



Sharing the Love

FALLING FOR A 1975 VW BUS

PAULINE WIELAND sure has some spunk. She just roadtripped home with her 92-year-old mother from Naples, Fla. Their ride? A 1975 VW camper bus purchased days before the unplanned journey.

“I blame it all on my dad,” said Wieland, with a laugh. “He could be a little impulsive, too.” Not only did Bill pass onto his daughter his fun-loving spirit, but also a love of VWs. Growing up in


Carpentersville, Wieland remembers many happy evenings spent on the family driveway, watching dad detail his vehicles. “He always had a cigar in his mouth and a clean car,” she said.

In the winter of 1963, Bill bought a Beetle, an unusual choice given his size. “He was 6.1’ but still fit comfortably inside,” said Wieland. “It was extremely reliable, too.” He was so impressed he bought a matching one for her mother, a total

surprise. Next, he purchased a red and white bus. Wieland remembers using it as a playhouse with neighborhood friends. Bill would park it in the front yard and set up its striped tent for the girls. “We’d be in there for hours, playing card games and lots of Monopoly,” she said.

In 1964, the family motored to Massachusetts to visit Wieland’s grandmother, camping along the way. On the way home, they stopped at the New York World’s Fair, its sights dazzling the young girl and her family.

As she approached driving age, Wieland vowed her first car would be a Beetle. After a test drive at an Elgin dealership, she discovered a major problem—it wasn’t fast enough. The lead foot ended up buying a banana-yellow AMC Gremlin that packed plenty of punch. “It was fast,” Wieland recalls. “I got way too many speeding tickets.”

Years passed and she went decades without a VW. That changed this past February. While getting some fun in the sun with mom, Wieland spied a 1975 VW bus parked at a brewery next to their hotel. “The nostalgia kicked in,” she said. On a whim, she struck up a deal with the owner and canceled the return flights home. The journey back was full of laughs and good times, exactly what Wieland was hoping for. This spring she’ll be overhauling the plucky cruiser and come summer, logging many more miles behind the wheel. 



Above: On summer days, Pauline Wieland and her friends could be found playing “Go Fish” and other card games inside the family’s red and white VW bus. Right: Pauline and her younger brother Roger pose beside their dad’s 1963 Beetle.