubic feet on the convertible—the New Beetle 2 will start the space race at a more Rabbit-y sixteen cubic

The current New Beetle is all baby-fat symmetrical curves, but NB2 takes on more heritage overtones and sportiness.

feet. Plus, the rear seat arrangement will be much more flexible to expand upon that. For the convertible, due out as a 2011 model, cargo space will be less compromised via an all-new efficient automatic roof system with a cleanly integrated tonneau cover.

Exterior detailing and lighting design will hearken back more convincingly to the original Bug, with design contours kinked into both the engine and trunk lids to remind us of the heritage more

The future greenhouse takes a rearward bias, and bodywork reflects the need for more passenger space and luggage room.

so than the current New Beetle has ever done. In another effort to render the whole less Betty Boop, air intakes in the front are set to get

more authoritative. This is also a hint at the fact that Volkswagen is talking about both GTI and R32 models for this all-new Beetle. Not only this, but there is also abundant buzz of a 4Motion all-wheel-drive edition, a four-door possibility, plus a station wagon and small pickup for world markets. And, yes, there will be an optional ragtop as seen here offered for the coupe.

Along sportier lines, the chassis will also get the latest compact multilink setup at all corners, while the transverse engine selection will immediately include the 2.0-liter TFSI as seen in the new Audi TT and the GTI. The current 2.5-liter inline-five goes the way that all just-okay things go, to be replaced by an as-yet unspecified engine for North American base models. The next iteration of the



dual-clutch DSG paddle-shift transmission will also be available on loaded versions.

The real point here is that Volkswagen more than anything else needs a Mini-esque phenomenon to happen at this segment of the market, and the New Beetle 2 is going to be it. Right now, VW is undergoing major internal renovations, and finally making the New Beetle work harder for the company worldwide is key to satisfying the bold corporate goal of reaching Toyota in both productivity and profitability by 2018.

Look for a base S-trim New Beetle 2 to have an MSRP of around \$18,500, while the convertible will start at nearly \$25,000.

