

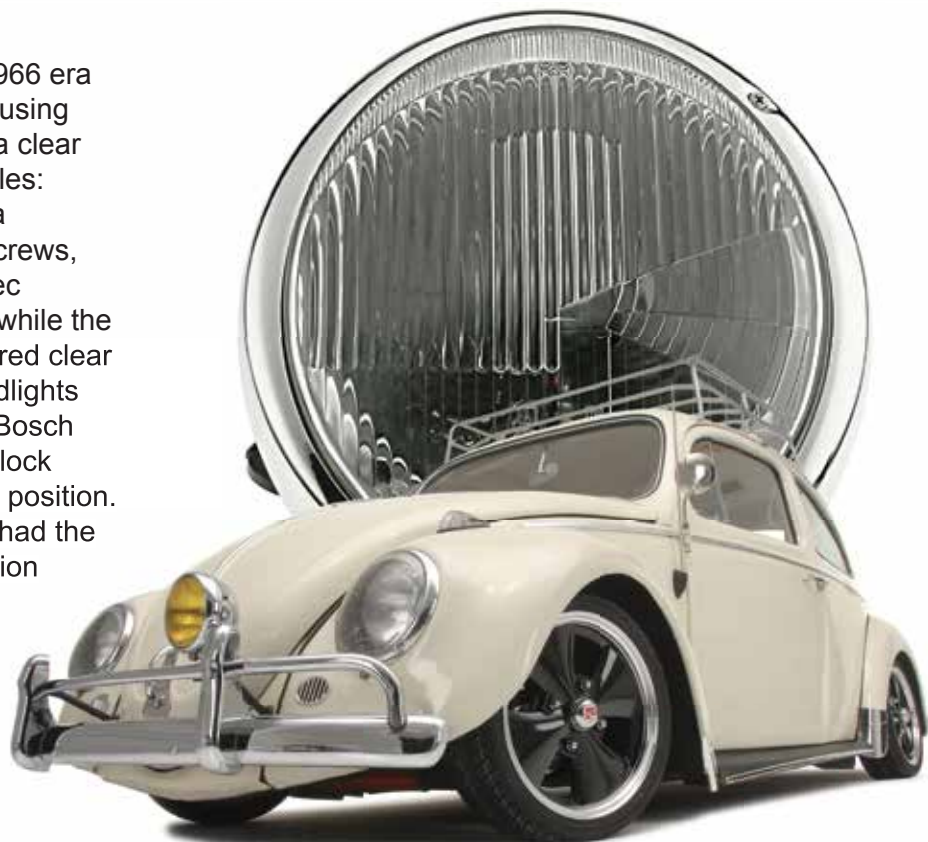


## Let It Shine Know Your VW Headlights!

Headlights not only provide drivers with better visibility at night, they also notify other motorists of your presence in foggy conditions or when visibility is very low. They have evolved from the early acetylene-based flames to 6V and eventually 12V power. With this article, Mid America Motorworks will review the two major versions of headlights used in Air Cooled Volkswagens, as well as options for custom looks.

### Early VW Headlights

Air Cooled VW headlights of the 1950 through 1966 era were the sloped style headlights. The headlight housing screwed into the fender of the VW and had either a clear or fluted lens. They were available in two basic styles: European or US. Easy ways to check if you have a European or US headlight are with the adjusting screws, manufacturer and the indicator light. European spec headlights were made by Bosch with fluted glass, while the US spec headlights were made by Hella and featured clear lenses. One notable difference between the 2 headlights was the adjusting screw positions. The European Bosch had the up and down adjusting screw at the 12 o'clock position and the side to side screw at the 9 o'clock position. The US-spec Hella headlights, on the other hand, had the up and down adjusting screw at the 8 o'clock position and the side to side at 4 o'clock. The US-spec headlights did feature an indicator bulb inside the headlight housing, while the European version did not. Headlights from this era were operated on 6 Volts.





## Headlights for 1967 & Later VWs

The sealed beam headlights were made mandatory in the US well before they were common in Europe. They are generally brighter, maintenance free and don't suffer from moisture and dirt ingress in the way the pre-1966 headlights do. As a result, they stay bright until the day they fail. The downside is you cannot replace bulbs; you have to replace the headlight unit complete. 1967 and later VWs with 'upright' headlights can have either normal or sealed beam lights. With the sealed beams there will only be one screw in the trim ring which, when removed, will reveal adjusting screws at 2 o'clock and 7 o'clock positions. Non-sealed lights have the adjusters in the same positions, but they are accessible through the outer trim rings. These headlights operate on 12 Volts.

## Headlights That Turn Heads

As technology has evolved for safety and extended bulb life, the option for more specialized headlights has become more widespread.

## European vs. US Headlights

While the function and design of European Headlights is more or less the same as US Headlights, there are a few subtle differences. Hella offers H4 beams for European style and HB2 for US style. The H4 was introduced in Europe in 1971 as the world's first halogen bulb with both high and low beams. Its popularity was almost immediate and in 1991, automakers wanted to use the H4 in the US. However, at the time the US had limits on beam intensity and the H4 was too bright. The DOT also decided engineering blueprints for the H4 bulbs allowed too much variance in filament position, so they created a new blueprint for the HB2 bulb with stricter limits on filament placement variance.



### Halo Headlights

Halo 7" Headlights are made with ultra-bright LED lights. They come with white halos that are less expensive and can be used as daytime driving lights. The LEDs burn little-to-no electricity, so it gives extra safety to daytime driving without drawing much electricity. Also it gives your Air Cooled VW Audi style looks.

Halo Headlights are also available in multi-color LEDs. These multi colors are not legal for driving, but they are frequently used at car shows and while parked. Just like the white Halos, they use very little electricity so they can be used without worry that the battery will drain. They come with a remote control that allows you to select color, as well as set the lights to fade, strobe and flash.



### Headlight Rings & Trim

Give your Volkswagen a custom look with Headlight Rings and Trim that add a personal touch. Headlight Eyebrows show other enthusiasts that you're enjoying the hobby. They are also functional, helping reflect light back onto the roadway at night. For a sporty look, Headlight Grilles can channel the Porsche Speedster or add aggressive looks while protecting the headlight assemblies. If subtlety is more your style, Headlight Ring are available in black or chrome to complete the look in a refined way.



### Sport Headlights

We all know that some VWs are meant for more than car shows and cruising. Luckily, you can still give your Off Road VW custom looks. Headlights are available in standard style to take the abuse of a weekend with your Club, while chrome headlights are also available to add a little flash to the adventure. Freestanding Headlights can be mounted to the front of your Dune Buggy, adding more light for nighttime joy rides.

No matter how you enjoy your Classic VW, be sure to know the year breaks for important changes. There's a style option for every VW enthusiast on – or off! – the road!

