

VW's First EV Sets Tone

ID.4 Continues to Refine Volkswagen's Vision for Electric Transportation

By Derek Price
CARGAZING.COM

When one of the world's biggest car companies decides to build its first electric car from the ground up, the result can be telling.

In the case of Volkswagen's ID.4, its first clean-sheet EV design that debuted a couple of years ago, this German brand thinks electric vehicles ought to be quirky, roomy and smooth-riding.

The fact that VW would pack a few eccentricities into the ID.4 should be no surprise given its history with the Microbus, the Vanagon camper, the Thing and the various Beetles, old and new.

Idiosyncratic design touches, including a twist-turn gear selector behind the steering wheel and almost complete lack of physical buttons, make the ID.4 seem very different — although not necessarily better — than regular, gas-powered VWs.

Instead of regular buttons, the ID.4 makes liberal use of touch-sensitive switches, magical hand-gesture reading and voice control. It gives the car an imaginative, sci-fi feeling, adding to its offbeat vibe.

Other things about it seem out of character compared to yesterday's VWs.

It's remarkably roomy, for



Volkswagen's first car designed from the ground up for electric power, the ID.4 combines family-friendly practicality with quirky design.

one thing, with an oversized cargo area in back that makes it useful for doing SUV-like cargo hauling. It holds 30.3 cubic feet of cargo behind the back seat or 64.2 cubic feet if you fold the seat down.

The ID.4 is smaller than the Tiguan but, thanks to clever interior packaging, has about the same total interior volume, 100 cubic feet.

It also has a surprisingly mushy ride.

Given VW's long history of building sporty, fun-to-

drive cars, I'd hoped the ID.4 would follow that same vein. Electric cars can be legitimately enjoyable for enthusiast drivers, as cars like the BMW i4 M50, Polestar 2 and Kia EV6 GT have shown me in recent months. They're all EVs that are exciting to drive, albeit more expensive than this one.

In contrast, the ID.4 is more about comfort. It's the most softly-sprung EV I've driven, something that helps keep road noise comfortably out of the cabin at highway speeds and makes it a joy to

take on long trips. It's a car I'd buy because it's soothing, not necessarily exciting.

Still, acceleration is strong, just as in all today's good EVs. People used to the comparatively slow response of most gasoline engines will be impressed by the instant feedback and freight-train-like torque from a 201-horsepower electric motor on the base model.

The new-for-2023 base model, called the Standard, comes with a lower starting price and lower EPA-rated range to match, 209 miles.

If you upgrade to the Pro, it increases the range to 275 miles thanks to a bigger, 82-kWh battery. Yet another upgrade, the Pro AWD, adds a second electric motor to increase the horsepower to 295 and provide all-wheel-drive traction, but it reduces the range to 255 miles, according to the federal government.

Volkswagen made several changes to the ID.4 for 2023, including tweaking the styling by adding gloss-black trim and premium lighting on the S models. A 12-inch

AT A GLANCE

What was tested? 2023 Volkswagen ID.4 ADW Pro (\$47,795). Options: None. Price as tested (including \$1,295 destination charge): \$49,090
Wheelbase: 108.9 in.
Length: 180.5 in.
Width: 72.9 in.
Height: 64.5 in.
Powertrain: 82 kWh lithium ion battery and dual electric motors (295 total system horsepower)
EPA fuel economy: Combined 107 MPG equivalent

RATINGS

Style: 8
Performance: 7
Price: 7
Handling: 6
Ride: 9
Comfort: 8
Quality: 7
Overall: 7

Why buy it?

It's Volkswagen's take on the pure-electric car, one with some innovative and quirky design elements. It has a soft, comfortable ride and ample cargo space for its class.

display is now standard on all versions.

Pricing starts at \$38,995 for the Standard model and tops out at \$55,245 for the AWD Pro S Plus trim.

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The ID.4's cabin is spacious and focused around technology. It lets the driver use hand gestures and voice to control many features in the car and has a noticeable lack of physical buttons compared to most vehicles.

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A CLOSER LOOK



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FACTS, FIGURES AND RATINGS

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