VW ID.Buzz – Road Test

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The Volkswagen ID.Buzz all electric multi-utility vehicle plugged in, charged and test driven by Robin Roberts (and Miles Better News Agency).

Move over supercars and SUVs, there’s a new head turner on the road, the Volkswagen ID.

Buzz MUV.

Talked about for a few years and on sale last year in Britain, the very retro Buzz is one of the rare newcomers that manage to break with modern convention by being old-school conventional.

Borrowing retro styling cues from the famous VW Combi/Camper window vans of a few decades ago yet sweeping up the latest technology along the way it’s a package which cannot fail to please.

It’s a modern people mover par excellence which does what you’d expect and a few things you’d not expect, while looking like nothing else on the beach, or road, or supermarket car park.

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Passing cars slowed on the motorway for a better look, those coming towards it on country roads drastically reduced speed to take it in and even dog walkers eased over in lanes and invariably smiled. It’s that sort of vehicle.

It’s familiar but unfamiliar at the same time sort of a friend you’ve not seen in a while.

To those of teenage years it has striking styling they may not have gazed upon unless they have a modern toaster sitting in their kitchen or university hall of residence. Older voyeurs may have remembered throwing a blanket down in the back to sleep, or something like that.

Volkswagen has not made a new model, it’s remade memories cozily wrapped up in a car which really is, to my mind both physically and practically, head and shoulders above rivals which carry the increasingly misplaced appendage SUV.

Yet it’s not a sporting car but a car with which you can enjoy sports.

It’s big at over four metres (about 13 feet) long and nearly two metres (approx. 6.5 feet) tall and the high riding five-seats all give a near uninterrupted view all round with the battery and reasonably sized electric motor under the floor. Future models are rumoured to be getting two more seats and all-wheel drive, which will significantly spread its appeal still further.

It’s still a comparatively rare sight on UK roads and the first four months of 2023 saw under 400 registered. It uses the platform from the ID.4 car and comes in 1st Edition, Life and Style trim, with the more expensive Pro model getting bigger wheels, additional interior lighting, matrix LED, powered tailgate and multi-flex boot board.

Prices range from £58,915 to £63,715 but our top spec Pro test model priced at £65,465 came with infotainment package, additional charging cable, two colour paint which together included £3,550 in that price.

Press ‘start’ and go…

Like its stablemates, the all-electric ID.Buzz is simple to use, press start button, turn stalk to go forward or reverse and you’re away. A second turn on the right hand stalk behind the wheel engages the battery regeneration and transforms driving into a single-pedal operation depending on throttle pedal pressure.

It’s very smooth, unbelievably quiet, fairly quick and immediately responsive. You have eco, comfort, sport and individual mode settings to refine what you want out of the powertrain, steering and suspension and all at the push of a few buttons onscreen.

I found the steering a bit dead in character even in the sporting mode and the turning circle was not great in traffic or town but the brakes were strong and the suspension really smoothed out anything underneath.

You could hear the suspension working away and tyres rumbling over ridges and rips in the tarmac but this was only because the powertrain was almost silent.

It is a big vehicle and sometimes you became aware of this when parking or manoeuvering but it did not really have any handling vices, just a slight tendency to run wide through some bends, immediately coming back on line when the throttle was eased. The parking brake was highly effective.

Secondary controls on the stalks and wheelspokes operated with a satisfying precision and the dials infront of the driver were fairly large and always clear, changing emphasis with any selected mode.

Matching the driver's display was a big central multi-purpose infotainment screen for music, navigation, vehicle settings and communications, which all worked well even if they left finger-tip marks as reminders. A slim wide panel beneath handled the speech level and temperature.

Heating and ventilation was excellent throughout the big cabin and backed up with powered front windows but there was no sunroof.

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The people-centric design means there were a lot of places to stow on journey items, even for those behind the front seats. Rear laptop or picnic trays folded flat and there were slim pockets for phones with adjacent power points, while the loadbed really was that, wide and long enough to sleep on, with an underfloor storage area and still more recesses as well as a 12v point for an inflator or cleaner.







The big, heavy sliding side doors maybe too much for a child to use but reveal a massive offset-split seating arrangement behind the multi-adjustable front seats and all were generously proportioned, thickly padded and very comfortable with armrests on the front pair for long range journeys. Some may find getting out more awkward than entering due to the height of the seats.

Room was a premium point inside so five people can really travel in comfort without restrictions to leg, head or elbow room. You can even remove the box between the front seats if desired to have 'walk-through' access.

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Visibility was excellent thanks to the thin roof pillars, low waistline and deep windows, with big wipers each end and bright lights.

It actually moved quite well when encouraged but if you wanted to stretch the charge it would do close to the claimed 255 miles if you kept below 60 mph and effectively engaged the strong retardation feature.

Other family BEVs will go further but probably not with so much style. It is fast charging on a suitable point in about 30 mins.

VERDICT

The Volkswagen ID.Buzz is a real family car or visible VIP transport and although it's not cheap it could be worth every penny if you're going to keep it and use it.

Now here's an idea to conclude: VW Group member Bentley could do worse than take the Buzz and use it as a basis for a super-luxury limousine with 4WD, a longer body but not necessarily more than five seats and double the price.

For: Eye-catching, very roomy, superbly comfortable, excellent family or business transport,

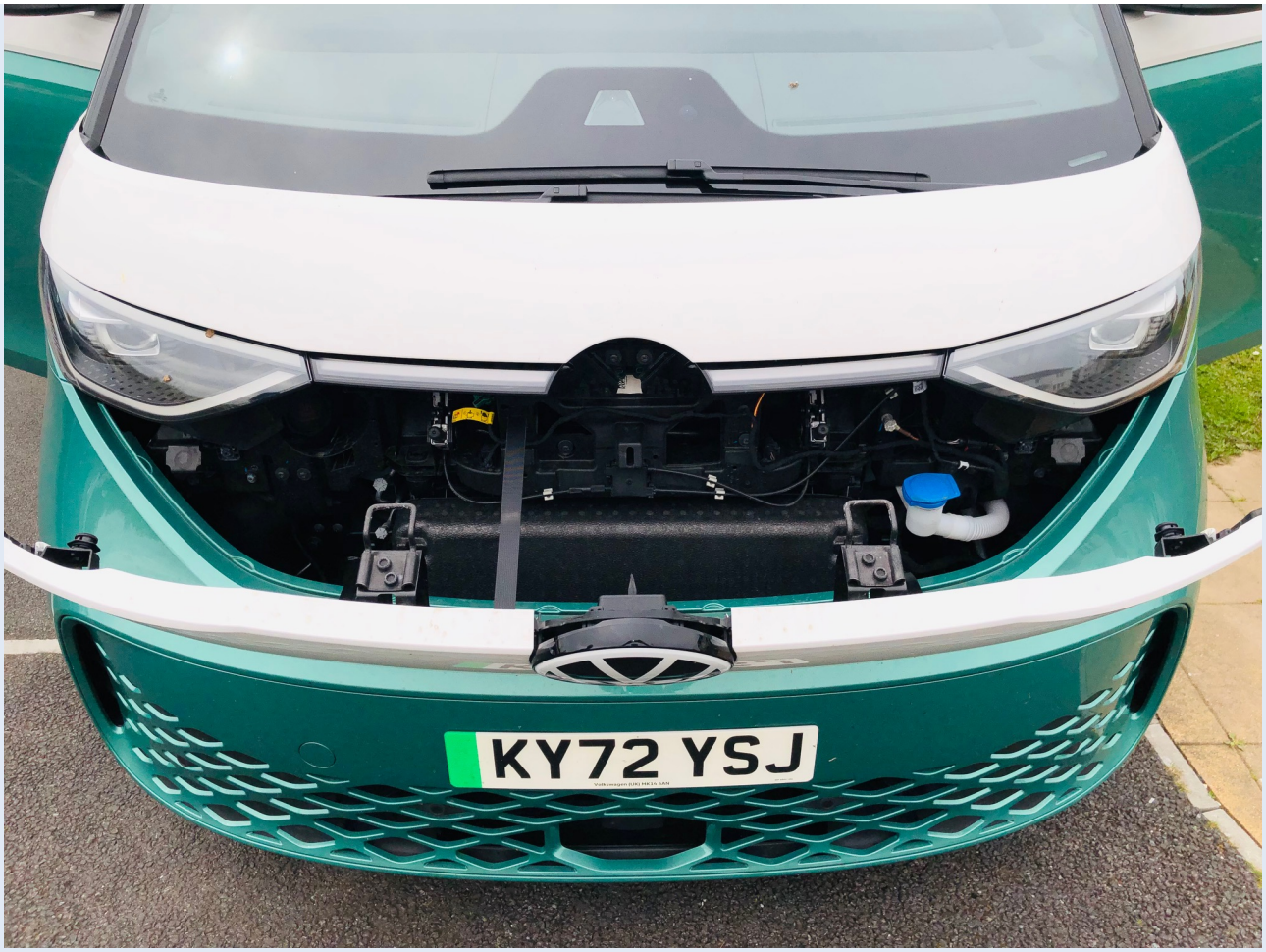
highly practical, genuine good driving range, excellent infotainment, rarity value, zero emissions, low tax costs.

Against: Large turning circle, some road noise, expensive, only five seats, average performance.



FAST FACTS

Model: VW ID.Buzz Pro



Price: £65,465 as tested

Mechanical: 204 PS/ 150kW motor with 77 kWh battery, rear wheel drive

Max Speed: 90 mph

0 – 62 mph: 10.2 secs

Range: 250 miles

Insurance Group: 32

C02 emissions: Zero

Tax costs: Bik rating 2%, VED £ZeroFY, £ZeroSR

Warranty: 3 years/100,000 miles

Size: L 4.72 m (15.49 ft), W 2.22 m (7.28 ft), H 1.93 m (6.33 ft)

Bootspace: 1,121 to 2,123 litres (39.59 to 74.97 cu.ft)

Kerbweight: 2,498 kg (5,507 lb)