

Last SA Beetle restored after accident

The last Beetle built in VW's Uitenhage manufacturing plant has been restored after it was practically destroyed in a vehicle carrier accident in 2006.

The metallic bronze Beetle represents the last of 288 353 Beetles built in Uitenhage from 31 August, 1951, to 18 January, 1979. It was never used and lived in the Volkswagen museum - now the AutoPavilion. It only had 200km on the clock when the accident happened on its way from a show in Cape Town in November, 2006. The vehicle carrier overturned and nine of the AutoPavilion's best historic cars were destroyed.

"Being such a special vehicle, the "last Beetle" was restored over a period of two years to ensure that it returned to its former glory. We are very pleased that it has once again taken its proud place at the AutoPavilion," explained Johan Wagner, manager of Volkswagen's AutoPavillion.

Loaded with luxury features

Wagner added: "All the mechanicals and most of the interior from the original car could still be used. They were then transferred to another body of the same era. The original car was loaded with luxury features not found on any of the models that preceded it. It was built with most of the luxury features of the higher specification and limited edition 1600s, like the Fun Bug, Lux Bug, Jeans Bug and Snug Bug."

Some of its special features include Bilboa cloth upholstery, black fender spats, a special gear lever knob, taper-tip exhaust pipes, a centre tunnel console, a cigarette lighter and Rostyle wheel rims. It was also sprayed in a special bronze metallic paint.

The 21st-century Beetle will be introduced locally towards the end of the year.