

Bug



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"A peppy, perspicacious history of the Volkswagen--with brio and dash, Patton charts the long strange trip of the little bug that became a grand cultural totem." -- Kirkus Reviews "Herbie." "Punchbuggy." "Beetle." The world's most recognizable automobile goes by many noms de plume. But did you know that the "Love Bug" was originally conceived as Hitler's "car of the people," or that it was the Manson "family"'s car of choice? Tapping into Americans' continuing obsession with the VW Bug, Phil Patton has written a kaleidoscopic history of the car from the 1950s to the 2000s. He describes the genius marketing strategy used in America to rid the car of its Fascist associations (VW hired a Jewish marketing team), and explains why designers are obsessed with its shape (the Bug, like the Pantheon, fits the Greek "golden ellipse" ideal of dimension). Patton posits that the Bug was the first car to cause Americans to "wrap themselves in a brand as an extension of their ideology," and turn up their noses at the huge, showy cars produced in Detroit. Amazingly, it worked, and, based on the Beetle's continuing status as an American cultural icon, it still does. As Jonathan Yardley asserted in the Washington Post Book Review: "The original Bug was more than a car, it was an experience."

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